

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

News Release



For Immediate Release

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Okefenokee NWR Announces Fall Program Schedule

Folkston, GA...Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge will be offering an array of activities for families to enjoy throughout the fall months. An activities calendar is now available for the months of September, October, and November. In the upcoming season, the refuge will be hosting several special events including a cleanup of the Chesser Island Homestead in celebration of National Public Lands Day on September 27 and the Okefenokee Pioneer Day to be held November 22. Popular programs such as the 'Oke' Archery Days and Owl Prowls will be offered throughout the season as well. **Reservations are required for all programs.** Contact the Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. When attending programs, please dress appropriately for the weather. Programs may be cancelled or rescheduled due to inclement weather and are subject to staff availability.

For anyone interested in reserving group programming, refuge staff and volunteers are available most Saturdays, as well as during the week to provide programming options to school groups, scout groups, and other organized groups visiting the refuge. Programs are available for all ages, but require a reservation. Trips should be scheduled at least two weeks in advance. For questions, or to schedule a program, contact the Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center at 912-496-7836.

Scheduled Programs

'Oke' Archery Days

Join a certified archery instructor to learn how to properly and safely shoot a bow and arrow. Free and family friendly, archery programs are welcome to participants of all ages, even adults. No prior experience required, all equipment is provided. Programs will incorporate activities on the different types of archery, archery games, 3D targets, and bowhunting. Participants are welcome to attend one program or many. Programs are scheduled from 10:00 - 11:30 am, unless otherwise noted. Registration required; limited space available. Contact the Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register and check availability.

Saturday, September 20

Saturday, October 11

Saturday, October 18

Saturday, November 1

Saturday, November 8

Owl Prowl

Join a ranger for a stroll down Chesser Island Boardwalk at sunset. Climb the Owls Roost Tower and experience an Okefenokee evening. Look, listen, and learn about the nocturnal creatures of the swamp. Registration required. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Limited space available. Meet at the Visitor Center picnic area.

Saturday, October 11, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Saturday, October 18, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Saturday, November 8, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Saturday, November 15, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Photography Workshops with John Reed

Join award winning nature photographer, John Reed, for workshops on nature and wildlife photography. Workshops will include classroom lessons and field shooting. Participants can attend one or both days. Registration and fee required. Space is limited. Contact the Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 for more information or to register.

End of Summer Workshop

Saturday, September 13, 8:00 - 4:30 pm &

Sunday, September 14, 7:00 - 11:00 am

Fall Workshop

Saturday, November 15, 8:00 - 4:30 pm &

Sunday, November 16, 7:00 - 11:00 am

Wilderness Paddling Weekends

Explore two of Georgia's designated Wilderness Areas by canoe/kayak in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Overnight and day trip paddling opportunities at Cumberland Island National Seashore and Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Registration and fee required. For more information, contact Okefenokee Adventures at 912-496-7156 or Up the Creek Xpeditions at 912-882-0911.

Saturday and Sunday, September 13/14 (Overnight)

Saturday and Sunday, September 20/21 (Day Trip)

Refuge Special Events

National Public Lands Day

Saturday, September 27, 8:00 - 12 noon

Join Okefenokee NWR as we celebrate National Public Lands Day by conducting a cleanup of the historic Chesser Island Homestead. Free hot dogs and refreshments for all participants. Bring gloves and wear closed toes shoes. Contact Gracie Gooch, Volunteer Coordinator at the Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 for more information or to sign up.

Okefenokee Festival

Saturday, October 11, 8:00 - 5:00 pm

Okefenokee Festival will be held in downtown Folkston, and will be a day full of festivities including a 5k race, car show, vendor booths, and more. Check out the refuge booth in town and also look for the refuge float in the parade. After enjoying the festival in town, visit the refuge to take a boat tour, hike a trail, or participate in a scheduled program! Contact the Okefenokee Chamber of Commerce for more information at 912-496-2536.

National Wildlife Refuge Week

October 12 – 18

Join Okefenokee NWR in celebrating National Wildlife Refuge Week by participating in a scheduled program! Visitors can participate in both 'Oke' Archery Days or an Owl Prowl on Saturday, October 18. Contact the Visitor Center to register.

Suwanee Canal Recreation Area Quota Hunt (White-tailed Deer)

Friday, October 24, and Saturday, October 25 from 5:30 am - 12:00 noon, each day

Thirty permits will be issued on a first-come, first-serve basis, with an additional ten permits reserved for mobility-impaired hunters. Hunters must possess a valid state hunting license and follow all state and federal regulations. A \$15.00 permit fee applies. For more information, contact the Visitor Center at 912-496-7836.

Okefenokee Pioneer Day

Saturday, November 22, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Visit the Chesser Island Homestead to discover how people once lived in Southeast Georgia. Learn how settlers made soap, brooms, butter, quilts, baskets, and other everyday items. Watch a traditional sugar cane boil, and sample the sweet cane juice. Participate in fun for the whole family. For more information, contact the Visitor Center at 912-496-7836.

Refuge News

Visitor Center/Refuge Fall Hours of Operation

September 1 - November 30, the Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center will resume daily operation, 9:00 - 4:00 pm.

Beginning November 1 - February 28, the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area entrance will be open 1/2 before sunrise until 5:30 pm; Swamp Island Drive closes at 5:00 pm. This refuge entrance will be closed Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

2014-2015 Okefenokee NWR Hunts

The refuge offers hunting opportunities for deer, feral hog, small game, and turkey in the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area, the Pocket, and Cowhouse Island in accordance with state and Federal regulations. Visit the refuge website at http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Okefenokee/visit/visitor_activities.html for information, dates, and regulations.

Refuge to offer Fee Free Days

The following dates are fee free - no entrance fee required. This does not cover concessionaire or license fees for activities such as hunting, fishing, or special tours.

September 27 - National Public Lands Day

October 12 – The First Day of National Wildlife Refuge Week

November 11 - Veterans Day

Georgia Free Fishing Day

September 27, all day

In accordance with the Georgia DNR, September 27 (National Public Lands Day & National Hunting and Fishing Day) is a 'Free Fishing Day'. Georgia residents 16 and over can fish without a license. All other fishing regulations do apply.

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The Suwannee Canal Recreation Area (East Entrance) to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is the primary entrance 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/okefenokee for hours of operation, upcoming events, and entrance fee information.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to providing access to our events for all participants. Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in our events should contact Susan Heisey at (912) 496-7366 ext. 233 or Susan_Heisey@fws.gov. In order to allow sufficient time to process requests, please contact us for assistance at least five business days before the event.

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>.