



- Pets, swimming, motorized vessels, and fires (except in designated areas) are prohibited.
- Children under 13 must wear Personal Flotation Device (PFD). All individuals on the water must have a PFD with them.
- Keep trails free from litter. Visit the Leave No Trace website at <https://lnt.org/learn/7-principle>.
- Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms will comply with all provisions of state and local law. Firearms are prohibited in all buildings. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations 50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in 50 CFR Part 32.
- The collection and/or capturing of any plant and/or animal is strictly prohibited. Do not approach, feed, or harass wildlife.
- Open fires (wood or charcoal) are permitted only at Canal Run, Cravens Hammock, Mixons Hammock, and Floyds Island. Restrictions may be put in place during high fire danger. Visit <http://www.dontmovefirewood.org/>; bringing in firewood from outside of the local region is prohibited to try to reduce the spread of invasive fungus and insects.

- All licenses, permits, equipment, and effects, including vehicles and canoes are subject to inspection by state and federal officers.
- All state, federal and county laws regarding alcohol consumption are strictly enforced.

How Difficult is Paddling in the Okefenokee?

Consider the skill level of individuals in your party before choosing a trail! The swamp terrain is flat; there is little fast water and dry land is scarce. Your paddle will be used every inch of the way as you wind through cypress forests or cross open prairies exposed to the sun and wind. Paddling can be slow and strenuous on shallow and/or narrow trails. You may have to get out of your canoe and push across peat blowups, shallow water, or trees.

You must plan ahead if you choose a trail that does not return to the same landing. Highway distance between landings:

- Suwannee Canal Recreation Area to Kingfisher Landing: 25 miles
- Suwannee Canal Recreation Area to Stephen C. Foster State Park: 75 miles
- Kingfisher Landing to Stephen C. Foster State Park: 95 miles

NOTE: Kingfisher Landing is an unstaffed entrance. There are no facilities, except a composting toilet and kiosk.

What must I bring? What should I bring?

You MUST carry the following items, for your safety:

- ___ Coast Guard approved flotation device (PFD) for each person (children under 13 years of age must wear at all times)
- ___ Compass and map of refuge and trails
- ___ Flashlight
- ___ Cook stove and fuel if you choose to cook on your trip
- ___ Drinking water (4-6 quarts per person each day, depending on weather). Drinking/filtering swamp water is not recommended.

You SHOULD carry the following items:

- ___ Extra flashlights and batteries
- ___ Trash bags
- ___ Portable toilet with disposable bags
- ___ Rope for pulling canoe
- ___ First Aid Kit
- ___ Food (plus enough for one extra day)
- ___ Foul weather gear
- ___ Sleeping bag or blanket
- ___ Insect repellent
- ___ Duct tape for emergency repairs
- ___ Spare paddle
- ___ Waterproof bags
- ___ Toilet paper
- ___ Free-standing tent
- ___ Cord to tie down tent
- ___ Bailer
- ___ Sun protection (sunscreen, wide brim hat, light-colored long sleeve shirt, and pants)

What if I am a guide or outfitter?

If you charge any fees for trips into the Okefenokee, you are required to have a Commercial Guiding Special Use Permit. Permits are issued once annually, in the fall. For more information, call 912/496 3331. **NOTE:** Visit the refuge website (Wilderness Canoeing page) for a list of permitted day use and overnight guides.

Do I need a special permit to cross the Suwannee Sill?

You no longer need a permit to cross the Suwannee River Sill. Contact Stephen C. Foster State Park at 912/637 5274 if leaving a vehicle parked in their parking lot overnight. All overnight trips **MUST** park at the Stephen C. Foster State Park, not at the Sill parking area (day-use only).

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Okefenokee

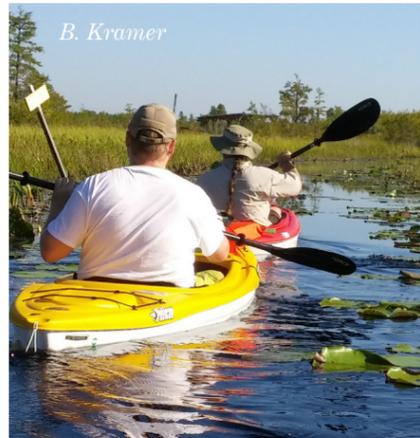
National Wildlife Refuge Wilderness Canoe Guide



Okefenokee
National Wildlife Refuge
2700 Suwannee Canal Road
Folkston, Georgia 31537
912/496 7836
<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee>

December 2015





B. Kramer

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge – Wilderness Canoe Trails

A trip into the Okefenokee is an experience that you will remember for a lifetime. Alligators glide through the dark water stained with tannic acid. Herons and egrets wade through tall grasses and water lilies. Bears meander through

hammocks and islands. Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is a haven for these and other animals – over 400,000 acres of wet prairies, cypress forests, interior islands, and pine uplands. Most of the refuge is a nationally designated Wilderness Area, which offers opportunities for solitude and rejuvenation. Seven overnight shelters and three islands are available for camping in the swamp with a permit. There are also endless possibilities for day trips into the Okefenokee Swamp through several different entrances/access points. Please remember that it is your responsibility to be prepared for a Wilderness experience, which may include temperature changes, precipitation, difficult trail navigation, and other factors. Read this brochure carefully and be sure you understand all of the procedures and regulations.

Here forests of moss-draped cypress stand mile on mile in dense, almost unbroken formation and watery “prairies” spread their colorful panorama of sight and sound. Here the swamp dwellers – the alligator, bear, raccoon, otter, and many water birds – follow their way of life with little interference from man. – E.U.Curtis Bohlen

What is Wilderness?

The open water prairies, cypress-lined lakes, and scrub-shrub thickets of the Okefenokee are not only part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, but also a National Wilderness



Area. Wilderness is a rare and wild place, untamed and undeveloped, where one can retreat from the mechanized world and reconnect with nature and oneself. Where man is just a visitor, the Wilderness in Okefenokee provides

unparalleled opportunities for solitude, wildlife observation, and serenity.

Day Trips into the Okefenokee

There are many different ways you can enjoy the nearly 120-miles of Wilderness trails within the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Each season in the swamp is varied and offers a unique experience for visitors. Visitors can enjoy the refuge by fishing, canoeing/kayaking, birdwatching, and wildlife observation year-round.



B. Kramer

For many visitors, a boat tour offered by Okefenokee Adventures or Stephen C. Foster State Park is a great way to experience the refuge’s vast Wilderness Area. These tours are offered on flat-bottom boats with small motors year-round, giving visitors a glimpse into the refuge’s history as well as observing the current inhabitants of the swamp, American alligators, great blue herons, red-shouldered

hawks, and more! There are also canoes, kayaks, and small boats to rent for visitors who would like to explore a little further.

Call Okefenokee Adventures at 912/496-7156 for tour and rental information for the Main Entrance (Suwannee Canal Recreational Area). Call Stephen C. Foster State Park at 912/637 5274 for tour and rental information for the Stephen C. Foster State Park (West Entrance) near Fargo.

Visitors can also access the Okefenokee with a personal boat (canoe, kayak, or small boat with motor less than 10 HP). Kingfisher Landing between Folkston and Waycross has a boat ramp and a small dock to access the Red Trail to Double Lakes (5 miles) and Green Trail to Bluff Lake (8 miles). The Suwannee Canal Recreation Area near Folkston has a boat ramp, a small dock, and a public canoe/kayak launching “beach” area and gives visitors access into the historic Suwannee Canal and associated trails. The Stephen C. Foster State Park has a boat ramp, small dock, and canoe/kayak launching area to access Billys Lake, Billys Island, Minnies Run to Big Water (11 miles), and the River Narrows. The Suwannee River Sill near Stephen C. Foster State Park

also has a boat ramp and accesses the Brown Trail. Refer to map for additional information on mileage and day-use access versus overnight trail access.

Overnight Wilderness Camping

Full of outstanding wildlife photography and wildlife observation opportunities, visitors can choose to spend anywhere from one night up to four nights (based on trail conditions) camping within the Okefenokee. These paddling trips are anywhere from 2 – 15 miles/day and can be through difficult conditions like peat blow-ups, narrow trails, shallow water, etc. Know the limitations of your group members when making a reservation. It is required for parties to take man-powered vessels ONLY on overnight Wilderness camping trips. NO boats with motors are authorized for this use.

It is your responsibility to be prepared for a trip, which may include temperature extremes, precipitation, high winds, high humidity, and other factors. While you may choose to bring communication and navigational equipment (cell phones, GPS units) on a trip, this is not a substitute for proper preparation. Cell phone coverage may be inconsistent, batteries die, and equipment gets dropped or wet. It is imperative that you keep on the trail specified on your permit for safety. Check the weather conditions for the refuge prior to your trip - be prepared!

How Do I Make a Reservation for a Wilderness Camping Permit?

Camping overnight is only authorized with a Wilderness Camping Permit (excluding camping areas within Stephen C. Foster State Park). **Permits must be made in advance of your planned trip and Reservations are made by calling the Canoe Reservation Line at 912/496 3331 between 7:00 am. – 10:00 am., Monday-Friday, excluding federal holidays.** Reservations can be made up to 2 months in advance of your trip. Things to know BEFORE calling to make a reservation:

- Okefenokee uses Recreation.gov to book your trip. You should have a profile in Recreation.gov before calling to make a reservation.
- There is a \$6.00 non-refundable reservation fee in addition to the \$15/person per night use fees. Be prepared to make payment (or partial payment) at time of reservation. All fees will be processed through Recreation.gov; only credit cards will be accepted.
- The cancellation policy is as follows:
 - If you cancel your reservation at least 14 days prior to your entry date, all use fees (less one person/night reservation - \$15) will be refunded. The \$6.00 reservation fee is non-refundable for all



reservations. If you cancel your reservation 13 days or less prior to the entry date, none of the fees will be refunded. If the refuge must cancel your reservation due to extreme weather events requiring the closure of the refuge and trails (hurricane, wildfire), you will be immediately notified and a full refund of use fees will be issued.

- If you do not cancel and decide to not use your reservation, none of the fees will be refunded. Please cancel your reservation if you are unable to use it as this opens space for others.

- **Change in the number of people with same dates and trip itinerary:** log onto Recreation.gov to make changes up to 24 hours prior to trip and before your permit is printed.
- **Changing the date of entry, the number of days, or the trip itinerary:** cancel your current permit and reserve a new permit. A \$6.00 reservation fee will apply to the new permit reservation.
- All permittees will be required to print their own permits and parking placards. You may print your permit up to 7 days in advance of your trip. **Once your permit is printed, no changes will be authorized.**

Know Before You Go – Wilderness Camping Permits:

Being prepared is critical for your trip into the Okefenokee. Whether you are staying one night or four, there are many things to consider as you get ready for your trip.

- Each camping group is limited to 20 people. The group leader will be responsible for printing all permits and parking placards.
- Entrance fees are included in the Wilderness Camping Permit.
- Any additions or changes to permits must be completed prior to departure.
- Portable toilets with disposable bags are recommended. Restroom facilities are available at overnight stops and day-use shelters.
- Portable camp stoves are required for cooking in areas where campfires are not permitted.
- There will only be one group per overnight platform. However, day use visitors access a large portion of the Wilderness Trail System and day use shelters.

Rules and Regulations

- Canoes and kayaks ONLY are permitted on overnight camping trips. Although boats with small motors are permitted on portions of the Okefenokee Water Trails, absolutely no motors (electric or gas-powered) are authorized on overnights.
- The Wilderness Camping Permit must be carried by each boat in the party.
- Parties must launch before 10:00 am to ensure that the overnight stop is reached before dark each day. All members of the party must be present at time of departure.
- You must remain at the designated overnight area between sunset and sunrise. Each party must leave the platform by 10:00 am.
- Each party must sign-in/out when entering and leaving the swamp and at each overnight stop. Each entrance has a sign in logbook either located at the boat ramp or the concession area.
- Follow the route exactly as it is on your permit. Do not leave designated trail.



Wilderness Canoe Trails

The trail system within the refuge is designated by a series of colors (orange, green, blue, red, brown, pink, purple). Each trail will be marked with a painted wooden sign with a mile number. In between the miles you may find directional wooden posts painted white on top to aid you in finding your way. At main intersections and distinct areas there may be wooden signs with names on them (i.e. Chesser Prairie, Minnies Lake, etc). These markers along with the refuge trail map, should help you in navigating through the trails.

Orange Trail – Follow the historic Suwannee Canal, dug in the late 1800s, in an attempt to drain the swamp. Canal Run Shelter is a 10 mile paddle from the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area (east entrance). Past Canal Run Shelter are five miles of narrow, winding trail leading to Billys Island. Follow Billys Lake for 2 miles to Stephen C. Foster State Park. Low water levels between Canal Run and Billys Island can mean navigating stumps, peat blow-ups, and encroaching vegetation. This trail is considered an EASY paddle, while the area between Canal Run and Billys Island is DIFFICULT.

Red Trail – Kingfisher Landing to Maul Hammock is a long day of paddling 12 miles through scrub-shrub, marsh, and small lakes. The 8-mile stretch between Maul Hammock and Big Water goes through marsh, a narrow closed channel, and into a wider river channel surrounded by cypress. The Big Water Shelter is at the north end of Big Water. The last 11 miles to Stephen C. Foster State Park is through prairie, cypress forest, and Billys Lake. The slow current is with you as it travels towards the State Park. This trail is considered DIFFICULT, due to the distance and conditions you must navigate through.

Green Trail - Kingfisher Landing to Bluff Lake is 8 miles along a channel originally cut for peat mining and across open prairies full of pitcher plants. The next 8 miles to Floyds Island takes you from Durdin Prairie to Territory and Chase Prairies. Between are narrow close-sided channels that may be difficult paddling during low water levels. Floyds Island to Stephen C. Foster State Park is 9 miles of marshes and cypress forests, ending in Billys Lake. This trail is considered EASY to MODERATE, with some areas DIFFICULT.

Brown Trail – Campers access Mixons Hammock with an easy 2 mile paddle across Billys Lake. To reach Cravens Hammock, paddle 5 miles through the River Narrows to the Suwannee River Sill. Follow the trail an additional 5 miles of mixed cypress, bay, and gum swamp to an oak-covered hammock. Trail conditions vary with water levels. There can be a strong current in the River Narrows, which may make the return trip difficult. This trail is considered EASY (to Mixons Hammock), and MODERATE (to Cravens Hammock).

Purple Trail – This trail connects to the Orange Trail through Chase Prairie and back to the Blue Trail. Round Top Shelter, located within Chase Prairie, boasts a 360 degree view of the prairie. This trail is considered MODERATE.

Blue Trail – This trail connects the Orange Trail with the Green Trail and skirts the edge of Chase Prairie. The deeper holes you come across are good fishing areas. It is used mainly as a route from the Orange Trail to Floyds Island. This trail is considered MODERATE due to the distance to get to the blue trail.

Pink Trail – Starts off of the Suwannee Canal, heading south into Chesser Prairie, then Grand Prairie, and ending at Monkey Lake. This trail goes through some of the most iconic open prairie where you will see alligators and wading birds, and plants such as water lilies and golden club. This trail is considered MODERATE.

General information:

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
2700 Suwannee Canal Road
Folkston, GA 31537
912/496 7836

The refuge is open daily (except Thanksgiving and Christmas)

Refuge hours vary seasonally. Check the website for hours of operation for the Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center and other facilities
<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee>

Overnight Wilderness Canoe Information and Reservations:

912/496 3331
Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays) 7am – 10am EST



National Wilderness Area (1974) "...has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation..." Section 2(c) (Excerpts from the National Wilderness Act, September 3, 1964)

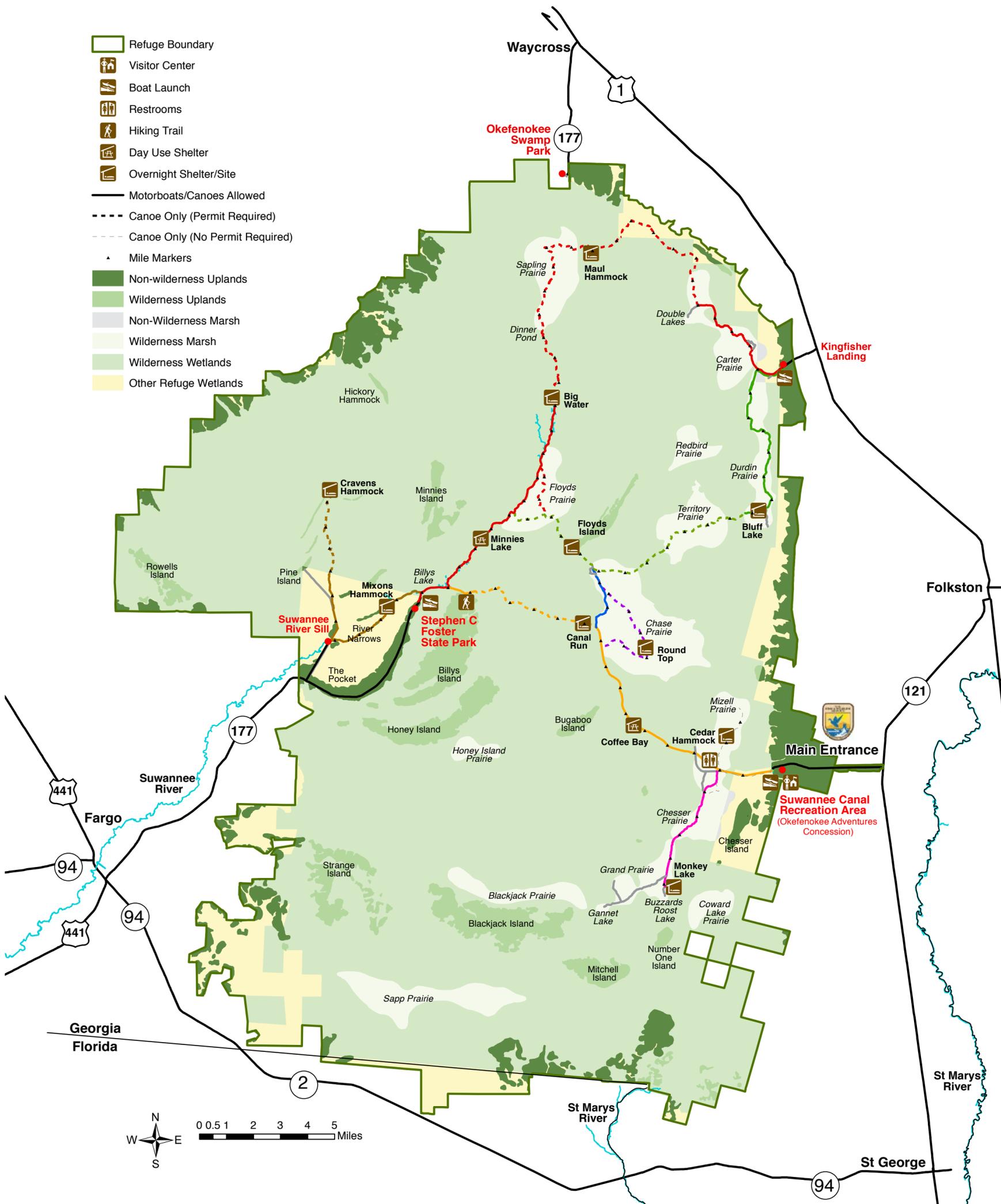


National Water Trail System
The National Water Trails System is a distinctive national network of exemplary water trails that are cooperatively supported and sustained.



National Recreation Trail
In 1981, the Secretary of the Interior designated over 100 miles of Okefenokee's wilderness canoe trails as a National Recreation Trail in recognition of its local and regional significance. Through designation, these trails became part of America's national system of over 1,000 trails.

- Refuge Boundary
- Visitor Center
- Boat Launch
- Restrooms
- Hiking Trail
- Day Use Shelter
- Overnight Shelter/Site
- Motorboats/Canoes Allowed
- Canoe Only (Permit Required)
- Canoe Only (No Permit Required)
- Mile Markers
- Non-wilderness Uplands
- Wilderness Uplands
- Non-Wilderness Marsh
- Wilderness Marsh
- Wilderness Wetlands
- Other Refuge Wetlands



Folkston

121

St George

St Marys River

94

441

94

441

177

177

Waycross

Okefenokee Swamp Park

Kingfisher Landing

Maul Hammock

Big Water

Cravens Hammock

Minnies Island

Minnies Lake

Billys Lake

Suwannee River Sill

Stephen C Foster State Park

Bluff Lake

Main Entrance

Suwannee Canal Recreation Area (Okefenokee Adventures Concession)

Chesser Prairie

Monkey Lake

Blackjack Prairie

Blackjack Island

Sapp Prairie

Georgia

Florida