

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

# News Release



**For Immediate Release**

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Contact: Susan Heisey, 912-286-3110  
Supervisory Refuge Ranger

## Okefenokee Water Trails/Wildfire Update Refuge Closing Portions of Water Trail System

Folkston, GA.....With only sporadic rain across the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, the refuge has determined the need to close portions of the overnight water trail system due to low water and inaccessibility. Additionally, the refuge will only be booking overnight permits two-weeks in advance, instead of two months. These changes allow refuge personnel to better respond to falling water levels, without cancelling reservations for the visiting public. At the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area, although water levels are down, visitors may still take a boat tour with Okefenokee Adventures, or rent a canoe or kayak. Visitors may also launch their own boat with a motor of 10HP or less, although boaters need to use caution if boating along the prairie water trails to ensure their water pump does not get clogged. At Stephen C. Foster State Park, boat tours, boat rentals, and canoe/kayak rentals are available, although access to certain areas may be limited and operations will most likely change quickly. At Okefenokee Swamp Park, boat tours are still available and guest are enjoying hiking on the low boardwalk out to the observation tower.

For information on visiting the Stephen C. Foster State Park near Fargo, please call 912-637-5274; to visit the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge near Folkston, please call 912-496-7836; or to visit the Okefenokee Swamp Park near Waycross, please call 912-283-0583.

While recreational opportunities still abound at the refuge, firefighting personnel remain vigilant in managing the three fires that are currently within the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. The Compartment #1 Fire, Edge Fire, and Deer Fire all remain contained with no smoke or flames visible on the Edge and Deer Fires in the last 72 hours. The Compartment #1 Fire did receive precipitation last week, but still has reburn potential within the interior. Crews continue to monitor the Compartment #1 Fire and are mopping up as needed, while aviation resources are continuing to monitor the Edge and Deer Fires. Preparation work on the Swamp Edge Break continues around the refuge boundary, discing both the Swamp Edge Break and interior compartment lines.

The burn ban on campfires and charcoal grills in the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge remains in effect until further notice. This burn ban includes the campground at Stephen C. Foster State Park and any picnicking areas at Okefenokee Swamp Park and Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge Main Entrance. Additionally, campfires and charcoal grills on overnight camping trips on the Wilderness Canoe Trail System are prohibited.

For additional information, please call Susan Heisey at 912-286-3110, email [susan\\_heisey@fws.gov](mailto:susan_heisey@fws.gov), or follow the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge Facebook page ([@OkefenokeeWildlifeRefuge](https://www.facebook.com/OkefenokeeWildlifeRefuge)).

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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](http://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](http://www.fws.gov). Connect with our Facebook pages at [www.facebook.com/okefenokeewildliferefuge](https://www.facebook.com/okefenokeewildliferefuge) or [www.facebook.com/usfwssoutheast](https://www.facebook.com/usfwssoutheast)*