

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
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News Release



For Immediate Release

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Supervisory Refuge Ranger

Habitat Recovery Work Complete At Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge

Folkston, GA.... This month, 150,000 longleaf pine seedlings have been planted on over 350 acres of Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. The uplands that were planted were areas affected by the 2011 Honey Prairie Wildfire.

The 59 sites selected for planting were the most suited for longleaf pine. Lower, poorly drained sites will be allowed to return naturally to slash pine. Other sites, while damaged by the fire, had enough trees left after salvaging to provide suitable habitat. About 400 containerized longleaf pine seedlings were planted per acre. As these seedlings mature, they will be thinned, leaving 50 to 100 trees per acre, providing the traditional "open piney woods" habitat necessary for wildlife species utilizing Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

Longleaf pine, naturally adapted to the historic frequent fire regime of the southeast, provides critical habitat for wildlife occurring in the Okefenokee area.

The containerized longleaf pine seedlings were planted by a five member contract crew from the Arrowhead Starr Company from Plainview, Arkansas. They are planting a 15 acre site next to the Stephen C. Foster State Park. This stand was almost totally destroyed by the Honey Prairie Fire.

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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 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>.