

b. This rule will not create inconsistencies with other agencies' actions. This action pertains solely to the management of the System. The fishing and hunting activities located on national wildlife refuges account for approximately 1 percent of the available supply in the United States. Any small, incremental change in the supply of fishing and hunting opportunities will not measurably impact any other agency's existing programs.

c. This rule will not materially affect entitlements, grants, user fees, loan programs, or the rights and obligations of their recipients. This rule does not affect entitlement programs. There are no grants or other Federal assistance programs associated with public use of national wildlife refuges.

d. This rule will not raise novel legal or policy issues. This rule opens seven additional refuges for fishing and hunting activities and increases the activities available at three other refuges. This rule continues the practice of allowing recreational public use of

national wildlife refuges. Many refuges in the System currently have opportunities for the public to hunt and fish on refuge lands.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

We certify that this rule will not have a significant economic effect on a substantial number of small entities as defined under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*). A Regulatory Flexibility Analysis is not required. Accordingly, a Small Entity Compliance Guide is not required.

This rule does not increase the number of recreation types allowed in the System but establishes new or additional hunting and/or fishing programs on 10 refuges. As a result, opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation on national wildlife refuges will increase. The changes in the amount of permitted use are likely to increase visitor activity on these national wildlife refuges.

For purposes of analysis, we will assume that any increase in refuge

visitation is a pure addition to the supply of the available activity. This will result in a best-case scenario, and we expect to overstate the benefits to local businesses. The latest information on the distances traveled for fishing and hunting activities indicates that more than 80 percent of the participants travel less than 100 miles from home to engage in the activity. This indicates that participants will spend travel-related expenditures in their local economies. Since participation is scattered across the country, many small businesses benefit. The 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation identifies expenditures for food and lodging, transportation, and other incidental expenses. Using the average expenditures for these categories with the expected maximum additional participation on the System as a result of this rule yields the following estimates (Table 2) compared to total business activity for these sectors.

TABLE 2.—ESTIMATION OF THE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES WITH AN INCREASE OF ACTIVITIES IN THREE REFUGES AND THE OPENING OF SEVEN REFUGES TO FISHING AND/OR HUNTING FOR 2003–2004

	U.S. total expenditures in 2001 (in billions)	Average expenditures per day	Current refuge expenditures w/o duplication (FY2002) (in millions)	Possible additional refuge expenditures
Anglers:				
Total Days Spent (in millions)	\$557	\$5.9	\$1,000
Total Expenditures	36.2	\$465	386.3	64,937
Trip Related	14.9	27	158.9	26,710
Food and Lodging	6.0	11	63.8	10,718
Transportation	3.6	6	38.1	6,407
Other	5.3	10	57.0	9,585
Hunters:				
Total Days Spent (in millions)	228	2.0	2,082
Total Expenditures	20.6	92	181.0	190,878
Trip Related	5.3	23	46.1	48,642
Food and Lodging	2.4	11	21.5	22,689
Transportation	1.8	8	15.7	16,571
Other	1.0	5	8.9	9,383

Note: All estimates are in 2002 real dollars.

Using a national impact multiplier for hunting activities (2.73) derived from the report "Economic Importance of Hunting in America" and a national impact multiplier for sportfishing activities (2.79) from the report "Sportfishing in America" for the estimated increase in direct

expenditures yields a total economic impact of approximately 257,000 (Southwick Associates, Inc., 2003).

A large percentage of the retail trade establishments in the majority of affected counties qualifies as small businesses. With the small increase in overall spending anticipated from this

rule, it is unlikely that a substantial number of small entities will have more than a small benefit from the increased recreationist spending near the affected refuges; none are likely to have any adverse impact.