

News Release

Great Dismal Swamp

National Wildlife Refuge



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Lake Drummond Reopens to Boating

Suffolk, Virginia—The Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, in consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, announces the reopening of Lake Drummond to boating use effective sunrise on Saturday, August 30, 2008. Boaters can access the lake through the Feeder Ditch and the Dismal Swamp Canal in Chesapeake, Virginia. Vessels are restricted to a maximum of 1000 lbs to use the boat tram at the Lake Drummond Reservation and to a maximum of 25 hp on the lake. Access is allowed sunrise to sunset, seven days a week. The Interior Ditch Trail remains closed.

The Dismal Swamp Canal will continue with the temporary restricted lock operation schedule until further notice due to low water levels in the Dismal Swamp. The locks at Deep Creek, Virginia and South Mills, North Carolina will be operated daily only at 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. The Lake Drummond Reservation is open for overnight use.

The 3,100 acre Lake Drummond is one of two natural lakes in Virginia. The lake lies at the heart of the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Land access to the lake is currently available only by hiking or biking the Washington Ditch Trail. Parking is found at the trail head on White Marsh Road in Suffolk, Virginia. Additional trails for hiking and biking are available at the Jericho Lane entrance on White Marsh Road in Suffolk and at the Portsmouth Ditch entrance in Chesapeake.

The lake has been closed since early June as a public safety measure. Firefighters have used water from the lake to fight a wildfire that has consumed nearly 5,000 acres of adjoining forest. Although the fire is still smoldering along its western boundary, refuge management feels the public can safely use Lake Drummond for wildlife oriented recreation, which includes wildlife observation and fishing.

More information on refuge activities is available from refuge headquarters at 3100 Desert Road, Suffolk, Virginia (phone 757-986-3705) or on the refuge website found at www.fws.gov/northeast/greatdismalswamp.