

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

News Release



For Immediate Release
Date: January 22, 2018

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Refuge Manager

Partial Federal Government Shutdown Affects Local Refuges

Folkston, GA....Due to a lapse in federal appropriations, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is unable to fully staff the properties under its management. It is not feasible to close or otherwise prohibit all access to National Wildlife Refuge System properties. Refuge visitors are advised to use extreme caution if choosing to enter units of the National Wildlife Refuge System, as FWS personnel will not be available to provide guidance, assistance, maintenance, or emergency response on Refuge System property. Any entry onto Refuge System property during this period of federal government shutdown is at the visitor's sole risk.

For Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, the following remain open to public access:

- Main Entrance (Suwannee Canal Recreation Area) – Okefenokee Adventures, Swamp Island Drive, hiking trail, boat ramp/water trails, Chesser Island Homestead, and Chesser Island Boardwalk
- Stephen C. Foster State Park – all areas of the park and services provided by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- Okefenokee Swamp Park – all areas of the park and services provided by the Okefenokee Swamp Park staff
- Kingfisher Landing
- Suwannee River Sill

The refuge Administrative Office and the Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center will remain closed. Overnight Camping Permits can not be reserved during this period. The Recreation.gov site has been shut down, but any permit reservations that were made prior to January 20, will be honored. Permit holders will be required to pick up their permit at their entry point prior to 10:00 a.m. on the day of their trip.

Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Lakeland, GA will remain open to the public and Banks Lake Outdoors will operate as regularly scheduled. Refuge personnel will not be managing water levels in the lake during this period.

For any questions or concerns, please contact Michael Lusk, Refuge Manager at 912-496-7366 ex 226.

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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 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>.