

**Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge**, at 111,200 acres, is a forested wetland ecosystem that straddles the state line separating southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. Lake Drummond, 3,100 acres, is found at the center of the swamp and is one of only two naturally occurring lakes in the state of Virginia. The refuge is a favorite with sportsmen for hunting white-tailed deer and black bear in late autumn. A featured site on the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail, birding reaches a peak in April and May, as neo-tropical migratory birds move into and through the refuge. The Washington Ditch and Jericho Lane entrances are gateways to miles of refuge trails open for hiking and biking. The Feeder Ditch is a water trail connecting Lake Drummond east to the Dismal Swamp Canal. All trails are open daily, sunrise to sunset. Occasionally temporary trail closings may occur for habitat management activities. Please visit our website for announcements.

**Contact information:**

Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge  
[www.fws.gov/northeast/greatdismalswamp](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/greatdismalswamp)  
Refuge Headquarters at 3100 Desert Road, Suffolk, Virginia 23434  
(757) 986-3705

**The Dismal Swamp Canal Welcome Center**

Opened in April 1989, it is the first Welcome Center built off an interstate in North Carolina, and the only such facility in the country greeting visitors by both a major highway and historic waterway. Over 60,000 travelers visit the Center each year by highway, while nearly 2,000 boaters transit the waterway annually.

Maps and publications are available for assistance in planning trips or vacations to the state. Selected videotapes are also available on NC destinations. A knowledgeable staff is ready and willing to be of assistance.

The Welcome Center is located in Camden County on US Highway 17, approximately 18 miles north of Elizabeth City, NC, and 3 miles south of the NC/VA line.

Hours are November - May, Tuesday thru Saturday 9-5 and June - October, Daily 9-5.

**For information**, call 877-771-8333 or visit [www.DismalSwamp.com](http://www.DismalSwamp.com).

**The Dismal Swamp Trail** is approximately 10 miles round trip if you continue into the village of South Mills, NC. The main trail head begins on the southern end of the Dismal Swamp Canal Welcome Center off US 17. Asphalt tops the 10 ft. wide trail, making it user-friendly and ideal for families and handicapped individuals. It closely follows and overlooks the Dismal Swamp Canal. It is part of the NC Birding Trail and the East Coast Greenway Program. The East Coast Greenway was formed after an initial conception as an off-road route connecting enthusiasts to trails that will eventually link from Maine to Florida.

You will find many options which include hiking, biking birding, photography and a canoe and kayak launching area to enhance your eco-tourism opportunities. **For more information** call 877-771-8333 or visit [www.DismalSwamp.com](http://www.DismalSwamp.com)

**The Dismal Swamp Canal Trail (DSCT)**, opened in spring 2006. DSCT is a section of the former State Rt. 17, located in Chesapeake, Virginia at the intersection of Dominion Blvd. and Old Rt. 17. Running south for 8.3 miles, adjacent to the Dismal Swamp Canal, it is a multi-purpose linear nature trail traversing some of the most uniquely historical and ecologically significant habitats in the United States.

The Dismal Swamp Canal Trail is an historic, environmental and outdoor-recreation delight. The canal marks the east border of The Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in Chesapeake. The area is home to myriad species of wildlife; parts of the Refuge were assessed by George Washington's survey company; the Swamp is nationally recognized as a stop on the "Underground Railroad"; the GDS Refuge is also a stop for thousands of migratory birds in the fall and spring. The DSCT, which runs along the canal, is linear and flat—perfect for families of all ages to bike or walk and horse owners to ride. Ballahack Rd. boat ramp provides easy access to launch your boat, canoe or kayak and is the site of the annual PADDLE FOR THE BORDER.

**Look for more information** and downloadable brochures on our website, [cityofchesapeake.net/parks](http://cityofchesapeake.net/parks) "Trails."

**The North Carolina Dismal Swamp State Park**

offers numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation and environmental education. Over 16 miles of hiking and mountain biking trails lead you through the majestic swamp or get up close and personal on the boardwalk trail. Plans for a butterfly garden are in the works. The park is open every day from 8 AM - 6 PM except for Christmas.

The Dismal Swamp State Park Visitor Center located just over the pedestrian bridge, offers an exhibit hall discussing the natural and cultural history of the park, an auditorium, classroom and reception area. Education programs are offered to school groups and other organizations as well as the general public. **The Visitor Center is open 8-4:30 M-F and 9:30-4:30 Sat. & Sun.** For more information visit [www.ncparks.net](http://www.ncparks.net) or call 252-771-6593.

**Underground Railroad Network to Freedom**

The Underground Railroad refers to the effort of enslaved African Americans to gain their freedom by escaping bondage.

In 2003, the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, the Dismal Swamp Canal, and the Dismal Swamp Welcome Center were named as official sites in the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. These sites have been documented as "stations" of the Underground Railroad, or as places that provided refuge and assistance to fugitives. Although no structures remain, as yet unknown numbers of freedom seekers lived within the Great Dismal Swamp, using the thick cover of forest as refuge.

**For more information**, please visit <http://home.nps.gov/ugr>

**Additional Information @ these websites:**

**Books**

[www.chesapeake.lib.va.us](http://www.chesapeake.lib.va.us)

**Species List and Refuge Bird List**

[www.fws.gov/northeast/greatdismalswamp/habitat.htm](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/greatdismalswamp/habitat.htm)

**Natural Resource History**

<http://www.ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/disw/ecology.php>

Click on "Checklist," choose a park and click on Dismal Swamp, then choose a group.



Enjoy. . .and learn while you

**Paddle for the Border**

**Sponsored by**



[www.ncsparks.gov](http://www.ncsparks.gov)

**Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge**



[www.fws.gov/northeast/greatdismalswamp](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/greatdismalswamp)

**Dismal Swamp Canal**



[www.DismalSwamp.com](http://www.DismalSwamp.com)

Take a break. . . **Recre-8!**  
Chesapeake Parks and Recreation Department

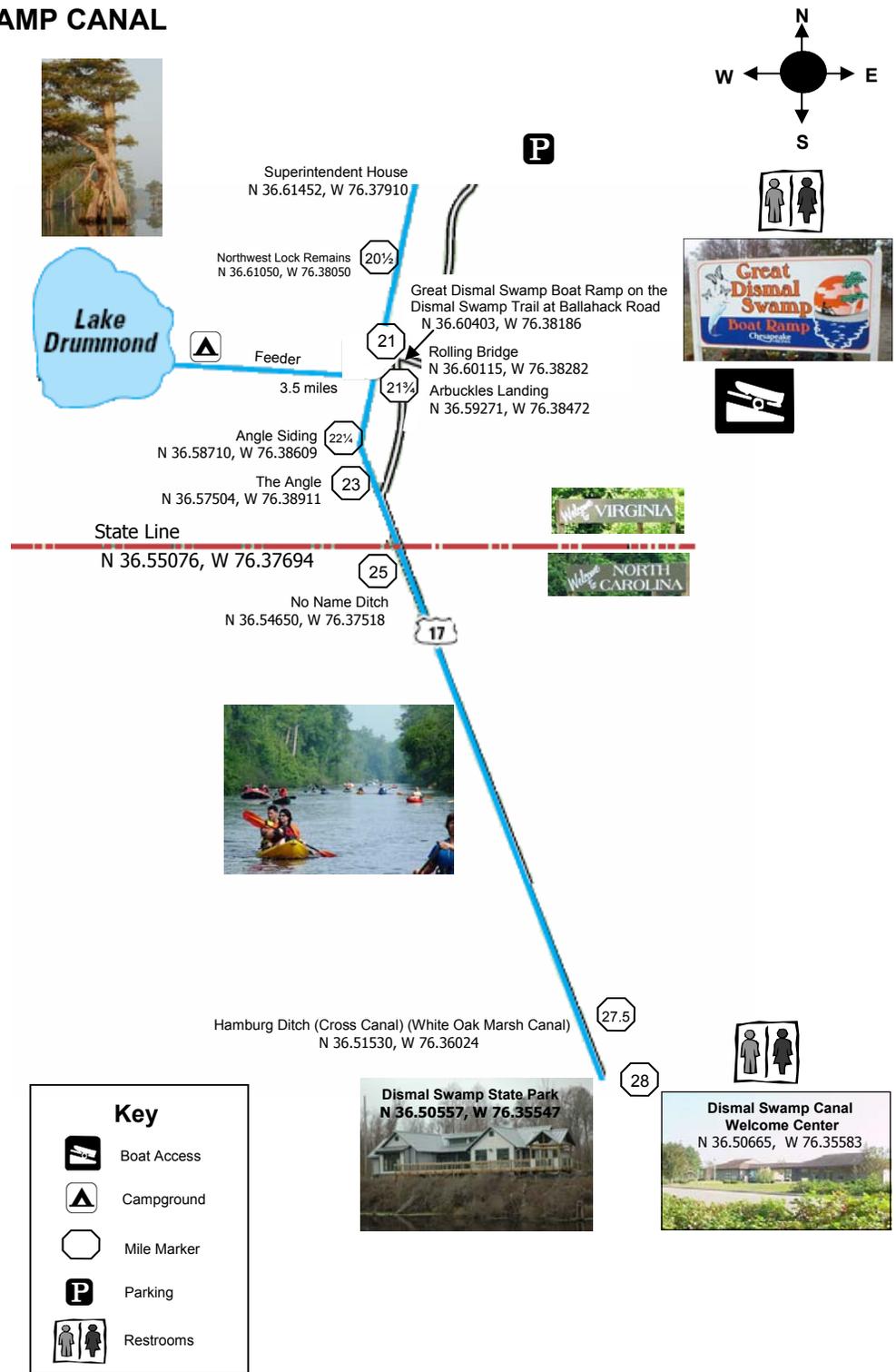
[www.cityofchesapeake.net/parks](http://www.cityofchesapeake.net/parks)

**Dismal Swamp Canal** - The Dismal Swamp Canal (DSC) is a body of water that connects southeastern Virginia to northeastern North Carolina and today is part of the inland body of water known as the Intra-Coastal Waterway. Although originally built for commercial reasons, today the canal is primarily used by recreational boaters as a way to travel along the east coast (Maine to Florida) while avoiding the open waters of the Atlantic Ocean. The history of the DSC dates back to 1787, when the Virginia General Assembly passed the necessary legislation to build the canal. Even though the legislation was in place in 1787, it took until 1805 to complete the work. Over its history, notable Americans, such as George Washington, have recognized the DSC's importance to both the region and the country. Today, the DSC can boast of the oldest maritime locking system of its type still in use, as well as its significant contributions to America's past.

# DISMAL SWAMP CANAL

## Points of Interest Along the Dismal Swamp Canal

- MP 28 Dismal Swamp State Park (west side) - N 36.50557, W 76.35547**  
The NC Division of Parks & Recreation's 5,600 square foot Environmental Education center/Visitor Center.
- Dismal Swamp Canal Welcome Center (east side) - N 36.50665, W 76.35583**  
The only facility in the continental US greeting visitors by a major highway and historic water way. Used annually by over 60,000 by highway and approx. 2,000 by waterway. The 4.5 mile DISMAL SWAMP CANAL TRAIL is used by hikers, bikers, birders and photographers.
- MP 27½ Hamburg Ditch (Cross Canal) White Oak Marsh Canal (west side) N36.51530, W76.36024**  
About 10 miles long, this canal dates back to 1822. It was hand dug by German labor, recruited and imported for that purpose, thus the name Hamburg. It was used to carry crops and other commerce between Gates County, NC and Norfolk, VA via the Dismal Swamp Canal.
- MP 25 No Name Ditch just south of MP 25 (west side) - N 36.54650, W 76.37518**  
Carrying the drainage of South Martha Washington, Persimmon, Sycamore, Corapeake and Kim Saunders Ditches, this discharge has caused many shoaling problems in the main canal in the past.
- State Line just north of MP 25 - N 36.55076, W 76.37694**  
The Lake Drummond Hotel (Halfway House) was located here from 1829 to the late 1850s. **From May 1860 Harpers Magazine:** The landlord lives in the Tar Heel State. His guests were entertained in the Old Dominion. The place is a famous matrimonial rendezvous. The lookout is superb. Nothing but the natural limit of sight hides from each other pursuer and pursued. The precise number of seconds allowed to the latter for donning the manacles of Hymen may easily be learned by sentinel.
- MP 23 The Angle - N 36.57504, W 76.38911**  
Intentionally surveyed this way to "avoid problems in the Northwest River drainage."
- MP 22¼ Angle Siding - N 36.58710, W 76.38609**  
Richmond Cedar Works had a railroad bridge crossing the canal. The trains carried timber products out of the swamp to the factory on the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River. Some repair or storage sheds remain on the west side.
- MP 21¾ Arbuckles Landing (east side) - N 36.59271, W 76.38472**  
Located at the mouth of the feeder ditch it now serves as a canoe/kayak put in. There were several houses and other buildings here. Some evidence remains.
- Duke's Landing just off Rolling Bridge (east side) - N 36.59991, W 76.38293**  
Probably named after Alva Duke within the last 40 years when he had a gas station and grocery store nearby. It is at the end of Ballahack Road.
- MP 21 Rolling Bridge just south of MP 21 - N 36.60115, W 76.38282**  
Using a surplus WWII era "Bailey Bridge," farmers get their equipment, supplies and crops across to and from Dover Farm. The bridge is moved (rolled) by hitching a farm tractor or other equipment to it on the west side, then pushing and pulling it back and forth.
- Great Dismal Swamp Boat Ramp on the Dismal Swamp Trail at Ballahack Road (east side) just before MP 21 - N 36.60403, W 76.38186**
- MP20½ Northwest Lock Remains (both sides) in edge of water along the banks - N 36.61050, W 76.38050**  
Here are the remains of a stone lock built in the 1826 to 1829 enlargement era. It was removed during the great improvement of 1896-1899.
- Superintendent's House (east side) - N 36.61452, W 76.37910**  
For collecting tolls on both canals, this is the only canal side structure left from the Dismal Swamp Canal Company's era.



Key	
	Boat Access
	Campground
	Mile Marker
	Parking
	Restrooms

