

Great Dismal Swamp

National Wildlife Refuge

Fact Sheet for Members of Congress

Represented by the following Members of Congress:

Senator John W. Warner (R)
Senator George F. Allen (R)
Rep. Randy Forbes (D-4th-VA)

Senator John R. Edwards (D-NC)
Senator Elizabeth Dole (R-NC)
Rep. Frank W. Ballance, Jr. (D-1st-NC)
Rep. Walter Jones, Jr. (R-3rd-NC)

Contact

Lloyd Culp, Jr., Refuge Manager
Great Dismal Swamp
National Wildlife Refuge
3100 Desert Road
Suffolk, VA 23434
Phone: 757/986 3706
Fax: 757/986 2353
TDD: 800/877 8339
E-mail: Lloyd_Culp@fws.gov
<http://greatdismalswamp.fws.gov>

Profile

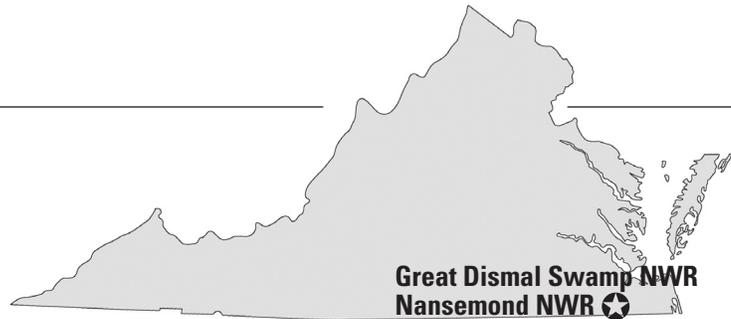
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|-----------------------|---------------|
| Established: | 1974 |
| Current acres: | 111,201 |
| Proposed acres: | 115,000 |
| Staff: | 19 (5 vacant) |
| FY 2003 budget: | \$1,480,000 |
| 2003 volunteer hours: | 291 |
| 2003 visitation: | 82,000 |
| Satellite refuge: | |
| Nansemond: | 423 acres |

Purpose

Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge was established to restore and protect a unique ecosystem, conserve migratory birds and provide public use and education opportunities.

Public Use Notes

- Hiking and biking on more than 50 miles of interior roads and a boardwalk
- Hunting for white-tailed deer by permit
- Fishing, canoeing and kayaking
- Scenic yachting on the intracoastal waterway



Management Activities

- Prescribed burning to maintain shrub-pocosin habitat and Atlantic white cedar stands
- Harvesting timber to conserve Atlantic cedar stands
- Clearing and burning marshy areas to maintain them in early successional stages
- Using water control structures to slow accelerated water loss due to past ditching
- Working with federal, state and university researchers
- Managing for possible reintroduction of the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker

Highlights

The refuge provides winter resting habitat for 10,000 to 15,000 tundra swans and snow geese.

The refuge includes one of the largest remaining Atlantic white cedar forests in the world.

Lake Drummond, the largest natural lake in Virginia, is located near the center of the refuge.

The refuge provides important nesting areas for neotropical songbirds such as the Swainson's warbler.

The refuge is one of the few areas east of the Mississippi River not showing a reduction in neotropical migrants.

The refuge is home to the one of the largest black bear populations on the east coast.

The refuge became the first national wildlife refuge to be designated by the National Park Service as a unit within the "Underground Railroad Network to Freedom."

Issues

Smoke from controlled burns and wildfires on the refuge can negatively affect neighboring communities.

Construction and widening of highways will bring about more conflicts between people and wildlife, as will continuing residential and commercial development.

Local communities in Virginia and North Carolina are advocating significant expansion of visitor services on the refuge.

Hurricane Isabel inflicted considerable damage to the refuge and increased the probability of a major wildfire.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>

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