

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
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News Release



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Supervisory Refuge Ranger

Okefenokee NWR to Increase Recreation Fees Beginning October 1

Folkston, GA....Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge has modified the entrance and recreation fees which aid the refuge in supporting the Visitor Services program. Beginning October 1, the fees will be updated as follows:

\$15 for a Refuge-Specific Annual Pass
\$15 for a Quota Hunt Permit for the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area
\$15/person/night for the Wilderness Camping Permit; and
\$50 for a Day-Use Commercial Guide Special Use Permit (SUP)

The refuge fee prices have remained unchanged since 1997 (Commercial Guide SUP unchanged since implemented in 2000). The fee increases were proposed to establish more consistency among neighboring sites and were increased due to the administrative costs associated with having a recreation fee program.

Public comments were accepted from June 16 – July 16, in which all comments provided regarding the refuge's entrance and recreation user fees were taken into consideration before a final decision was made.

Since 1981, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has had authority to collect recreation fees. Since 1997, the Service has been able to retain fees collected at the station, first under the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program and then, in 2004, under the authority of Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA). The FLREA was established to provide funding for recreation program improvements. Typical projects paid for by recreation fee funds include road and parking lot maintenance, brochures, signage, and trail maintenance and improvements.

For any questions regarding the fee program changes effective October 1, please contact Refuge Manager, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, via email (okefenokee@fws.gov), phone (912-496-7366), or by mail to 2700 Suwannee Canal Road Folkston, GA 31537.

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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/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. 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>.