

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
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<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee>

News Release



For Immediate Release
Date: June 10, 2019

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Supervisory Refuge Ranger

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge Now Accepting Annual Commercial Guide Permit Applications

Folkston, GA..... Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge has opened the application process for 2019-2020 Day-Use and Overnight Guide Permits. If your organization charges a fee to participants to visit Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, whether you are for profit or nonprofit, you are required to have a Commercial Guide Special Use Permit. This includes educational organizations, tour companies, and outfitters. The permit application is only required with the initial request. Each subsequent year, the permit holder will be required to submit the supporting documentation and fee when requested by refuge personnel. If supporting documentation is not received by the established deadline, the permit will be revoked. For complete guidelines and application forms, visit the refuge website at: <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Okefenokee/visit/permits.html>

Commercial Guide Special Use Permit applications are only accepted once a year and must be received by July 26, 2019. Permits will be awarded during August and will authorize the specific commercial services requested and approved by the Refuge Manager. The permit will allow the organization to provide the authorized commercial service from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020. All interested companies or organizations are required to submit a one-time application form (FWS Form 3-1383-C) for Commercial Services. This form can be found at www.fws.gov/forms/3-1383-C.pdf or by contacting the refuge at okefenokee@fws.gov. Please send in the following supporting documentation with the application; proof of insurance, proof of First Aid/CPR certification for all guides for commercial services provided on the refuge, and annual permit fee. Current permit holders in good standing are only required to submit the supporting documentation, annual permit fee and annual report. If supporting documentation is not received July 26, 2019, the permit will be revoked. Permits are renewable annually provided the permittee adequately provides quality services to the public and closely follows the terms of their permit.

All application documents can be e-mailed to gracie_gooch@fws.gov. For more information, contact Gracie Gooch at gracie_gooch@fws.gov or (912) 496-3200.

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The Main Entrance (Suwannee Canal Recreation Area) to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is located 11 miles southwest of Folkston, GA off Hwy 121/23. The refuge is open daily and offers a variety of opportunities for the visiting public. Call 912-496-7836 or visit the refuge website at www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee for hours of operation, upcoming events, and entrance fee information.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook pages at www.facebook.com/okefenokeewildliferefuge or www.facebook.com/usfwssoutheast, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwssoutheast, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwssoutheast>.