

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
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News Release



For Immediate Release

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Supervisory Refuge Ranger

Okefenokee Announces Project to Reopen Water Trails

Folkston, GA....The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is partnering with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to begin a major water trail clearing project west of Canal Run on the Orange Trail to reopen a portion of trail that persistently closes due to down trees and general trail conditions. This project will involve blasting work done by USFS Certified Blasters as well as work with other tools as needed. This project may last up to two weeks, and there may need to be additional trail maintenance conducted before this area can reopen to visitors. “This work on the Orange Trail between Canal Run and Billys Island will reopen a critical stretch of trail for visitors to be able to do cross swamp overnight trips and we are excited to work with our partners to reopen this trail” says Michael Lusk Refuge Manager. “In light of reduced staffing levels to conduct routine trail maintenance on our water trails, we are very fortunate to be working with our U.S. Forest Service partners on this project”.

Trail work conducted in National Wilderness Areas is not without its challenges. An assessment is always done in advance of any work to ensure that all tools and techniques are the minimum tools required to perform the work. Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge prides itself on the pristine nature of the Okefenokee Swamp and the ability for visitors to have a unique Wilderness experience here for solitude recreation.

The refuge expects that refuge visitors and our neighboring communities may hear controlled detonations as they occur from September 12 through September 26, 2018. If you have questions about this project, please contact the refuge Administrative Office at 912-496-7366 or email susan_heisey@fws.gov.

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The Suwannee Canal Recreation Area (East Entrance) to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is the main 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 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