

Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge



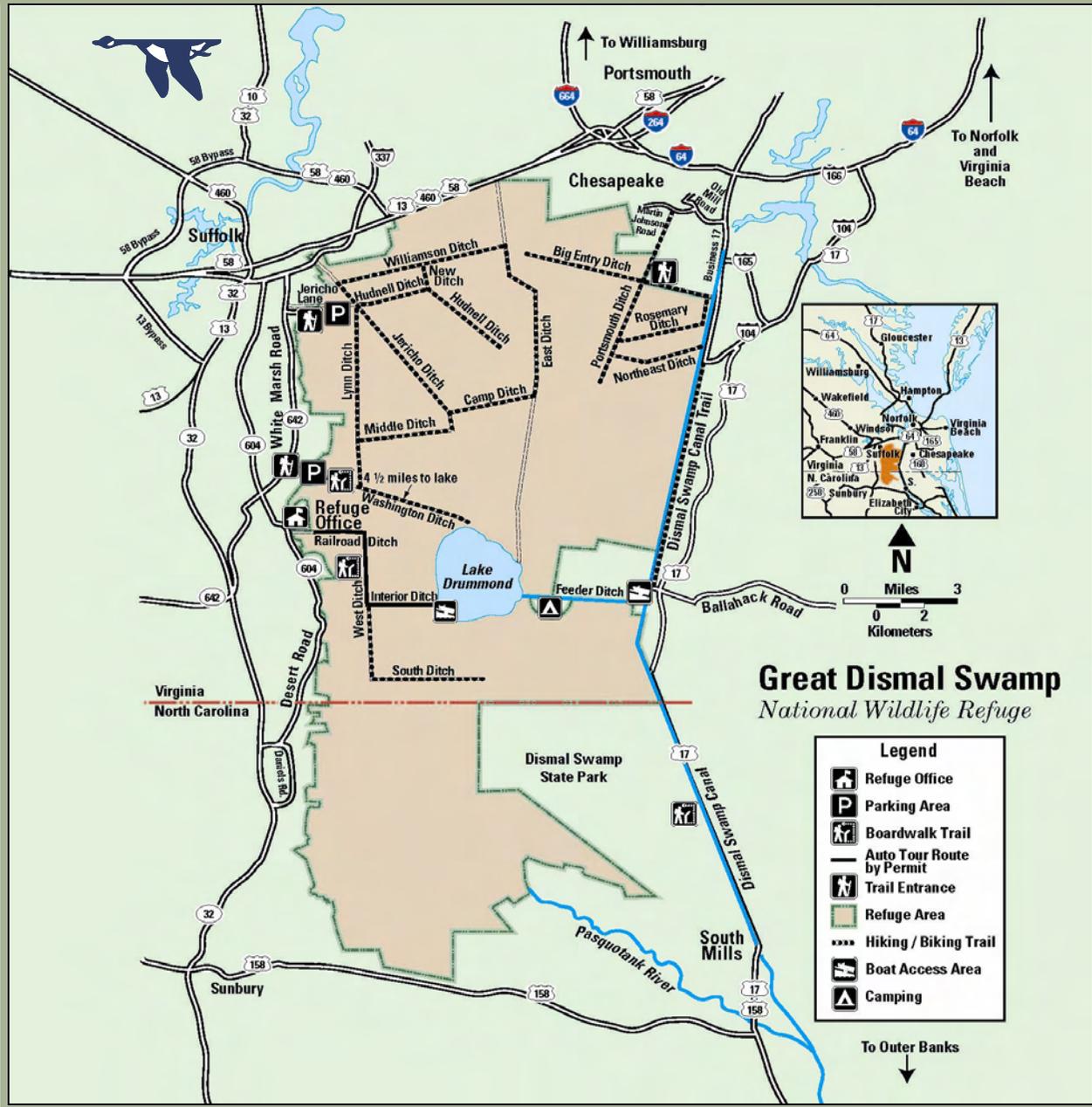
Visitor Information

Refuge Trails Open daily for hiking and biking, sunrise to sunset, or as otherwise posted.

Refuge Office Open Monday-Friday, 7:30am to 4:00pm, closed federal holidays.

Railroad Ditch Road Self-service passes are available at the gate Monday- Friday, 7:30am to 3:00pm.

Refuge Office
3100 Desert Road
Suffolk, Virginia 23434
Phone: 757-986-3705
www.fws.gov/northeast/greatdismalswamp



For your safety:

- Remain on designated trails at all times.
- Insect repellent is suggested during warm seasons.
- Cell phone coverage is limited.
- Pets must be on a hand held lease at all times.

- Collecting plants or animals is not allowed.
- Feeding or handling wildlife is not allowed.
- Swimming is prohibited.
- Ditch fishing is prohibited.

April, 2013

Welcome to the Great Dismal Swamp

Located in a two hour drive of 1.6 million residents of southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina, the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge offers an enticing wildlands experience. With over 113,000 acres of forested wetlands and the 3,100 acre Lake Drummond at its center, the refuge contains some of the most important wildlife habitat in the mid-Atlantic region.

Refuge trails are open daily, sunrise to sunset, unless otherwise posted. Visitors may participate in a variety of activities including hiking, biking, nature photography, wildlife observation, hunting, fishing and boating. The refuge was established for the purpose of protecting and managing the swamp's unique ecosystem which includes wildlife and habitat. In that, portions of the refuge may be periodically closed to public visitation in order to accomplish these objectives.

Refuge Points of Entrance

The refuge offers five entrances from which visitors will find many miles of trails for exploring. The Washington Ditch Trail and the Jericho Ditch Trail are both located off White Marsh Road in Suffolk, VA, and provide the best dirt roads for hiking and biking. The Railroad Ditch Road is located off Desert Road in Suffolk, VA, and is the auto access to Lake Drummond. The Portsmouth Ditch entrance is located off Martin-Johnson Road, in Chesapeake, VA. The Feeder Ditch, also in Chesapeake, is located off the Dismal Swamp Canal and is a by-water-only entrance.



Photo:USFWS/B.Bischoff

- **Washington Ditch Trail**

The Washington Ditch Trail is most often recommended for hiking and biking. The four and one half mile dirt road is the shortest trail to Lake Drummond. Once at the lake, visitors can enjoy panoramic views from the pier. The elevated Washington Ditch Boardwalk Trail is located adjacent to the parking area. The boardwalk meanders almost a mile through a representative portion of swamp habitats. Vault restrooms and the largest refuge parking area complete the accommodations making this entrance favored by both large and small groups.



- **Jericho Ditch Trail**

At the Jericho Ditch entrance visitors will find a more primitive setting but with four trailheads adjacent to the parking area. South Jericho Ditch Trail and Lynn Ditch Trail are favored by birding enthusiasts. In season, visit the bird banding station on South Jericho Ditch Trail. Hardier visitors may prefer the challenging loop of north Jericho-Williamson-New-Hudnell Ditches, approximately six miles. Visitor parking is located two miles east from White Marsh Road on Jericho Lane.

- **Railroad Ditch Road**

Auto access is allowed to Lake Drummond through the Railroad Ditch entrance, a route of six miles. A self-serve pass is available at the trail entrance or from the refuge office. The electronic gate allows visitors to enter Mondays—Fridays, from 7:30am until 3:00pm. Vehicles must exit by 4:00pm. Highlights of the route include the Underground Railroad Education Pavilion, the Cypress Marsh, the West Ditch Boardwalk, and Lake Drummond. A seasonal permit allows launching at the Interior Ditch boat ramp April 1 through June 15 each year.

- **Portsmouth Ditch Trail**

Subject to seasonal closures, the entrance road takes you two miles south of Martin-Johnson Road to a gated bridge. Only hiking and biking are allowed beyond the bridge in this natural area. Spring wildlife observations make the journey worth wild!

- **Feeder Ditch**

Fishing and boating are permitted year-round on Lake Drummond with access from the Feeder Ditch, connecting Lake Drummond with the Dismal Swamp Canal. Restriction are 1,000 lb limit to use the lift at the spillway and a 25hp limit on Lake Drummond. If fishing, a Virginia fresh water license is required.

Hunting

A white-tailed deer hunt is held on Fridays, Saturdays, and on one Thursday during six weeks in October through mid-November. A deer hunt scouting day is held the last Saturday in September. Hunters must enter and exit through either the Railroad Ditch, the Jericho Ditch, or the Corapeake Ditch entrances. A quota black bear hunt is held on three designated days coinciding with the final days of the deer hunt. The limited bear hunt has two designated zones, one in the Railroad Ditch entrance and one in the Jericho Ditch entrance. State and refuge permits are required for both hunts. Application information is available from the refuge office or on the refuge web site.

The Washington Ditch and Portsmouth Ditch entrances remain opened for hiking and biking during hunts, but all other trails are closed to general visitation.

Educational & Organized Group Visits

A refuge orientation is available for organized school, scout, civic, and professional groups by advance reservation. A typical visit would include a 15 minute orientation at the refuge office (accommodating groups up to 35 persons), or at the Washington Ditch or the Jericho Ditch trail heads (recommended for larger groups). Following the orientation most groups participate in a self-lead visit, activity, or trip to Lake Drummond through the Railroad Ditch entrance.

Reservations for orientations may be made by contacting visitor services at the refuge office. Orientations are limited to staff availability and require a two week notice. Orientations are not available on weekends.

Camping & Picnicking

Camping and overnight use are prohibited on the refuge. There are no designated picnic areas on the refuge.

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