

Secretary Lyle Lavery  
Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Re: 1024-AD70 / General Regulations for Areas Administered by the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service

Comments submitted electronically on 6/30/08  
by Louise Lasley, Public Lands Director, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance

The potential impact of allowing loaded, concealed weapons in our national parks and wildlife refuges is not an abstract concept for the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance. The Conservation Alliance is a local organization that is dedicated to ensuring that human activities are in harmony with the area's irreplaceable wildlife, scenic, and other natural resources. We are located in western Wyoming where our 2,000 strong membership works and recreates in Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks and the National Elk Refuge. On behalf of those members, the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance requests that this amendment to existing regulations that would allow loaded, concealed weapons in our parks and wildlife refuges be rejected.

Visitors and employees of our parks and refuges believe that their safety and the security of our wildlife will be in greater danger with this amendment than with the current regulations. Parks and refuges are considered some of the safest places now because of the prohibition of guns in these areas. The threat to human and wildlife safety increases with the presence of guns. These settings do not engender situations that necessitate self-protection to this extent and that sense of security would deteriorate with guns carried by visitors.

Other impacts that concern us include:

- The increased time and effort by law enforcement to verify gun permits and enforce anti-poaching regulations. Since this amendment doesn't apply to federal buildings, additional effort and funds will be necessary to secure visitor's centers and other buildings within parks and refuges.
- The legal issues involving parks and refuges that are contained within more than one state.
- The fact that national parks and wildlife refuges prohibit guns, except for specific times and/or events, is well-known and less confusing for out-of-state visitors.

The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance recognizes the value of our public lands for our community and visitors. The experiences on these lands should epitomize the unique qualities of landscapes and wildlife and not contribute to the stress and insecurity of the visitor. We strongly recommend that this amendment not be approved to allow guns in our parks and refuges.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments on this significant issue.