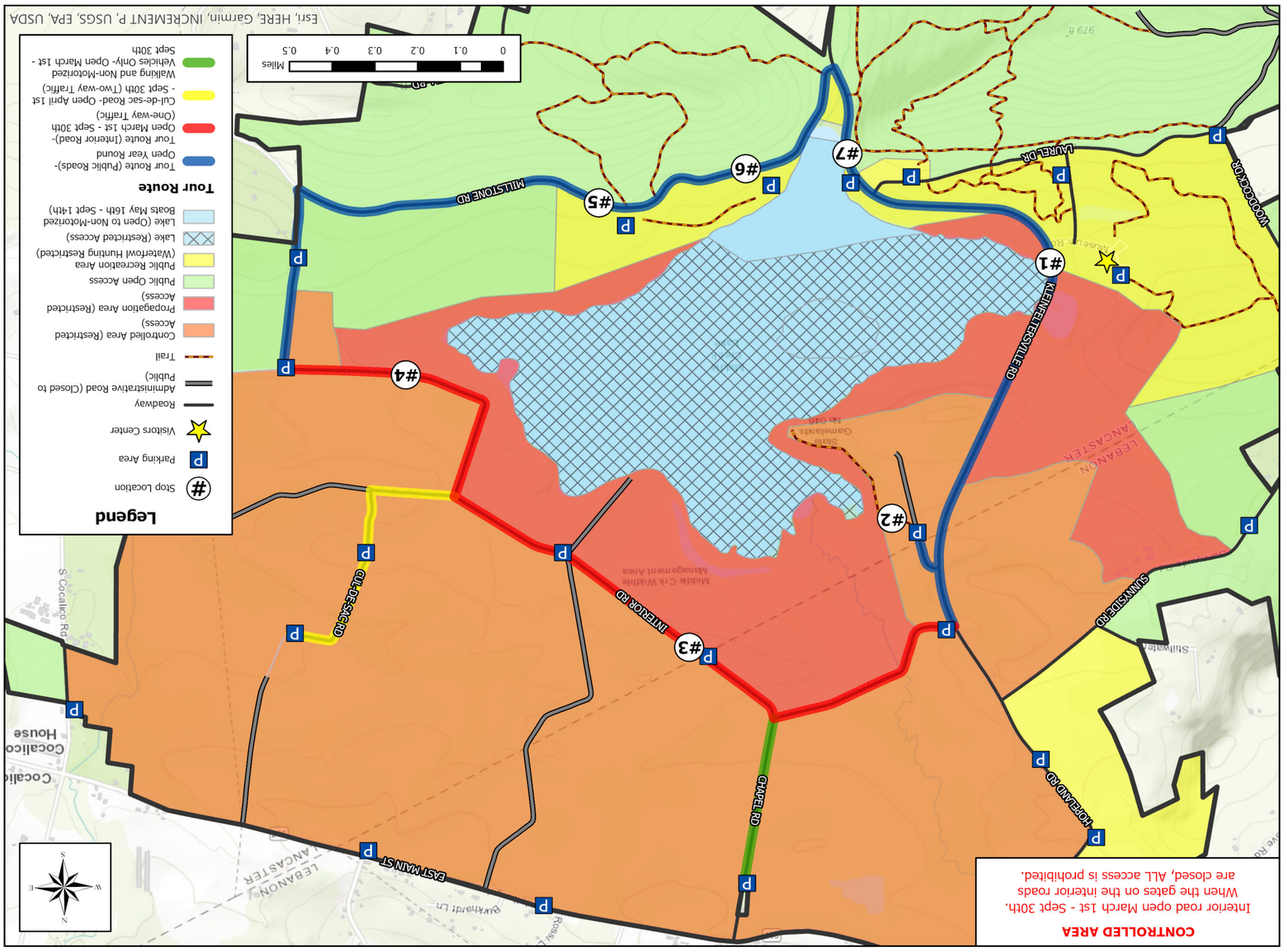
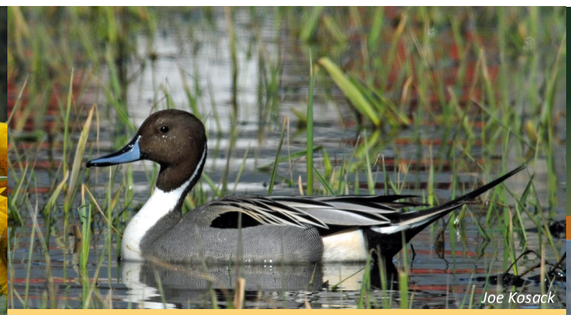
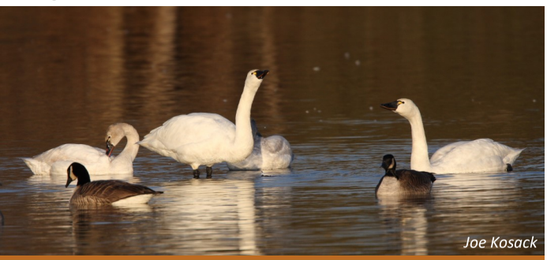


Jacob Dingel


Joe Kosack

the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (Federal) funds allocated to the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Project 500, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and Game Fund monies were used to develop the area. However, since the area opened in 1973, the maintenance and operation of the area has been financed by Pennsylvania hunters and furtakers whose dollars spent on licenses and hunting equipment provide the bulk of the agency's working capital.

This completes the tour of Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area. The Pennsylvania Game Commission sincerely hopes the tour was enjoyable and interesting. Remember that good habitat remains the key for healthy wildlife populations. This area boasts a wide diversity of wildlife that benefits from the modern land management and conservation practices employed at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area.


Joe Kosack

www.pgc.pa.gov

Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area

GPS Address:

100 Museum Road
Stevens, PA

Mailing Address:

PO Box 110
Kleinfeltersville PA 17039
717-733-1512

PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

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Southwest:	724-238-9523
Northcentral:	570-398-4744
Southcentral:	814-643-1831
Northeast:	570-675-1143
Southeast:	610-926-3136

LF 0119

MIDDLE CREEK WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Hal Korber

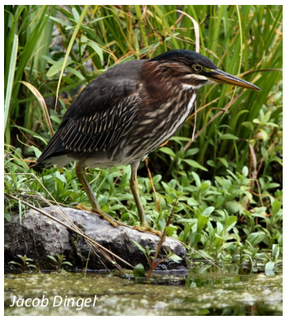
DRIVING TOUR

See Middle Creek at Your Pace

START:
THE VISITORS CENTER

At the heart of the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, the Visitors Center houses a number of Pennsylvania wildlife exhibits, ranging from taxidermic mounts to interactive stations. There also is a gift shop, video room and restrooms. This facility also serves as the registration point for hunters participating in the area's controlled hunts.

In addition, the Visitors Center features an auditorium and an observation area, which provides binoculars to glass the impressive vista before you. The windows offer a view of the main lake and the songbird feeding station. These facilities, along with the rest of the area, are incorporated into the environmental education program for thousands of school students.


Jacob Dingel

STOP #1:
WATERFOWL HABITAT

On the right, you can observe the southwestern portion of the lake. Take notice of the three different types of nesting structures provided for waterfowl. The tire and tub structures are provided for Canada geese, the straw tubes are for mallards and black ducks, and the box style structures are for wood ducks. The island in the center of the lake provides excellent nesting habitat for Canada geese. This stop also occasionally provides a great opportunity to see a bald eagle on the snags (standing dead trees) in the main impoundment. Watch the water and sky to your front and right for the conspicuous birds of prey. The Visitors Center pond is on your left. During spring and fall migrations, this is an excellent spot to observe mallards, black ducks, northern shovelers, ring-necked ducks, wood ducks, hooded mergansers and others.

The "tree-house" type structure located behind the pond and viewable from the Visitors Center is a bat condominium. It is intended to serve as a maternal colony for up to 6,000 bats. In addition to bats, numerous other mammal species benefit from the land management practices here at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area.

Joe Kosack

Before reaching Stop #2, notice on the right, the dike structure designed to provide additional habitat for waterfowl and other wetland birds. The creation of this dike was a cooperative effort between the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Ducks Unlimited, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. If the water is receding, look for black ducks and green-winged teal feeding on the exposed mud flats. The area also draws shorebirds during their migrations.

STOP #2:
WILLOW POINT TRAIL

An easy 10-minute hike will take the visitor to an observation point, which overlooks a large portion of the 360-acre lake. In late February and early March, about halfway out on your walk to the point, watch for tundra swans to your left on open water of this secluded area of the main impoundment. Willow Point is popular during the migration seasons. With a pair of binoculars or a spotting scope, it is possible to observe a wide variety of bird life including Canada geese, snow geese, tundra swans, and numerous duck species. An open-sided pavilion will protect you from some weather on the point and spotting scopes will bring you close to the action. During spring migration, there are days when waterfowl put on incredible flight displays right along and over Willow Point, which also is an excellent lookout for bald eagles. We hope you experience some of this unforgettable action while you're out there. Willow Point and the trail to it are closed occasionally for management reasons. If the road to the Willow Point Trail parking area is closed, no access is permitted. This is infrequent and usually occurs from November into January.

STOP #3:
OBSERVATION POINT PARKING LOT

From this point it is possible to see within the waterfowl propagation area, which is off limits to people and allows wildlife to nest, rest and feed unmolested year-round. The shallow dike, located directly ahead, is used by waterfowl and wading birds. In the spring and early summer, look for a variety of songbird activity. The bird boxes will have tree swallow and bluebird activity as the birds begin their nesting seasons in spring. In addition, these fields can provide an opportunity to observe bobolinks. During spring, the male bobolinks are especially visible as they establish their territories. This location features undisturbed, high-grass fields that bobolinks and other grassland-nesting birds need to nest successfully. These fields are periodically treated with prescribed fire to spur habitat rejuvenation. Prior to reaching Stop #4, you may choose to access the cul-de-sac area, which does not open until April 1. This is a narrow, dead-end road with two-way traffic so please drive slowly and attentively.

Jacob Dingel

STOP #4
VIEW OF LAKE FROM THE EAST

From this point, look back over the lake at the series of snags and dead trees. This is another good location to observe bald eagles. Bald eagles have nested at Middle Creek since 1999. In 1980, only two nests were known to exist in the Commonwealth. This was the result of the pesticide DDT and other environmental factors. With a ban placed on DDT in 1972, the environment improved, along with Pennsylvania's eagle population. By 2017, Game Commission personnel monitor more than 275 nests in the state. Some of this success also can be attributed to the bald eagle reintroduction program conducted by the Game Commission from 1983 to 1989. During that time, 88 eaglets were raised and released into the wild. Many of those birds returned to Pennsylvania to nest as adults. There are more shallow water impoundments in the area, sometimes affording good looks at waterfowl.

STOP #5
THE WHITE OAK PICNIC AREA

White Oak is one of three picnic areas at Middle Creek. Open fires are prohibited; self-contained stoves or charcoal grills are permitted unless otherwise designated by a manager. The picnic area is named after the huge white oak near the entrance. Study this tree and notice the lateral — or spreading — branching. This is indicative of a tree that grew in open spaces earlier in its life. The tree is believed to be at least 200 years old and was situated at one time in pasture or farmland.

Joe Kosack

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The Millstone Trail starts across the road from this area and affords an excellent view of the valley from a mountaintop vista. The trail is a loop of a little more than a mile. Be prepared for a steep and rocky ascent. In the past, millstones were quarried in this area; one can be found discarded at the top. It appears the stone cracked while being shaped with chisels. Another trail, the Deer Path Trail, also can be accessed from this area. This half-mile trail goes through wet woodlands between the White Oak Picnic Area and the Red Rock Picnic Area.

STOP #6
RED ROCK PICNIC AREA/FISHING ACCESS AREA

This public-access area contains the fishing and boating section of the lake. Only the lower 40 acres of the lake are accessible, the rest is reserved for wildlife. The area is marked by a buoy line above the dam and another running through the lake. Fishing from the shoreline around the boat launch is permitted year-round. This area also is a popular ice-fishing spot. Fish species include bass, crappies, catfish, carp and other panfish. Only non-motorized boats (no electric motors and no sailboats) are permitted from May 16 through September 14. Overnight mooring is prohibited.

This can be another good area for birding since it affords a view of the other side of the large island. Some of the bird species to look for include diving ducks such as ruddy ducks, buffleheads, common mergansers, ring-necked ducks, and other bird species including great blue herons, common egrets and belted kingfishers.

STOP #7
THE MAIN DAM STRUCTURE

The impoundment was created by the construction of this dam in the early 1970s. It is quite shallow, with an average depth of only three feet, which was a result of topography and design. The types of waterfowl that may potentially spend time here are those that prefer shallow water, compared to the big diving ducks of the Chesapeake Bay. The deepest part of the lake is just above the dam. When built, the depth there was about 13 feet in the former creek channel. Siltation over the years has reduced that depth to around eight feet. At the dam, you may see herons, egrets and kingfishers. Also, spotted sandpipers may be seen during the low flows of summer.

The construction of this impoundment and the relocation of Hopeland Road were paid by Project 70 and