

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Piedmont

*National Wildlife Refuge*

# Cemeteries



*Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge is located in the beautiful rolling clay hills of the lower Georgia Piedmont. The Refuge, which contains 35,000 acres, was purchased under the Resettlement Act in the 1930's when erosion, the boll weevil, and finally the great depression made it impossible for the small farms to provide a living for their owners.*

## A Conservation Success Story

Today, through the efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the 35,000 acre national wildlife refuge is once again a forest. It hosts loblolly pines on the ridges with hardwoods found along creek bottoms. The Refuge manages the forest for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker and associated native wildlife. Clear streams and beaver ponds provide ideal wetlands for migrating waterfowl. Wildlife populations have been restored, many in greater numbers than when settlers first arrived. But there are many reminders of the homes and settlers that once were scattered throughout the area.



## Evidence of Homesteads Remain

Spring is the time of year the old homesites are most visible. Wisteria is in full bloom, and daffodils, lilies and flowers that were once planted in flowerbeds and next to walkways now have crept

*Old homestead located next to Ridley Family Cemetery*

into the woods. Other non-native species such as Chinaberry, Nepalese Browntop, Mimosa, Chinese and Japanese privet will remain long after the last visible remains of the foundations disappear, and have slowly been invading the surrounding forest. Many homesites typically have large, open-grown oaks as well as hackberry in the vicinity.

Cemeteries can be harder to find. The more visible ones have large headstones, table top markers, obelisks, and perhaps wrought iron fences with ornate gates. Other cemeteries may only have a few oval

*Cover: Ridley Family Cemetery*



or rectangular indentations or field stones marking the graves. The Refuge's cemeteries are most easily seen during the winter after the understory has lost its leaves. All of the cemeteries share certain characteristics, such as old cedars, large mature oaks, and dogwood, growing within them. They are often located on ridges or hills and have old roadbeds leading to and around them. At least three Refuge cemeteries have limestone or concrete block walls built around several graves. There are indications that several cemeteries had ornamental metal or wrought iron fences around them or

*Photos, top to bottom: C. Gordon burial site; tabletops in Clowers Cemetery; Fieldstone in Childs Cemetery*

around individual family plots. Often ornamental shrubs or trees, such as red cedar, mark the corners or boundary lines of the cemetery.

You can find several different types of grave markers on the refuge. One of the most common markers is an engraved or carved tabletstone. Often these stones are set on a base and accompanied by a footstone that may be carved with initials of the deceased. Another type of marker is a large tabletop stone either set flush on the ground or placed on a stone box or vault. Tabletop stones are rectangular-shaped markers about three feet wide by six feet long and two inches thick. At least one cemetery has vaulted crypts or boxtombs, which are variation of the flat tabletop markers.



Monuments, such as obelisks, are present in several of the refuge's cemeteries. Rectangular rock cairns, seen in the Beeland Cemetery, were occasionally placed over the grave. Uncarved fieldstone markers, sometimes accompanied with smaller footstones, are used in a number of the cemeteries. A number of graves are not marked, but visible only as oval or rectangular indentations that range from three to five feet in length.

### **A Tie to the Past**

Cemeteries located on Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge are a link to the settlers

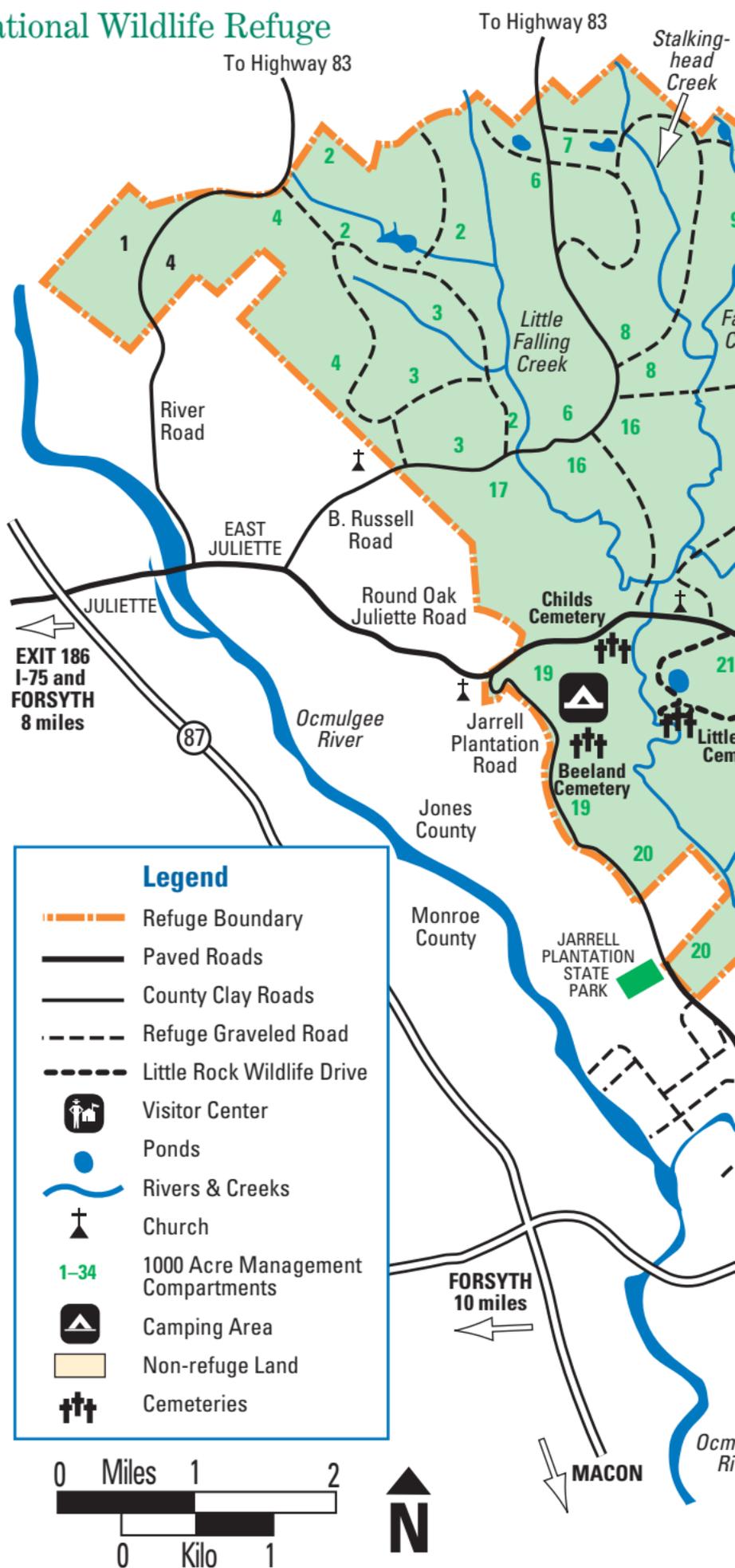
*Top: Obelisk, headstone and tabletop in Glover Cemetery; below: Rock cairn in Island Cemetery*

that once lived on this land. Headstones are inscribed with dates leading as far back as the 1700s, and mark the graves of several generations. There are Revolutionary War as well as Civil War veterans' graves, and several cemeteries are regularly visited by family and friends. The gravestones are cultural artifacts that can teach us much about our American forebears.

Thirty two cemeteries have been documented on the Refuge since the late 1990s. Five of these cemeteries are easily accessed by the public. Drop by the Refuge Office to inquire about access to the other cemeteries. The Refuge staff does record newly identified cemeteries periodically and welcomes information about undocumented cemeteries. Questions and comments are welcome at the Refuge Visitor Center or by telephone at 478/986 5441.

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*Granite enclosure surrounding Unnamed Cemetery #11*

## Exploring the Refuge

Piedmont Refuge is part of a system of more than 540 National Wildlife Refuges, which provide for the conservation and management of habitats to

benefit fish and wildlife. The refuge uses a variety of management techniques, primarily timber harvest and prescribed burning to sustain a healthy pine / hardwood forest. The refuge strives to provide quality wildlife dependant recreational opportunities when compatible with refuge management objectives.

The refuge is open to the public year round for visitation during day-light hours, except during big game hunts.

The refuge boundary is marked with signs and yellow paint.

Some access roads may be closed for small game and turkey seasons or in bad weather.

Contact the refuge office for more information or to report any violations of refuge regulations 478/ 986 5441.

### General Prohibited Activities

- Taking, collecting, or disturbing any plant or wildlife other than that specifically permitted by refuge regulation
- Removal of any public property including natural objects
- Search for or removal of objects of antiquity, archaeological, and historic resources, such as grave markers, bricks, pottery, and bottles
- Marking trails with flagging, blazing, painting, paper, trash or other devices



*Piedmont  
National  
Wildlife Refuge  
Visitor Center;  
open 8 am - 5 pm  
weekdays*

- Entering the refuge during deer firearm hunts without a refuge permit
- Possessing firearms except by permitted hunters during open seasons

- Off road vehicle travel. Vehicle travel is limited to open graveled roads
- Use of ATVs or other off road vehicles
- Blocking refuge road, boat ramp or gate with vehicles or vehicle travel around a closed gate
- Disturbing, annoying or interfering with other persons
- Unleashed pets
- Litter

### **Cemetery Regulations**

- Enjoy your visit, but respect your surroundings. Use caution when walking to and around the cemeteries.
- Photographing the cemeteries and individual markers and transcribing the inscriptions are encouraged.
- Cleaning the stones and grave rubbings can cause damage and are not permitted.
- Gravestones are easily damaged or uprooted. Jumping, leaping, or swinging from the stones are not permitted. Doing so can result in serious damage or injury to both visitors and stones.
- Children are to be supervised at all times.
- Pack out any garbage and litter.



### **Childs Cemetery**

The Childs Cemetery is located in compartment 19 less than 1/4 mile off Juliette Road, near Falling Creek. In this cemetery there are 15 marked graves with various types of headstones and at least 19 graves with fieldstones as markers. Buried in this cemetery is John Childs Sr. who was a Revolutionary Soldier. John Childs was born in 1751 in Louisa County,

#### *Childs Cemetery*

Virginia and died May 15, 1825 in Jones County, Georgia. John Childs and his wife Susannah Childs (originally Satterwhite) raised 11 children. Originally there were un-etched markers marking the grave, and on January 22, 2000 his descendants placed a marker on his grave.



### **Gunn Cemetery**

Also known as the Allison Lake Cemetery, this cemetery is located just west of the Refuge Visitor Center and is accessible from the Pine trail. Within this cemetery there are six legible head

#### *Gunn Cemetery*

and foot stones and about twenty graves marked with fieldstones. One of the headstones marks the grave of Daniel Gunn, who was born March 14, 1763 and died August 25, 1825. Daniel Gunn was a Revolutionary War soldier, and together with his wife Susan Street Gunn raised nine children. Descendants of Daniel and Sarah Gunn still reside in Monroe County today.



### **Beeland Cemetery**

This cemetery is also known as the Pippins Lake Campground Cemetery. Located 1/2 mile from gate into campground in compartment 19, the cemetery is surrounded by a wrought iron fence and has at least 21

*Beeland Cemetery*

graves. In addition to several graves marked with headstones and footstones, there are also some tabletops made of rocks and bricks. Descendents of the Beeland family still reside in the area today.



### **Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Trail Cemetery**

Located in compartment 14 along the 2.5 mile long Red-Cockaded Woodpecker trail is a burial site surrounded by a block wall. Within the

*Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Trail Cemetery*

walled site are at least three graves marked by headstones that once had engravings along the face, but time and the elements have made them unreadable.



### **Little Rock Cemetery**

This cemetery is a wonderful example of the cemeteries on the Refuge that do not have improved grave markers. Located in compartment 21 not even 100 feet off the Wildlife Drive, the cemetery has over 20

*Little Rock Cemetery*

graves marked only by fieldstones. The graves are oriented in several rows and seem to follow the ridge. For further directions to this and other cemeteries, please ask at the Visitor Center.

*All photos:  
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**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**  
1 800/344 WILD for general FWS information

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