

# The Great American Solar Eclipse Viewing On Santee National Wildlife Refuge



## **What is a solar eclipse?**

A solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes between Earth and the sun, blocking at least part of the sun as viewed from some areas of the earth. During a total solar eclipse, the moon completely obscures the sun so that only the sun's corona is visible for a moment in time. On August 21, 2017, a total solar eclipse will be visible along a 67-mile wide path across the United States from Oregon to South Carolina. This is one of the most amazing natural sights and is worth seeing at least once in a lifetime. It goes against all of our experience to seem like night in the middle of the day. The sky becomes so dark that the stars and planets are visible, birds stop chirping because they think it is time to roost, automatic streetlights turn on, and the air gets distinctly cooler

## **Where can I see the Eclipse on Santee National Wildlife Refuge?**

The entire Refuge will fall under the path of totality for the eclipse, providing opportunities for viewing, weather permitting. The Refuge is not planning any organized public events; however visitors may view the eclipse from several recreation areas on the Refuge on their own. All four units of the Refuge will be open: Bluff Unit (Visitor Center), Dingle Pond, Pine Island, and Cuddo (7.5 mile Wildlife Drive Trail). The following are the best options for the Eclipse:

**Bluff Unit:** The Bluff Unit is where the Visitor Center is located. The Visitor Center will be open on Monday August 21<sup>st</sup>. Front gates at the Refuge will open at 6 am, and the Visitor Center will open at 8 am. In addition, the gates on the Bluff Unit leading back to the fields will be open to provide additional viewing opportunity. Pick your spot!

**Pine Island:** The Pine Island Unit is limited to foot and bicycle traffic on approximately four miles of road. A primitive boat launch area is provided for small boats, canoes, and kayaks.

**Dingle Pond:** The Dingle Pond Unit is limited to foot traffic on a one mile dirt trail open for hiking. An observation tower overlooks the Carolina Bay and may provide good views for those willing to walk and brave the bugs. Limited space is available on top of the observation tower.

**Cuddo (Figure 1):** The Cuddo Unit will be OPEN on Monday August 21<sup>st</sup>. Gates will open at 6 am. A seven and a half (7.5) mile driving trail is open to the public and will be open on August 21, 2017. In addition, five miles of hiking and biking trails are also available. A canoe and kayak launch is also available on this unit.

Figure 1. Cuddo Unit



**Be Safe:**

Observing the eclipse can be dangerous to the human eye, but proper precautions can eliminate the risk. The solar eclipse should be viewed through ISO-certified eclipse viewing glasses. In addition, never look directly at the sun through a telescope, binoculars, camera lens or cell phone cameras, as these devices will not protect the eyes. August is usually hot and humid, **so don't forget your water and please pack out anything you bring along.** Trash cans will be limited. Ticks and snakes are common on the Refuge, so visitors are encouraged to avoid walking through tall grasses, and stay on trails. Our region is expecting unprecedented numbers of visitors for the solar eclipse. Travel will be difficult and

emergency services are going to be stretched incredibly thin. Be prepared and be smart. Things you should know while you are on the Refuge? • There are no entrance fees on August 21st, 2017. • Camping is NOT permitted • Please do not litter. Take trash (including pet waste) with you and dispose of it properly. • Fires are NOT allowed only • All pets must be on a leash. • Additional information on the Great American Solar Eclipse can also be found at:

<http://www.greatamericaneclipse.com/>

<http://www.eclipse2017.org/>

