This goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Benton Lake
National Wildlife Refuge

Public Use Opportunities

Welcome
Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1929 to provide habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife. On national wildlife refuges, the needs of wildlife and their habitat must come first. However, visitors are welcome at this Refuge and are encouraged to enjoy wildlife-oriented recreation, which includes wildlife observation and photography, sightseeing, hiking, cross-country skiing, bicycling, and hunting. Please observe the regulations listed in this handout, which have been established to protect and conserve wildlife and their habitats.

General Information
- The Refuge is open to visitors from dawn to dusk.
- The Refuge headquarters and visitor center is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, except on Federal holidays.
- Accessible restrooms are available in the headquarters building during operating hours. Outdoor accessible restrooms, located near the headquarters parking lot, are always available.
- It is not unusual for Refuge roads to be closed due to mud, snow, or high water. When inclement weather is a possibility, it is advisable to call prior to your visit to check road conditions.
- Access to particular areas of the Refuge may be limited seasonally to protect nesting birds and their young.
- Please carry out all trash and dispose of it properly.
- All wildlife and plants are protected, including rattlesnakes and other reptiles and amphibians.

Visitor Opportunities and Regulations
Activities not specifically covered in this handout are prohibited unless special permission is obtained from the Refuge Manager. If you are in doubt about a specific activity, contact Refuge staff at the headquarters for further information.

Roads and Parking
- Prairie Marsh Wildlife Drive is open year-round; however, access may be limited in the winter. Be sure to pick up the companion leaflet for the wildlife drive at the orientation kiosk or at the headquarters.
- Lower Marsh Road is open from July 15 until the opening of waterfowl hunting season. Large vehicles (RVs or vehicles towing trailers) are not permitted on this road due to rough road conditions and tight turns at either end.
- During the Refuge hunting season, Lower Marsh Road provides access to the hunt area; through travel is not permitted.
- There are four designated visitor parking areas on the Refuge *(see map)*. If you are not close to one of these parking areas when you want to stop, park on the road shoulder where you will not block a trail, a gate, or another road. During hunting season, refer to the Hunting Information handout for specific parking restrictions.
- No overnight camping or overnight parking is allowed on the Refuge. Fires are not permitted.

Wildlife Observation and Photography
- You are likely to get ample opportunities for viewing and photographing wildlife if you travel along the Prairie Marsh Wildlife Drive or Lower Marsh Road, especially in the early morning or evening. Please note the Lower Marsh Road is open from July 15 until the opening of waterfowl hunting season.
- A photography/observation blind, located on the Unit 1 wetland, is open year-round on a first-come, first-served basis.
- A blind for observing the courting ritual of sharp-tailed grouse is available by reservation in April and May.
- Privately-owned, temporary photography/observation blinds are allowed along the Prairie Marsh Wildlife Drive year-round. These types of blinds are allowed in other selected areas by Special Use Permit only. Contact the Refuge Manager for more information.

Non-motorized watercraft
Non-motorized watercraft are allowed only during the Refuge hunting season in the Refuge hunt area.

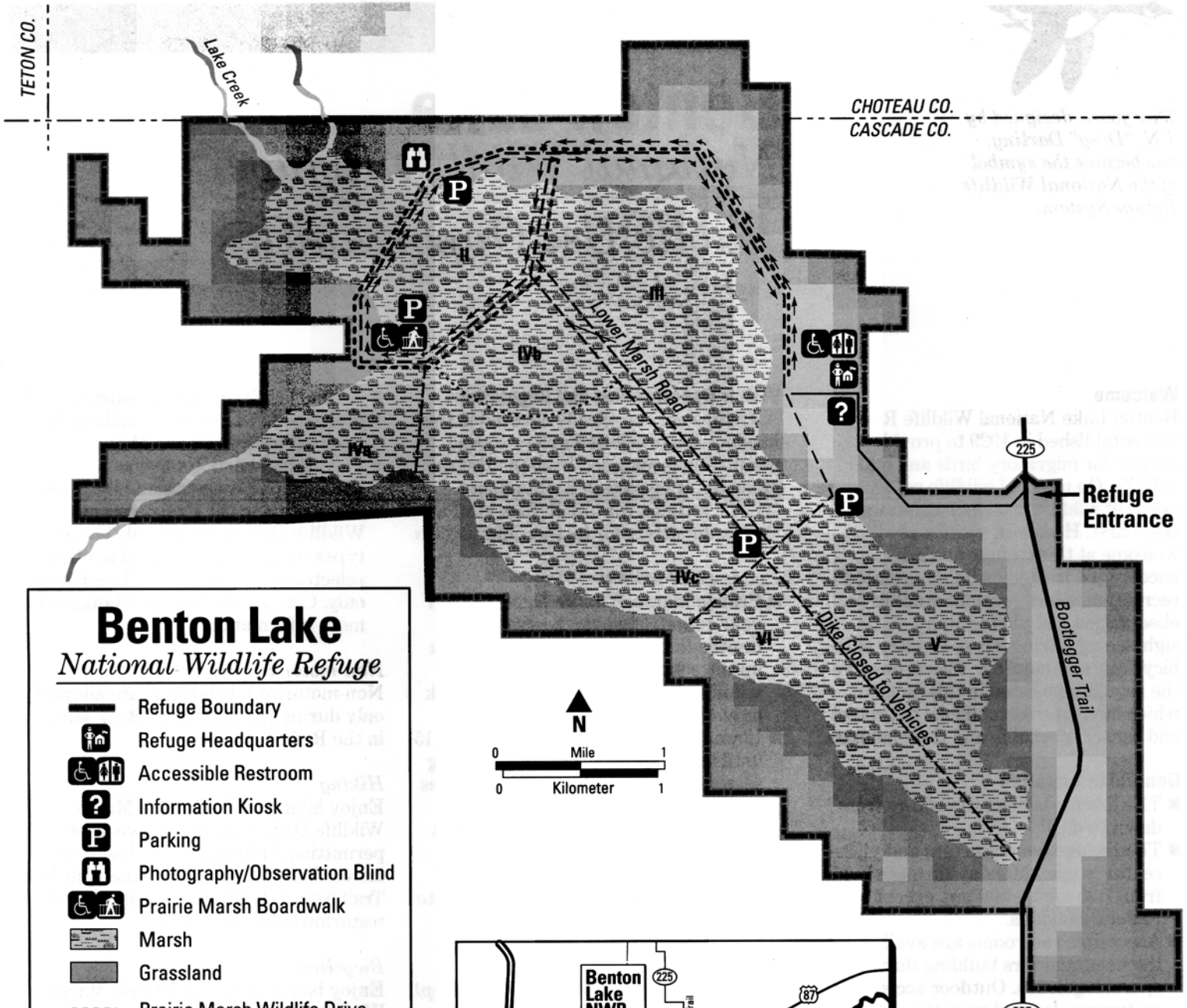
Hiking
Enjoy hiking on the Prairie Marsh Wildlife Drive year-round, weather permitting. Hiking is also allowed on Lower Marsh Road and on the Unit IVb Trail from July 15 until the opening of waterfowl hunting season.

Bicycling
Enjoy bicycling on the Prairie Marsh Wildlife Drive year-round, weather permitting. Bicycling is also allowed on Lower Marsh Road from July 15 until the opening of waterfowl hunting season.

Cross-country Skiing
The entire Refuge is open to cross-country skiing from December 15 to February 28.

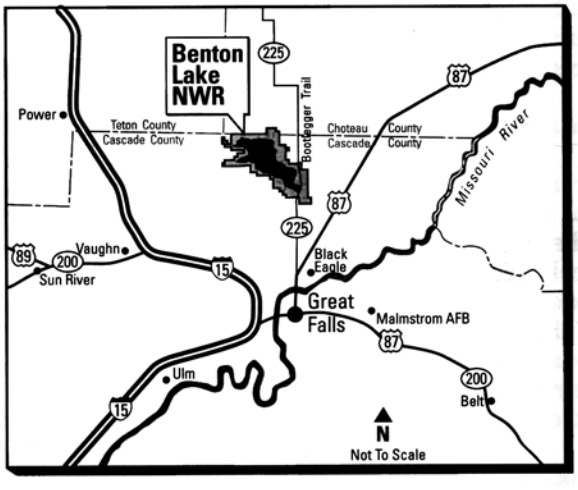
Dogs
To protect nesting birds and other wildlife, pets must be leashed and remain on the Prairie Marsh Wildlife Drive, except during the hunting season in the Refuge hunt area.

Hunting
Hunting ducks, geese, coots, mergansers, tundra swans, gray partridge, ring-necked pheasants, and sharp-tailed grouse is permitted on the Refuge. All State of Montana hunting regulations apply. For Refuge-specific hunting regulations, refer to the Hunting Information handout.



Benton Lake
National Wildlife Refuge

- Refuge Boundary
- Refuge Headquarters
- Accessible Restroom
- Information Kiosk
- Parking
- Photography/Observation Blind
- Prairie Marsh Boardwalk
- Marsh
- Grassland
- Prairie Marsh Wildlife Drive
- Paved Road
- Unpaved Road
- Direction of Traffic Flow
- Unit IVb Trail *(open July 15 until the opening of waterfowl hunting season)*



Accessibility
Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. Dial 7-1-1 for a free connection to the State transfer relay service for TTY and voice calls to and from the speech and hearing impaired. For more information or to address accessibility needs, please contact the Refuge staff at 406 / 727 7400, or the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge
922 Bootlegger Trail
Great Falls, MT 59404
406 / 727 7400
406 / 727 7432 fax
www.fws.gov/bentonlake

For State transfer relay service
TTY / Voice: 711

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
http:/www.fws.gov

For Refuge Information
1 800 / 344 WILD

May 2008