

NOTICE OF INTENT

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Ecotour Activities on WMAs (LAC 76:XIX.111)

The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission does hereby give notice of its intent to establish regulations for ecotour activities on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). The proposal will add regulations for commercial ecotour activities on certain WMAs.

The Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is authorized to take any and all necessary steps on behalf of the commission to promulgate and effectuate this Notice of Intent, including but not limited to, the filing of the Fiscal and Economic Impact Statement, the filing of the Notice of Intent and compiling public comments and submissions for the commission's review and consideration. In the absence of any further action by the commission following an opportunity to consider all public comments regarding the proposed rule, the Secretary is authorized and directed to prepare and transmit a summary report to the legislative oversight committees and file the final Rule.

Title 76

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Part XIX. Hunting and WMA Regulations

Chapter 1. Resident Game Hunting Season

§119. WMA Ecotours

A. Licensed Ecotours

1. Pursuant to R.S. 56:1833 on Wild Louisiana Guide License, individuals possessing a Wild Louisiana Guide License may conduct commercial boat/vessel ecotour

activities on Maurepas Swamp and Pearl River WMAs only, via permit issued by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Commercial ecotour activities must:

a. Obtain annually, a Special Use Permit from the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Such permits will specify:

i. dates, times, locations, and routes, whereby which tours may be conducted on a given WMA;

ii. number and types of vehicles and/or vessels, as well as number of individual tours or outings that will be allowed within a given timeframe;

iii. requirements for annual reporting will include number of tours conducted, number of vehicles and vessels per tour conducted, number of clients per tour conducted, dates, and beginning and ending times of activities;

iv. any additional requirements deemed necessary and appropriate by the department.

b. Pay to the department, a license fee of \$500 annually and a client fee of \$2 per trip for each person accompanying the guide on said WMAs; payments to be made quarterly or as determined by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

c. The following is prohibited on ecotour outings:

i. taking, handling, harassing, feeding, baiting, luring, or releasing of wildlife;

ii. possession of animals;

iii. use of airboats;

iv. any additional activities specifically prohibited in the Annual Special Use Permit.

d. The number of permits shall be determined by the department but shall not exceed five permits per approved WMA per year.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 56:110.1 and R.S. 56:115.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR

Family Impact Statement

In accordance with Act 1183 of 1999 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby issues its Family Impact Statement in connection with the preceding Notice of Intent. This Notice of Intent will have no impact on the six criteria set out at R.S. 49:972(B).

Poverty Impact Statement

This proposed Rule will have no impact on poverty as described in R.S. 49:973.

Provider Impact Statement

This proposed Rule has no known impact on providers as described in HCR 170 of 2014.

Small Business Analysis

This proposed Rule has no known impact on small businesses as described in R.S. 49:965.2 through R.S. 49:965.8.

Public Comments

Interested persons may submit written comments relative to the proposed Rule until April 4, 2024 to Steve Smith, Wildlife Division, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, P. O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 or via e-mail to ssmith@wlf.la.gov.

Andrew J. Blanchard

Chairman