

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
2700 Suwannee Canal Road
Folkston, GA 31537
Phone: (912) 496-7836
Fax: (912) 496-7991
<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee>

News Release



For Immediate Release

Date: September 3, 2015

Contact: Susan Heisey, 912-496-7366, ex 233
Supervisory Refuge Ranger

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge to Celebrate National Public Lands Day

Folkston, GA... On Saturday, September 26th, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge will celebrate the 22nd Annual National Public Lands Day - Helping Hands for America's Lands. One out of every three acres of land in the U.S. – about 600 million acres – belongs to the American people. These are America's public lands, ranging from one-of-a-kind natural treasures such as the Grand Canyon or the Okefenokee Swamp, to lesser-known but equally important county and city parks. When you lend a hand with programs like National Public Lands Day, you help improve these beautiful lands and give back to nature. Each year at the end of September, over 100,000 volunteers across the nation build trails and bridges, pull weeds, plant native trees, remove trash, and have fun giving back to their public lands.

This year, we encourage both you and your friends to assist us to give back to nature at the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Volunteers will assist refuge staff to perform maintenance on one of the refuge's most beloved cultural sites - the historic Chesser Island Homestead. Settled in the mid-1800's, this home site has come to symbolize the day-to-day life of the many families that once called the Okefenokee Swamp home. We need volunteers to assist with projects such as woodcutting, trail work, fence repairs, raking, trail maintenance, and minor house repairs.

The project begins at 8:00 a.m. and will finish by lunch. Volunteers must bring gloves and wear closed toe shoes (no sandals). All volunteers will be treated to refreshments at the Chesser Island Homestead plus an entrance fee waiver into the refuge. In addition, participants will receive a free admission pass good at sites operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management. For more information, contact Gracie Gooch, Volunteer Coordinator at (912) 496-7836 or gracie_gooch@fws.gov.

-fws-

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