

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

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge Monitoring Wildfire on Mitchell Island

Folkston, GA... U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge have been monitoring the Mitchell Island Fire since Sunday, July 31. The wildfire, ignited by lightning strike, grew to 209 acres by Wednesday largely due to strong outflow winds from passing thunderstorms.

Refuge personnel and fire crews have been actively monitoring the fires progression over the past several days. The wildfire is encompassed entirely on Mitchell Island, which is an interior island well within the swamp. Adequate water levels have helped to contain the blaze, as there were no open flames spotted during Wednesday's monitoring, although there were still some smoking standing snags.

Wildfire operations and monitoring are carried out by trained firefighters. A number of qualified firefighters and equipment (of various types and quantity) are present to respond to the changes of the fire. The weather conditions, including wind speed and direction, humidity, fuel moisture, and other factors may change the fire's behavior. Landowners near the fire area have been notified by refuge personnel.

If the Mitchell Island Fire progresses, portions of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge may be closed to the public and updates will continue to be reported. Please adhere to all signs, road closures, and instructions about closed areas provided by refuge and fire personnel. Questions; call the refuge office at 912-496-7366 or visit the refuge Facebook page for up to date information.

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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. 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 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