

Handy Brake

National Wildlife Refuge and Louisiana Wetlands Management District



photo: USFWS



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Refuge Facts

- Established: 1990.
- Acres: Approximately 20,000 in fee title, easements, and leases on 50 tracts.
- Responsible for Fish and Wildlife Service land based interests and Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in 20 north Louisiana parishes.
- Office located on D'Arbonne National Wildlife Refuge 10 miles north of West Monroe, Louisiana, on LA Highway 143.

Natural History

- Most Wetland Management District lands are former bottomland hardwood tracts which were cleared for agriculture.
- The Service has reforested and restored wetlands on most areas. The tracts are in early successional stages, and many provide excellent habitat for waterfowl, shore birds, raptors, wading birds and other wetland species.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- D'Arbonne, Handy Brake, Red River, Upper Ouachita, Black Bayou NWR's and Louisiana Wetlands Management District are administered under the North Louisiana Refuges Complex with a total budget for FY02 of \$883,700.

- 4,500 visitors annually.

Refuge Objectives

- Protect, enhance, and perpetuate bottomland hardwood habitats, moist soil areas, and other endemic ecotypes for the benefit of endangered species, waterfowl, and other migratory and resident wildlife.

- Provide compatible wildlife-oriented recreation and environmental education for the public.

Management Tools

- Forest management including reforestation of bottomland hardwoods.
- Water management for waterfowl and other wetlands species.
- Law enforcement.
- Education/interpretation.
- Hunting.
- Partnerships.

Public Use Opportunities

- Observation tower.
- Wildlife observation.
- Hunting.
- Photography.

Calendar of Events

February: rabbit hunting.

October-January: wildlife observation (waterfowl migration).

Questions and Answers

What areas of the Louisiana WMD are open for public use?

Currently Handy Brake is open for wildlife observation during daylight hours. The K&I North tract is open for rabbit hunting during the month of February. Other tracts will be opened for public use as access can be developed.

How can the Louisiana WMD help private landowners?

Staff can provide technical assistance in restoring wetlands and other special habitats. Through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program landowners can be provided with tree seedlings for reforestation, water control structures, and labor on a cost shared basis. Contact the WMD for details.