

Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys  
National Wildlife Refuges  
16450 NW 31st Pl., Chiefland, FL 32626  
Phone: 352.493.0238, Ext. 224  
Andrew\_Gude@fws.gov

# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
27 January 2021

Contact: Andrew Gude  
Cell: 703/622.3896

## Public Notice of Availability for Comment:

### Draft Compatibility Determination and Environmental Assessment for Hound Field Trials on the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has evaluated a proposed public use on the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The proposed use is to allow sanctioned raccoon dog trial associations to conduct “Hound Field Trails” under Special Use Permits.

Federal law requires that the Service first allow the public to review this action prior to conducting this activity on the Refuge. We do not see field trials impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational use or any other use of a National Wildlife Refuge. Based on sound professional judgment we believe this action will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the purposes for which the Refuge was established and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The Service develops an environmental assessment and a compatibility determination to facilitate evaluation of proposed uses, including anticipated impacts and stipulations necessary to ensure compatibility and effects on refuge resources and capacity.

A draft compatibility determination and environmental assessment covering the anticipated scope of the activity is currently available for public review and comment at [https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Lower\\_Suwannee/](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Lower_Suwannee/). Please tell us your thoughts.

The National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) mission 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. The purposes for establishing the refuges are provided on the first page of the draft compatibility determination.

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All comments received within 14 days following the date of this notice will be considered in finalizing these documents. We hope to make a final decision on this proposed use within 14 days following closure of the public comment period.

All comments should be in writing and must be received no later than **12 February 2021**. Comments should specifically articulate how the proposed action would, or would not, materially interfere with or detract from the Refuge purposes or NWRs mission.

Comments should be addressed to:

**Email:**

**Andrew\_Gude@fws.gov; Subject Line: “Hound Field Trials”, phone (703.622.3896).**

or,

**Mail:**

**Hound Field Trials c/o Andrew Gude, Lower Suwannee NWR, 16450 NW 31<sup>st</sup> Place, Chiefland, FL 32626.**

If commenting via email, please place the words “**Hound Field Trials**” in the subject line and your comments in the body of the text. Please do not include attachments because they will not be opened due to the potential of computer viruses.

To request a copy of the compatibility determinations, learn the final decision regarding this proposed use, or for more information, contact Refuge Manager Andrew Gude or find it on our website at [https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Lower\\_Suwannee/](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Lower_Suwannee/).

Copies of the draft compatibility determination and environmental assessment may also be obtained at the refuge office located at 16450 NW 31st Place, Chiefland, FL 32626. To access the office please make an appointment by calling Andrew on his cell phone 703.622.3896.