

Volunteers Make a Difference

Throughout the year, dedicated volunteers maintain and improve visitor services and wildlife management operations on the refuge. If you would like to help, contact the refuge or our cooperative association:

Friends of the Heinz Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum
P.O. Box 333
Folcroft, PA 19032-0333
<http://friendsoftinicummarsh.org>

Volunteer



C. Braine/USFWS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum is one of more than 540 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The National Wildlife Refuge System is a network of lands and waters managed specifically for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat and represents the most comprehensive wildlife management program in the world. Units of the system stretch across the United States from northern Alaska to the Florida Keys and include small islands in the Caribbean and South Pacific. The character of the refuge system is as diverse as the nation itself.

The Service also manages national fish hatcheries, and provides Federal leadership in habitat protection, fish and wildlife research, technical assistance and the conservation and protection of migratory birds, certain marine mammals and threatened and endangered species.

For further information, contact:

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum
Cusano Environmental Education Center
8601 Lindbergh Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19153
215/365 3118
215/365 2846 FAX
<http://heinz.fws.gov>

Federal Relay Service
for the deaf and hard-of-hearing
1 800/877 8339

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>

June 2003



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John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum

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Fall 2003
John and Karen Hollingsworth



People are part of the natural world. It is up to each individual to determine if their interaction with nature will have a positive or a negative impact on the environment.

Great blue heron

Bill Buchanan/USFWS



Bill Buchanan/USFWS

Canoeing

Introduction



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

The John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tincicum holds within its borders the largest remaining freshwater tidal wetland in Pennsylvania. This wetland serves as an important feeding and resting location for migrating birds within the Atlantic Flyway.

Congress established the Refuge on June 30, 1972 with three main objectives:

- To acquire lands necessary for the purposes of preserving, restoring and developing the natural area known as Tincicum Marsh.
- To construct, administer and maintain a wildlife interpretive center for the purpose of promoting environmental education.
- To provide visitors an opportunity for the study of wildlife in its natural habitat.



Bill Buchanan/USFWS

Trail



Bill Buchanan/USFWS

Photo walk

History of the Area

The history of Tincum Marsh dates back to 1634 when the first settlers to the region, the Swedes, Dutch and English, diked and drained parts of the marsh for grazing. At that time the tidal marshes measured over 5,700 acres. After World War I, rapid urbanization reduced the marsh size to 200 acres. That area is located approximately one mile north of the Philadelphia International Airport.

Along the eastern end of Tincum Marsh is a diked, non-tidal area of 145 acres. The man-made pond, or impoundment as it is referred, was donated by the Gulf Oil Corporation to the City of Philadelphia in 1955. The open water, along with the adjacent heavily vegetated tidal wetlands, form an ideal habitat for thousands of migratory water birds. Administered for the benefit of wildlife and people, this area was known as Tincum Wildlife Preserve.

In 1969, Tincum Wildlife Preserve was threatened by plans to route Interstate 95 through the tidal wetlands.



Bill Buchanan/USFWS

These activities started a long series of injunctions, public hearings, and extraordinary efforts by private and public groups to secure an alternate route for the highway. Under legislation passed by Congress during 1972, authorization was given to the Secretary of the Interior to acquire 1,200 acres to establish the Tincum National Environmental Center.

Much of the purchased land surrounding the marsh is former tidal wetland altered by diking, dredging, or filling. The highly disturbed condition of the area presents a unique opportunity to restore former wetlands and to preserve remaining ones.

In 1991, in a bill sponsored by Congressman Weldon, the name of the refuge was changed to John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tincum to honor the late Senator who helped preserve Tincum Marsh.

Fishing



C. Brame/USFWS

Ecosystem

Marsh, pond, creek, field, and upland habitats support a diversity of fish, animals, and plants on the Refuge.

Birdwatchers have recorded more than 280 species of birds in the refuge and its immediate environs. Over 85 bird species nest here. Migratory birds such as Canada geese, great blue herons, egrets, killdeer, sandpipers, and a large variety of ducks use the refuge during spring and fall flights.

Mammals, including deer, foxes, raccoons, muskrats, rabbits, squirrels, and mice, can be seen on occasion. These animals are elusive and avoid contact with humans, whenever possible.

Reptiles and amphibians also can be found within the refuge. Three species of non-venomous snakes and six species of turtles, including the state threatened Red-bellied turtle, enjoy the lush habitat here. The state endangered southern leopard frog joins five other species of frogs on the refuge.

Many fish species travel the waterways of the Darby Creek and the numerous ponds of the refuge. Catfish, carp, sunfish, tiger musky, largemouth and striped bass have been identified here.



Red-bellied turtle

Red fox



“Tinicum”, a Native American word, means “islands of the marsh”.



Cattails

Hundreds of plant species, including a wide variety of wildflowers, flourish throughout the year. Native wetland plants such as cattail, arrow arum, and marsh grass are common. These and many other plants not only help purify water systems, but also provide food and cover for wildlife.

Jerusalem
artichokes





Biking

Visitor Services and Activities

Located in metropolitan Philadelphia and adjoining Delaware County, the refuge provides unique opportunities to see and study wildlife in its natural environment. Access through the refuge can be gained along ten miles of foot and bike trails. These paths include boardwalks, bridges, observation areas, and bird blinds. Throughout the year, experienced naturalists lead weekend nature walks for visitors. Wildlife observation and photography are also popular activities here.

Fishing, with a state license, is permitted in certain areas of the creek and ponds. A fishing platform is located off Route 420 on the western end of the refuge, adjacent to a 20-car capacity parking lot.

A canoe and kayak launch area, with access to the tidal Darby Creek, is located near the Lindbergh Blvd. entrance on the eastern end of the refuge.

Environmental education is an important objective of the refuge. It helps to promote an awareness and understanding of the environment, our relationship to it, and the concern and responsible action necessary to improve our quality of life.

Stan Rapp/USFWS



Bill Buchanan/USFWS

Exhibit



Mark Bohm

Marsh machine

The refuge provides consulting services to teachers planning fieldtrips, introductions and equipment for fieldtrip groups, and a curriculum library and educator workshops for area schools and colleges.

Visitor facilities were minimal during the early years of the refuge. However, in 2001, with a bequest from local resident Antonio Cusano and matching funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the 15,000 square foot, Cusano Environmental Education Center was constructed and opened to the public. The beautifully engineered "green" building, built to "step lightly on the land", showcases numerous sustainable design features. Recycled materials were used throughout the building and resulted in very little impact on the environment as compared to traditional construction.

Housed within the facility is the visitor information desk, museum-quality interpretive displays and interactive exhibits that serve as a gateway to the refuge and the natural world. The library, multipurpose room, wildlife observation area, environmental education classrooms, and the Tinicum Treasures bookstore all help support nature-based learning. Additionally, the Marsh Machine, our own water treatment plant, demonstrates how plants, bacteria, and microbes purify water.

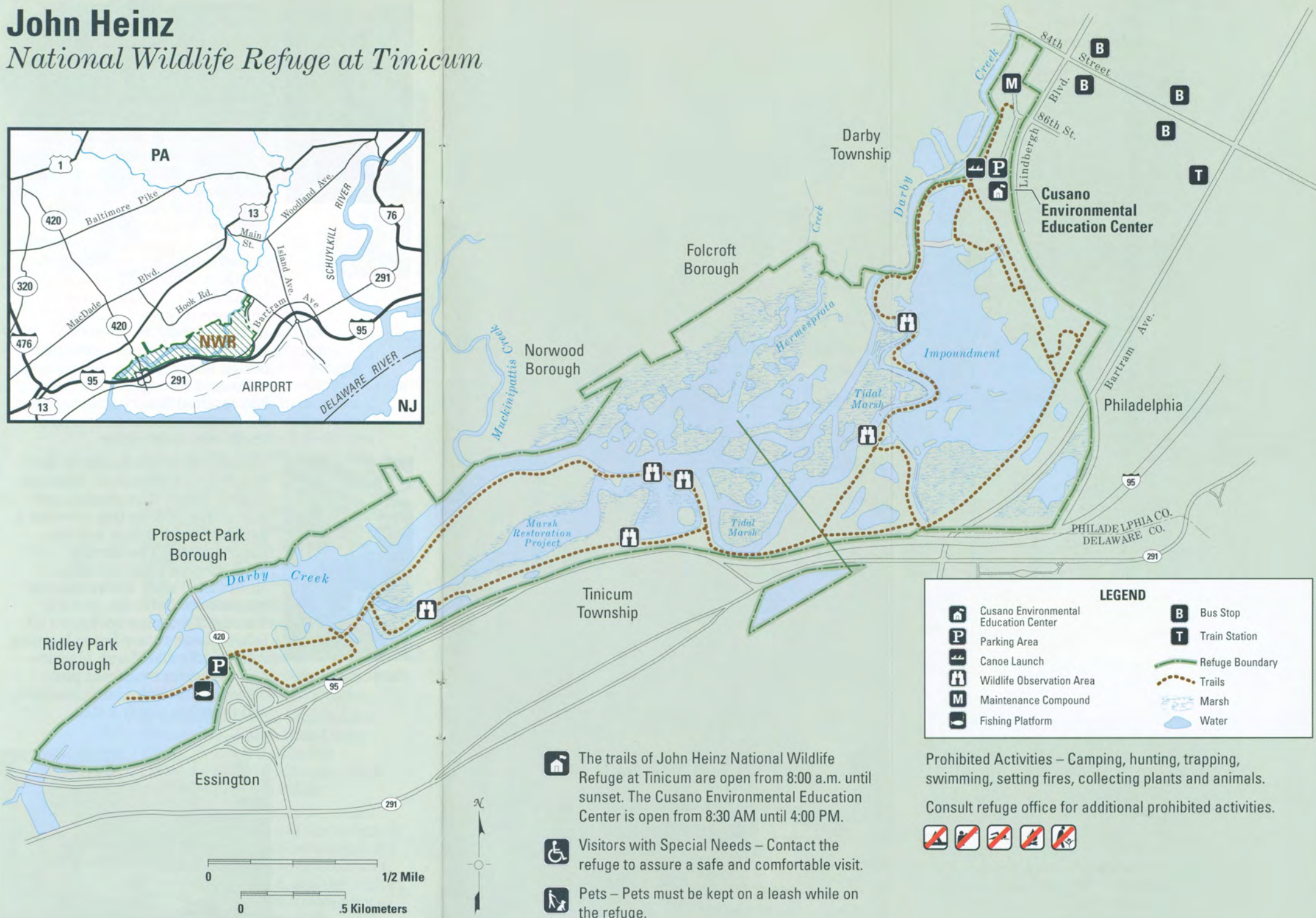
Library



Bill Buchanan/USFWS

John Heinz

National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum



LEGEND

	Cusano Environmental Education Center		Bus Stop
	Parking Area		Train Station
	Canoe Launch		Refuge Boundary
	Wildlife Observation Area		Trails
	Maintenance Compound		Marsh
	Fishing Platform		Water

- The trails of John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum are open from 8:00 a.m. until sunset. The Cusano Environmental Education Center is open from 8:30 AM until 4:00 PM.
- Visitors with Special Needs – Contact the refuge to assure a safe and comfortable visit.
- Pets – Pets must be kept on a leash while on the refuge.

- Prohibited Activities – Camping, hunting, trapping, swimming, setting fires, collecting plants and animals. Consult refuge office for additional prohibited activities.
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