

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

# News Release



**For Immediate Release**

Date: November 2, 2016

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Supervisory Refuge Ranger

## **Low Water Levels in Okefenokee Impacts to Overnight Camping Permits and Reservations**

Folkston, GA... The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is experiencing low water levels in much of the refuge which is impacting access to several of the overnight shelters in the swamp and closing many trails in the Okefenokee Wilderness Trail System. Beginning on November 14, the refuge will only be accepting reservations for overnight camping trips two weeks in advance, instead of two months. Reservations made prior to November 14 will be honored as scheduled. Booking only two weeks in advance should help the refuge better manage cancellations if the water continues to fall. The Canoe Reservation Line is open Monday – Friday from 7:00 A.M. – 10:00 A.M., excluding federal holidays. Below is additional information about current conditions:

### Overnight Camping Permits

- Currently, there are no overnight trips available that are "through trips" (entering at one location and exiting at another). All overnight trips will enter and exit from the same location.
- There are currently no trips available out of Kingfisher Landing.
- Refer to Recreation.gov for the most up-to-date information on which sites are currently being booked.

### Day-Use Boating

- Currently, the majority of the day-use trails at the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area, Kingfisher Landing, and Stephen C. Foster State Park are still accessible to the public. Visitors should use their best judgment in attempting to paddle or boat through areas with floating peat.
- Visitors should check with Okefenokee Adventures (912-496-7156 or <http://www.okefenokeeadventures.com/>) or Stephen C. Foster State Park (912-637-5274 or <http://www.gastateparks.org/StephenCFoster>) staff before going out on the water trails and the availability of boat tours/guided trips.
- Please use extreme caution when going out on the water trails in your personal boat with motor or canoe/kayak. There are areas in the prairies where there is very little water and you may find yourself hung up on a peat battery just below the surface. It is hard to tell where these areas are due to the dark color of the water.

### Campfires

- We do not have any campfire restrictions in place. If conditions continue to get dry, a campfire restriction could be put in place for all of the overnight stops that allow campfires and the Stephen C. Foster State Park. If you do have a campfire in the area, please use extra caution to ensure the fire is completely out before you leave the campsite.

The refuge will continue to provide updates if additional closures/restrictions are put in place. Please call the Richard S Bolt Visitor Center at 912-496-7836, Okefenokee Adventures at 912-496-7156, or Stephen C. Foster State Park at 912-637-5274 before your next visit and for the most up-to-date information on trails, tours, etc. You can also visit the refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee> or follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/okefenokeewildliferefuge/>.

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The Main Entrance (Suwannee Canal Recreation Area) 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. Entrance fees are \$5 per vehicle/\$1 per bicycle for a daily pass (good for 7 days). Annual passes are also available. 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](http://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](http://www.fws.gov). Connect with our Facebook pages at [www.facebook.com/okefenokeewildliferefuge](http://www.facebook.com/okefenokeewildliferefuge) or [www.facebook.com/usfwssoutheast](http://www.facebook.com/usfwssoutheast)*