

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Erie is one of over 500 refuges in the national wildlife refuge system administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The national wildlife refuge system is a network of lands and waters managed specifically for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat and represents the most comprehensive wildlife management program in the world. Units of the system stretch across the United States from northern Alaska to the Florida Keys and include small islands in the Caribbean and South Pacific. The character of the refuges is as diverse as the nation itself.

The Service also manages national fish hatcheries, and provides Federal leadership in habitat protection, fish and wildlife research, technical assistance and the conservation and protection of migratory birds, certain marine mammals and threatened and endangered species.

For further information, please contact:

Refuge Manager
Erie National Wildlife Refuge
RD 1, Wood Duck Lane
Guys Mills, PA 16327
Telephone: (814) 789-3585

Hard of hearing or deaf visitors may call the Pennsylvania Relay Center at 1-800-654-5984 TDD/1-800-654-5988 voice.

This brochure is also available upon request in a large print version.



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

RL-52520

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Erie

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



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Guys Mills, Pennsylvania

Welcome

Erie National Wildlife Refuge, one of over 500 national wildlife refuges in the United States, is a haven for migratory birds. The refuge is not on the shores of Lake Erie, but lies in Crawford County, 35 miles south of the city of Erie and Lake Erie. The refuge is a namesake of the Erie Indians, an extinct tribe that resided near the lake.

The refuge consists of two separate land divisions. Sugar Lake Division, the more intensely managed portion, lies 10 miles east of Meadville on the outskirts of Guys Mills village. It contains 5,205 acres lying in a narrow valley which includes Woodcock Creek draining to the north and Lake Creek draining to the south. Beaver ponds, pools, and marshland along the creeks are bounded by forested slopes interspersed with croplands, grasslands, and wet meadows.

The Seneca Division is about 10 miles north of Sugar Lake Division or four miles southeast of Cambridge Springs. It consists of 3,545 acres situated in a forested valley where Muddy Creek and Dead Creek provide most of the wetland habitat.

Management

Erie Refuge was established in 1959. The land was purchased with funds provided from the sale of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps (also known as Duck Stamps). The major management objective is to provide waterfowl, primarily ducks, with nesting, feeding, brooding, and resting habitat. Secondary objectives are to provide habitat to support a diversity of other wildlife species and to enhance opportunities for wildlife-oriented public recreation and environmental education.

Over 2,500 acres of wetlands, including beaver floodings, marshes, swamps, man-made impoundments, creeks and wet meadows, provide desirable waterfowl habitat. Water control structures on refuge impoundments permit the manipulation of water levels to encourage the growth of waterfowl food and cover plants such as smartweeds and

bulrushes. Future plans call for more than doubling the amount of manageable habitat now available.

Grasslands are being developed near wetlands to provide dense nesting cover for ground-nesting waterfowl and other birds. Improved nesting cover provides more natural protection from predators and can be just as important to waterfowl production as quality marsh habitat.

A cooperative farming program permits farmers to cultivate crops on refuge lands. Farmers agree to raise certain crops such as oats, grass, clover and corn. In return for using the land, farmers leave the refuge a share of the crops. These refuge shares are usually left in the field as supplemental food for wildlife.

Wildlife

Birds

Waterfowl migrations occur from March to early April and again from September to November. The peak migrating waterfowl population on any given day has been 2,500 ducks and 4,500 Canada geese. Bird enthusiasts may readily see Canada geese, wood ducks, mallards, blue-winged teal, and hooded mergansers. Some less numerous migrants are pintail, green-winged teal, American wigeon, scaup, bufflehead, golden-eye, ring-necked ducks, and black ducks.





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Wood ducks are the most prolific waterfowl nesters on the refuge. Their annual production is significantly increased by the placement of nesting boxes on refuge wetlands. Hooded mergansers, mallards, blue-winged teal and Canada geese are other common resident nesting waterfowl.

Bald eagles and osprey visit the refuge in search of food. Red-tailed hawks and American kestrels are common raptors that nest here.

During the summer shorebirds such as sandpipers and yellowlegs appear in small flocks, feeding on the mudflats. The most noticeable marsh birds are great blue herons, which nest in rookeries on the refuge.

The diverse habitat types found on Erie Refuge attract 236 species of birds. The refuge provides nesting habitat for 112 bird species. A detailed refuge bird brochure may be obtained from the refuge office.

Mammals

Some 33 species of mammals are present on the refuge. The most commonly seen are white-tailed deer, beaver, muskrat and woodchucks.

Fish

Common warm water fish occurring in refuge waters include black crappie, yellow perch, largemouth bass, bluegills, sunfish and bullheads. Common cold water species include trout and white suckers, found in Woodcock Creek.

Visitor Opportunities

Visitor Center

Visitors can view displays, obtain information brochures and talk with personnel at the refuge headquarters/visitor center building Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. til 4:30 p.m. Headquarters is located off Route 198, 3/4-mile east of Guys Mills and 10 miles east of Meadville.

Outdoor Facilities

Facilities are open daily, 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset, unless otherwise posted.

Beaver Run Trail

Two half-mile long paths (a loop and a spur) wind through natural surroundings where visitors can observe a variety of plant and animal life. Trail is located on Hanks Road.

Tsuga Nature Trail

This two-loop trail follows a 1.2 or 1.6 mile route through a variety of habitats. A boardwalk traverses a beaver pond. During winter, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are permitted. Trail is located near headquarters/visitor center.



Deer Run Trail

Animals tracks in the snow or chips beneath a tree where a woodpecker is working can be seen along this three-mile trail which is open during winter for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Trail is located on Boland Road.

Muddy Creek Holly Trail

Winterberry holly, also called black alder, with bright red berries can be seen along the one-mile trail. Trail is located on Johnstown Road, Seneca Division.

Observation Blind

An ideal spot to observe and photograph wildlife. A short path leads to the blind which overlooks Reitz's Pond. Blind is located on Boland/Ritchie Road.

Deer Run Overlook

Eagles can often be observed flying overhead from this high point above the 130-acre Pool 9. Overlook is located on Allen Road.

Wooded Drive

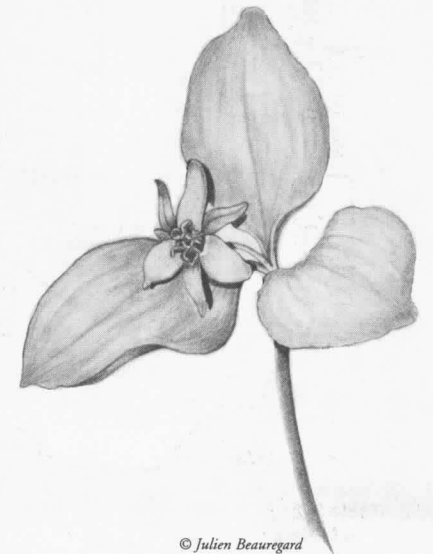
This section of gravel township road is especially scenic and a good spot to observe white-tailed deer and other wildlife.

Hunting and Fishing

Specific regulations and maps are available at headquarters/visitor center.

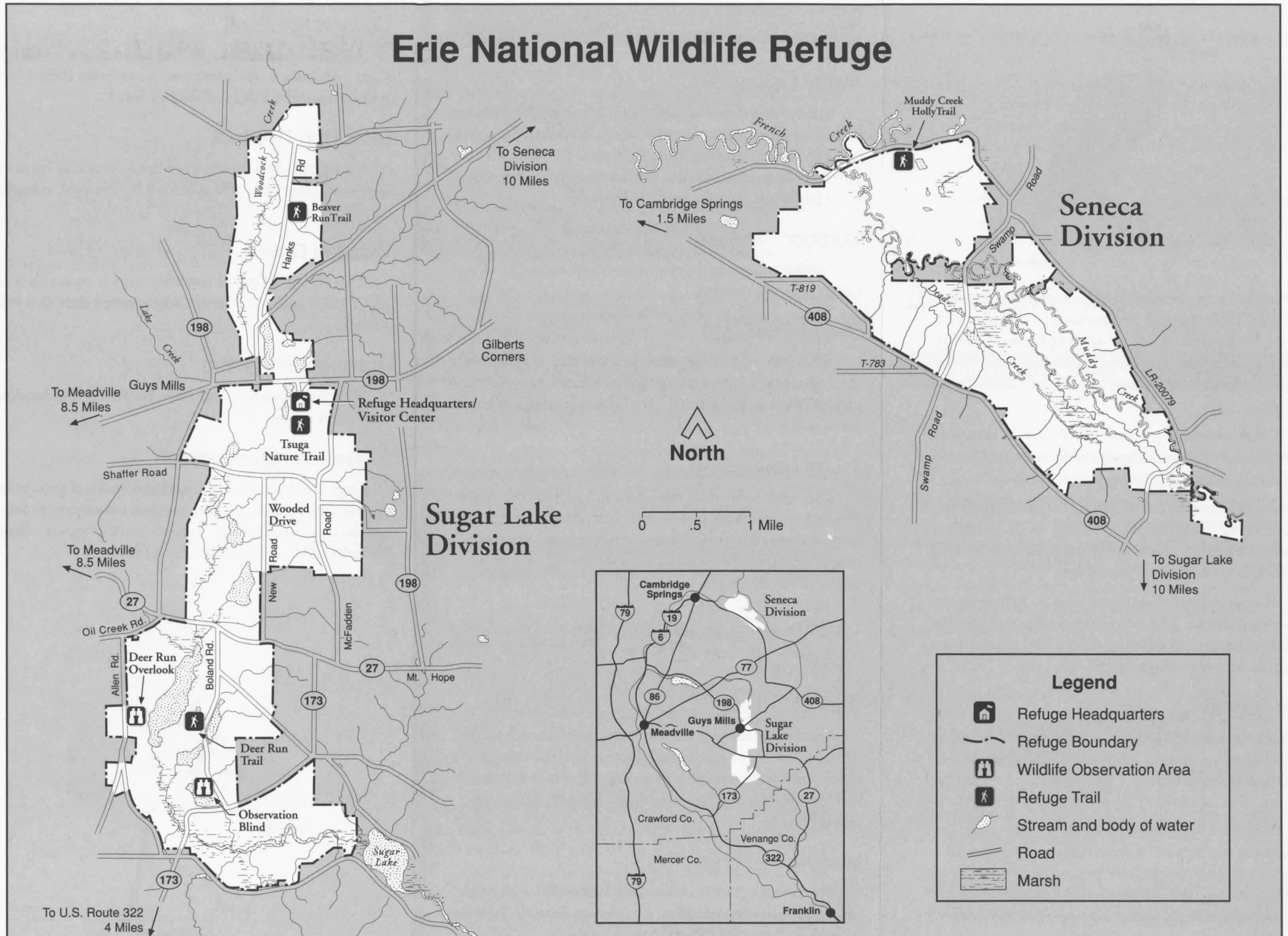
Environmental Education

Organized school, civic and professional groups may reserve dates for slide talks, movies, management tours, and outdoor classrooms. Teacher workshops are offered. Write or call for additional information.



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Erie National Wildlife Refuge



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Legend

- Refuge Headquarters
- Refuge Boundary
- Wildlife Observation Area
- Refuge Trail
- Stream and body of water
- Road
- Marsh