

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
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<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee>

News Release



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Stephen C. Foster State Park to Reopen May 26 *Wildfire activity diminished in the Okefenokee*

May 25, 2017, FARGO, GA -- Recent rain and decreased fire activity in the Okefenokee Swamp will allow officials to reopen Stephen C. Foster State Park near Fargo on Friday May 26. While the West Mims wildfire is still active, it is contained in areas around the park. The Suwannee River Sill and The Pocket of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge will also open.

Cabins and campsites can again be reserved by visitors. Extremely low water levels mean that boating is not available at this time, and boardwalks and trails remain closed due to fire suppression equipment across the trails. Visitors should use extreme caution in the park and adhere to all closures in effect for their safety and firefighters still working in the area. Visitors can enjoy watching for wildlife such as alligators, black bear, deer, turkey and woodpeckers. The park's exceptionally dark skies make it a popular destination for astronomy as well. Picnickers are welcome, but all campfires and charcoal grills are temporarily banned throughout the refuge. To learn more, visit www.GaStateParks.org/StephenCFoster or call 912-637-5274. Cabin and camping reservations may be made online or by calling 1-800-864-7275.

Stephen C. Foster State Park is the west entrance to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, the largest intact freshwater wetland in North America and the largest National Wildlife Refuge in the east. The park has been closed since April 21 as a safety precaution due to the ongoing wildfire. No park structures have been damaged due to the fire. To find out the most up to date information on the West Mims Fire, visit the incident webpage at <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5153/> or call 904-452-4627.

Currently, the Main Entrance (Suwannee Canal Recreation Area) to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge near Folkston remains closed to all public access. As soon as fire managers have determined the area is safe for visitors to access, the Main Entrance will reopen as well. Even after reopening, visitor should expect limited access due to extremely low water levels and firefighting equipment being in the area.

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The Main Entrance (Suwannee Canal Recreation Area) 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 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