

Mississippi Wetlands Management District



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Refuge Facts

- Established: 1989.
- Acres: 107 separate properties totaling 15,911 acres located in 16 counties in northwest Mississippi plus 9,691 acres at Dahomey NWR and 6,149 acres at the two Units of Tallahatchie NWR.
- The Management District consists of a staff of 15 that manages Dahomey and Tallahatchie NWR's, the 107 FmHA properties and directs an extensive Private Lands Program in 26 counties in northwest Mississippi.
- Location: the Management District office is located in Grenada County, Grenada, MS, on Highway 8, one mile west of I-55.

Natural History

- The Management District was formed to manage lands being acquired through transfer of FmHA properties to the Service, the acquisition of Dahomey and Tallahatchie NWR's, and to initiate an extensive Private Lands Program.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- 15-person staff (including two persons at Dahomey NWR).
- 15,000 visitors annually (note-the FmHA properties and the Black Bayou Unit of Tallahatchie NWR are closed to public access by either Service policy or restrictions on property deeds).
- Current budget (FY 98) \$837,000 including \$100,000 for Dahomey NWR.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide habitat for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds and wading birds, other migratory birds, and wetland enhancement and restoration.
- Provide habitat and protection for endangered or threatened species including American alligator, bald/golden eagle, pondberry, least tern and wood stork.
- Provide recreation and environmental education for the public.

Management Tools

- Water management, reforestation and wetland enhancement and restoration projects.
- Cooperative farming.
- Bottomland-hardwood wetland forest management and reforestation.
- Law enforcement.

Public Use Opportunities

Properties not open to the public. Most of the properties are too small to safely permit hunting. There are no developed access roads on any of the properties. About one-half of the properties have deed restrictions that prohibit public access, and many of the properties have been developed for waterfowl sanctuaries.

Calendar of Events

May: Migratory Bird Day.

October: National Wildlife Refuge Week.

Questions and Answers

Are the FmHA properties open to the Public?

No, see explanation under Public Use Opportunities above.

Can I as the fee simple owner of FmHA properties with a Conservation Easement, farm the easement, harvest the timber, enroll the easement in the Conservation Reserve Program or Wetland Reserve Program, or swap the easement acres for other acres I own?

No, the recorded deeds and U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations prohibit the first questions and the Department of Interior Solicitor is of the opinion that the easement acres can not be swapped for other lands.

Why does the Service own or have easements on all those small scattered pieces of property that are too small to become "real" National Wildlife Refuges?

The Service acquired the properties from the U.S. Department of Agriculture because they were wetlands and with restoration and development would provide wetland values including water quality benefits, landscape diversity, habitat for migratory neo-tropical songbirds, and ground water recharge.