

# National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Survey 2010/2011: Individual Refuge Results for the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

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*So natural, yet conveniences are close by if needed. It's the only vacation we take and the only ones we need. We have 7 children and they all love it. It's a once in a lifetime experience that words cannot do justice to—*Survey comment from visitor to the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR.



Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Photo credit: Hailey Sample/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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## Introduction

The National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System), established in 1903 and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), is the leading network of protected lands and waters in the world dedicated to the conservation of fish, wildlife and their habitats. There are 556 national wildlife refuges (NWRs) and 38 wetland management districts nationwide, including possessions and territories in the Pacific and Caribbean, encompassing more than 150 million acres. The mission of the Refuge System is to “administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.” Part of achieving this mission is the goal “to foster understanding and instill appreciation of fish, wildlife, and plants, and their conservation, by providing the public with safe, high-quality, and compatible wildlife-dependent public use” (Clark, 2001). The Refuge System attracts more than 45 million visitors annually, including 25 million people per year to observe and photograph wildlife, over 9 million to hunt and fish, and more than 10 million to participate in educational and interpretation programs (Uniack, 1999; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2007). Understanding visitors and characterizing their experiences on national wildlife refuges are critical elements of managing these lands and meeting the goals of the Refuge System.

The Service contracted with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to conduct a national survey of visitors regarding their experiences on national wildlife refuges. The survey was conducted to better understand visitor needs and experiences and to design programs and facilities that respond to those needs. The survey results will inform Service performance planning, budget, and communications goals. Results will also inform Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCPs), Visitor Services, and Transportation Planning processes.

## Organization of Results

These results are for the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR (this refuge) and are part of USGS Data Series 643 (Sexton and others, 2011). All refuges participating in the 2010/2011 surveying effort will receive individual refuge results specific to the visitors to that refuge. Each set of results is organized by the following categories:

- **Introduction:** An overview of the Refuge System and the goals of the national surveying effort.
- **Methods:** The procedures for the national surveying effort, including selecting refuges, developing the survey instrument, contacting visitors, and guidance for interpreting the results.
- **Refuge Description:** A brief description of the refuge location, acreage, purpose, recreational activities, and visitation statistics, including a map (where available) and refuge website link.
- **Sampling at This Refuge:** The sampling periods, locations, and response rate for this refuge.
- **Selected Survey Results:** Key findings for this refuge, including:
  - Visitor and Trip Characteristics
  - Visitor Spending in the Local Communities
  - Visitors Opinions about This Refuge
  - Visitor Opinions about National Wildlife Refuge System Topics
- **Conclusion**
- **References**
- **Survey Frequencies (Appendix A):** The survey instrument with the frequency results for this refuge.
- **Visitor Comments (Appendix B):** The verbatim responses to the open-ended survey questions for this refuge.

## **Methods**

### **Selecting Participating Refuges**

The national visitor survey was conducted from July 2010 – November 2011 on 53 refuges across the Refuge System (table 1). Based on the Refuge System’s 2008 Refuge Annual Performance Plan (RAPP; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2011, written comm.), 192 refuges with a minimum visitation of 25,000 were considered. This criterion was the median visitation across the Refuge System and the minimum visitation necessary to ensure that the surveying would be logistically feasible onsite. Visitors were sampled on 35 randomly selected refuges and 18 other refuges that were selected by Service Regional Offices to respond to priority refuge planning processes.

### **Developing the Survey Instrument**

USGS researchers developed the survey in consultation with the Service Headquarters Office, managers, planners, and visitor services professionals. The survey was peer-reviewed by academic and government researchers and was further pre-tested with eight Refuge System Friends Group representatives from each region to ensure readability and overall clarity. The survey and associated methodology were approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB control #: 1018-0145; expiration date: 6/30/2013).

### **Contacting Visitors**

Refuge staff identified two separate 15-day sampling periods and one or more locations that best reflected the diversity of use and specific visitation patterns of each participating refuge. Sampling periods and locations were identified by refuge staff and submitted to USGS via an internal website that included a customized mapping tool. A standardized sampling schedule was created for all refuges that included eight randomly selected sampling shifts during each of the two sampling periods. Sampling shifts were three- to five-hour randomly selected time bands that were stratified across AM and PM, as well as weekend and weekdays. Any necessary customizations were made, in coordination with refuge staff, to the standardized schedule to accommodate the identified sampling locations and to address specific spatial and temporal patterns of visitation.

Twenty visitors (18 years or older) per sampling shift were systematically selected, for a total of 320 willing participants per refuge—160 per sampling period—to ensure an adequate sample of completed surveys. When necessary, shifts were moved, added, or extended to alleviate logistical limitations (for example, weather or low visitation at a particular site) in an effort to reach target numbers.

**Table 1.** Participating refuges in the 2010/2011 national wildlife refuge visitor survey.

<b>Pacific Region (R1)</b>	
Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge (HI)	William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge (OR)
Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge (ID)	McNary National Wildlife Refuge (WA)
Cape Meares National Wildlife Refuge (OR)	Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge (WA)
Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (OR)	
<b>Southwest Region (R2)</b>	
Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NM)	Aransas National Wildlife Refuge (TX)
Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (NM)	San Bernard/ Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge (TX)
Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge (OK)	
<b>Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region (R3)</b>	
DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge (IA)	McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge – (IA/WI)
Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge (IA)	
Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge (IN)	Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge (MO)
Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge (MN)	Horicon National Wildlife Refuge (WI)
Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge (MN)	Necedah National Wildlife Refuge (WI)
<b>Southeast Region (R4)</b>	
Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge (AL)	Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge (GA)
Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge (AR)	Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge (MS)
Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge (AR)	Cabo Rojo National Wildlife Refuge (Puerto Rico)
Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (FL)	Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge (NC)
St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge (FL)	Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge (SC)
Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge (FL)	Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge (TN)
<b>Northeast Region (R5)</b>	
Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge (CT)	Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge (ME)
Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge (DE)	Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (NJ)
Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge (MA)	Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge (NY)
Parker River National Wildlife Refuge (MA)	Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge (NY)
Patuxent Research Refuge (MD)	Occoquan Bay/ Elizabeth Hartwell Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge (VA)
<b>Mountain-Prairie Region (R6)</b>	
Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge (CO)	Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge (SD)
Quivira National Wildlife Refuge (KS)	National Elk Refuge (WY)
Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (MT)	
<b>Alaska Region (R7)</b>	
Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge (AK)	Kenai National Wildlife Refuge (AK)
<b>California and Nevada Region (R8)</b>	
Lower Klamath/Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge (CA)	Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NV)
Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge (CA)	

Refuge staff and/or volunteers (survey recruiters) contacted visitors on-site following a protocol provided by USGS to ensure a diverse sample. Instructions included contacting visitors across the entire sampling shift (for example, every  $n^{\text{th}}$  visitor for dense visitation, as often as possible for sparse visitation), and only one person per group. Visitors were informed of the survey effort, given a token incentive (for example, a small magnet, temporary tattoo), and asked to participate. Willing participants provided their name, mailing address, and preference for language (English or Spanish) and survey mode (mail or online). Survey recruiters also were instructed to record any refusals and then proceed with the sampling protocol.

Visitors were mailed a postcard within 10 days of the initial on-site contact thanking them for agreeing to participate in the survey and inviting them to complete the survey online. Those visitors choosing not to complete the survey online were sent a paper copy a week later. Two additional contacts were made by mail during the next seven weeks following a modified Tailored Design Method (Dillman, 2007): 1) a reminder postcard one week after the first survey, and 2) a second paper survey two weeks after the reminder postcard. Each mailing included instructions for completing the survey online and a postage paid envelope for returning the paper version of the survey. Those visitors indicating a preference for Spanish were sent Spanish versions of all correspondence (including the survey). Finally, a short survey of six questions was sent to nonrespondents four weeks after the second survey mailing to determine any differences between respondents and nonrespondents at the national level. Online survey data were exported and paper survey data were entered using a standardized survey codebook and data entry procedure. All survey data were analyzed by using SPSS v.18 statistical analysis software.

## Interpreting the Results

The extent to which these results accurately represent the total population of visitors to this refuge is dependent on 1) an adequate sample size of those visitors and 2) the representativeness of that sample. The adequacy of the sample size for this refuge is quantified as the margin of error. The composition of the sample is dependent on the ability of the standardized sampling protocol for this study to account for the spatial and temporal patterns of visitor use specific to each refuge. Spatially, the geographical layout and public use infrastructure varies widely across refuges. Some refuges only can be accessed through a single entrance, while others have multiple unmonitored access points across large expanses of land and water. As a result, the degree to which sampling locations effectively captured spatial patterns of visitor use will likely vary from refuge to refuge. Temporally, the two 15-day sampling periods may not have effectively captured all of the predominant visitor uses/activities on some refuges during the course of a year. Therefore, certain survey measures such as visitors' self-reported "primary activity during their visit" may reflect a seasonality bias.

Herein, the sample of visitors who responded to the survey are referred to simply as "visitors." However, when interpreting the results for the McGregor District, any potential spatial and temporal sampling limitations specific to this refuge need to be considered when generalizing the results to the total population of visitors. For example, a refuge that sampled during a special event (for example, birding festival) held during the spring may have contacted a higher percentage of visitors who traveled greater than 50 miles to get to the refuge than the actual number of these people who would have visited throughout the calendar year (that is, oversampling of nonlocals). In contrast, another refuge may not have enough nonlocal visitors in the sample to adequately represent the beliefs and opinions of that group type. If the sample for a specific group type (for example, nonlocals, hunters, those visitors who paid a fee) is too low ( $n < 30$ ), a warning is included. Additionally, the term "*this* visit" is used to reference the visit on which people were contacted to participate in the survey, which may or may not have been their most recent refuge visit.

## **Refuge Description for the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge**

“Upper Miss” Refuge winds through 260 miles of beautiful bluff country. Its marshes, wooded islands, bottomland forests and upland prairies provide the diverse habitats necessary for countless numbers of fish and wildlife. Established on June 7, 1924 this refuge begins at the Chippewa River near Wabasha, Minnesota, and ends near Rock Island, Illinois. The refuge lies within four states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois. The river was free-flowing until a series of locks and dams were constructed in the 1930s by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). Over half of the lands managed by the refuge are owned by the Corps. Today, nearly 240,000 acres of wooded islands, marshes, and backwaters comprise the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The Refuge is divided into four management districts: Winona, LaCrosse, McGregor, and Savanna. The McGregor District encompasses Pools 9, 10, and 11, beginning near Lansing, Iowa, and ending at Dubuque, Iowa.

This refuge was established as a breeding place for migratory birds, game animals, fur-bearing animals, fish and other aquatic mammals, as well as for the conservation of wild flowers and aquatic plants. The refuge provides resting and feeding areas for a large number of migratory birds including Tundra swans and canvasback ducks. Additionally, Upper Mississippi River NWFR also provides the public with opportunities for outdoor recreation and environmental education programs. With 1.5 million visitors each year (from 2008 RAPP database; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2011, written comm.), Upper Mississippi River NWFR offers a variety of activities including use of the Visitor Center, waterfowl hunting, migratory bird hunting, upland game hunting, big game hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking, biking, motorized and nonmotorized boating, wildlife observation, bird watching, photography, environmental education programs, interpretation, geocaching and camping.

With most of the Refuge only accessible by boat, the Upper Miss Refuge has been a place for visitors to renew themselves on the water. Figure 1 depicts a map of the Upper Mississippi River NWFR. For more information, visit <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/UpperMississippiRiver/>.



Figure 1. Map of the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR, courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

## Sampling at the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

A total of 262 visitors agreed to participate in the survey during the two sampling periods at the identified locations at the McGregor District (table 2). In all, 192 visitors completed the survey for a 75% response rate and  $\pm 6\%$  margin of error at the 95% confidence level.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 2.** Sampling and response rate summary for the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR.

Sampling period	Dates	Locations	Total contacts	Undeliverable addresses	Completed surveys	Response rate
1	07/24/10 to 08/07/10	Lansing Beach Big Slough Landing Cassville Boat Ramp Million Dollar Island	134	3	96	73%
2	11/06/10 to 11/20/10	Big Slough Landing Prairie Du Chen Boat Ramp Bussey Landing Bertom Lake Access Alternative Visitor Use Sites	128	4	96	77%
<b>Total</b>			<b>262</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>75%</b>

## Selected Survey Results

### Visitor and Trip Characteristics

*A solid understanding of refuge visitors and details about their trips to refuges can inform communication outreach efforts, inform visitor services and transportation planning, forecast use, and gauge demand for services and facilities.*

### Familiarity with the Refuge System

While we did not ask visitors to identify the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, visitors to the McGregor District reported that before participating in the survey, they were aware of the role of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in managing national wildlife refuges (93%) and that the Refuge System has the mission of conserving, managing, and restoring fish,

<sup>1</sup> The margin of error (or confidence interval) is the error associated with the results related to the sample and population size. A margin of error of  $\pm 5\%$ , for example, means if 55% of the sample answered a survey question in a certain way, then 50–60% of the entire population would have answered that way. The margin of error is calculated with an 80/20 response distribution, assuming that for any given dichotomous choice question, approximately 80% of respondents selected one choice and 20% selected the other (Salant and Dillman, 1994).

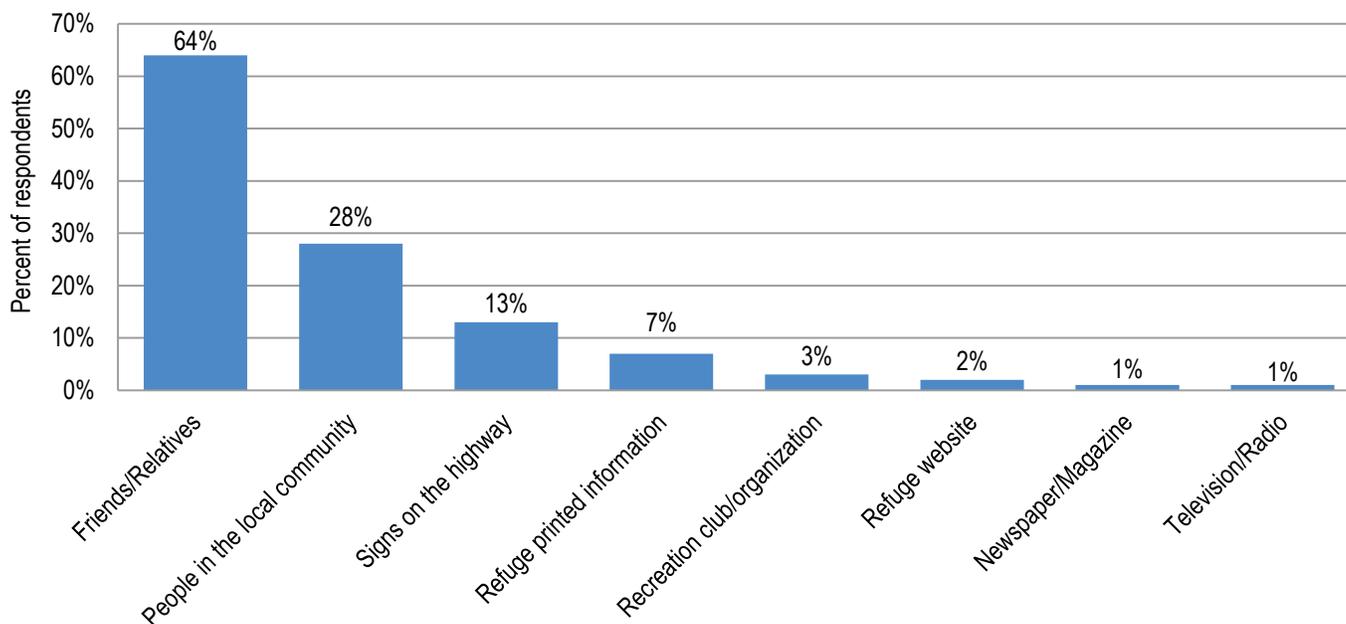
wildlife, plants and their habitat (92%). Positive responses to these questions concerning the management and mission of the Refuge System do not indicate the degree to which these visitors understand the day-to-day management practices of individual refuges, only that visitors feel they have a basic knowledge of who manages refuges and why. Compared to other public lands, many visitors feel that refuges provide a unique recreation experience (81%; see Appendix B for visitor comments on “What Makes National Wildlife Refuges Unique?”); however, reasons for why visitors find refuges unique are varied and may not directly correspond to their understanding of the mission of the Refuge System. A little more than half of visitors to the McGregor District had been to at least one other National Wildlife Refuge in the past year (58%), with an average of 10 visits to other refuges during the past 12 months.

### Visiting This Refuge

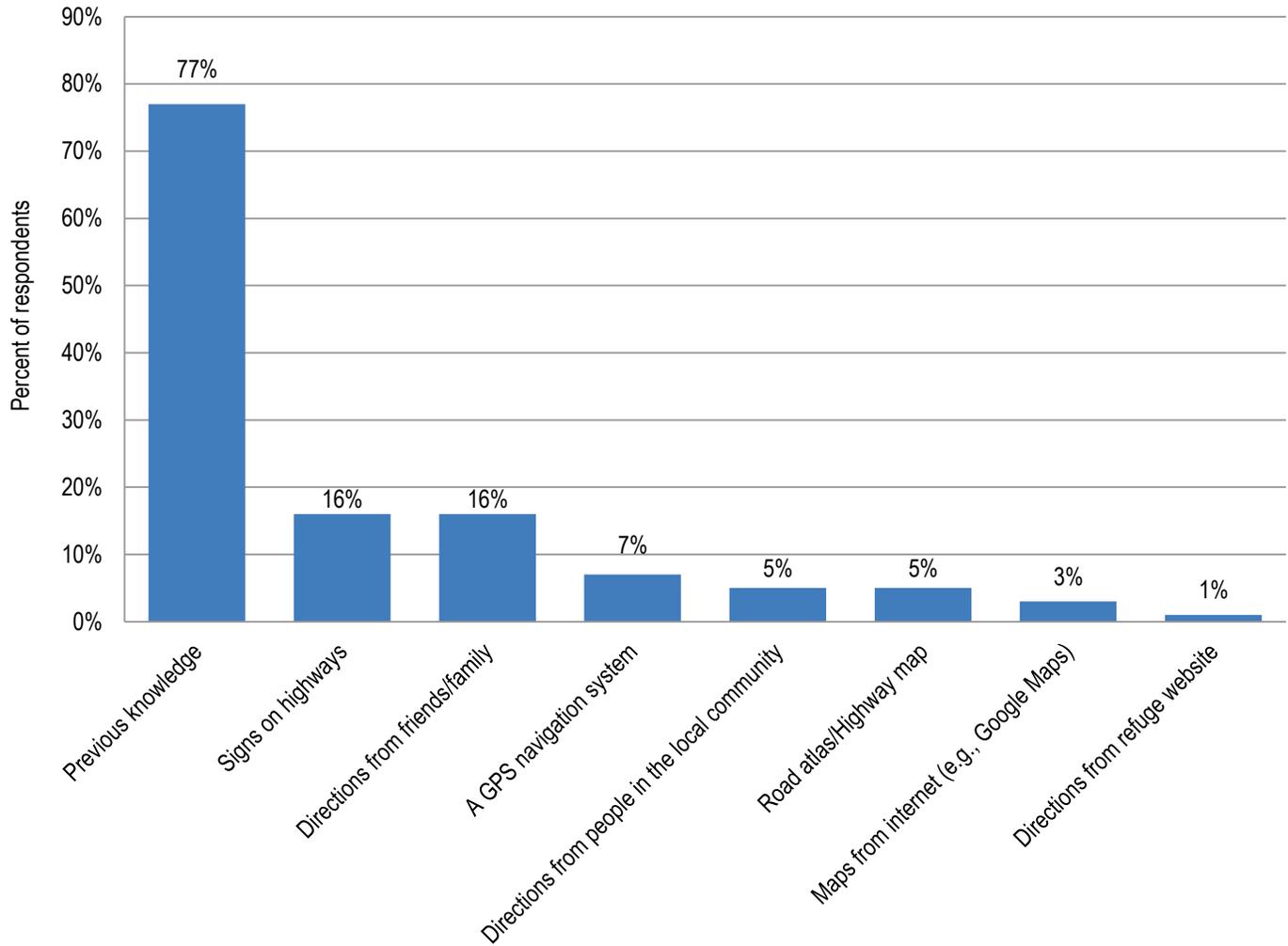
Some surveyed visitors (14%) had only been to the McGregor District once in the past 12 months, while most had been multiple times (86%). These repeat visitors went to the refuge an average of 23 times during that same 12-month period. Visitors used the refuge during only one season (29%), during multiple seasons (32%), and year-round (39%).

Most visitors first learned about the refuge from friends/relatives (64%), people in the local community (28%), or signs on the highway (13%; fig. 2). Key information sources used by visitors to find their way to this refuge include previous knowledge (77%), signs on highways (16%), or directions from friends/family (16%; fig. 3).

Most visitors (63%) lived in the local area (within 50 miles of the refuge), whereas 37% were nonlocal visitors. For most local visitors, the McGregor District was the primary purpose or sole destination of their trip (78%; table 3). For most nonlocal visitors, the refuge was also the primary purpose or sole destination of their trip (72%). Local visitors reported that they traveled an average of 19 miles to get to the refuge, while nonlocal visitors traveled an average of 152 miles. Figure 4 shows the residence of visitors travelling to the refuge. About 95% of visitors travelling to the McGregor District were from the state of Iowa or Wisconsin.



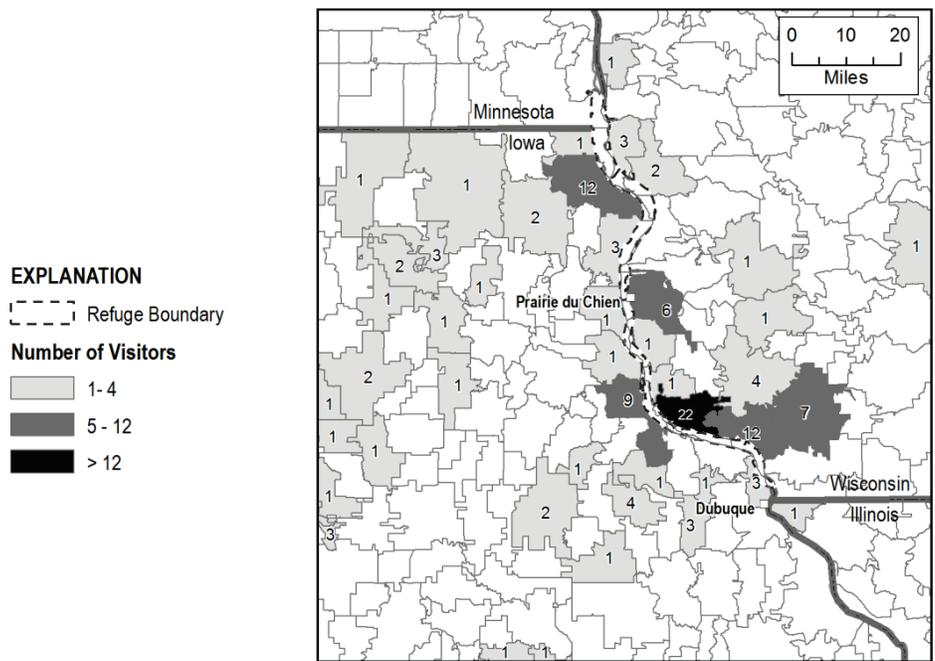
**Figure 2.** How visitors first learned or heard about the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR (n = 186).



**Figure 3.** Resources used by visitors to find their way to the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR during *this* visit (n = 191).

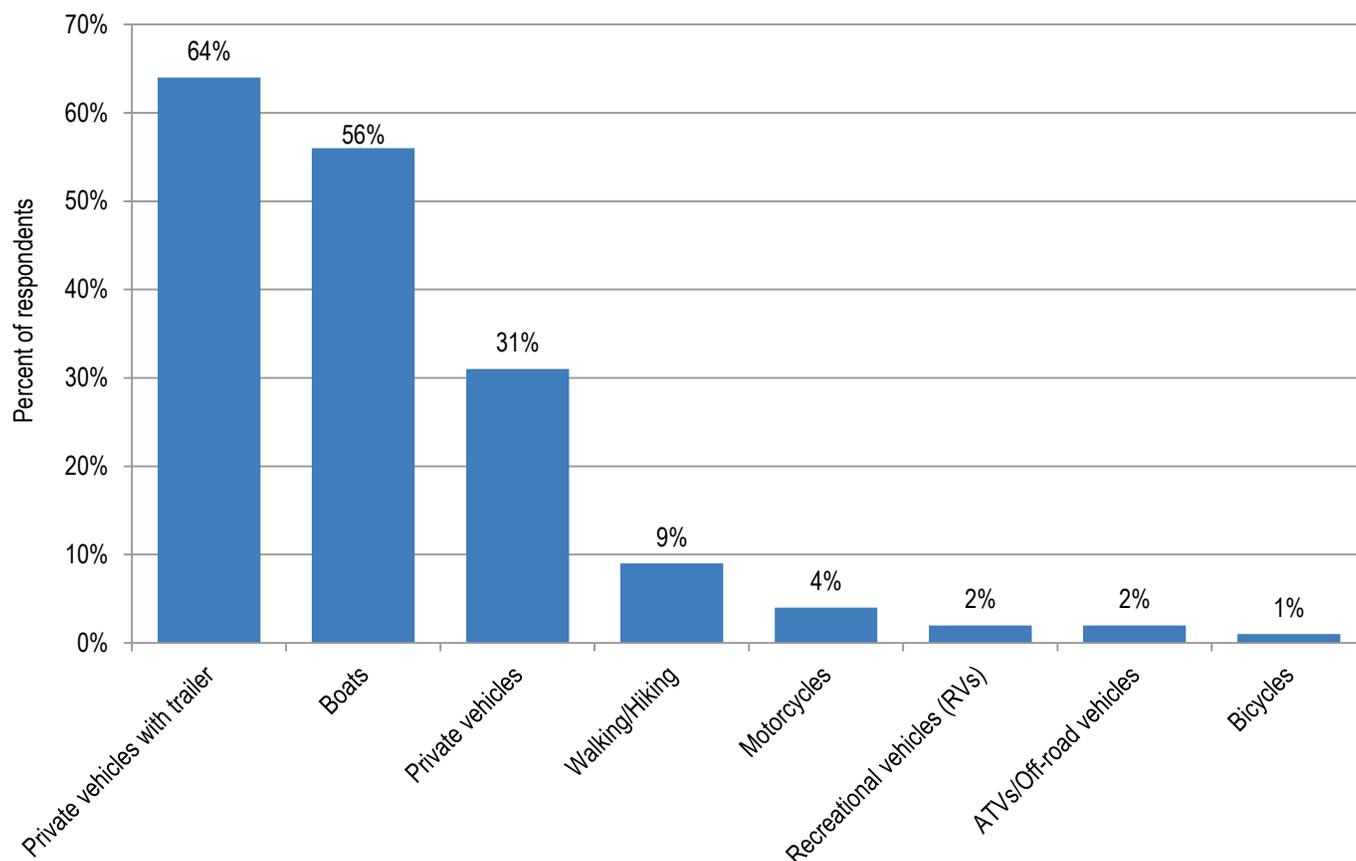
**Table 3.** Influence of the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR on visitors' decision to take *this* trip.

Visitors	Visiting this refuge was...		
	the primary reason for trip	one of many equally important reasons for trip	an incidental stop
Nonlocal	72%	24%	4%
Local	78%	13%	9%
Total	76%	17%	7%



**Figure 4.** Number of visitors travelling to the McGregor District , Upper Mississippi River NWFR by residence. Top map shows residence by state and bottom map shows residence by zip codes near the refuge (n = 192).

Surveyed visitors reported that they spent an average of 7 hours at the McGregor District during one day there (a day visit is assumed to be 8 hours). However, the most frequently reported length of visit during one day was actually 8 hours (63%). The key modes of transportation used by visitors to travel around the refuge were private vehicle with trailer (64%), boat (56%), and private vehicle (31%; fig. 5). Most visitors indicated they were part of a group on their visit to this refuge (65%), travelling primarily with family and friends (table 4).

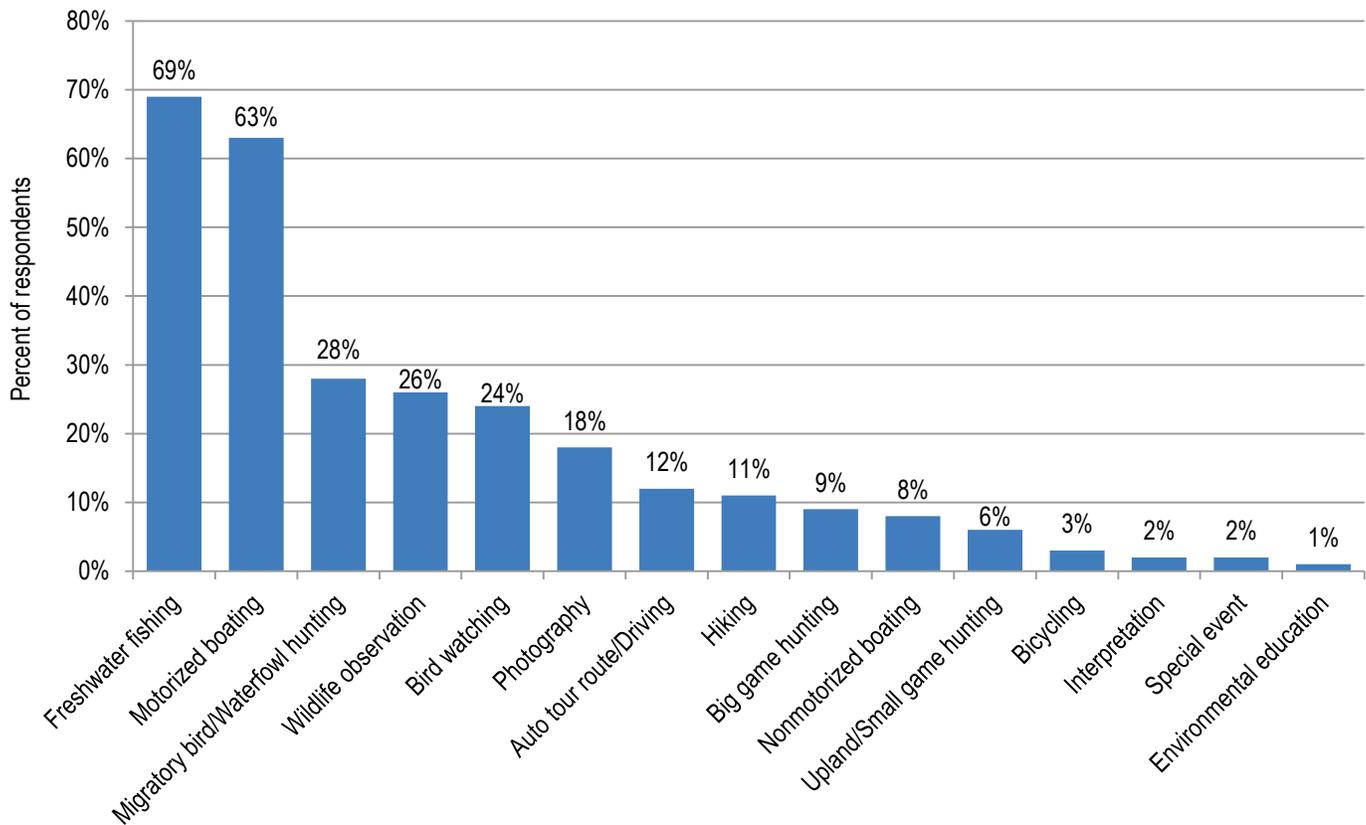


**Figure 5.** Modes of transportation used by visitors to the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR during *this* visit (n = 192).

**Table 4.** Type and size of groups visiting the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR (for those who indicated they were part of a group, n = 121).

Group type	Percent (of those traveling in a group)	Average group size		
		Number of adults	Number of children	Total group size
Family/Friends	97%	4	1	5
Commercial tour group	1%	4	0	4
Organized club/School group	0%	0	0	0
Other group type	2%	19	0	19

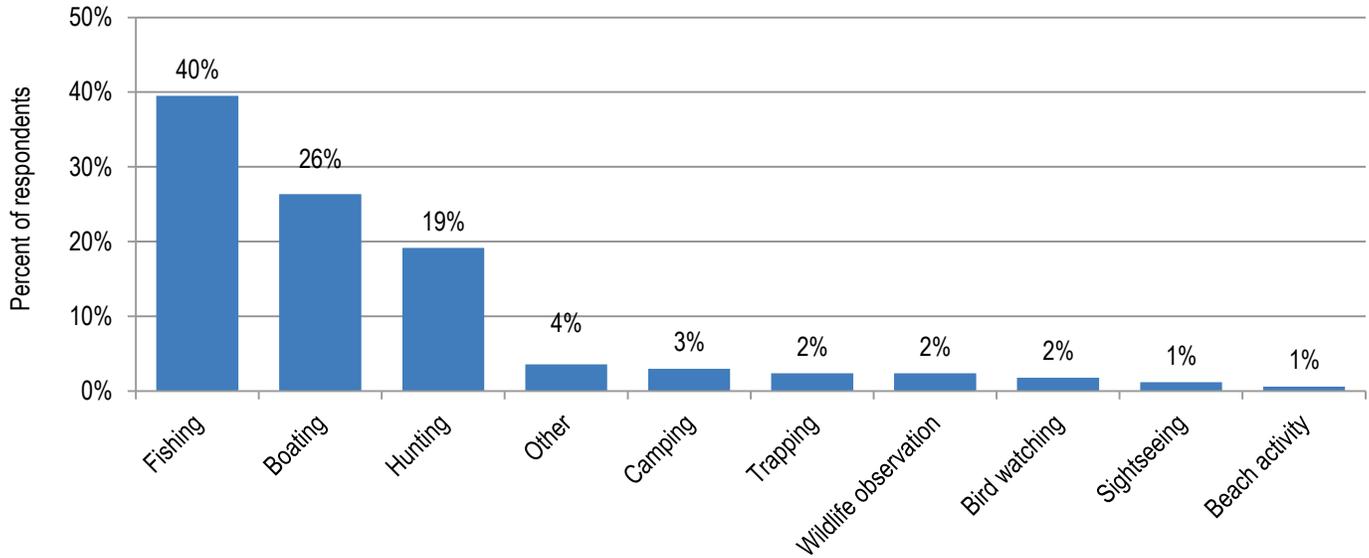
Surveyed visitors participated in a variety of refuge activities during the past 12 months (fig. 6); the top activities reported were freshwater fishing (69%), motorized boating (63%), migratory bird/waterfowl hunting (28%), and wildlife observation (26%). The primary reasons for their most recent visit included fishing (40%), boating (26%), and hunting (19%; fig. 7). The visitor center was used by 11% of visitors, mostly to stop to use the facilities (48%) and view the exhibits (38%; fig. 8).



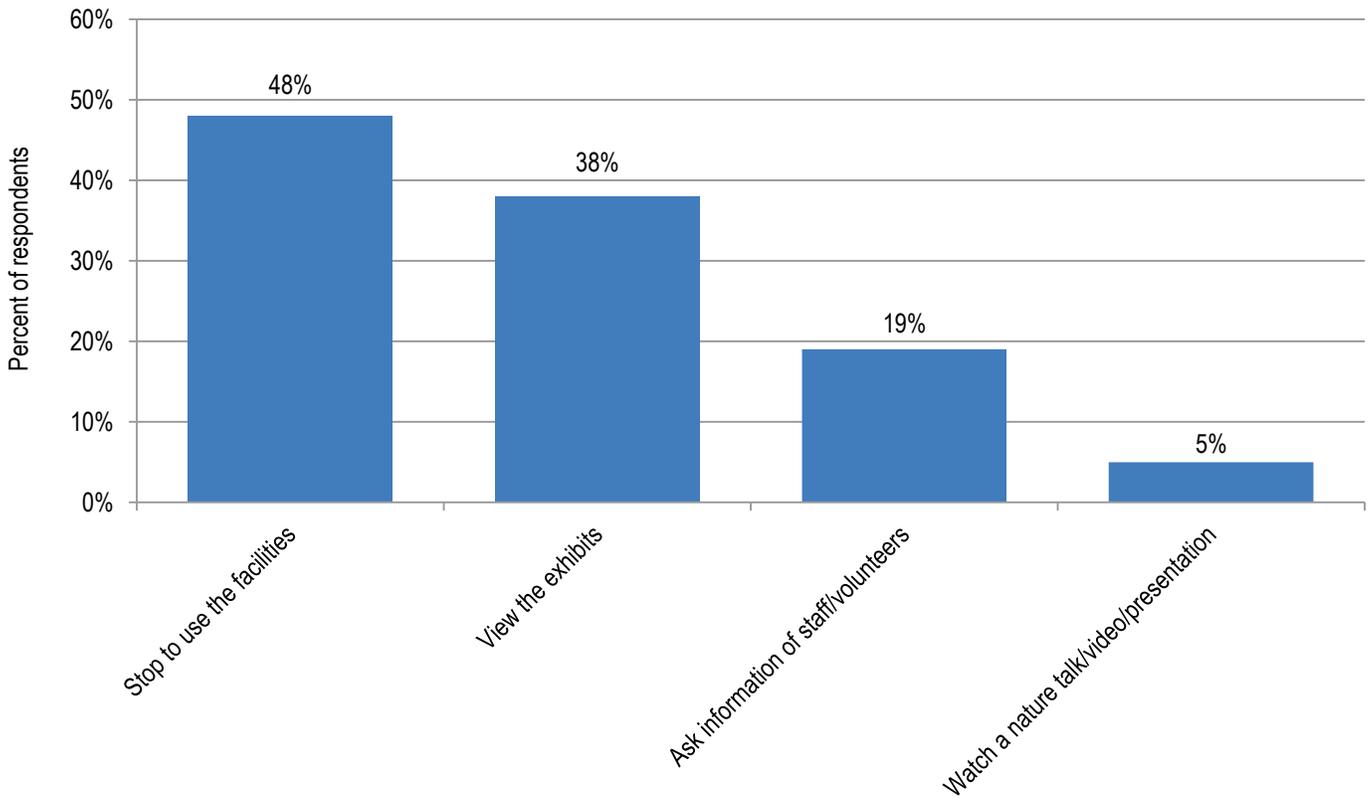
**Figure 6.** Activities in which visitors participated during the past 12 months at the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWR (n = 191). See Appendix B for a listing of “other” activities.

### Visitor Characteristics

All surveyed visitors to the McGregor District indicated that they were citizens or permanent residents of the United States. Only those visitors 18 years or older were sampled. Visitors were a mix of 82% male with an average age of 53 years and 18% female with an average age of 49 years. Visitors, on average, reported they had 14 years of formal education (college or technical school). The median level of income was \$50,000–\$74,999. See Appendix A for more demographic information. In comparison, the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation found that participants in wildlife watching and hunting on public land were 55% male and 45% female with an average age of 46 years, an average level of education of 14 years (associate degree or two years of college), and a median income of \$50,000–\$74,999 (Harris, 2011, personal communication). Compared to the U.S. population, these 2006 survey participants are more likely to be male, older, and have higher education and income levels (U.S. Department of Interior and U.S. Department of Commerce, 2007).



**Figure 7.** The primary activity in which visitors participated during *this* visit to the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR (n = 167). See Appendix B for a listing of “other” activities.



**Figure 8.** Use of the visitor center at the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR (for those visitors who indicated they used the visitor center, n = 21).

## Visitor Spending in Local Communities

*Tourists usually buy a wide range of goods and services while visiting an area. Major expenditure categories include lodging, food, supplies, and gasoline. Spending associated with refuge visitation can generate considerable economic benefits for the local communities near a refuge. For example, more than 34.8 million visits were made to national wildlife refuges in fiscal year 2006; these visits generated \$1.7 billion in sales, almost 27,000 jobs, and \$542.8 million in employment income in regional economies (Carver and Caudill, 2007). Information on the amount and types of visitor expenditures can illustrate the economic importance of refuge visitor activities to local communities. Visitor expenditure information also can be used to analyze the economic impact of proposed refuge management alternatives.*

A region (and its economy) is typically defined as all counties within 50 miles of a travel destination (Stynes, 2008). Visitors that live within the local 50-mile area of a refuge typically have different spending patterns than those that travel from longer distances. During the two sampling periods, 63% of surveyed visitors to the McGregor District indicated that they live within the local area. Nonlocal visitors (37%) stayed in the local area, on average, for 3 days. Table 5 shows summary statistics for local and nonlocal visitor expenditures in the local communities and at the refuge, with expenditures reported on a per person per day basis. During the two sampling periods, nonlocal visitors spent an average of \$65 per person per day and local visitors spent an average of \$58 per person per day in the local area. Several factors should be considered when estimating the economic importance of refuge visitor spending in the local communities. These include the amount of time spent at the refuge, influence of refuge on decision to take this trip, and the representativeness of primary activities of the sample of surveyed visitors compared to the general population. Controlling for these factors is beyond the scope of the summary statistics presented in this report. Detailed refuge-level visitor spending profiles which do consider these factors will be developed during the next phase of analysis.

**Table 5.** Total visitor expenditures in local communities and at the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR expressed in dollars per person per day.

Visitors	n <sup>1</sup>	Median	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Nonlocal	64	\$45	\$65	\$70	\$0	\$316
Local	99	\$20	\$58	\$83	\$0	\$365

<sup>1</sup>n = number of visitors who answered both locality *and* expenditure questions.

Note: For each respondent, reported expenditures were divided by the number of persons in their group that shared expenses in order to determine the spending per person per trip. This was then divided by the number of days spent in the local area to determine the spending per person per day for each respondent. For respondents who reported spending less than one full day, trip length was set equal to one day. These visitor spending estimates are appropriate for the sampling periods selected by refuge staff (see table 2 for sampling period dates and figure 7 for the primary visitor activities). They may not be representative of the total population of visitors to this refuge.

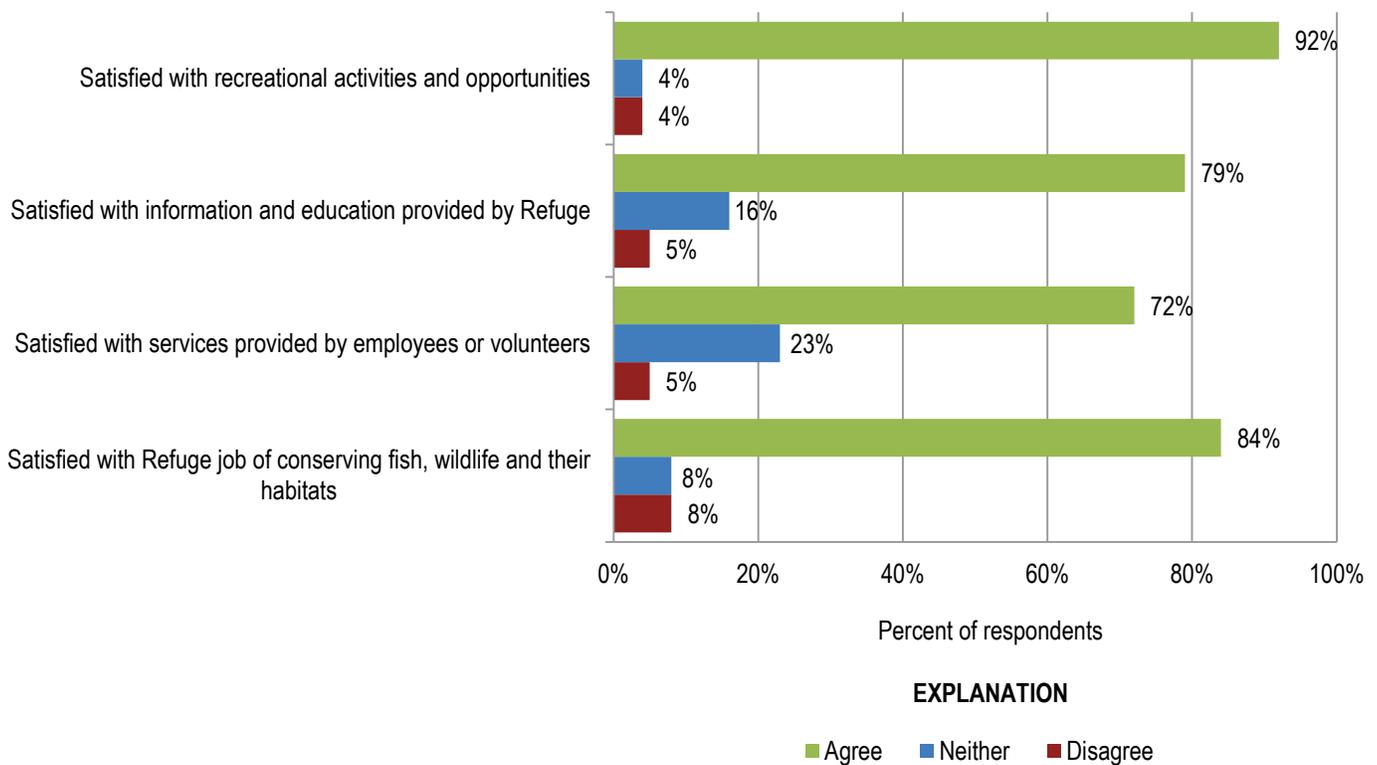
## Visitor Opinions about This Refuge

National wildlife refuges provide visitors with a variety of services, facilities, and wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities. Understanding visitors' perceptions of their refuge experience is a key component of the Refuge System mission as it pertains to providing high-quality wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities. Having a baseline understanding of visitor experience can inform management decisions to better balance visitors' expectations with the Refuge System mission. Recent studies in outdoor recreation have included an emphasis on declining participation in traditional activities such as hunting and an increasing need to connect the next generation to nature and wildlife. These factors highlight the importance of current refuge visitors as a key constituency in wildlife conservation. A better understanding is increasingly needed to better manage the visitor experience and to address the challenges of the future.

Surveyed visitors' overall satisfaction with the services, facilities, and recreational opportunities provided at the McGregor District were as follows (fig. 9):

- 92% were satisfied with the recreational activities and opportunities,
- 79% were satisfied with the information and education about the refuge and its resources,
- 72% were satisfied with the services provided by employees or volunteers, and
- 84% were satisfied with the refuge's job of conserving fish, wildlife and their habitats.

Although 18% of visitors indicated they paid a fee to enter the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR, the refuge does not have an entrance fee. It may be that these visitors were referencing a trapping tag/permit fee they may have paid.



**Figure 9.** Overall satisfaction with the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR during this visit (n ≥ 150).

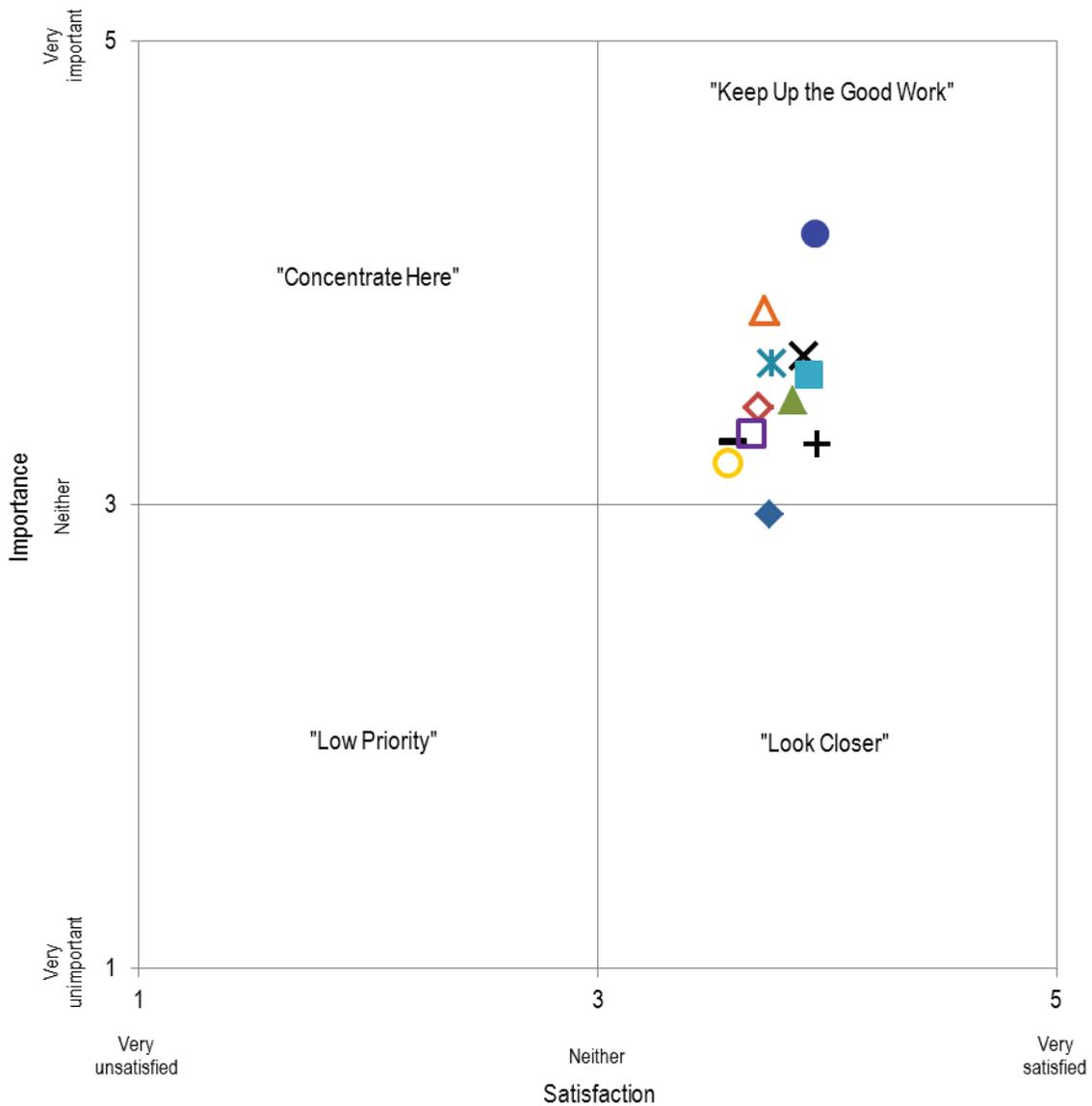
## Importance/Satisfaction Ratings

*Comparing the importance and satisfaction ratings for visitor services provided by refuges can help to identify how well the services are meeting visitor expectations. The importance-performance framework presented in this section is a tool that includes the importance of an attribute to visitors in relation to their satisfaction with that attribute. Drawn from marketing research, this tool has been applied to outdoor recreation and visitation settings (Martilla and James, 1977; Tarrant and Smith, 2002). Results for the attributes of interest are segmented into one of four quadrants (modified for this national study):*

- Keep Up the Good Work = high importance/high satisfaction;
- Concentrate Here = high importance/low satisfaction;
- Low Priority = low importance/low satisfaction; and
- Look Closer = low importance/high satisfaction.

*Graphically plotting visitors' importance and satisfaction ratings for different services, facilities, and recreational opportunities provides a simple and intuitive visualization of these survey measures. However, this tool is not without its drawbacks. One is the potential for variation among visitors regarding their expectations and levels of importance (Vaske et al., 1996; Bruyere et al., 2002; Wade and Eagles, 2003), and certain services or recreational opportunities may be more or less important for different segments of the visitor population. For example, hunters may place more importance on hunting opportunities and amenities such as blinds, while school group leaders may place more importance on educational/informational displays than would other visitors. This potential for highly varied importance ratings needs to be considered when viewing the average results of this analysis of visitors to the McGregor District. This consideration is especially important when reviewing the attributes that fall into the "Look Closer" quadrant. In some cases, these attributes may represent specialized recreational activities in which a small subset of visitors participate (for example, hunting, kayaking) or facilities and services that only some visitors experience (for example, exhibits about the refuge). For these visitors, the average importance of (and potentially the satisfaction with) the attribute may be much higher than it would be for the overall population of visitors.*

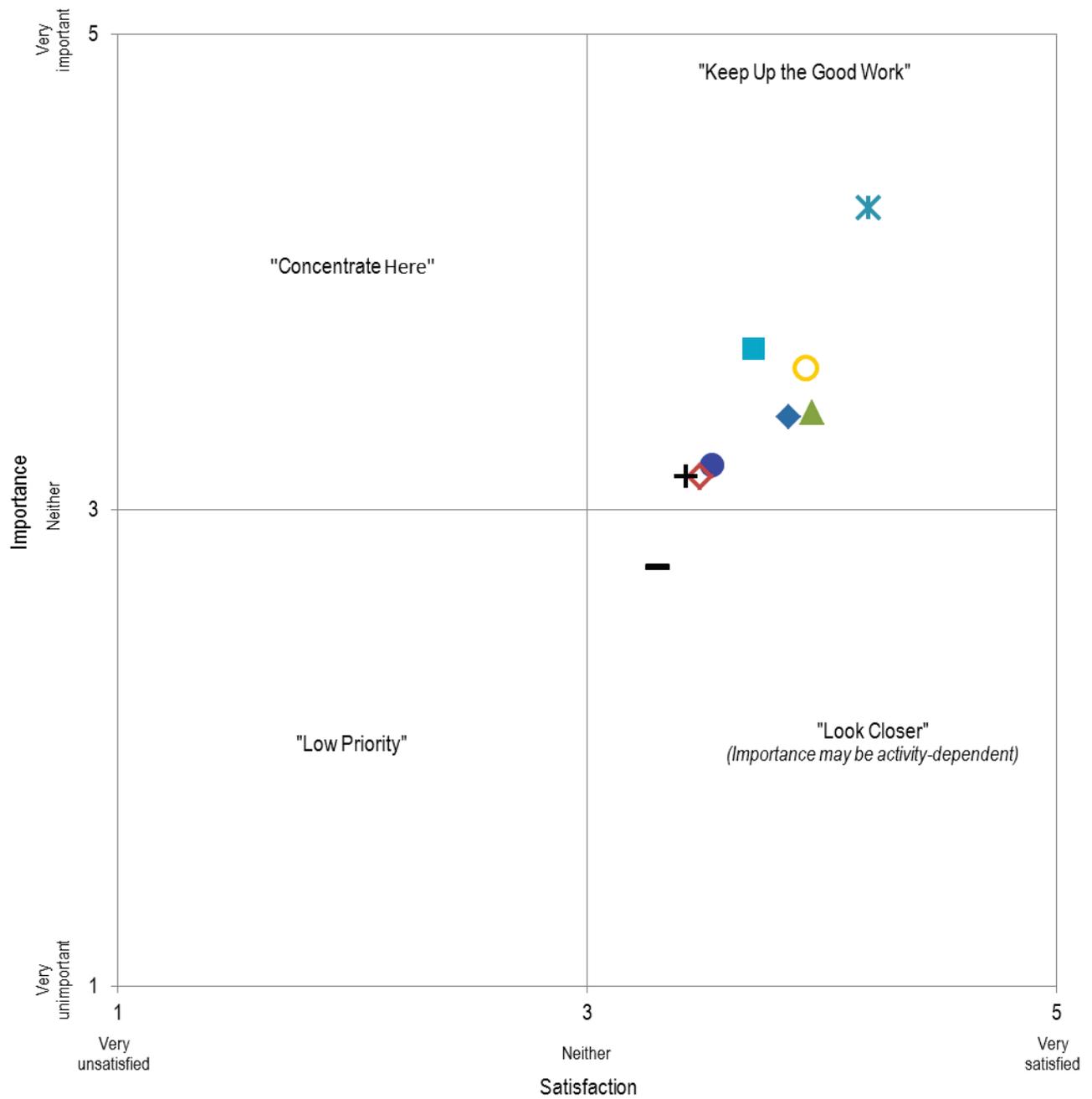
Figures 10-12 depict surveyed visitors' importance-satisfaction results for refuge services and facilities, recreational opportunities, and transportation-related features at the McGregor District, respectively. Nearly all refuge services and facilities fell in the "Keep Up the Good Work" quadrant *except* availability of employees/volunteers, which fell into the "Look Closer" quadrant (fig. 10). Nearly all refuge recreational opportunities fell in the "Keep Up the Good Work" quadrant *except* bicycling opportunities, which fell into the "Look Closer" quadrant (fig. 11). The average importance of bicycling opportunities in the "Look Closer" quadrant may be higher among visitors who have participated in this activity during the past 12 months; however, there were not enough individuals in the sample to evaluate the responses of such participants. All transportation-related features fell in the "Keep Up the Good Work" quadrant (fig. 12).



**EXPLANATION**

- ◆ Availability of employees/volunteers
- + Courteous/welcoming employees/volunteers
- ▲ Knowledgeable employees/volunteers
- ✕ Printed information about this Refuge
- ✕ Informational kiosks/displays about this Refuge
- Signs with rules/regulations
- ◊ Exhibits about this Refuge
- Environmental education programs/activities
- Visitor Center
- Convenient hours/days of operation
- ▲ Well-maintained restrooms
- ◻ Wildlife observation structures

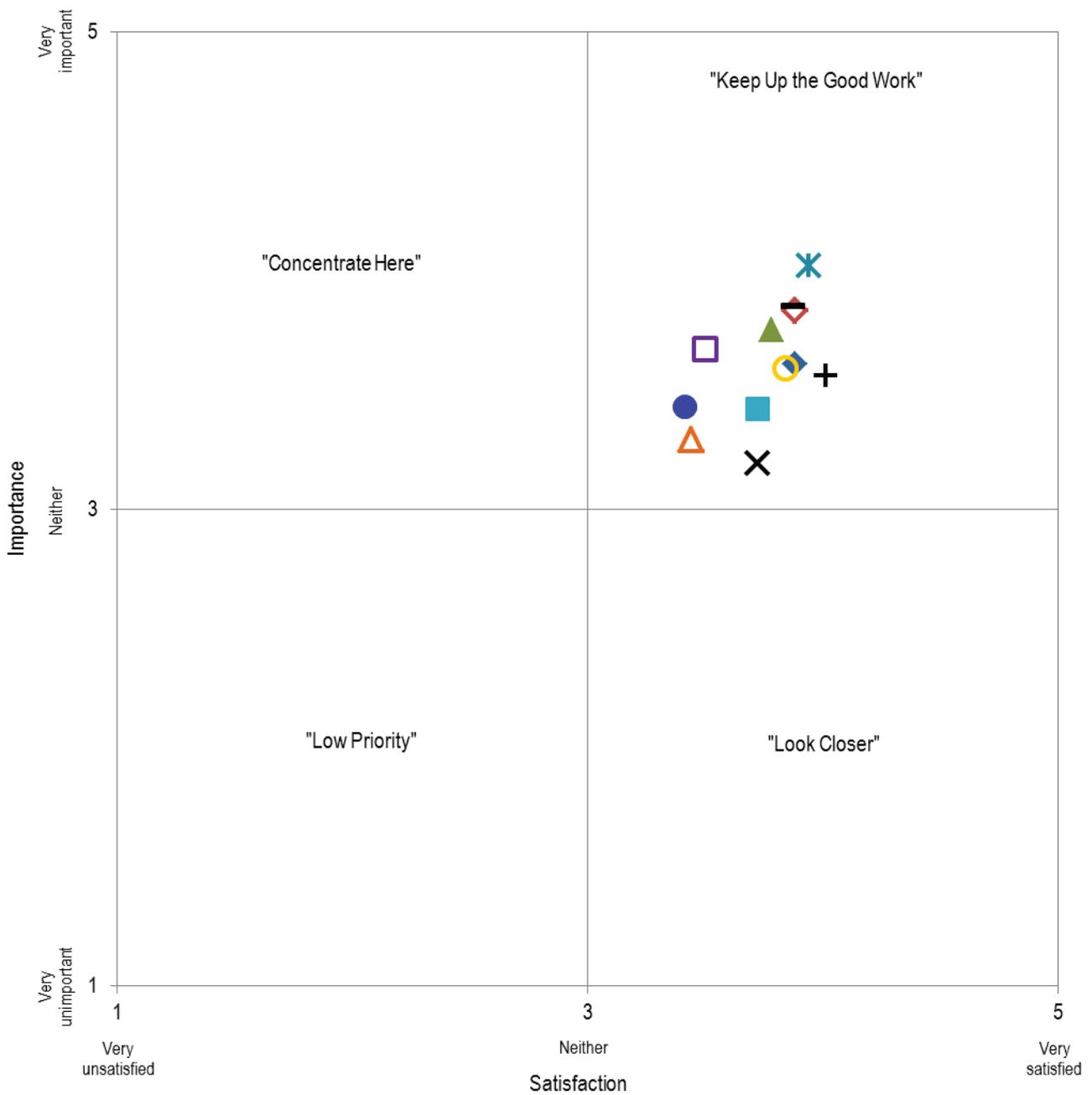
**Figure 10.** Importance-satisfaction ratings of services and facilities provided at the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR.



**EXPLANATION**

- ◆ Bird watching opportunities
- Hunting opportunities
- ◊ Kayak/Canoe opportunities
- Wildlife viewing opportunities
- ✕ Fishing opportunities
- Bicycling opportunities
- ▲ Photography opportunities
- Hiking opportunities
- ⊕ Volunteer opportunities

**Figure 11.** Importance-satisfaction ratings of recreational opportunities provided at the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR.



**EXPLANATION**

- ◆ Condition of roads
- + Condition of parking areas
- ▲ Condition of bridges
- ✕ Condition of trails/boardwalks
- ✕ Number of parking places
- Number of pullovers
- ◇ Safety of driving conditions
- Safety of Refuge entrances
- Directional signs on highways
- Directional signs on Refuge
- △ Directional signs on trails
- Disabled access

**Figure 12.** Importance-satisfaction ratings of transportation-related features at the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWFR.

## Visitor Opinions about National Wildlife Refuge System Topics

*One goal of this national visitor survey was to identify visitor trends across the Refuge System to more effectively manage refuges and provide visitor services. Two important issues to the Refuge System are transportation on refuges and communicating with visitors about climate change. The results to these questions will be most meaningful when they are evaluated in aggregate (data from all participating refuges together). However, basic results for the McGregor District are reported here.*

### Alternative Transportation and the National Wildlife Refuge System

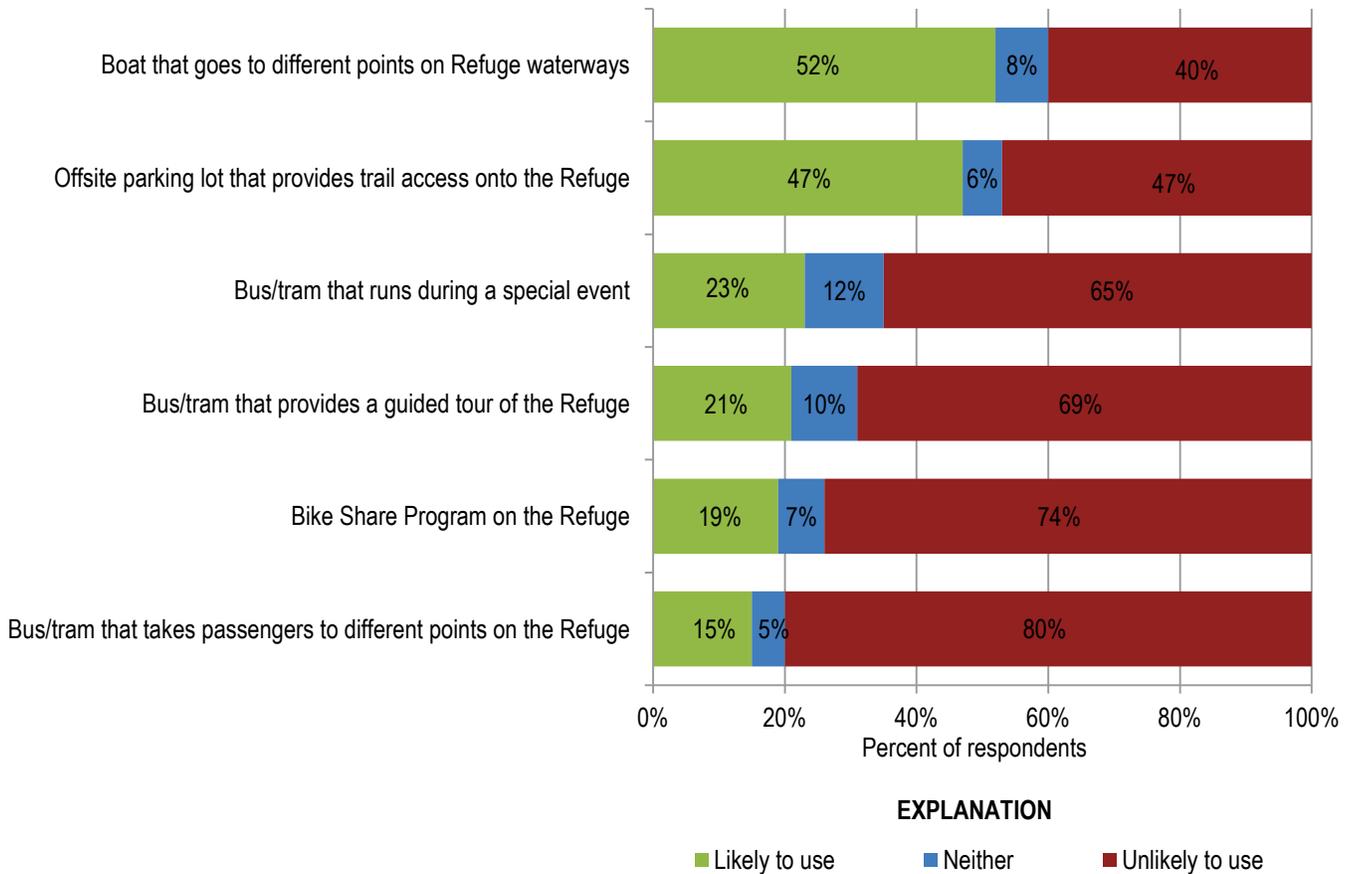
*Visitors use a variety of transportation means to access and enjoy national wildlife refuges. While many visitors arrive at the refuge in a private vehicle, alternatives such as buses, trams, watercraft, and bicycles are increasingly becoming a part of the visitor experience. Previous research has identified a growing need for transportation alternatives within the Refuge System (Krechmer et al., 2001); however, less is known about how visitors perceive and use these new transportation options. An understanding of visitors' likelihood of using certain alternative transportation options can help in future planning efforts. Visitors were asked their likelihood of using alternative transportation options at national wildlife refuges in the future.*

Of the six Refuge System-wide alternative transportation options listed on the survey, the majority of the McGregor District visitors who were surveyed were likely to use the following option at national wildlife refuges in the future (fig. 13):

- a boat that goes to different points on Refuge waterways.

The majority of visitors were *not* likely to use a bus/tram that takes passengers to different points on Refuge, a bike share program, a bus/tram that provides a guided tour, or a bus/tram that runs during a special event at national wildlife refuges in the future (fig. 13).

When asked about using alternative transportation at the McGregor District specifically, 29% of visitors indicated they were unsure whether it would enhance their experience; however, some visitors thought alternative transportation would enhance their experience (8%) and others thought it would not (63%).



**Figure 13.** Visitors’ likelihood of using alternative transportation options at national wildlife refuges in the future (n ≥ 183).

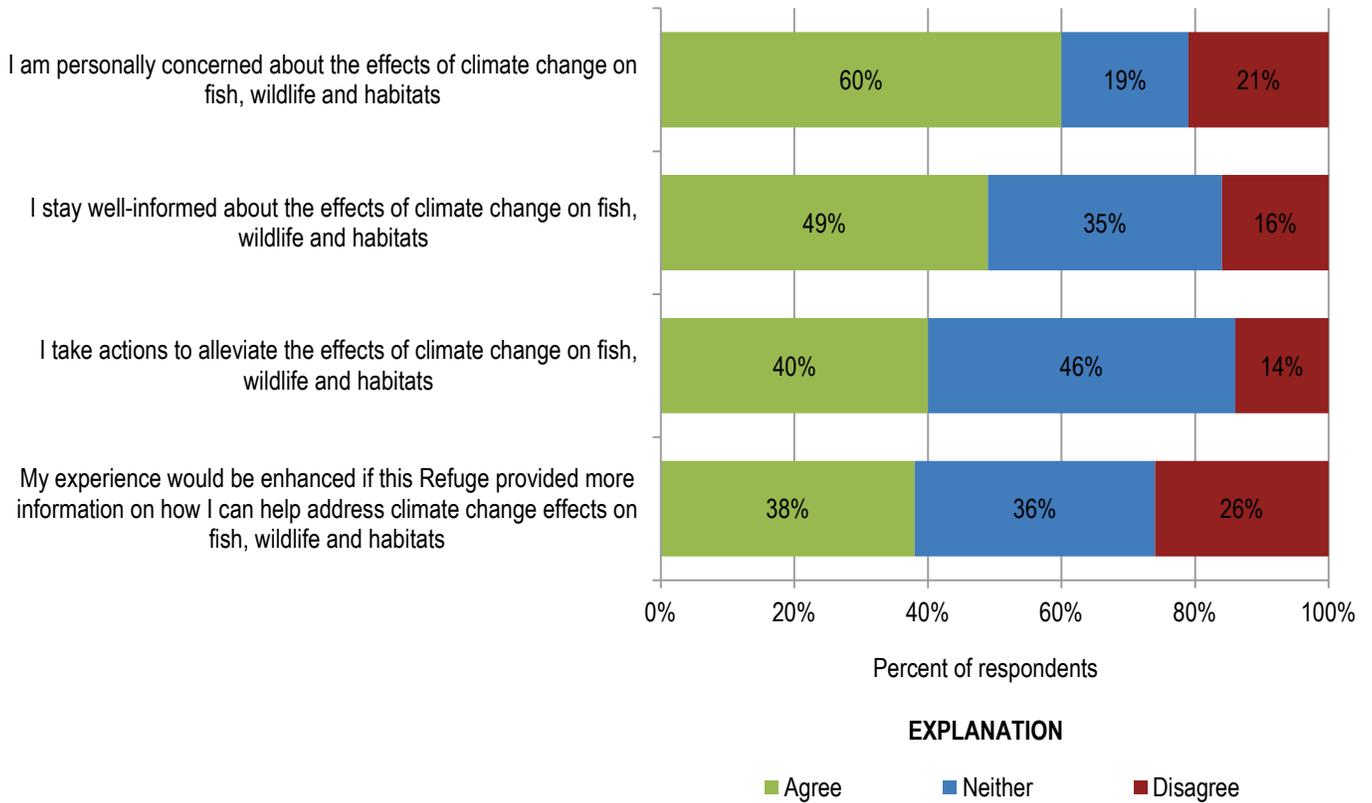
### Climate Change and the National Wildlife Refuge System

*Climate change represents a growing concern for the management of national wildlife refuges. The Service’s climate change strategy, titled “Rising to the Urgent Challenge,” establishes a basic framework for the agency to work within a larger conservation community to help ensure wildlife, plant, and habitat sustainability (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2010). To support the guiding principles of the strategy, refuges will be exploring options for more effective engagement with visitors on this topic. The national visitor survey collected information about visitors’ level of personal involvement in climate change related to fish, wildlife and their habitats and visitors’ beliefs regarding this topic. Items draw from the “Six Americas” framework for understanding public sentiment toward climate change (Leiserowitz, Maibach, and Roser-Renouf, 2008) and from literature on climate change message frames (for example, Nisbet, 2009). Such information provides a baseline for understanding visitor perceptions of climate change in the context of fish and wildlife conservation that can further inform related communication and outreach strategies.*

Factors that influence how individuals think about climate change include their basic beliefs, levels of involvement, policy preferences, and behaviors related to this topic. Results presented below provide baseline information on visitors’ levels of involvement with the topic of climate change related to fish,

wildlife and their habitats. The majority of surveyed visitors to the McGregor District agreed with the following statement (fig. 14):

- “I am personally concerned about the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and habitats.”



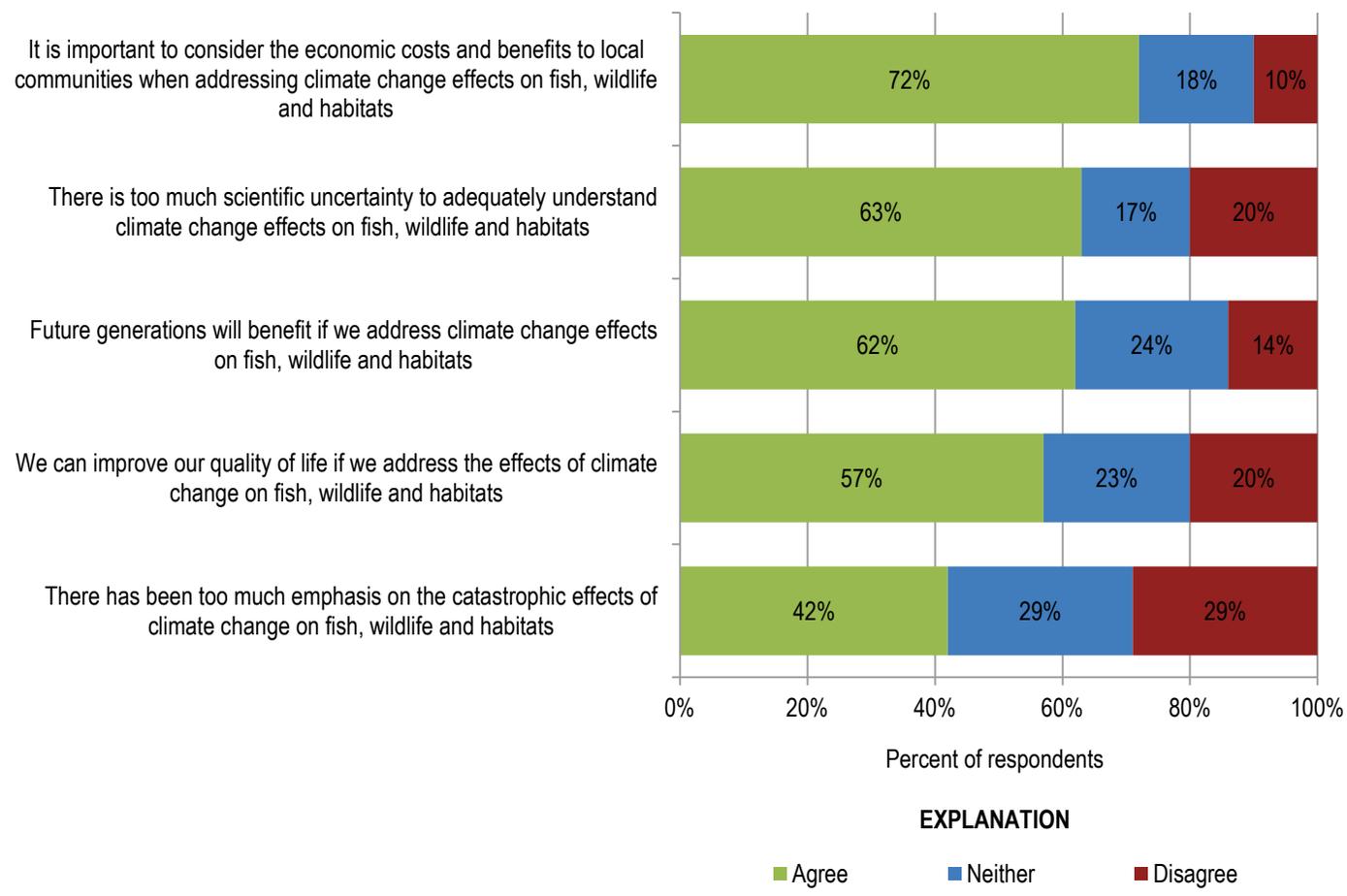
**Figure 14.** Visitors’ personal involvement with climate change related to fish, wildlife and their habitats (n ≥ 182).

These results are most useful when coupled with responses to belief statements about the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats, because such beliefs may be used to develop message frames (or ways to communicate) about climate change with a broad coalition of visitors. Framing science-based findings will not alter the overall message, but rather place the issue in a context in which different audience groupings can relate. The need to mitigate impacts of climate change on Refuges could be framed as a quality-of-life issue (for example, preserving the ability to enjoy fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitat) or an economic issue (for example, maintaining tourist revenues, supporting economic growth through new jobs/technology).

For the McGregor District, the majority of visitors believed the following regarding climate change related to fish, wildlife and their habitats (fig. 15):

- “It is important to consider the economic costs and benefits to local communities when addressing climate change effects;”
- “There is too much scientific uncertainty to adequately understand climate change effects;”
- “Future generations will benefit if we address climate change effects;” and
- “We can improve our quality of life if we address the effects of climate change.”

Such information suggests that certain beliefs resonate with a greater number of visitors than other beliefs do. This information is important to note because some visitors (38%) indicated that their experience would be enhanced if the McGregor District provided information about how they could help address the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife, and their habitats (fig. 14), and framing the information in a way that resonates most with visitors may result in a more engaged public who support strategies aimed at alleviating climate change pressures. Data will be analyzed further at the aggregate, or national level, to inform the development of a comprehensive communication strategy about climate change.



**Figure 15.** Visitors’ beliefs about the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats (n ≥ 180).

## Conclusion

These individual refuge results provide a summary of trip characteristics and experiences of a sample of visitors to the McGregor District during 2010–2011. These data can be used to inform decision-making efforts related to the refuge, such as Comprehensive Conservation Plan implementation, visitor services management, and transportation planning and management. For example, when modifying (either minimizing or enhancing) visitor facilities, services, or recreational opportunities, a solid understanding of visitors' trip and activity characteristics, their satisfaction with existing offerings, and opinions regarding refuge fees is helpful. This information can help to gauge demand for refuge opportunities and inform both implementation and communication strategies. Similarly, an awareness of visitors' satisfaction ratings with refuge offerings can help determine if any potential areas of concern need to be investigated further. As another example of the utility of these results, community relations may be improved or bolstered through an understanding of the value of the refuge to visitors, whether that value is attributed to an appreciation of the refuge's uniqueness, enjoyment of its recreational opportunities, or spending contributions of nonlocal visitors to the local economy. Such data about visitors and their experiences, in conjunction with an understanding of biophysical data on the refuge, can ensure that management decisions are consistent with the Refuge System mission while fostering a continued public interest in these special places.

Individual refuge results are available for downloading at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/ds/643/> as part of USGS Data Series 643 (Sexton and others, 2011). For additional information about this project, contact the USGS researchers at [national\\_visitor\\_survey@usgs.gov](mailto:national_visitor_survey@usgs.gov) or 970.226.9205.

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# National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Survey



**PLEASE READ THIS FIRST:**

Thank you for visiting a National Wildlife Refuge and for agreeing to participate in this study! We hope that you had an enjoyable experience. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey would like to learn more about National Wildlife Refuge visitors in order to improve the management of the area and enhance visitor opportunities.

**If you have recently visited more than one National Wildlife Refuge or made more than one visit to the same Refuge, please respond regarding only the Refuge and the visit when you were asked to participate in this survey. Any question that uses the phrase “this Refuge” refers to the Refuge and visit when you were contacted.**

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**SECTION 1. Your visit to this Refuge**

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1. Including your most recent visit, which activities have you participated in during the past 12 months at this Refuge?  
(Please mark **all that apply.**)

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9% Big game hunting                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 11% Hiking  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1% Environmental education (for example, classrooms or labs, tours) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6% Upland/Small-game hunting         | <input type="checkbox"/> 3% Bicycling  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 28% Migratory bird/Waterfowl hunting | <input type="checkbox"/> 12% Auto tour route/Driving                               | <input type="checkbox"/> 2% Special event ( <i>please specify</i> )<br><u>See Appendix B</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 26% Wildlife observation             | <input type="checkbox"/> 63% Motorized boating                                     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 24% Bird watching                    | <input type="checkbox"/> 8% Nonmotorized boating (including canoes/kayaks)         | <input type="checkbox"/> 9% Other ( <i>please specify</i> )<br><u>See Appendix B</u>         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 69% Freshwater fishing               |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0% Saltwater fishing                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2% Interpretation (for example, exhibits, kiosks, videos) | <input type="checkbox"/> 2% Other ( <i>please specify</i> )<br><u>See Appendix B</u>         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18% Photography                      |  |  |

2. Which of the activities above was the **primary** purpose of your visit to this Refuge?  
(Please write **only one activity** on the line.)   See report for categorized results; see Appendix B for miscellaneous responses

3. Did you go to a Visitor Center at this Refuge?

- 89% No
- 11% Yes → If yes, what did you do there? (Please mark **all that apply.**)
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10% Visit the gift shop or bookstore    | <input type="checkbox"/> 5% Watch a nature talk/video/presentation                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 38% View the exhibits                   | <input type="checkbox"/> 48% Stopped to use the facilities (for example, get water, use restroom) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19% Ask information of staff/volunteers | <input type="checkbox"/> 29% Other ( <i>please specify</i> ) <u>See Appendix B</u>                |

4. Which of the following best describes your visit to this Refuge? (Please mark **only one**.)

Nonlocal	Local	Total	
<input type="checkbox"/> 72%	<input type="checkbox"/> 78%	<input type="checkbox"/> 76%	It was the primary purpose or sole destination of my trip.
<input type="checkbox"/> 24%	<input type="checkbox"/> 13%	<input type="checkbox"/> 17%	It was one of many equally important reasons or destinations for my trip.
<input type="checkbox"/> 4%	<input type="checkbox"/> 9%	<input type="checkbox"/> 7%	It was just an incidental or spur-of-the-moment stop on a trip taken for other purposes or to other destinations.

5. Approximately how many **miles** did you travel to get to this Refuge?

**Nonlocal** 152 number of miles

**Local** 19 number of miles

6. How much time did you spend at this Refuge on your visit?

See Report for Results

7. Were you part of a group on your visit to this Refuge?

35% No (skip to question #9)

65% Yes → What **type of group** were you with on your visit? (Please mark **only one**.)

97% Family and/or friends

0% Organized club or school group

1% Commercial tour group

2% Other (please specify) See Appendix B

8. How many people were in your group, including yourself? (Please answer each category.)

4 number 18 years and over

1 number 17 years and under

9. How did you **first learn or hear about** this Refuge? (Please mark **all that apply**.)

64% Friends or relatives

2% Refuge website

13% Signs on highway

1% Other website (please specify) See Appendix B

3% Recreation club or organization

1% Television or radio

28% People in the local community

1% Newspaper or magazine

7% Refuge printed information (brochure, map)

2% Other (please specify) See Appendix B

10. During which seasons have you visited this Refuge in the last 12 months? (Please mark **all that apply**.)

61% Spring  
(March-May)

85% Summer  
(June-August)

80% Fall  
(September-November)

44% Winter  
(December-February)

11. How many times have you visited...

...this Refuge (including this visit) in the last 12 months? 20 number of visits

...other National Wildlife Refuges in the last 12 months? 6 number of visits

**SECTION 2. Transportation and access at this Refuge**

1. What **forms of transportation** did you use on your visit to this Refuge? (*Please mark **all that apply.***)

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31% Private vehicle without a trailer                             | <input type="checkbox"/> 0% Refuge shuttle bus or tram       | <input type="checkbox"/> 1% Bicycle                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 64% Private vehicle with a trailer<br>(for boat, camper or other) | <input type="checkbox"/> 4% Motorcycle                       | <input type="checkbox"/> 9% Walk/Hike                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0% Commercial tour bus  | <input type="checkbox"/> 2% ATV or off-road vehicle          | <input type="checkbox"/> 0% Other ( <i>please specify below</i> ) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2% Recreational vehicle (RV)                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> 56% Boat                            | <u>See Appendix B</u>   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> 0% Wheelchair or other mobility aid |   |

2. Which of the following did you use to find your way to this Refuge? (*Please mark **all that apply.***)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16% Signs on highways   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1% Directions from Refuge website                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7% A GPS navigation system  | <input type="checkbox"/> 5% Directions from people in community near this Refuge  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5% A road atlas or highway map                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> 16% Directions from friends or family                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3% Maps from the Internet (for example,<br>MapQuest or Google Maps) | <input type="checkbox"/> 77% Previous knowledge/I have been to this Refuge before |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1% Other ( <i>please specify</i> ) <u>See Appendix B</u> |

3. Below are different alternative transportation options that could be offered at some National Wildlife Refuges in the future. Considering the different Refuges you may have visited, please tell us **how likely you would be to use each transportation option.** (*Please circle one number for each statement.*)

How likely would you be to use...	Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
...a bus or tram that takes passengers to different points on the Refuge (such as the Visitor Center)?	<input type="checkbox"/> 70%	<input type="checkbox"/> 10%	<input type="checkbox"/> 5%	<input type="checkbox"/> 11%	<input type="checkbox"/> 4%
...a bike that was offered through a Bike Share Program for use while on the Refuge?	<input type="checkbox"/> 64%	<input type="checkbox"/> 10%	<input type="checkbox"/> 7%	<input type="checkbox"/> 16%	<input type="checkbox"/> 3%
...a bus or tram that provides a guided tour of the Refuge with information about the Refuge and its resources?	<input type="checkbox"/> 60%	<input type="checkbox"/> 9%	<input type="checkbox"/> 10%	<input type="checkbox"/> 16%	<input type="checkbox"/> 4%
...a boat that goes to different points on Refuge waterways?	<input type="checkbox"/> 32%	<input type="checkbox"/> 8%	<input type="checkbox"/> 9%	<input type="checkbox"/> 34%	<input type="checkbox"/> 18%
...a bus or tram that runs during a special event (such as an evening tour of wildlife or weekend festival)?	<input type="checkbox"/> 55%	<input type="checkbox"/> 10%	<input type="checkbox"/> 12%	<input type="checkbox"/> 19%	<input type="checkbox"/> 4%
...an offsite parking lot that provides trail access for walking/hiking onto the Refuge?	<input type="checkbox"/> 37%	<input type="checkbox"/> 10%	<input type="checkbox"/> 6%	<input type="checkbox"/> 34%	<input type="checkbox"/> 14%
...some other alternative transportation option? ( <i>please specify</i> ) <u>See Appendix B</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%	<input type="checkbox"/> 65%	<input type="checkbox"/> 35%

4. If alternative transportation were offered at *this* Refuge, would it enhance your experience?

- 8% Yes       63% No       29% Not Sure

5. For each of the following transportation-related features, first, **rate how important** each feature is to you when visiting this Refuge; then **rate how satisfied** you are with the way this Refuge is managing each feature. *If this Refuge does not offer a specific transportation-related feature, please rate how important it is to you and then circle NA "Not Applicable" under the Satisfaction column.*

Importance						Satisfaction					
Circle one for each item.						Circle one for each item.					
Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Neither	Somewhat Important	Very Important		Very Unsatisfied	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Neither	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
13%	11%	7%	40%	29%	Surface conditions of roads	5%	12%	7%	42%	34%	NA
11%	15%	8%	40%	26%	Surface conditions of parking areas	3%	13%	7%	35%	43%	NA
11%	5%	19%	27%	38%	Condition of bridges	5%	7%	23%	33%	31%	NA
18%	5%	31%	33%	13%	Condition of trails and boardwalks	3%	3%	41%	27%	27%	NA
9%	5%	7%	34%	45%	Number of places for parking	3%	12%	11%	35%	39%	NA
11%	8%	26%	34%	20%	Number of places to pull over along Refuge roads	6%	13%	29%	37%	15%	NA
8%	4%	20%	32%	36%	Safety of driving conditions on Refuge roads	4%	7%	16%	44%	29%	NA
8%	5%	18%	35%	35%	Safety of Refuge road entrances/exits	3%	9%	17%	42%	30%	NA
11%	8%	16%	41%	24%	Signs on highways directing you to the Refuge	2%	9%	19%	42%	28%	NA
12%	6%	27%	36%	19%	Signs directing you around the Refuge roads	1%	6%	35%	36%	22%	NA
16%	7%	29%	29%	19%	Signs directing you on trails	3%	9%	45%	29%	15%	NA
12%	4%	21%	30%	33%	Access for people with physical disabilities or who have difficulty walking	7%	9%	33%	29%	22%	NA

6. If you have any comments about transportation-related items at this Refuge, please write them on the lines below.

See Appendix B

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**SECTION 3. Your expenses related to your Refuge visit**

1. Do you live in the local area (within approximately 50 miles of this Refuge)?

63% Yes

37% No → How much time did you spend **in local communities** on this trip?

  4   number of hours      OR        5   number of days

2. Please record the amount that **you and other members of your group** with whom you shared expenses (for example, other family members, traveling companions) spent in the local 50-mile area during **your most recent visit** to this Refuge. *(Please enter the amount spent to the nearest dollar in each category below. Enter 0 (zero) if you did not spend any money in a particular category.)*

Categories	<u>Amount Spent in Local Communities &amp; at this Refuge</u> <i>(within 50 miles of this Refuge)</i>
Motel, bed & breakfast, cabin, etc.	
Camping	
Restaurants & bars	
Groceries	
Gasoline and oil	
Local transportation (bus, shuttle, rental car, etc.)	
Refuge entrance fee	
Recreation guide fees (hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, etc.)	
Equipment rental (canoe, bicycle, kayak, etc.)	
Sporting good purchases	
Souvenirs/clothing and other retail	
Other <i>(please specify)</i> _____	

See Report for Results

3. Including yourself, how many people in your group shared these trip expenses?

  3   number of people sharing expenses

4. As you know, some of the costs of travel such as gasoline, hotels, and airline tickets often increase. If your total trip costs were to increase, what is the maximum extra amount you would pay and still visit this Refuge? (*Please circle the highest dollar amount.*)

\$0	\$10	\$20	\$35	\$50	\$75	\$100	\$125	\$150	\$200	\$250
7%	13%	18%	8%	22%	3%	12%	2%	4%	4%	6%

5. If you or a member of your group paid a fee or used a pass to enter this Refuge, how appropriate was the fee? (*Please mark **only one.***)

0%	Far too low	0%	Too low	88%	About right	6%	Too high	6%	Far too high	82%	Did not pay a fee (skip to Section 4)
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6. Please indicate whether you disagree or agree with the following statement. (*Please mark **only one.***)

**The value of the recreation opportunities and services I experienced at this Refuge was at least equal to the fee I paid.**

6%	Strongly disagree	6%	Disagree	12%	Neither agree or disagree	58%	Agree	18%	Strongly agree
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#### SECTION 4. Your experience at this Refuge

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1. Considering your visit to this Refuge, please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each statement. (*Please circle one number for each statement.*)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Overall, I am satisfied with the recreational activities and opportunities provided by this Refuge.	1%	3%	4%	55%	37%	NA
Overall, I am satisfied with the information and education provided by this Refuge about its resources.	1%	5%	16%	55%	23%	NA
Overall, I am satisfied with the services provided by employees or volunteers at this Refuge.	0%	5%	23%	44%	28%	NA
This Refuge does a good job of conserving fish, wildlife and their habitats.	3%	5%	8%	48%	35%	NA

2. For each of the following services, facilities, and activities, first, **rate how important** each item is to you when visiting this Refuge; then, **rate how satisfied** you are with the way this Refuge is managing each item.  
*If this Refuge does not offer a specific service, facility, or activity, please rate how important it is to you and then circle NA “Not Applicable” under the Satisfaction column.*

Importance					Refuge Services, Facilities, and Activities	Satisfaction					
Circle one for each item.						Circle one for each item.					
Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Neither	Somewhat Important	Very Important		Very Unsatisfied	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Neither	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
20%	14%	28%	25%	12%	Availability of employees or volunteers	2%	4%	40%	26%	28%	NA
17%	5%	34%	21%	22%	Courteous and welcoming employees or volunteers	0%	1%	41%	19%	39%	NA
14%	6%	29%	24%	27%	Knowledgeable employees or volunteers	0%	1%	40%	31%	28%	NA
9%	8%	18%	40%	25%	Printed information about this Refuge and its resources (for example, maps and brochures)	0%	10%	17%	44%	28%	NA
8%	7%	20%	42%	22%	Informational kiosks/displays about this Refuge and its resources	2%	9%	27%	38%	25%	NA
4%	4%	9%	36%	47%	Signs with rules/regulations for this Refuge	3%	10%	9%	43%	34%	NA
12%	6%	28%	35%	19%	Exhibits about this Refuge and its resources	0%	10%	32%	37%	22%	NA
12%	6%	39%	30%	13%	Environmental education programs or activities	0%	4%	48%	32%	16%	NA
16%	7%	34%	29%	14%	Visitor Center	1%	5%	49%	25%	20%	NA
11%	3%	30%	30%	26%	Convenient hours and days of operation	1%	2%	36%	25%	35%	NA
11%	5%	12%	34%	38%	Well-maintained restrooms	5%	10%	17%	44%	24%	NA
14%	9%	27%	35%	16%	Wildlife observation structures (decks, blinds)	2%	8%	34%	34%	22%	NA
11%	8%	28%	38%	16%	Bird-watching opportunities	1%	2%	36%	31%	30%	NA
8%	7%	23%	39%	23%	Opportunities to observe wildlife other than birds	1%	4%	28%	34%	32%	NA
10%	9%	26%	37%	17%	Opportunities to photograph wildlife and scenery	2%	2%	29%	35%	33%	NA
13%	6%	23%	17%	41%	Hunting opportunities	5%	5%	29%	33%	27%	NA
7%	1%	8%	26%	58%	Fishing opportunities	1%	8%	9%	34%	48%	NA
14%	7%	35%	33%	11%	Trail hiking opportunities	2%	5%	48%	29%	16%	NA
16%	9%	33%	28%	14%	Water trail opportunities for canoeing or kayaking	3%	5%	49%	25%	18%	NA
24%	9%	42%	18%	7%	Bicycling opportunities	3%	5%	64%	14%	14%	NA
12%	10%	41%	26%	11%	Volunteer opportunities	3%	3%	57%	22%	14%	NA

3. If you have any comments about the services, facilities, and activities at this Refuge, please write them on the lines below.

See Appendix B

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**SECTION 5. Your opinions regarding National Wildlife Refuges and the resources they conserve**

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1. Before you were contacted to participate in this survey, were you aware that National Wildlife Refuges...

...are managed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

93%

Yes

7%

No

...have the primary mission of conserving, managing, and restoring fish, wildlife, plants and their habitat?

92%

Yes

8%

No

2. Compared to other public lands you have visited, do you think Refuges provide a unique recreation experience?

81%

Yes

19%

No

3. If you answered "Yes" to Question 2, please briefly describe what makes Refuges unique. \_\_\_\_\_

See Appendix B

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4. There has been a lot of talk about climate change recently. We would like to know what you think about climate change as it relates to fish, wildlife and their habitats. To what extent do you disagree or agree with each statement below? (Please circle one number for each statement.)

Statements about climate change	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am personally concerned about the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats.	9%	11%	19%	45%	16%
We can improve our quality of life if we address the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats.	8%	11%	23%	40%	16%
There is too much scientific uncertainty to adequately understand how climate change will impact fish, wildlife and their habitats.	3%	16%	17%	45%	18%
I stay well-informed about the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats.	3%	13%	36%	40%	8%
It is important to consider the economic costs and benefits to local communities when addressing the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats.	3%	7%	18%	56%	16%
I take actions to alleviate the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats.	5%	9%	46%	33%	7%
There has been too much emphasis on the catastrophic effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats.	7%	23%	29%	32%	9%
Future generations will benefit if we address the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats.	5%	9%	24%	45%	16%
My experience at this Refuge would be enhanced if this Refuge provided more information about how I can help address the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats.	8%	18%	36%	31%	7%

## SECTION 6. A Little about You

**\*\* Please tell us a little bit about yourself. Your answers to these questions will help further characterize visitors to National Wildlife Refuges. Answers are not linked to any individual taking this survey. \*\***

1. Are you a citizen or permanent resident of the United States?

100% Yes  0% No → If not, what is your home country? See Figure 4 in Report

2. Are you?  82% Male  18% Female

3. In what year were you born? 1959 (YYYY)

4. What is your highest year of formal schooling? *(Please circle one number.)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
(elementary)					(junior high or middle school)			(high school)				(college or technical school)				(graduate or professional school)			
					1%			41%				44%				14%			

5. What ethnicity do you consider yourself?  2% Hispanic or Latino  98% Not Hispanic or Latino

6. From what racial origin(s) do you consider yourself? *(Please mark **all that apply.**)*

- 2% American Indian or Alaska Native  0% Black or African American  99% White  
 0% Asian  0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

7. How many members of your household contribute to paying the household expenses? 2 persons

8. Including these members, what was your approximate household income from all sources (before taxes) last year?

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1% Less than \$10,000   | <input type="checkbox"/> 21% \$35,000 - \$49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12% \$100,000 - \$149,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4% \$10,000 - \$24,999  | <input type="checkbox"/> 24% \$50,000 - \$74,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3% \$150,000 - \$199,999  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10% \$25,000 - \$34,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 22% \$75,000 - \$99,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3% \$200,000 or more      |

9. How many outdoor recreation trips did you take in the last 12 months (for activities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, etc.)?

27 number of trips

**Thank you for completing the survey.**

**There is space on the next page for any additional comments you may have regarding your visit to this Refuge.**

See Appendix B for Comments

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## Appendix B: Visitor Comments to Open-Ended Survey Questions for the McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

### Survey Section 1

Question 1: "Including your most recent visit, which activities have you participated in during the past 12 months at this Refuge?"

Special Event	Frequency
Bass fishing tournaments	1
DNR clean up	1
Pool 9 cleanup	1
Total	3

Other Activity	Frequency
Camping	3
Camping on sandbar	1
Relaxing on sandbar	1
Relaxing with friends and family	1
Social Picnic/swim/hangout	1
Swimming/Family fun	1
Swimming/Skiing	1
Trapping	4
Trapping fur bearing animals	1
Trapping furbearers	1
Visiting	1
Went through lock and dam 11	1
Working. I own and operate a hunting guide service on the refuge.	1
Total	18

2 <sup>nd</sup> Other Activity	Frequency
Camping	2
Swimming	1
Total	3

Question 2: “Which of the activities above was the primary purpose of your visit to this Refuge?”  
*Primary activities are categorized in the main report; the table below lists the “other” miscellaneous primary activities listed by survey respondents.*

Other Miscellaneous Primary Activities	Frequency
Family enjoyment	1
Family time, Swimming	1
Other	1
Pick up Golden Pass	1
Relaxing on sandbar	1
Sight seeing	1
Taking kids to the beach	1
Visiting	1
Working	1
Total	9

Question 3: “Did you go to a Visitor Center at this Refuge?”; If Yes, “What did you do there?”

Other Visitor Center Activity	Frequency
Get trapping license	1
Obtain special use permit	2
Pamphlets	1
Pick up Golden Pass	1
Took 3 pamphlets from kiosk	1
Total	6

Question 7: “Were you part of a group on your visit to this Refuge?; If Yes, “What type of group were you with on your visit?”

Other Group Type	Frequency
Bass world sports tournament association	1
Guiding hunters	1
Waterfowl guide	1
Total	3

Question 9: “How did you first learn or hear about this Refuge?”

Other Website	Frequency
Waterfowl guide website	1

Other Ways Heard about This Refuge	Frequency
Beach	1
DNR	1
Hunting guide	2
Total	4

## Survey Section 2

Question 1: "What forms of transportation did you use on your visit to this Refuge?"

Not Applicable

Question 2: "Which of the following did you use to find your way to this Refuge?"

Other Ways Found This Refuge	Frequency
Beach	1

Question 5: "Below are different alternative transportation options that could be offered at some National Wildlife Refuges in the future...please tell us how likely you would be to use each transportation option."

Other Transportation Option Likely to Use	Frequency
Air boat-hover craft	1
At snowmobile boat	1
ATV	2
ATVs - Everyone I know goes to Wisconsin for ATVing and they are from Iowa. Iowa needs to get better trails and keep some of that money in Iowa.	1
Biking	1
Boat	1
Cable car	1
Canoe	1
Car	1
Helicopter tower	1
Hike	1
Horse & sleigh	1
My own boat	1
Off the road sign	1
Own boat	1
River boat cruise	1
Snowmobile trail	1
Truck and boat water	1

Visitor boat ride for many people	1
Total	20

Question 6: "If you have any comments about transportation-related items at this Refuge, please write them on the lines below."

Comments on Transportation-related Items at This Refuge (n = 27)

ATV should be able to be used to get to ice fishing spots.

Boat ramps are nice in the area. It is sometimes difficult to use the boat ramp that I want because the lack of parking for trucks and boat trailers.

Entering refuge, having to drive under railroad bridges is bad, narrow, constrains during winter.

Fix the roadway under the RR bridge.

I live in Guttenberg, Iowa.

I took my boat to the beach. There are no trails and/or roads.

It is an island on the river - none of this applies

It was a lot easier to launch a boat before they redid the launch but those people don't have to use it. So we deal with it.

It was an island on the Mississippi that we could access only by boat.

Making channels for recreational boats would be nice.

More pull offs along the highway.

Mud Lake Road needs to be re-surfaced and widened.

Need more boat docking available in this area.

Not very familiar with this topic, most of my mobility is done with my fishing boat or duck boat in the Lansing area and New Albin area.

Please fix the entrance under the railroad bridge to Lynn Hollow Landing.

Post no parking areas better.

Railroad bridge is too narrow. Road in and out narrow too.

Road under rail tracks needs improvement for winter use.

Spent most of time kayaking on river. Route undefined, thus somewhat difficult maneuvering to return to start without leaving water to cross island.

The gravel road and boat ramp are maintained by the Potosi Wisconsin Township. A better job could be done.

The more natural the environment, the better.

---

The refuge that I use is an island so it is only accessible by boat.

The road and boat ramp need better maintenance and the parking area. Better payroll of the parking area too, my truck was broken into there.

To get to the boat landing you need to go under the railroad bridge which is too narrow for larger fishing boats. We scraped the cement walls about every other time we put our boat in this landing. Also in the winter there is a spring that runs through the bridge and then it ices up and vehicles drive through which makes huge ice ruts and the people get stuck under the bridge (huge problem). Last winter I helped pull out 3 different vehicles and one vehicle had damaged his suspension to his steering.

Very well kept, clean, neat, efficient.

We were on a boat/island. No roads or parking involved.

Wetland islands on the Mississippi so road/parking is not an issue.

---

## Survey Section 4

Question 6: "If you have any comments about services, facilities, and activities at this Refuge, please write them on the lines below."

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### Comments on Services, Facilities, and Activities at This Refuge (n = 40)

Again, it's an island and does not have buildings or staff.

Bertom Lake was dredged many years ago. It wasn't done correctly and fishing has not been the same since. Whatever they did at Stoddard when they dredged and laid out the lake/rocked around the silt to keep it from washing away, planting new vegetation was a huge success. My friends and I travel there at least 5 times a winter to fish there and this has drawn people from several hours away to fish there. That is what it was like at Bertom Lake many years ago.

Dredging too much in pool 9 takes beach away then it makes it very crowded.

Hovie Island is utilized by River of Lakes & Jays Landing residents. Hovie Island is significantly in need of more sand dumped there to accommodate and safely place boaters closer to their residence.

I am concerned about the backwater areas silting in and becoming non-navigable. This is a serious threat to future hunting and fishing opportunities.

I am impressed with the Friends of pool 9 and their efforts. They have made the refuge a great place to boat and camp.

I just use it as a place to waterfowl hunt in the fall and fish in the spring and summer.

I think the dam lock #10 put the water up and down too much.

I took my family swimming at the beach 2 miles from my house I don't expect services, facilities or activities.

I was raised less than 5 minutes from the refuge and I saw how it looked 70 years ago and how it has changed.

I would like to speak with someone that mattered in the area of trapping regulations and seasons. I think I have good input regarding this issue. (Name and phone number stated)

I'm thinking all refuges need restrooms at the entrances!!!!

---

It's all kept very neat and the billboards are good with information about birds and fish.

It's one of the worst boat ramps on the river and is not big enough for the amount of people that use it.

Loved spending time kayaking - however it is very challenging especially against the current.

My biggest complaint is the drastic water level fluctuations this last year. I know there has been some unusual weather events but I'm not sure that is always the case. It seems sometimes that commercial interests trump everything else. I love the river but it can be frustrating at times.

Need more boat unloading ramps.

Needs a boat dock.

Open more of the refuge to waterfowl hunters.

Our family enjoys boating, skiing, tubing on the Mississippi.

Overall I'm very happy with the refuge except the hunting opportunities. Recent rules have limited the areas we can hunt and it's affecting our success. The islands of pool 9 are very fragile and eroding at an alarming rate yet no protection of these islands is being done. It seems that most if not all rebuilding is done inside the closed areas. I believe more effort needs to be done outside these closed areas since most of that money is coming from those that are hunting and buying licenses and stamps!

Pump more sand on the existing island sand bars to be used by campers, boaters, swimmers, etc.

Suggest alternative fish size limits to promote better spawning i.e. leave the largest fish, harvest juvenile fish. Example: bluegill allowed 6"-8", leave 8" or larger, keep 1 for trophy.

Surface under railroad bridge need to be addressed.

Take your own survey- there is nothing here but a boat ramp and parking.

Thank you

The boat ramp area was more user friendly before they redid it, now you can only launch one boat at a time.

The city is taking away fishing spots and opportunities for boaters and a new marina.

The only problem I have is with the underage drinking over holidays that no one seems to care about.

The port-a-potty on boat landing was not my choice of bathroom. Parking lot was in bad condition with leaf and brush piles.

The refuge is a beautiful and wild place. The remote areas are better left alone to be wild and untouched.

The restroom is a filthy joke and most of the time unusable.

The wildlife Biologist was extremely helpful and friendly.

This is a beach we go to every year while in the area. Its condition depends a lot on water level and river traffic. It gets cleaner every year.

This is just a boat landing in rural Iowa. It seems to be no big deal to anybody at all.

Too much water closed for duck hunting. Ducks go to refuge, don't come out.

Very few services at this boat launch however it does have portable toilets, and piers make it nice. Also, large parking area is great.

---

Very pleased with the US Fish/ Wildlife Service working with the friends of pool 9 to enhance the sandbars, fire pits, and bathrooms. This partnership should be mirrored by many others.

Village Creek boat ramp near Lansing needs restroom facilities and hard services parking lot and keep weeds mowed.

While a new bike trail was made along the highway I do not feel safe using it as I have small children riding in a trailer... There is nothing between me and crazy drivers whether they are looking at the Mississippi or leaf watching...

---

## Survey Section 5

Question 3: "If you answered "Yes" to Question 2, please briefly describe what makes Refuges unique."

---

### Comments on What Makes Refuges Unique? (n = 111)

A good duck hunting area.

A larger body of water than you can experience elsewhere. A moving and changing river.

A lot of rules for wildlife on hunting and fishing in protected areas.

A very large variety of outdoor recreational activities

Access to ramps and boat landings. Facilities provided for necessities.

All of the things you can do with it.

Ample wildlife, hunting opportunities, unique waterfowl (canvasback ducks).

Availability of wildlife, seclusion, and the great outdoors. The kids learned to play without electronics.

Boating and fishing very good

Boating on the Mississippi provides the ability to travel north to the beginning; we are just lacking with the number of communities along the river who do not have docking available to safely travel to.

Closer to nature and natural habitats.

Combination of fishing, waterfowl, wildlife proliferations at different locations.

Completely on your own.

Concrete boat ramp and sidewalk.

Conserve nature while still making it available to the public.

Due to the flow of the river its level is constantly changing.

Each place is a little different and wildlife can just act in their normal way without being on total alert.

Easily accessible from City of Cassville's boat landing for fishing and photography.

Easy access to the beautiful outdoors, lots of recreational opportunities.

Education for young children.

---

Excellent fishing and waterfowl hunting.

For keeping the water clean so animals can live and fish too, and all the birds, ducks, and geese.

Friends, family, river swimming, fishing, enjoying the time together. We try to go every Sunday. "Church on the River"

Good fishing.

Great hunting and fishing (better than home).

Hunting, fishing.

I am 82 years old and want to view the Mississippi River often and can easily do just that.

I could tell measures had been taken to support and protect wildlife.

I like the fact that it remains "wild" and not developed. There are no houses on the shore or excess structures etc.

I like their fishing programs.

It has a good wetland habitat to view waterfowl and has some pretty good fishing.

It has an abundance of birds, wildlife, vast amounts of fishing. I believe it has the most bald eagle nests on the Mississippi River.

It is a beautiful, free beach on the Mississippi River! These beaches are a well-kept secret for those who don't live in the area.

It is a great place to visit and take family and friends. Great nature experience.

It is a great staging area for wildlife. Way bigger than our local marshes.

It makes the time spent with nature worthwhile.

It was well maintained and clean. Good beaches.

It's a beautiful country and has different things to do or see.

It's a place to learn about the river and its habitat.

It's back to the basics and I think children should be taught to respect these Refuges.

It's clean and accessible to the river for fishing. It would be nice to have lights and a toilet in the place all year.

It's the Mississippi River! It's extremely unique!

It's good to have a place to go that is public.

Just open your eyes, ears, and senses to it. It has vast appeal to anyone energetic enough to enjoy it.

Just the beauty of it all.

Keep everything natural. People need to witness the area as it is, not adapted to human comforts.

Large, wild, open, free.

Location for boat access to the Mississippi.

Many times the location of the refuge. For example, this refuge is located on the Mississippi River.

Mississippi River Valley opportunities, views.

More welcoming to visitors than other government locations.

Nice because we always host foreign exchange students so they can see this.

Nice docks to fish from.

Not being built up.

One can observe the Mississippi and all it has to offer in beauty, nature and wildlife when you boat on it.

Openness to public.

Other state (public lands) don't let motor vehicles on the land or water but the people of the state own the land.

Please do not restrict access during the duck season.

Preserves wildlife in natural environment, educates future generations of importance of wildlife.

Pristine and beautiful and well maintained nature experiences.

Refuges keep the land and the waterways natural for people to enjoy. They also provide habitat for animals and plants to thrive in. I just enjoy the natural beauty without all kinds of development.

Refuges take the time to take care of the land in a way that best fits the animals.

So natural, yet conveniences are close by if needed. It's the only vacation we take and the only ones we need. We have 7 children and they all love it. It's a once in a lifetime experience that words cannot do justice to.

The ability to create as close to "untouched" land by man only to view and not destroy with development.

The ability to provide opportunities to be in nature and close to wildlife.

The abundance of different wildlife and the challenges of the hunt. Multiple opportunities to do other activities for the whole family.

The amount of canvasback ducks.

The amount of ducks (canvasbacks). It was outstanding to see these wonderful birds. First time I hunted on the Mississippi River it was great, but I did not like the looks of the industrial power plants in the river. It ruins the backdrop of this great river and bluffs.

The attraction of wildlife, such as migratory birds.

The concentration of canvasbacks ducks is the greatest in the US.

The corp. of engineer facilities are very good and well located. The river is a precious resource and needs protection and access for boating and public.

The fact that there ARE wildlife and fish there.

The fishing and hunting.

The fishing opportunities.

The habitat and the land and water management.

The hunting and fishing would be better if they learned to control the water levels better.

The large amount of area.

The Mississippi River backwaters are beautiful and need to be preserved and maintained.

The nice cement curb and boat loading ramps and parking lot.

The number of canvasbacks that use the river.

The number of different activities.

The refuge can be used year round in all seasons. It is like a wilderness in the middle of everyday life. At times very peaceful and quiet. Sheer beauty with various outdoor activities available.

The refuge is clean and wildlife is abundant. Our family enjoys the refuge many months throughout the year.

The refuges I've visited are usually laid out for better observation and education than public land, often times holding endangered species.

The river changes day by day making fishing a challenge.

The river itself and the vast amount of waters to fish.

The trails on land to the water area! I enjoy every time I am in the area.

The undisturbed vegetation and wildlife.

The unique wildlife that is there for viewing and public control of the interaction of each. Usually good restrooms and handicap accessible. Shelters, basic access.

The wide-open spaces and the variety of fish and wildlife that inhabit the refuge.

There is no other place like it on the Mississippi.

They are trying to preserve the natural habitat of plants and animals unlike other public areas which seem to be destroying it.

They are very well maintained (my experience - locally).

They are what they are, you get what you see. Some public lands have been made into parks. I'd rather not see restrooms or picnic tables in the refuge.

They preserve habitats and keep the environment in its natural state while allowing recreational use.

They provide an opportunity to get outside and see and enjoy nature.

They provide learning experiences for kids and adults.

This one is close to home and gives me a chance to fish and my wife likes to walk on the dike.

This refuge and boat ramp is very well maintained. I like the 3 ramp boat ramp and large parking lot.

This refuge caters primarily to waterfowl hunting.

This refuge is more of an adventure usually seeing something different each time you are out as far as wildlife.

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Variety of wildlife and opportunities to fish and hunt.

We were able to see eagles and other birds while on the river in our boat and actually had an eagle swoop down and catch a fish in the wake of our boat. That was unique! You people do a great job! Keep up the good work.

Well maintained.

When I first visited in '88 the bluffs and winding river overwhelmed. We boat, canoe, swim, hike, shop, fish, dine all while having one of the great natural wonders of the world around us. P.S. The eagle population has grown but I believe too early to remove the life and there should be protection from cougars by the state. The normal food chain includes these predators as cougars who have been shot on site. There has to be a balance.

When I visit most of the refuges it gives me a sense of freedom and peaceful beauty that too many people take for granted.

Wildlife and plant diversity; the ability to get in your boat and get up close and personal.

Wildlife.

You can fish and watch the birds and rats all the time.

You cannot use manmade products to construct duck blinds, I wish the state would adopt this law. I've just seen too many habitats and wetlands that look like look like a dump with the amount of junk left behind. It's sad our political machine doesn't do anything. THANK YOU FOR CARING.

You see a lot of different wildlife.

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#### Additional Comments (n = 42)

Again we would like you to forward onto whomever would be able to generate a sand buildup for the Hovie Island beach area. This would keep motor boats operating closer to their origin and would be greatly appreciated as "Friends of Hovie Island".

Allow pet dogs with owners on refuge islands please.

Always the work that the DNR and the US FWS along with the Friends of Pool 9 have made our trips much more enjoyable.

Chiggers suck!

Do whatever you have to do to keep fishing and hunting opportunities open and abundant to the public.

Good job, keep up the good work!

I belong to the Friends of Pool 9 on this refuge. We are very active on projects on this refuge.

I have been visiting this refuge for almost 40 years. I believe it is in its best condition ever. The wildlife is more abundant and the water is cleaner and more clear.

I think nature takes its course. I think there is not global warming, everything goes in a circle.

I wish that when regulations change it would be better posted.

I would be pleased to talk to anyone about what we can do about improving Bertom Lake. We still do catch fish here but it is nothing like it used to be. If we could do things and changes to make it what it once was it would be a major improvement to the economy of this very depressed area. I believe if we made the correct

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changes, this area could become one of the best fishing spots in the state of Wisconsin. I have some ideas on what could be done and I would do volunteer work to help and I'm sure many of my friends and fellow fishermen would join in to help also. Thank you! Thank you for giving me the opportunity to discuss this and give my opinion (Signature)

I would like to have better maps of the back waters with names of the different sloughs and GPS coordinates for them. Anything that could improve waterfowl hunting and provide more deer hunting opportunities. Better availability and more publications of the different areas of the refuge with more info on the uniqueness of individual areas of the refuge and how the whole comes together.

I would like to see guided hunts not allowed on weekends or in any national refuge.

I would like to see more of the closed areas open to waterfowl hunting. Officer Stavroplus was very professional when I talked to him on different occasions. He was also helpful with answering questions, open to thinking about hunting spots, regulations, etc.. There were too many hunters on the refuge. I think you need more officers working with the WDNR, especially around the island near Lynxville.

I would like to speak with a federal employee who has influence concerning the trapping season. I would also volunteer my services if a need arose for volunteers for any Mississippi refuge function. Thanks. (Name and phone number stated)

I'd like to see some draw-down activities on pool 11. I'd like a clear(ed) channel from Potosi point to the main channel. At Lynn Hollow, it's difficult to make the turn under the railroad bridge; I think the road could be straightened out to facilitate boat trailers better there. Thanks for asking!

It is important to conserve, but only if the reserves can be used by responsible people.

It was a good experience. I wish I just had more time in my schedule to do it more! P.S. Restrooms at all refuges would make life a lot easier - ha ha!!

It was very clean.

It would be nice if something could be done about traveling under the railroad tracks to enter the refuge. (Name stated)

Just what are we trying to decide with the survey? The beach we hang out at is a strange place to be asking about facilities and roads/trails.

Manage the refuge but be reasonable and use common sense. DO NOT charge a fee to use the refuge.

Mountains and oceans are awesome. The Midwest had its own abundance of beauty and is more varied-hills, plains, rivers, lakes, different seasons. It's fun to go see the mountains or an ocean but I'd still prefer to live in the Midwest!

National Wildlife Refuges are an extremely important resource.

Need to do something about the people that take their limit or so of fish day after day after day so when we take the younger kids there are still some fish left.

Needs some money spent on signage and restrooms. Parking on the roads and enforcement of the laws are sad. This refuge has a high density of boaters and hunters plus recreational boating. More dockage is needed.

One of the best kept boat ramps found along the Mississippi River.

Open beaver trapping with state and learn to stop flooding our pool 10 constantly. Thank you.

Open up the refuge by the dam on pool 9 since you already have the entire open water as a refuge. There is enough food in the open water for the ducks.

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Pay more attention to the Mississippi River between Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois before it is all destroyed. Please do this. Thank you.

Public land or wildlife refuge land is owned by the public. So any and all should be accessed to the public 24 hours and 7 days a week.

The beach and river are very, very clean at Lansing where I have been going for the last 4 years. It's nice that you can go swimming and not have to worry about your kid cutting themselves on glass and clams. No threat of leaches from the sandy bottom where other places are muddy mosquito infested water. For several years we went to Prairie Du Chien area, thinking the whole river was this way. (Boy we were wrong). We discovered Lansing Pool 9 and it's been a joyful experience ever since. Volunteers of Pool 9 have their stuff together and is greatly appreciated. It's a great way to get the community together and they should be very proud of their success at Pool 9. Hats off, thank you, a local patron.

The river and its fish and wildlife are dying fast. Having lived on the river all my life I can see how it has lost most of the backwaters that are so important to wildlife. The panfish in our area (pool 10 Guttenberg IA) are about gone. The ducks don't migrate down the river and stop, nothing to eat. The pelicans are whipping out a lot of panfish, there are hundreds of them during open water. There are so many beavers on the river they are cutting all the trees. Once the trees are gone the islands wash away also. As a trapper I know how hard work trapping is. Us old river rats are disappearing and the new generations aren't into it.

The Upper Mississippi is a great place for fishing and boating. We are fortunate to live less than 5 miles away and just take it for granted.

The warden was very nice and informative, I believe this is part individual and training. Job well done!

Walleye fishing needs to be better.

Warden Nick rocks!

We have land on the Mississippi so we use it often, however it is not my primary residence.

Why did you close the lower Mississippi River basin in November for waterfowl. It is stupid and I disagree with it. We have nowhere to hunt. The ducks are not going to sit down there anyways!!

With all the closed areas for ducks I will not be going this year. Need to open up some areas for hunting.

Your climate change questions are political. The climate in this world is forever changing and fish and animals adapt. We can all help to keep the earth clean, but we have no control over the climate.

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