



News Release

Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge
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Suffolk, VA 23434
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www.fws.gov/refuge/Great_Dismal_Swamp

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wildlife Refuge Proposes New Wildlife Drive Entrance Fee- Open for Public Comment

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge is proposing to add a vehicle access fee for the Lake Drummond Wildlife Drive and is seeking public input.

Earlier this year after a process of regulation changes, as well as a period of public comment, the Lake Drummond Wildlife Drive began opening daily for vehicle and boating traffic with seasonal hours. Visitors are now allowed access to the lake through the Railroad Ditch entrance gate April 1 through September 30, from 7:00am to 7:00pm, and October 1 through March 31, from 7:30am to 5:00pm. Drivers of all personal vehicles must pick up and complete a self-serve access permit from the permit station on Railroad Ditch Road. At this time there is no fee for the access permit.

The proposed new fee for vehicle access will be \$5.00 per vehicle and will apply to both boaters and personal vehicles. An annual refuge pass will also be available from the refuge office at a cost of \$25.00 per calendar year. Owners of an America the Beautiful Annual, Senior, or Access pass can present their pass when applying for the annual refuge pass and the fee will be waived. The proposed changes would be implemented beginning in January 2017.

The Refuge is adopting this fee structure to manage the increasing use of this popular entrance. At other entrances on the refuge visitors have daily opportunities to hike and bike a vast network of trails, sunrise to sunset. Permits, passes, or fees are not required for the hiking or biking visitor. All trails and entrances on the refuge are subject to urgent, temporary closures due to safety issues or refuge management needs. Visitors should turn to the refuge facebook page (GreatDismalSwamp) for the most current trail notices.

Public comments regarding this proposed fee structure must be received by 4:00pm on September 19, 2016. You may submit comments by email to GreatDismalSwamp@fws.gov, by fax to (757)986-2353, or in writing to:

USFWS
Attn: Fee Schedule
3100 Desert Road
Suffolk, VA 23434

For more information regarding this proposed new access fee call the refuge headquarters at (757)986-3705 during business hours, Monday- Friday, 8:00am-4:00pm.