

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
2700 Suwannee Canal Road
Folkston, GA 31537
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<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee>

News Release



For Immediate Release

Date: February 24, 2015

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

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge Announces Spring Activities

Folkston, GA..... Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge will be offering an array of activities for families to enjoy throughout the months of March, April, and May. A variety of programs will be offered to provide visitors with fun and educational opportunities each Saturday. Programs are family friendly and free. Unless otherwise noted, all programs will meet in the Visitor Center. Programs are subject to cancellation in the event of inclement weather. Although programs are free, a \$5 refuge entrance fee is required or other entrance pass. In addition to programs listed, more programs may become available; contact the Visitor Center to inquire about current programming options. For questions, or to inquire more about programming, contact the Visitor Center at 912-496-7836.

Saturday, March 7

Owl Prowl, 4:30-7:00 p.m.

Join refuge rangers for a stroll down Chesser Island Boardwalk at sunset. Climb the Owls Roost Tower and experience an Okefenokee evening. Look, listen, and learn of nocturnal creatures of the swamp. Registration required. Limited space available. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Meet at the Visitor Center parking lot.

Saturday, March 14

‘Oke’ Archery Days, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Join a skilled instructor to learn the basics of archery. The program is geared towards children ages 5-15, but is also open to adults. Participants will learn how to properly use a bow and arrow, and gain improvement in their marksmanship abilities. Registration is required, and parents/guardians must be present with their child for the duration of the program. Limited space available. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Saturday, March 14 and Sunday, March 15

Spring Nature Photography Workshop by John Reed, 8:00-4:30 p.m.

Join acclaimed photographer John Reed March 14 and 15. The two-day workshop consists of classroom and hands-on exercises on Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and hands-on photography in the field on Sunday morning from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Participants must provide their own camera and any other photographic equipment they need. All photography skill levels are welcome. Registration and fees required. Limited spaces are available. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register.

Saturday, March 21

Chesser Island Homestead Demonstrations, 11:00-2:00 p.m.

Join volunteers at the historic Chesser Island Homestead to learn more about the true “swampers” who once live there. Participate in a tour through the home, and then watch demonstrations on how to make old time soaps and candles. Sponsored by Okefenokee Wildlife League; handmade soaps and candles will be available for purchase. Meet at the Chesser Island Homestead.

Gator Talk, 2:00-2:30 p.m.

Without alligators, the Okefenokee Swamp wouldn't be the same. Come and learn some interesting facts about the Swamp's most sought after resident. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Owl Prowl, 5:30-8:00 p.m.

Join refuge rangers for a stroll down Chesser Island Boardwalk at sunset. Climb the Owls Roost Tower and experience an Okefenokee evening. Look, listen, and learn of nocturnal creatures of the swamp. Registration required. Limited space available. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Meet at the Visitor Center parking lot.

Saturday, March 28**'Oke' Archery Days, 10:00-11:30 a.m.**

Join a skilled instructor to learn the basics of archery. The program is geared towards children ages 5-15, but is also open to adults. Participants will learn how to properly use a bow and arrow, and gain improvement in their marksmanship abilities. Registration is required, and parents/guardians must be present with their child for the duration of the program. Limited space available. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Meet at the Visitor Center.

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Gator Talk, 2:00-2:30 p.m.

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Saturday, April 4**'Oke' Archery Days, 10:00-11:30 a.m.**

Join a skilled instructor to learn the basics of archery. The program is geared towards children ages 5-15, but is also open to adults. Participants will learn how to properly use a bow and arrow, and gain improvement in their marksmanship abilities. Registration is required, and parents/guardians must be present with their child for the duration of the program. Limited space available. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Owl Prowl, 5:00-7:30 p.m.

Join refuge rangers for a stroll down Chesser Island Boardwalk at sunset. Climb the Owls Roost Tower and experience an Okefenokee evening. Look, listen, and learn of nocturnal creatures of the swamp. Registration required. Limited space available. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Meet at the Visitor Center parking lot.

Saturday, April 11**Chesser Island Homestead Demonstrations, 11:00-2:00 p.m.**

Join volunteers at the historic Chesser Island Homestead to learn more about the true "swampers" who once live there. Participate in a tour through the home, and then watch demonstrations on how to make old time soaps and candles. Sponsored by Okefenokee Wildlife League; handmade soaps and candles will be available for purchase. Meet at the Chesser Island Homestead.

Owl Prowl, 5:00-7:30 p.m.

Join refuge rangers for a stroll down Chesser Island Boardwalk at sunset. Climb the Owls Roost Tower

and experience an Okefenokee evening. Look, listen, and learn of nocturnal creatures of the swamp. Registration required. Limited space available. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Meet at the Visitor Center parking lot.

Saturday, April 18

Earth Day Celebration, 10:00-2:00 p.m.

Come and celebrate Earth Day by visiting Okefenokee NWR! Participate in family friendly activities, programs, and crafts. Explore the Swamp Island Drive to learn more about the refuge and experience the Okefenokee Swamp. Activities will be on-going and located at the Visitor Center, along Swamp Island Drive, and the Chesser Island Homestead. Boat tours and rentals will be available with Okefenokee Adventures. For more information or to inquire about celebration details, contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836.

Refuge Litter Pickup, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Come and support the local community and the refuge in honor of Earth Day! Make a difference by participating in the refuge litter pickup. Meet at Highway 121, mile marker 30, at Prospect Church. Participants need to bring gloves and water. After the cleanup, all litter pickup participants will be offered free refuge entrance and a hotdog cookout - located at the picnic pavilion near the Visitor Center. For more information or to participate, contact Gracie Gooch at 912-496-7836.

Chesser Island Homestead Demonstrations, 11:00-2:00 p.m.

Join volunteers at the historic Chesser Island Homestead to learn more about the true “swampers” who once live there. Participate in a tour through the home, and then watch demonstrations on how to make old time soaps and candles. Sponsored by Okefenokee Wildlife League; handmade soaps and candles will be available for purchase. Meet at the Chesser Island Homestead.

Saturday, April 25

Owl Prowl, 5:30-8:00 p.m.

Join refuge rangers for a stroll down Chesser Island Boardwalk at sunset. Climb the Owls Roost Tower and experience an Okefenokee evening. Look, listen, and learn of nocturnal creatures of the swamp. Registration required. Limited space available. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Meet at the Visitor Center parking lot.

Beginner Birding Hike, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Join refuge birders for a guided birding hike along the Chesser Island Boardwalk. All ages and skill levels are encouraged to attend, especially beginners. Dress appropriately for the weather, and bring binoculars and a field guide. The Visitor Center does have a loaner binocular program, but availability will be limited. Other suggested items to bring are snacks and water, as well as a camera. Registration required. Limited space available. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Meet at the Chesser Island Boardwalk parking lot.

Saturday, May 2

‘Oke’ Archery Days, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Join a skilled instructor to learn the basics of archery. The program is geared towards children ages 5-15, but is also open to adults. Participants will learn how to properly use a bow and arrow, and gain improvement in their marksmanship abilities. Registration is required, and parents/guardians must be present with their child for the duration of the program. Limited space available. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Spring Plants of the Okefenokee, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

Interested in learning more about the plants found at the refuge during spring time? Come and learn more

about the carnivorous plants, orchids, and others who grow in the Okefenokee. Bring a camera and dress for the weather. Registration required. Limited space available. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Meet at the Visitor Center to caravan along the Swamp Island Drive.

Saturday, May 9

Beginner Birding for Kids & Families, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Interested in learning more about bird watching, and how to make it a fun, family activity? Join a ranger for an introduction to the basics of beginner birding, and learn that it's not hard at all to get started. Registration required. Limited space available. Contact the Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Bird Activities and Crafts, On-going from 10:00-2:00 p.m.

Stop by the Visitor Center to create make-and-take bird crafts. Create your own bird anti-collision ornament, pine cone bird feeder, bird hand puppets, and more! Join a ranger to test your wingspan and compare it to birds like the bald eagle, great blue heron, or California Condor! Learn and listen to bird calls. Touch table and games will be on-going, along with storytelling, and more! Activities are located in the Visitor Center.

Owls of the Okefenokee, 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Want to learn more about the owls of the Okefenokee? Learn how to identify them by sight and sound, then join a ranger to dissect owl pellets! This is a hands-on, "down and dirty" program centered on owls. Learn about the general biology of these amazing animals, including where they live, what they eat, and how they use their senses and other physical attributes to hunt their prey. Registration required. Limited space available. Contact the refuge Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 to register. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Owl Prowl, 5:30-8:00 p.m.

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For registration of programs or for more information, contact the Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center at 912-496-7836 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. All activities will take place at the East Entrance of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, eleven miles southwest of Folkston, GA along Georgia State Highway 121/23.

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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/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/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwssoutheast>.