

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
VOLUNTARY PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM  
AND  
HABITAT INCENTIVE PROGRAM  
STATE OF MICHIGAN**

**INTRODUCTION**

The United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency proposes to implement a new program authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (the 2008 Farm Bill) in the State of Michigan. The Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) provides grants to State and tribal governments to encourage owners and operators of privately-held farm, ranch, and forest land to voluntarily make the land available for access by the public for wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting, fishing, and other compatible recreation and to improve fish and wildlife habitat on their land. The VPA-HIP is administered by the State or tribal government that receives the grant funds.

The State of Michigan, through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), proposes to use VPA-HIP grant funds to expand its existing hunting access program to provide more opportunities for hunting in southern Michigan.

**PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

The Preferred Alternative is the Proposed Action which consists of expanding the existing Hunting Access Program (HAP) in southern Michigan (hunting opportunities in southern Michigan are very limited, specially near urban areas); allow for more hunting opportunities for youth and apprentice hunters; encourage landowner participation by offering increased financial incentives and greater program flexibility; encourage high quality wildlife habitat by offering increased financial incentives for enrolling quality habitat into the HAP and through targeted efforts on Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) lands; and increase hunter and landowner awareness of the HAP through target outreach and program marketing.

**REASONS FOR FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

In consideration of the analysis documented in the Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) and in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations 1508.27, the preferred alternative would not constitute a major State or Federal action affecting the human and natural environment. Therefore, this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been prepared and an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared. This determination is based on the following:

1. Long-term beneficial impacts and short-term localized beneficial impacts would occur with the preferred alternative. Neither of these impacts would be considered significant.

2. The preferred alternative would not affect public health or safety.
3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area (cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, and ecologically critical areas) would be preserved with implementation of the preferred alternative.
4. The potential impacts on the quality of the human environment are not considered highly controversial.
5. The potential impacts on the human environment as described in the Programmatic EA are not uncertain nor do they involve unique or unknown risks.
6. The preferred alternative would not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.
7. Cumulative impacts of the preferred alternative in combination with other recent, ongoing or foreseeable future actions are not expected to be significant.
8. The preferred alternative would not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
9. The preferred alternative would have short-term beneficial impacts to wildlife and their habitats, including endangered and threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
10. The preferred alternative does not threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local laws imposed for the protection of the environment.

**DETERMINATION**

On the basis of the analysis and information contained in the Programmatic EA and FONSI, it is my determination that adoption of the preferred alternative does not constitute a major Federal action affecting the quality of the human and natural environment. Barring any new data identified during the public and agency review of the Final Programmatic EA that would dramatically change the analysis presented in the Programmatic EA or identification of a significant controversial issue, the Programmatic EA and this FONSI are considered Final 30 days after date of initial publication of the Notice of Availability.



08/23/2011

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

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**Date**