

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

News Release



For Immediate Release

Date: June 7, 2017

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Visitor Opportunities Resume at Okefenokee *With Rainfall Comes Higher Water Levels*

Folkston, GA – Due to recent rain events, the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge will be able to resume nearly all visitor services at the Main Entrance (Suwannee Canal Recreation Area) and the Stephen C. Foster State Park. Fire personnel will remain working around the refuge, conducting suppression repair efforts on the over 500 miles of line constructed during the West Mims Fire. The fire will continue to be patrolled and monitored until it reaches 100% containment, but recent weather events and decreased fire activity allow fire crews to conduct the necessary repair work on both the refuge and private lands.

Beginning on Thursday June 8, the Main Entrance to the refuge near Folkston, GA will reopen the public boat launch to day-use visitor access including launching a boat with small motor (less than 10HP) or canoes and kayaks. Visitors may also rent canoes and kayaks from the onsite concession, Okefenokee Adventures. The Chesser Island Homestead and Chesser Island Boardwalk will remain closed until the structure protection equipment can be removed and the facilities inspected for visitor safety.

Boat access to the Okefenokee via the Stephen C. Foster State Park near Fargo will resume once water levels can support boat access. Please contact Stephen C. Foster State Park at 912-637-5274 for the most up-to-date information on visitor opportunities available at this location.

The overnight canoe stops will remain closed as water levels are still low in the Okefenokee, and reservations are not being taken at this time.

Additionally, the burn ban has been lifted on the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Visitors are now authorized to use charcoal grills in designated picnic areas and are authorized to have campfires in approved campfire rings (Stephen C. Foster State Park).

All visitors should use extreme caution while visiting the refuge and adhere to all posted signs and information provided by refuge and concession staff as well as firefighters working in the area. Visitors should be aware that there is still active fire in portions of the swamp and firefighters will be working in and around the refuge entrance for the foreseeable future.

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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