

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
2700 Suwannee Canal Road
Folkston, GA 31537
Phone: (912) 496-7836
Fax: (912) 496-7991
<http://www.fws.gov/okefenokee>

News Release



For Immediate Release

Date: May 1, 2014

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

Okefenokee Fire Staff Recognized for Their Service and Commitment

Folkston, GA.....Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is often noted for being at the center of large and complex wildfires. This spring, the Okefenokee Fire Program is being recognized and awarded for the hard work and dedication in particular of two of the refuge personnel.

In late March, at the monthly Charlton County Fire Board Meeting, Terri Jenkins, Fire Management Specialist, was awarded the Firewise Leadership Award by the Georgia Forestry Commission. “Terri Jenkins has been a huge part in outreach to landowners, fire departments, and local communities in Southeast Georgia. Terri’s leadership has resulted in a half dozen new communities being recognized as Firewise.” states Eric Mosley, Wildfire Mitigation Program Manager for Georgia Forestry Commission.

“The local County Commissioners, landowners, and Fire Department look to Terri daily for advice. With high fire occurrence in and around the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge the need for mitigation and education is important.” Terri has 28 years of experience working on National Wildlife Refuges in the southeast, and Okefenokee is lucky to have had Terri here for the past four years.

Also recognized this spring was Rocky Chesser, Heavy Equipment Supervisor, as the recipient of the National Fire Safety Award at a formal ceremony in Atlanta. “The Branch of Fire Management created the award to recognize outstanding leadership and service in wildland fire safety,” said John Segar, FWS Fire Director from the National Interagency Fire Center, who flew to Atlanta to present the award. “Rocky was chosen by an interagency panel for being key to ensuring a safe response to the 2011 Honey Prairie Fire.” Rocky is an 18-year veteran of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and began his career at Okefenokee as an Engineering Equipment Operator (EEO) before being promoted four years ago.

“We are particularly proud of Rocky’s professionalism, leadership, and dedication to safe operations given the size and complexity of the Southeast’s fire program,” said Cindy Dohner, Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Southeast Region.

“We are very proud of the fire program at Okefenokee NWR. We think these two employees exemplify the dedication and expertise in working with the local community to manage fire effectively and safely” states Okefenokee Refuge Manager, Michael Lusk.

-fws-

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 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>.