Swing the gates open March 2nd at Swan Lake

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Posted by : John
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The gates to Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge will be swinging open at 6 o'clock on Saturday morning, March 2nd, signaling the start of events for the "Swing the Gatesâ celebration. Promoters say everyone is welcome into the refuge at 6 a-m to scour the woods and fields for deer antler sheds. These can be scored in the Visitorâs Center from 9-11 am by conservation agents and employees.

In addition to hunting for sheds, there will be a birding tour of the refuge led by the Grand River Audubon Society from Chillicothe. Officials hope warmer weather March 2nd will bring in waterfowl migrating back north as well as songbirds, shorebirds, and other migrants that stop by Swan Lake National Wildlife Refugre.

At 9 a-m, coffee and donuts will be served in the Visitorâs Center. There will be a lunch of hotdogs, hamburgers, and drinks from 11 until 1 oâclock. From 12 to 4 oâclock, Swan Lake will have tractor-drawn hay rides. The viewing tower will also be open, and there will be walking tours to the observation deck overlooking Swan Lake.

Three events are planned during the celebration. The first is a hunting meeting where the Refuge Manager will discuss Swan Lakeâs new hunting plan at 1 oâclock.

The second is burying a Refuge Time Capsule at 2 pm. Until that time, visitors will be encouraged to write letters, submit pictures, and bring items to put into the time capsule that will be buried for the next 100 years outside of the Visitorâs Center.

The other event is the Sneak-a-Peek photo contest that closes after the time capsule is buried. The winner will be announced in the Visitorâs Center at 3 pm. The winner will be determined by popular vote submitted both online on the Facebook page (http://www.facebook.com/swanlakenwr#) and on the photos displayed in the Visitorâs Center. Swan Lake wildlife refuge is one mile south of Sumner.