

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

News Release



For Immediate Release
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Supervisory Refuge Ranger

New Smartphone App To Deliver Interactive Fun for Refuge Visitors

Folkston, GA...The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will launch the new Discover Okefenokee app, ushering in a new era of mobile digital engagement and fun for smart device-carrying visitors to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. The app will launch in concert with refuge Earth Day events on Saturday, April 23. The place-based scavenger hunt style trivia game and wildlife spotting app will give smartphone users an exciting new way to learn about and appreciate the refuge's extraordinary flora and fauna.

"Discover Okefenokee will help us reach the rapidly growing number of smartphone-carrying visitors in a way that's both fun and substantive," said Michael Lusk, Okefenokee NWR manager. "While nothing beats a personal interpreter, the Discover Okefenokee app will fill a vital gap, giving people of all ages another avenue to learning through technology."

Developed by Discover Nature Apps, an award winning, mission-driven app developer, the "Discover Okefenokee" game will include a GPS-guided nature-based scavenger hunt; the ability for users to post and view sightings and photographs and share their experiences on social media. Discover Okefenokee will be nested within the free Discover Nature App, which can be found on iTunes or Google Play Store by searching for "Discover Nature Apps."

To play the game, users must be on the Okefenokee Swamp Island Drive, and will be alerted by the app when they're close by. In addition to the game, the app will allow users to capture photos of their discoveries, including sightings like alligators, sandhill cranes, and other emblematic Okefenokee wildlife. Sightings and photographs will be viewable in a digital photo gallery that will be accessible to all users, regardless of their location.

For more information about the app and Earth Day launch, or to schedule a special media tour in advance, please contact Susie Heisey, Supervisory Refuge Ranger, at 912-496-7366 ex 233 or susan_heisey@fws.gov.

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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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to providing access to this event for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, close captioning, or other accommodation needs to Susan Heisey, 912-496-7366 ex 233, susan_heisey@fws.gov, TTY 800-877-8339 with your request by close of business April 15, 2016.

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>.