



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY



Crackerneck Wildlife Management Area and Ecological Reserve

An Introduction

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Senior Natural Resource Program Manager

September 27, 2022



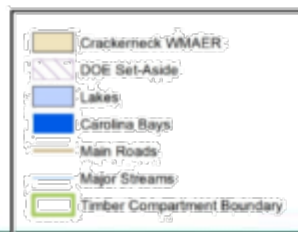
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR)

- 10,600 acres managed on behalf of DOE through cooperative agreement
- Bottomland hardwoods, Carolina bays, upland forests, fields, ponds and more
- Public access is controlled with approximately 70 open days per year
- SCDNR hosts a required check-in process, addressing remote worker protocols

Brief Management History

- **Early 1970's - Atomic Energy Commission enabled US Forest Service (USFS) to manage the land as part of the Sumter National Forest**
 - Enrolled in the SCDNR WMA program
 - Year-round access for fishing & non-consumptive use
- **1984 area status was returned to Savannah River for national security**
 - USFS environmental assessment determined public use occurred 22 days per year
 - 22 days were spread out, typically no more than 2 days per week
- **1987 DOE and SCDNR - agreement allowing limited public access to Crackerneck WMA**
- **1999 DOE proclamation notes SCDNR to serve as primary Crackerneck manager**





The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585
June 24, 1999

PROCLAMATION

To the People of South Carolina:

We, the undersigned, are proud to designate 10,012 acres within the Savannah River Site as a protected habitat for the enjoyment of future generations. This acreage will be known as the Crackerneck Wildlife Management Area and Ecological Reserve and is located on the western side of the Savannah River Site, between the Town of Jackson and D/TNX-Area, its western boundary formed by the Savannah River and its eastern boundary running parallel to South Carolina Highway 125.

The Crackerneck Wildlife Management Area and Ecological Reserve is a valuable resource unique to this region that serves as habitat for numerous rare, threatened, and endangered species, including the red-cockaded woodpecker, bald eagle, wood stork, pine woods snake, and American alligator. This land is scenic and unique, and is among the most valuable ecological parcels at the Savannah River Site.

We support designation of the Crackerneck Wildlife Management Area and Ecological Reserve as a natural protected area and wildlife management area, and commit to work together to provide for its conservation and preservation. Preserving this habitat for future generations and managing the wildlife and habitat therein are the key goals of a new agreement between the Department of Energy and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

This agreement provides for the transfer of management responsibilities of the Crackerneck Wildlife Management Area and Ecological Reserve to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources will develop management guidelines for the Crackerneck Wildlife Management Area and Ecological Reserve aimed to conserve and enhance its natural attributes, preserve its natural state, conserve its valuable resources, and provide for its continued limited use as a public recreation area. Management responsibilities of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources will provide for the protection, enhancement, and restoration of habitat, wildlife, and timber management as needed to preserve wildlife and habitat and promote public safety and fire protection; hunting and fishing to support habitat or wildlife conservation; and activities needed to maintain the habitat.

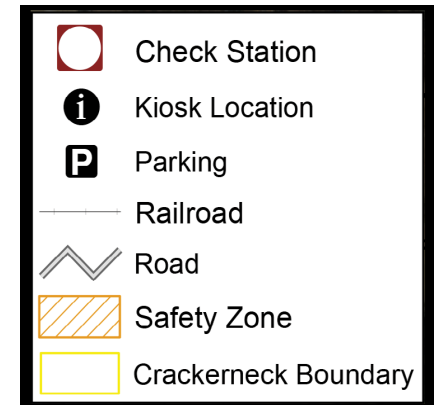
At the conclusion of the Department's mission in the State of South Carolina, the Department and the State will work together and with local communities and the public to propose guidelines and explore options to ensure that the Crackerneck Wildlife Management Area and Ecological Reserve remains protected, conserved, and managed in accordance with the goals stated herein and consistent with the values and policies of State and local governments and the public. This will include the option of eventual transfer to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. This collaborative process will have as its goal the preservation, conservation, and management of the Crackerneck Wildlife Management Area and Ecological Reserve for the people of South Carolina, in perpetuity.

Bill Richardson
Bill Richardson
Secretary of Energy

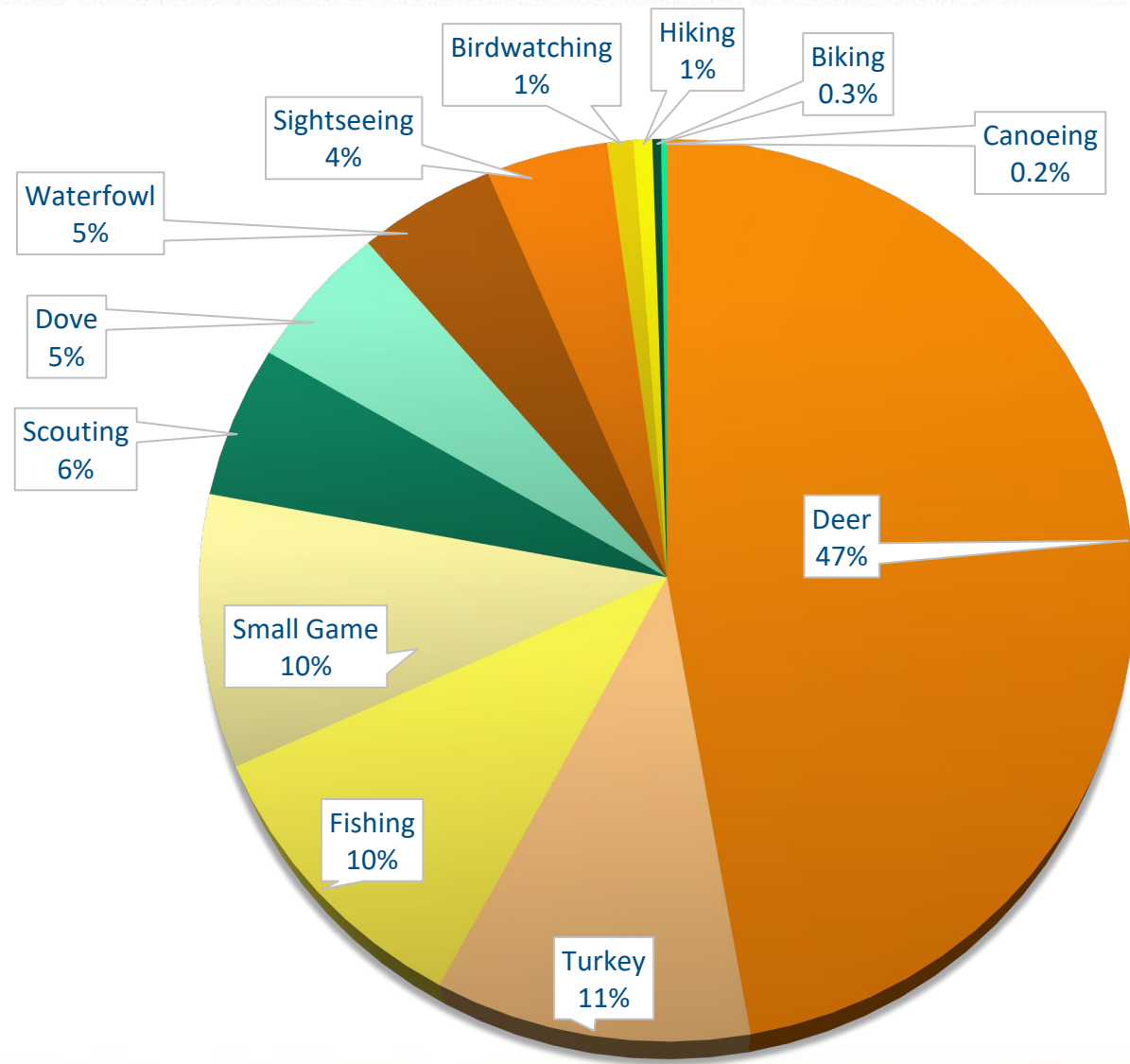
Paul A. Sandifer
Paul A. Sandifer
Director, South Carolina
Department of Natural Resources

Access and Management Today

- **SCDNR continues as the primary manager under Cooperative Agreement**
 - A new 5 yr agreement begins in October with DOE providing 60% of the funding
 - Working with USFS on site, SCDNR manages our natural resources at Crackerneck
 - SC DNR also provides law enforcement at the WMA on an as needed basis
- **Open September – May for approximately 70 days per year**
 - Friday and Saturday
 - Thanksgiving Day
- **Typically experiences over 3,000 visitors annually**



Visitor Activity Percentages



Where do they come from?

- Visitors typically come from 21 South Carolina counties and four states.
- Aiken, Anderson, Edgefield, Lexington and Barnwell County average the most yearly visitors.
- Out of state visitors typically reside in Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, and Ohio



Skinface Pond – a popular fishing spot

Management and Partners

- Funding for management is provided by DOE and SCDNR.
- USFS-SR assists with the management of timber, fire, road maintenance and habitat restoration.
- SCDNR also partners with several agencies and private natural resource organizations to manage Crackerneck.
- Wild Turkey Federation and Longleaf Alliance assist with arranging special hunting opportunities, grants for habitat restoration, and projects that expand public access.



Management Activities

- **Establishing and maintaining**
 - Food plots
 - Fire breaks
 - Roads
- **Forest Management**
 - Thinning
 - Regenerating
 - Prescribed fire
- **Wetland Restoration**
 - Ditch plugging
 - Forest clearing
- **Staffing the Check Station**



Special Use Dovefield

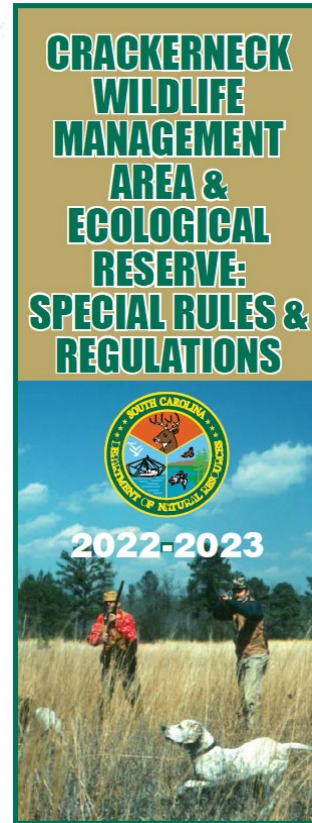
- Created in 2022 through a partnership with SCDNR, USFS-SRS, DOE, Wild Turkey Federation and Longleaf Alliance.
- This field will host hunts for women in the outdoors, youth, first responders, veterans, first time hunters, and mobility impaired.



Enhanced Quail Habitat

- Quail Management Areas are expanding, focusing on habitat for all phases of the Northern bobwhite quail life cycle.
- Work completed as a cooperative effort between SCDNR, USFS-SRS, Longleaf Alliance and the Wild Turkey Federation.





QUESTIONS?
