

## *Appendix G. Finding of No Significant Impact*

### **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND DECISION TO OPEN ALLIGATOR HUNTING ON BANKS LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

#### **BANKS LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE *Lakeland, Georgia***

The Service is opening opportunities for American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) on the Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge in accordance with the refuge's Hunt Plan and Environmental Assessment (2020). Currently, the entire refuge is open to fishing, but not hunting. Under this proposal, the entire refuge will be open for alligator hunting.

#### **Selected Action**

##### **Alternative A—Proposed Action Alternative:**

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, all acreage of the Refuge will be open to alligator hunting. All State of Georgia Regulations would apply and the season would be limited to the first two weekend hunts within the State season. This hunt would be operated and conducted in coordination with Georgia DNR.

This alternative would open the refuge to alligator hunting opportunities. This action would attract hunters currently not using the refuge, thus affording an opportunity for the refuge to engage new segments of the public to promote natural resources conservation, environmental education and natural resources stewardship. Opportunities to create additional outdoor recreation experiences would be consistent with goals and priority uses identified by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (NWRSA) and Secretarial Orders 3347 and 3356.

This alternative was selected over the other alternatives because:

- It would provide a quality recreational experience to the general public while maintaining a healthy and sustainable population;
- It would meet the intent of the NWRSA and Secretarial Order 3356;
- It offers the best opportunity for public hunting that would result in a minimal impact on physical and biological resources;
- It would provide a wildlife-dependent recreational opportunity;
- Allow the public to harvest a renewable resource;
- Increase awareness of the Banks Lake NWR and the National Wildlife Refuge System in