

Hart Mountain

National Antelope Refuge
Oregon

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Sage Grouse

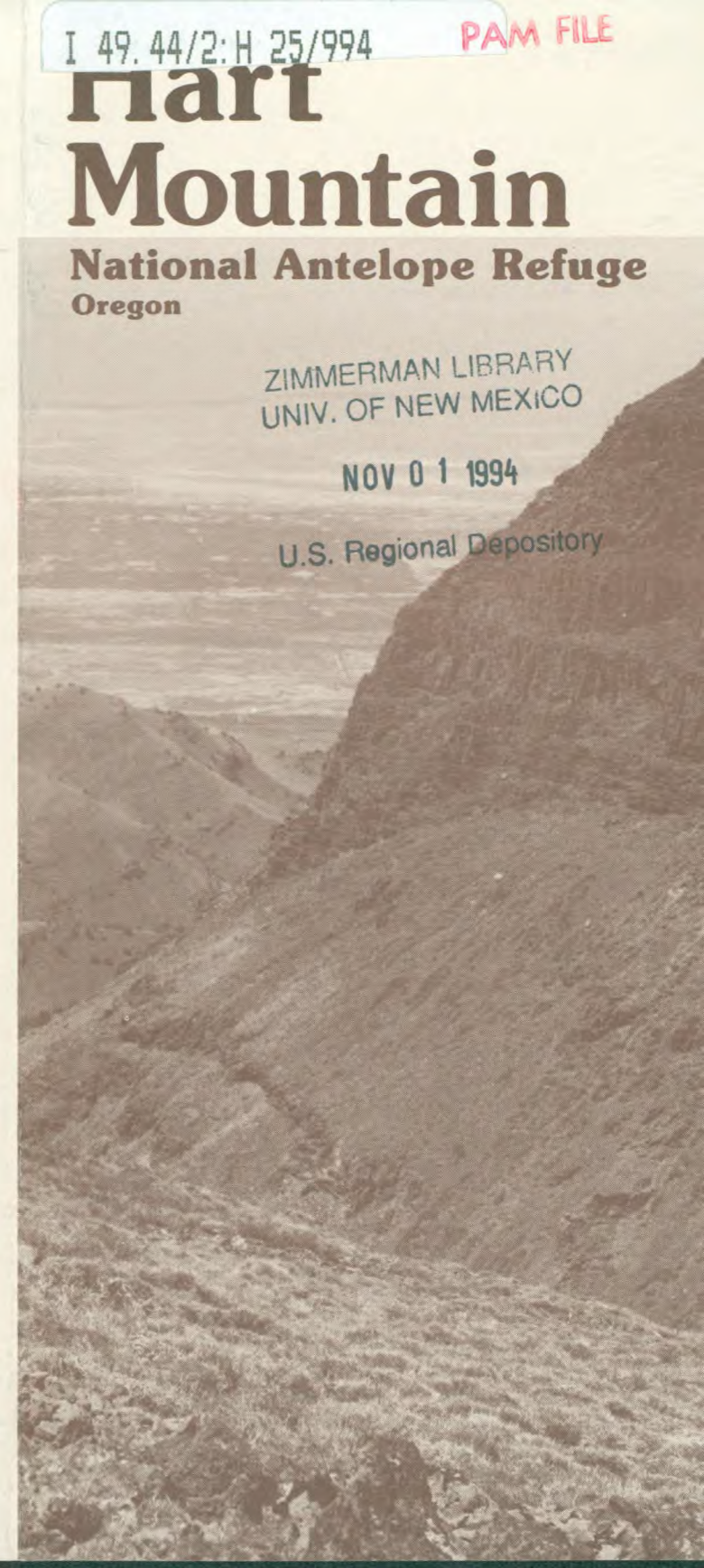
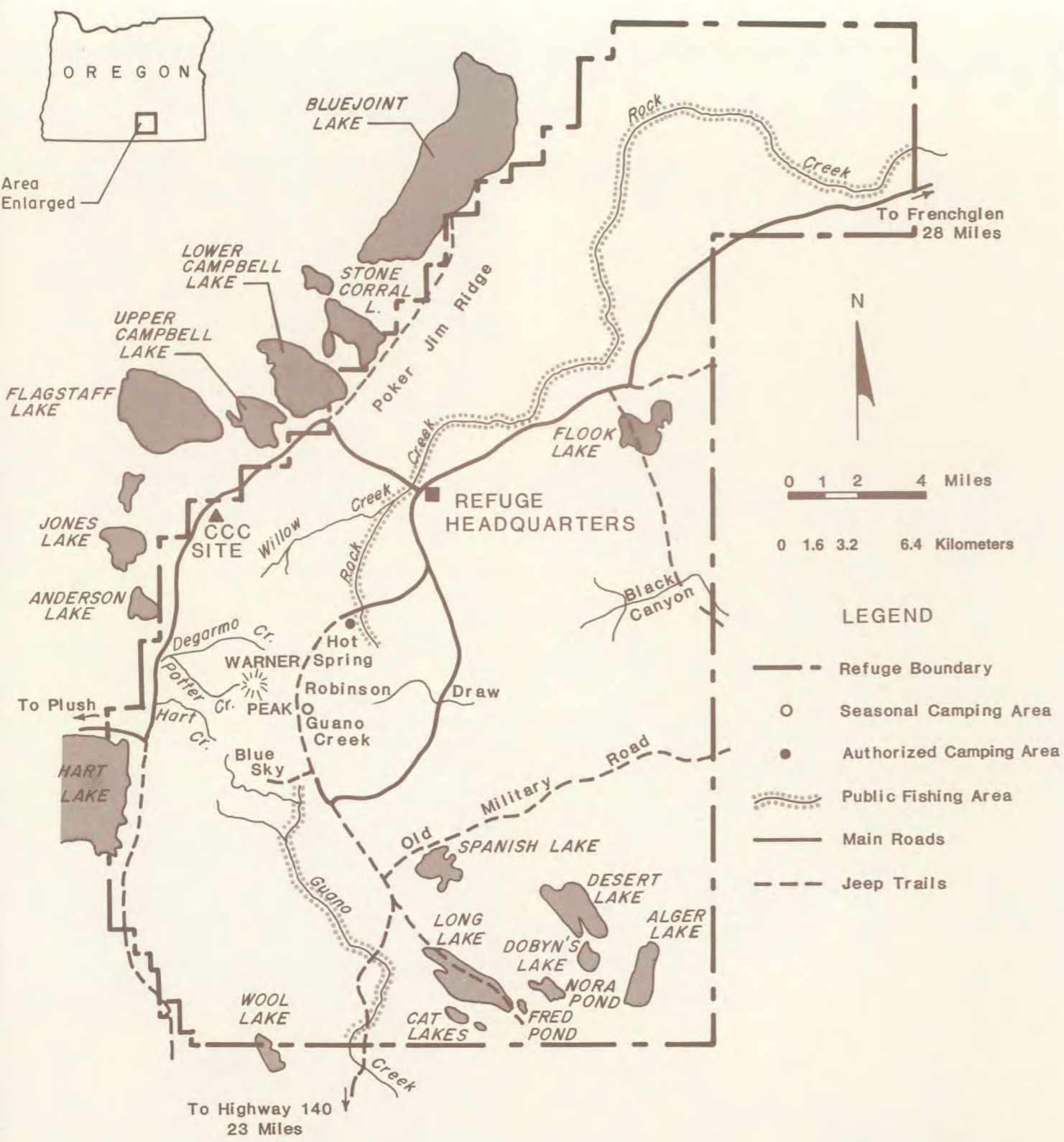
As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical place, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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U.S. Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service

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The Refuge

The 275,000-acre Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge was established in 1936 to provide spring, summer, and fall range for remnant antelope herds. These herds usually winter in Catlow Valley, to the east, and on the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge about 35 miles southeast in Nevada.

Since then, the purpose of the refuge has been expanded to include management of all wildlife species characteristic of this high-desert habitat, and to preserve natural, native ecosystems for the enjoyment, education, and appreciation of the public.

The Landscape

Hart Mountain is a massive fault block ridge rising high above the surrounding rangelands to an elevation of 8,065 feet above sea level. The west side is precipitous, ascending abruptly some 3,600 feet from the floor of Warner Valley in a series of rugged cliffs, steep slopes, and knifelike ridges. The face of the mountain is cut by several deep gorges. Hart, Potter, and DeGarmo canyons, the most rugged, extend from the valley floor to the top of the main ridge.

The east side of the mountain is less precipitous, descending in a series of hills and low ridges to the sagebrush-grass ranges typical of southeastern Oregon.

Hart Mountain has been called an oasis in the desert. It is well-watered by many fine springs. Rising near the middle of the mountain, Rock Creek traverses a deep canyon in a northeasterly direction, emerging on the open range just above refuge headquarters. Guano, Stockage, and Goat creeks, rising on the south end of the mountain, flow south and east into Guano Valley. Deer Creek, rising from the intermediate hills, flows east, gradually disappearing into the semiarid rangeland soils.



Pronghorn Antelope

Wildlife

The higher elevations of Hart Mountain are typified by several steep canyons, rock bluffs, and cliffs with snowbrush, wild gooseberry, chokecherry, and aspen thickets. Here we find mule deer, bighorn sheep, golden eagles, prairie falcons, and numerous smaller bird species.

In contrast, the lower country to the east with the shallow intermittent lakes, is the preferred area of the antelope, kangaroo rats, burrowing owls, and sage sparrows, and such reptile as rattlesnake, bull snakes, yellow-bellied racers, and sagebrush lizards.

Between these extremes, among the big and short sage, mountain mahogany, and numerous kinds of bunch grasses, are the animals for which the mountain is so well known. Bands of antelope roam the gently-sloping east face. California bighorn sheep have been reestablished along the steep and rugged west wall and nearby Poker Jim Ridge. Also living in this vast area are mule deer, coyotes, bobcats, jackrabbits, cottontails, marmots, ground squirrels, night-hawks, northern flickers, and many other species of mammals and birds.



Mule Deer

Recreation

For those interested in wildlife and nature-oriented recreation, Hart Mountain offers a variety of opportunities.

Wildlife Observation and Photography are the most popular recreational activities on the refuge. Early morning and evening are the best times to observe wildlife. Many big game animals can be seen from the improved roads around the headquarters and south to the Blue Sky area during the summer and fall months.

Fishing is available in Rock and Guano creeks in accordance with Oregon State regulations. An Oregon license is required. Please be aware of current regulations in effect as these may change slightly each year.

Camping is allowed year round at the Hot Springs Camp, 4 miles south of refuge headquarters. Winter snows or spring thawing may close this road periodically and visitors should check on the condition of this road during those times before planning a camping trip. The area is accessible by cross-country skiing during the winter. Other camps are open during special refuge hunting season. Conditions at all camps are primitive, with no improvements or facilities. Campfires are prohibited during periods of high fire danger.

Rockhounding is popular on Hart Mountain as it is in most of southeastern Oregon. Collections of rock specimens are limited to 7 pounds per person per day. Blasting and digging are prohibited. All items of antiquity (including arrowheads) are protected.

Hiking and Backpacking in the more remote areas of the refuge are gaining in popularity as this generally affords the refuge visitor unique opportunities to observe and photograph the area and wildlife.

Overnight backpack camping is permitted by a free special permit obtained at refuge headquarters. Some areas of Hart Mountain may be excluded from hiking during critical times of the year to prevent undue disturbance; for example, when bighorn sheep are lambing.

Hunting. Hunting is permitted in accordance with applicable Federal and Oregon State regulations. Special hunting seasons for partridge, quail, deer, antelope, and bighorn sheep are held with emphasis placed on quality hunting experiences. The need to preserve some of the finer traditions of the sport and the fostering of man's appreciation of wildlands and its wildlife species is stressed in hunter orientation programs.



Uncle Jacob's Homestead

Information. Hart Mountain is located 65 miles northeast of Lakeview, Oregon. It can be reached by county roads from U.S. Highway 395 and Oregon Highway 140. The refuge is remote. Gasoline and groceries are available at Plush, 25 miles and Adel, 45 miles. All tourist facilities are available in Lakeview. Mid-May through October is the best season to visit the refuge. Even then, road conditions may limit access to parts of the area.

Special regulations regarding public access and use are in effect. Please contact refuge headquarters for applicable regulations and current road conditions.

For further information, contact:

Refuge Manager
Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge
P.O. Box 111
Lakeview, Oregon 97630
(503) 947-3315

