

# Waterfowl Way Hiking Trail Introduction

A complex world of plants and animals await you on Waterfowl Way. Walk this area as the Caddo Indians once did, with respect and admiration for the works of nature.

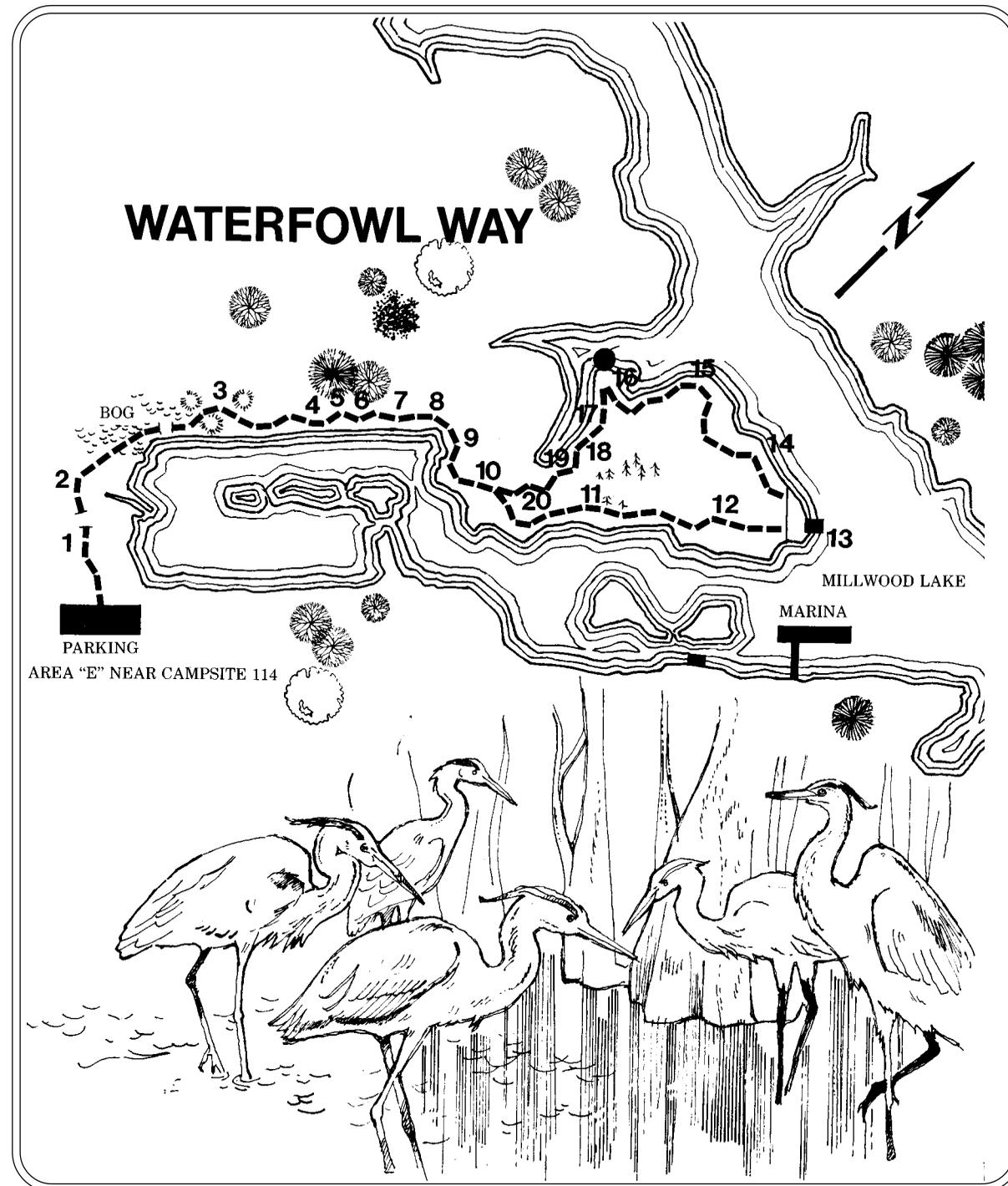
Waterfowl Way is a 1 1/2-mile self-guided trail. Markers embedded in the ground correspond with the site numbers in this brochure to explain some of the unique features of this natural area. Hikers should allow at least an hour to complete this easy trail.

Here, as in all state parks, all plants and animals must be left undisturbed. Please stay on the designated trail to retain the natural setting just as you have found it today.

1. Food Plot - About 75% of Millwood State Park is an undeveloped forest of primarily mixed pine and hardwood. Why is there a wildlife food plot here? Our food plot serves several purposes. First, it provides food and cover to wildlife. Secondly, it is to remind you that there are many things you can do to provide food and shelter for wildlife regardless of your location. From the smallest "city" yard, to the broad expanses of unused field, many types of trees, shrubs, and other vegetation are available for planting. Contact your local Game and Fish Commission officer to receive planting packets, most of which are free!

2. Poison Ivy/Oak - Contact with the oils of this plant may lead to a skin reaction. Regardless of its effect on people, it is a very important plant in the forest. Growing as a vine and groundcover, this plant is responsible for curbing soil erosion due to its extensive root system. Both wild and domestic animals enjoy eating poison ivy/oak. Cows usually eat it faster than it will grow, with no ill effects.

3. Greenbrier - Known locally as sawbrier, or catbrier, this vine grows thickly in this area. Note the stems that seem to have been pruned about 12 to 18 inches from the



ground. These low tendrils have been eaten by rabbits and other small animals. The taller tendrils that seem to have been pruned, were eaten by deer.

4. Prairie Bumps - Look for mounds of dirt, from one to four feet high, throughout the surrounding woods and even the campground. These mysterious mounds are part of a phenomena that occur along a path leading

from Texas to northeast Arkansas. Referred to as prairie bumps, these mounds are thought to have been formed by generations of burrowing animals that live together in colonies. Their constant burrowing and tunneling formed mounds of dirt where the colonies lived. Native Americans often used these hills as ready-made housing platforms to keep their living quarters dryer during heavy rains. There may have been several camps on this mound.

5. Palmetto - These large, spike-leaved plants look like a desert dweller. They are a member of the palm family, and grow well in this part of Arkansas, whether on wet or dry areas.

6. Huckleberry - Visions of huckleberry muffins, pancakes, and jam will haunt you as you scan this area of the trail. This wild blueberry plant has been the object of searches by both animals and people. The small berries ripen in summer and are deliciously sweet.

7. Farming/Logging - As far as you can see, this land has been logged. As early as the 1820's, large areas were cut or burned to make way for crops and to supply wood for early Americans.

8. Bald cypress - This water-loving tree is one of many beginning to grow around the edge of Lake Millwood. Bald cypress lumber is sought for construction due to its natural water resistance.

9. Chiggers and Ticks - It was probably not in your plans to become a human food plot when you began your walk, but if you have been veering off the trail into the underbrush, you may be the new host for a few parasitic critters. One of these pests may be one of the local species of ticks. These blood-sucking insects come in all sizes and used to be no more than uncomfortable pests. However, the threat of Lyme disease has spread from the east. If a tick becomes lodged in your skin, use tweezers to completely remove the tick's body and head. Watch the area for several days to note any redness, swelling, fever, or generalized illness and see your family doctor should such symptoms develop.

Another uncomfortable pest, chiggers are baby mites that burrow under your skin to enjoy a meal of human cells, which they dissolve into a soupy mixture before dining. They are difficult to see, measuring only 1/150th of an inch, but their itch is enormous.

10. Beaver Run - This narrow ditch was made by beavers traveling between the small inlet to the north, and the larger water area to the south. Beavers are quite wary, and may have just moved off as you approached.

11. Aquatic Plants - There are many plants growing in the lake. From reeds growing at the water's edge, to thick moss growing out of sight in deeper water, plants provide several benefits to fish. Plants provide shade on a hot day, shelter to hide in or behind, and increased oxygen levels. For these reasons, they are also a great place for an angler to fish around in hopes of catching that "big 'un!"

12. Animal Homes - There's a whole lot of holes around here. Holes in the ground, holes in the trees, under bark, and under leaves. Animal homes aren't confined to holes, but are preferred by many animals because of their safety, dryness, and comfort.

13. Lake and Dam View - Behold the longest earthen dam in Arkansas. In 1966, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dedicated Millwood Lake. Built to control flooding in this area, the lake has become famous for its good fishing. The lake will not reach its maximum capacity until the water is about 20' over your head.

14. Shagbark Hickory - It's easy to see how this tree got its name. Notice the loose, shaggy appearance of the bark. Several varieties of hickories occur in this area, but the wood of this tree is the hardest and heaviest. One cubic foot of this wood weighs 51 pounds. Besides its use for smoking meat, the wood is commonly used for handles of work tools.

15. Photography Blind - Sitting quietly at this point may earn you the chance to see wading birds such as the majestic great blue heron or snowy egret. In addition, the presence of a

large beaver population means that you may see one of them swimming from cove to cove, or returning home with a fresh cut tree limb for a snack.

16. Beaver Lodge - Pretty close, aren't you? Can you see that through the shallow water there are several "runs" or paths entering this lodge? Beavers like to have several doors leading in and out of their lodges. This large mound is a den of 2 or 3 families of beaver, that usually mate for life. During early to mid-summer, young beavers may be seen for the first time out of the den feeding on plants around the edge of the lake.

17. Alligator Pocket - Silence...all around... the coolness of the water soothing the sun's summer rays. The need for oxygen summons the large black head to the surface. Eyes and nose above the water, eyes peer into the trees searching for movement. Caution arises, and nervous tail movements begin. Swirling silty clouds darken the shallow water. Movement again in the woods, and the alligator eases down, and out of site towards a more peaceful snoozing area. Did you scare him?

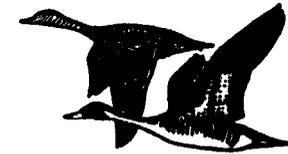
Take advantage of this wildlife blind to prevent careful eyes from seeing you. This is a common area for the largest reptile in the United States to sleep...or hunt.

18. Listening Stop - Have you been asked the question, "If a tree fell in the woods, would it make noise if there was nobody to hear it?" How difficult it is for us to remember that the world does not simply exist for us. If you had the chance to hear a tree fall in the woods right now, it would sound much the same as it did several million years ago...the only difference being that you weren't around then to hear it. Take a moment to enjoy the sound of the leaves rustling, birds chirping, and insects buzzing.

19. Indians - Tattoos etched with thorns and natural dyes were a common practice among the Caddo Indians that once thrived along the rivers in this area. A highly religious group, the Caddo commonly built ceremonial mounds on which to worship. Artifacts are commonly recovered around Millwood, as the

rich, open areas along the rivers allowed for easy soil preparation for the numerous crops for which the Caddo were famous.

20. River Traffic - The period of 1840 to 1890 was the greatest era for riverboat traffic on the Little River. Millwood landing was located just Northeast of where you are now. Hundreds of steamboats traveled up and down Little River, their decks loaded with cotton, furs, lumber, and traders. The average speed of riverboats coming up river was about 5 mph. The pilot would blow his steam whistles periodically to announce the riverboat's arrival to the next landing. Local folks could hear the whistle for 5 to 7 miles away, and would often drop what they were doing to meet the boat at the landing.



We hope you have enjoyed the sights and sounds of Waterfowl Way. For those interested in learning more about the natural world of Millwood, stop by the visitor center to talk with the park staff. In the visitor center you will also find schedules of interpretive programs presented seasonally and special events offered throughout the year.

Notice: To preserve scenic beauty and ecology, fences and warning signs have not been installed in some park locations. Caution and supervision of your children are required while visiting these areas.

For further information on park facilities, contact: Millwood State Park  
1564 Hwy 32 East  
Ashdown, AR 71822  
Telephone: (870) 898-2800  
e-mail: millwood@arkansas.com

For further information on Arkansas' other fine state parks, contact: Arkansas State Parks  
One Capitol Mall, 4A-900  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
Telephone: (501)682-1191  
www.ArkansasStateParks.com

