

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: October 17, 2017

Contact: Susan Heisey, 912-496-7366, ex 233

Supervisory Refuge Ranger

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge - Pioneer Day Festival

Folkston, GA...The fall is a perfect time of year to celebrate nature, the outdoors, and the vast history of the Okefenokee. The Pioneer Day Festival on November 18th from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., is a fantastic celebration featuring crafts, activities, and demonstrations, where visitors will see how early settlers lived around the Okefenokee Swamp. Be sure to visit the Chesser Island Homestead to learn about the process of cane grinding/syrup making and to sample some of the sweet juice and syrup!

Explore the Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center, watch our award-winning film, and view the entries for the 2017 refuge photo contest on display. The winning photo will be announced at the Chesser Island Homestead at 12:00 p.m. The photo contest winner will be featured on the 2018 refuge-specific annual pass. Browse the Okefenokee Wildlife League (OWL) nature store in the Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center where all proceeds from sales go to support refuge programs, including the Pioneer Day event!

The Chesser Island Homestead is the perfect location to demonstrate the techniques used by the homesteaders and “swampers” of the early 20th-century using authentic tools and facilities. Visitors will be able to assist in grinding the sugar cane in a traditional mule-powered grinder and watch it boil down to make cane syrup. Samples of cane syrup will be provided and bottles of syrup will be available for a donation. Visitors can also enjoy quilting, butter churning, soap-making, blacksmith demonstrations, and bluegrass music throughout the day!

All are invited to join in the fun and learning of the annual Pioneer Day Festival at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. All activities are located at the Main Entrance of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, 11 miles southwest of Folkston, Georgia, off the Okefenokee Parkway South (GA 121/23). A \$5 refuge entrance fee per vehicle or annual pass is required as admission. For more information, contact the Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center at 912-496-7836, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. daily.

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The Main Entrance (Suwannee Canal Recreation Area) to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is 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 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, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwssoutheast, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfw> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwssoutheast>.