



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
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For Immediate Release
September 26, 2008

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Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge Celebrates Okefenokee's Cultural Heritage at Historic Chesser Island Homestead

Come rediscover some of Georgia's cultural heritage of yesteryear as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service celebrates the Thirty-seventh Annual **Okefenokee Festival** and **National Wildlife Refuge Week** with an array of activities at the **Chesser Island Homestead Open House** on October 11, 2008, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This special event will take place at the historic Chesser Island Homestead, located within the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge at the East Entrance, near Folkston, Ga.

Additional festival activities sponsored by the Okefenokee Chamber of Commerce will take place in Folkston, including food and local art vendors, music, games, and a parade.

Take a walk into history and relive the ways of the old "swampers". Learn how settlers made soap, brooms, butter, quilts, baskets, and other everyday items from various swamp and forest resources. Watch how settlers washed clothes, smoked meat, collected pine resin for turpentine, and survived in and around the Okefenokee. See chickens, mules and other farm animals. Listen to the soothing sounds of bluegrass music, storytellers, and authentic four-note singing. Sample boiled peanuts, soup, biscuits, and other items cooked on the homestead's wood-burning stove, and enjoy traditional games including musical chairs, wheelbarrow races and more!

In the evening, the Refuge's concession and cooperating partner Okefenokee Adventures is offering a special sunset boat tour into the beautiful and mysterious Okefenokee Swamp, which is available for an additional charge. Visitors will have the chance to view alligators, wading birds, and other wildlife. Pre-registration is required. Call Okefenokee Adventures at 912-496-7156 for more information about these unique and scenic boat tours.

The refuge does require an entrance fee of \$5 per vehicle. Federal Duck stamps and/or Federal annual passes are also accepted. Free shuttle bus service will leave from the refuge visitor center approximately every fifteen minutes, traveling to and from the festivities at the Chesser Island Homestead and Swamp Boardwalk. On-board trained interpreters will discuss the amazing wildlife and plant species found in the Okefenokee, and will also be available to answer questions about the day's events as you are transported to the homestead and back. Last bus for the day leaves the parking lot at 3:45pm.

This event takes place at the East entrance to the refuge, located 11 miles southwest of Folkston, Georgia off Hwy. 121/23. For information on events and activities at the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, please visit the refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/okefenokee> or contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836.

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