

***Appendix L. Rationale for Public Use
Determinations for the Units of
Sacramento River National Wildlife
Refuge***

Percentages described in the CCP objectives and strategies represent current refuge acres and do not necessarily reflect the long-term percentages of lands open for visitor use on the Refuge. For example, we have proposed 80 percent of the Refuge open for wildlife-dependent activities. However, as the Refuge acquires new properties, additional acreages maybe opened for public use or they maybe set aside as sanctuary. This plan does not define public use or sanctuary objectives as a percentage figure, but rather seeks the most appropriate land use for individual sites within the context of the entire Refuge.

The process for determining visitor use on each of the Refuge units includes analyzing many different elements. Some of these include:

- Are there sensitive resources that require protection (i.e. cultural resources or nesting colonies)?
- Is public access to the unit via land or boat?
- Is the unit landlocked by private land ownership?
- Is there a large enough land base to open the unit to hunting?
- Are there safety considerations that may impact public access?
- Are there private residences or other land uses nearby that may conflict with certain types of public use?
- Characteristics of the unit that lend itself to certain uses (i.e. proximity to urban area and access or facilities for school groups)?
- Is there a historic type of public use on the site?

Big 6 – open to hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation

Big 5 - open to fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation

Sanctuary – closed to public use

Public Use Determinations

Unit Name: **Level of Public Use:**

La Barranca – Big 6

- Makes large continuous area for hunting with Mooney and Todd Island units.
- Boat access only.

Blackberry Island – Big 5

- Small acreage.
- Private residence close proximity.
- Good fishing from gravel bar.
- Boat access only.

Todd Island – Big 6

- Big 6 uses are consistent with current Bureau of Land Management (BLM) public use/contingency for transfer.
- Adjacent to La Barranta and Mooney units that will have Big 6 uses.
- Boat access only.

Mooney – Big 6

- Existing deeded hunting rights.
- Makes large continuous area for hunting with La Barranta and Todd Island units.
- Boat access only.
- Due to a pre-existing hunting easement, this unit is closed to waterfowl hunting, but is open for all other hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation. Contact refuge manager for details.

Ohm – Sanctuary

- Closed to public due to sensitive resource areas, except northern 62 acres which is closed to waterfowl hunting, but is open for all other hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation. Contact refuge manager for details.
- Portion east of River is an area of disputed ownership and if determined to be owned by the Service will be designated as sanctuary due to close proximity to residences (except below ordinary high water mark).
- Large tract of quality habitat on northern section of Refuge for wildlife sanctuary.
- Boat access only.

Flynn – Big 5, with gravel bar as Big 6

- Coyote Creek good natural separation between sanctuary to the north (Ohm Unit) and the Flynn Unit (see CCP chapter 3 unit descriptions for details).
- Good gravel bar for canoe/boat access.
- Good wildlife viewing opportunities.
- Boat access only.
- 57 acres of gravel bar are below ordinary high water mark and open to Big 6.

Heron Island – Big 6

- No sensitive resource issues.
- Surrounded by agricultural lands.
- Boat access only.

Rio Vista – Northern portion Big 5, southern portion Big 6, eastern edge Sanctuary

- Northern portion closed to hunting due to proximity to Woodson Bridge State Park, Tehama county park, RV park, and private residences.
- Northern portion has good vehicle access via South Avenue for Big 5 users.
- Southern portion open to hunting via boat access only.

- Southern portion adjacent to California Department of Fish and Game (DFG, Merrill Landing Unit), that is also open to hunting via boat access.
- Sanctuary along eastern edge designated as a buffer to adjacent private landowners and to provide undisturbed sanctuary for wildlife populations.

Foster Island – Big 6

- Big 6 uses consistent with current BLM public use/contingency for transfer.
- Boat access only.

McIntosh Landing North – Sanctuary except gravel bar as Big 6

- Close proximity to private residences.
- Small acreage.
- Quality Neotropical migrant bird breeding habitat.
- Provides sanctuary on the middle section of the Refuge.
- Lacks public vehicle access.
- 6 acres of gravel bar are below ordinary high water mark and open to Big 6.

McIntosh Landing South – Sanctuary

- Small acreage.
- Steep eroding river bank makes boat access difficult.
- Unsafe entrance/exit on Highway 45 for vehicles.

Pine Creek – Big 5

- Good environmental education site due to close proximity to Chico.
- Good wildlife viewing opportunities and habitat restoration sites.
- Trails already exist.
- Private residences on west side of unit preclude hunting.
- Existing levee separates DFG (Pine Creek Unit) to the south that is currently open for hunting via boat access.
- Proposed that State Parks/The Nature Conservancy (TNC) property near bridge may provide a parking and visitor facility area.
- Good vehicle access on northwest corner via Highway 32.
- Vehicle access delayed due to CalTrans requirements for vehicle safety turn lanes.

Capay – Big 6

- Historic hunting use
- Adjacent to DFG (Pine Creek Unit) to the north that is open to hunting.
- Pedestrian access to River bank along existing road.
- Good vehicle access via County Road 23.

Phelan Island – Big 6

- Existing environmental education activities facilitated by Refuge partners.
- Existing internal roads available for guided tours.
- Good wildlife viewing and habitat restoration sites.

- Historic hunting use.
- Boat access only.

Jacinto – Big 6

- Adjacent to DFG (Shannon Slough Unit) that is open to hunting.
- Boat access only.

Dead Man’s Reach – Northwest portion Big 6, remainder Big 5

- Big 6 below ordinary high water mark, Big 5 above ordinary high water mark.
- Deer grazing concerns by adjacent landowners.
- Large gravel bar for easy boat access.
- Boat access only.

North Ord – Sanctuary

- Small acreage.
- Provides sanctuary in the middle section of the Refuge.
- Close proximity to private residences.
- Lacks public vehicle access.
- Steep river bank makes boat access difficult.

Ord Bend – Big 5

- Adjacent to Ord Bend County Park.
- Close proximity to Chico.
- Private residences close proximity.
- Small acreage.
- Good vehicle access via Ord Bend county road.

South Ord – Big 6

- Adjacent to DFG (Ord Bend Unit) that is open to hunting.
- Boat access only.

Llano Seco Island 1 – Big 6

- Adjacent to DFG (Jacinto Unit) that is open to hunting.
- Boat access only.

Llano Seco Island 2 – Big 6

- Historic hunting use.
- Boat access only.

Llano Seco Riparian Sanctuary – Sanctuary

- Original goal of Llano Seco property to be sanctuary.
- Large tract of habitat for sanctuary for middle portion of Refuge.
- Public access would potentially negatively impact private land easement sanctuaries.

- Sensitive resource protection.
- No vehicle access.

Hartley Island – Big 6 western portion, Sanctuary eastern portion

- Adjacent to DFG (Oxbow Unit) that is open to hunting.
- Large portion is below ordinary high water mark.
- Boat access only.
- Eastern portion sanctuary due to no access (surrounded by private property).

Sul Norte – Big 6, except for very southern portion Big 5

- Adjacent to DFG (Beehive Bend Unit) that is open to hunting.
- South end closed to hunting as buffer to Highway 162 and the units to the south that are Big 5.
- Good vehicle access and parking.

Codora – Big 5

- Adjacent to Packer Unit which is currently open to fishing.
- Good wildlife viewing opportunities.

Packer – Big 5, with gravel bar as Big 6

- Currently open to fishing.
- Close proximity to private residences.
- Good vehicle access via Highway 45.
- 11 acres of gravel bar are below ordinary high water mark and open to Big 6.

Head Lama – Sanctuary and Big 6

- High quality habitat for sanctuary.
- Provides sanctuary on southern portion of the Refuge.
- Big 6 below ordinary high water mark.
- Boat access only.

Drumheller Slough – Big 6

- Historic hunting on surrounding properties.
- Vehicle access by county road.

