



photo: Gene Stauff,
American Alligator with Young



photo: USFWS,
Prairie Flowers



photo: Gene Stauff,
Sandhill Cranes



photo: Blaine Eckberg,
Chesser Island Homestead



photo: George Gentry,
Swamp Sunrise

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge

Welcome to the "Land of the Trembling Earth"

Measuring almost 396,000 acres in size, the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1936 to protect migratory bird habitat. In 1974, 353,981 acres of the refuge were given additional protection as a National Wilderness Area. The refuge is home to hundreds of plant and animal species including the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. Visitors may explore the swamp in a boat, hike woodland trails, observe and photograph wildlife, hunt, fish, take a guided tour, and visit a historic "swamper" homestead. Stop at the Visitor Center to see an award-winning movie about the refuge and to learn about what truly makes the Okefenokee special.

Please Remember

Disturbing or collecting plants, animals and artifacts is strictly prohibited. Leave the area as you found it for others to enjoy. Stay at least 15 feet from alligators. Please help keep the wildlife healthy and safe by not feeding or harassing them. Feeding animals causes them to lose their fear of humans and they may become aggressive.

Hours of Operation—Open daily except Christmas Day

East Entrance

March 1–October 31 - 1/2 hour before sunrise to 7:30 pm

November 1–February 28/29 - 1/2 hour before sunrise to 5:30 pm

All day use boats must be off the water 90 minutes before refuge closing.

Swamp Island Drive Area

March 1– October 31 - 1/2 hour before sunrise to 7:00 pm

November 1–February 28/29 - 1/2 hour before sunrise to 5:00 pm

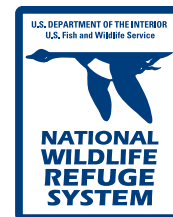
Drive gate closes 90 minutes before refuge closing.

Visitor Center

9:00 am to 5:00 pm daily (subject to change)

For additional information contact:

Refuge Manager
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
Route 2, Box 3330
Folkston, GA 31537
912/496 7836 voice/TDD
<http://okefenokee.fws.gov>



Follow these guidelines for a fun and safe visit:

Refuge Entry/Exit

Enter the refuge only during posted hours. Entrance fees or passes are required for all vehicles. Entrance fees help to defray costs of operating and maintaining refuge facilities. Display entrance pass clearly on the dashboard of your vehicle. Allow time to return to your vehicle and leave the area before posted closing time. Closing times are strictly enforced.

Driving

Observe the posted speed limits for everyone's safety and the safety of wildlife. Buses, commercial vehicles and motorhomes may not idle for more than five minutes. Follow all state and county driving laws. Do not leave valuables in your vehicle. Unlicensed motorized vehicles including ATV's are not permitted.

Wildlife Observation, Photography, and Hiking

Enjoy these activities in areas open to public use and along designated trails only.

Bicycling

Permitted on Swamp Island Drive and entrance road only. Park bicycles at racks located at the entrance to the boardwalk, homestead, and other trails. Georgia State law requires children under 16 to wear bicycle helmets.

Swimming and Wading

Prohibited in refuge waters for your own safety.

Firearms and Other Weapons

Allowed during designated hunts only. Contact the refuge for additional information.

Fishing

Permitted year-round in designated areas in accordance with Georgia state fishing laws. Trot lines and the use of live fish as bait are prohibited.

Canoeing, Kayaking, and Motorboating

Permitted year-round on marked trails. Motorboats are prohibited on some trails. Motors must be 10 hp or less. Each boat occupant is required to have a Coast Guard-approved life jacket. Georgia state law requires children under 10 to wear a life jacket when in boats. Reservations are required for overnight paddling trips.

Camping

Allowed on the refuge with a permit at designated overnight canoe campsites and at designated areas in Stephen C. Foster State Park. Public and private campgrounds are located near all refuge entrances.

Campfires

Permitted at Floyds Island, Cravens Hammock, Canal Run and designated areas in Stephen C. Foster State Park. Campfires may be prohibited during dry periods.

Pets

Pets are not permitted on boardwalks, inside buildings, or in boats. Pets must be restrained on a 10-foot or shorter leash. Please cleanup after your pet.

Alcohol

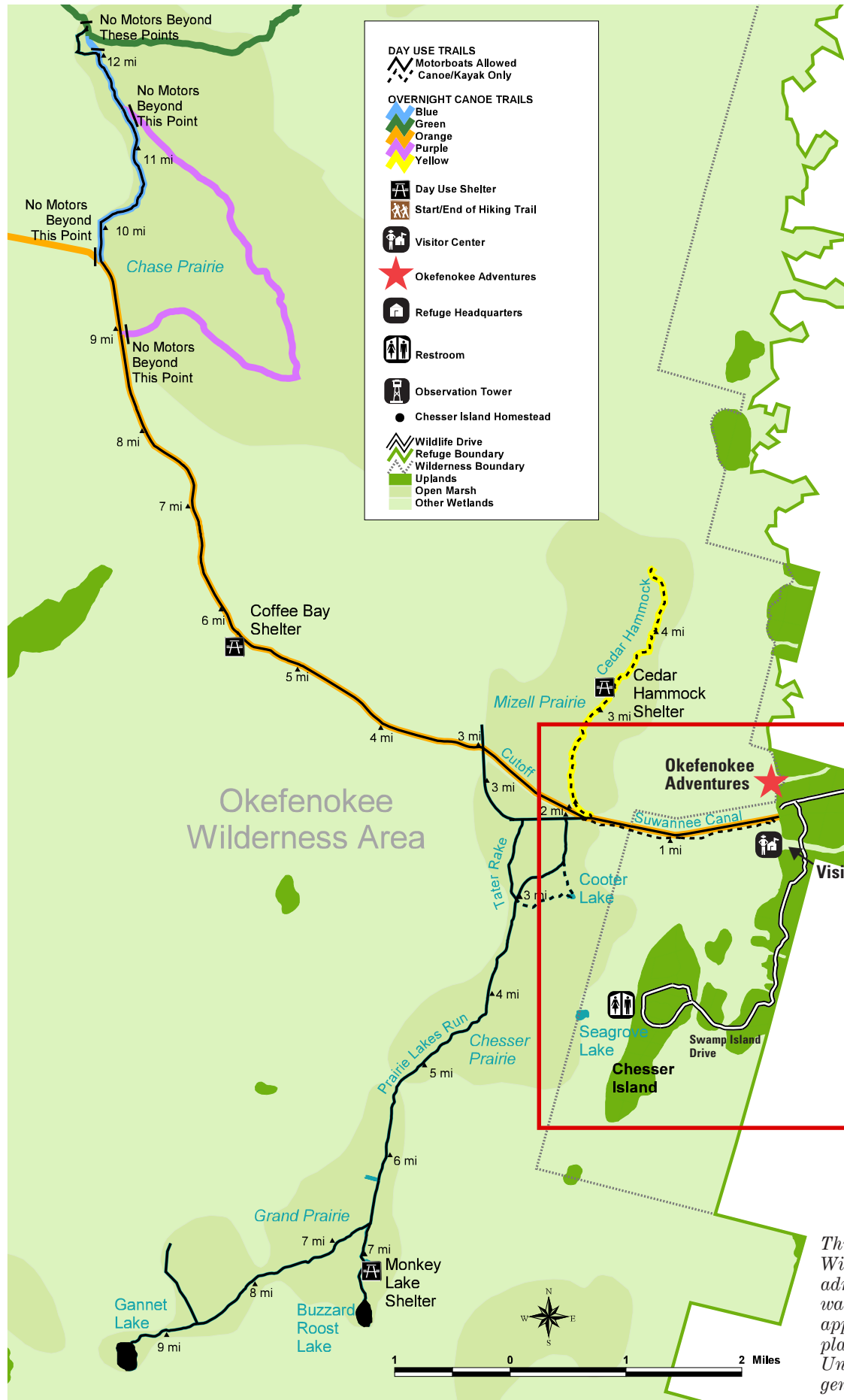
Follow state and county regulations regarding possession and consumption of alcohol on public lands.

Non-compatible Activities

Organized games such as football, baseball, horseshoes, etc. are not compatible activities permitted on the refuge. Egg hunting, "geo-caching" and horseback riding are also not permitted. Contact the refuge visitor center in advance to confirm that your activity is permitted.

Special Events

Wings Over the Swamp 2nd Saturday in February
Earth Day/National Wildlife Week 3rd Saturday in April
International Migratory Bird Day 2nd Saturday in May
Banks Lake NWR Youth Fishing Derby 1st Saturday in June
Okefenokee Festival/National Wildlife Refuge Week 2nd Saturday in October
Christmas on Chesser Island 2nd Saturday in December



The East Entrance

The historic Suwannee Canal provides canoe and motorboat access to the vast, open “prairies” of the Okefenokee Swamp. The small natural lakes and gator holes dotting the prairies offer freshwater sport fishing. Look for sandhill cranes, wood storks, and white ibis feeding in open marshes. Alligators, turtles, kingfishers, prothonotary warblers and carnivorous plants are seen along the waters edge. Upland trails are excellent places to view endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers, gopher tortoises, turkeys, white-tailed deer, and longleaf pines.

Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center

Staff and volunteers will provide information and help you plan your visit. Exhibits, a bookshop, and an award-winning film about the Okefenokee NWR are available. Call 912/496 7836 for more information.

Chesser Island Homestead

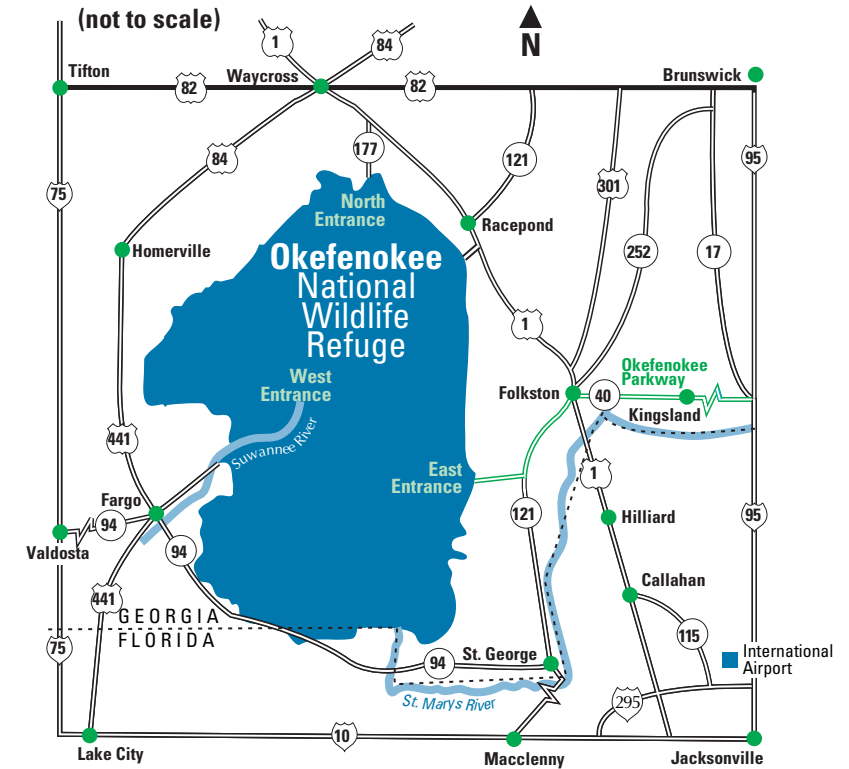
Visit this restored homestead to discover how "swampers" once lived in the Okefenokee. Tour the Chesser family home and explore a traditional syrup shed and other outbuildings.

Okefenokee Adventures: On-site Partners with USFWS

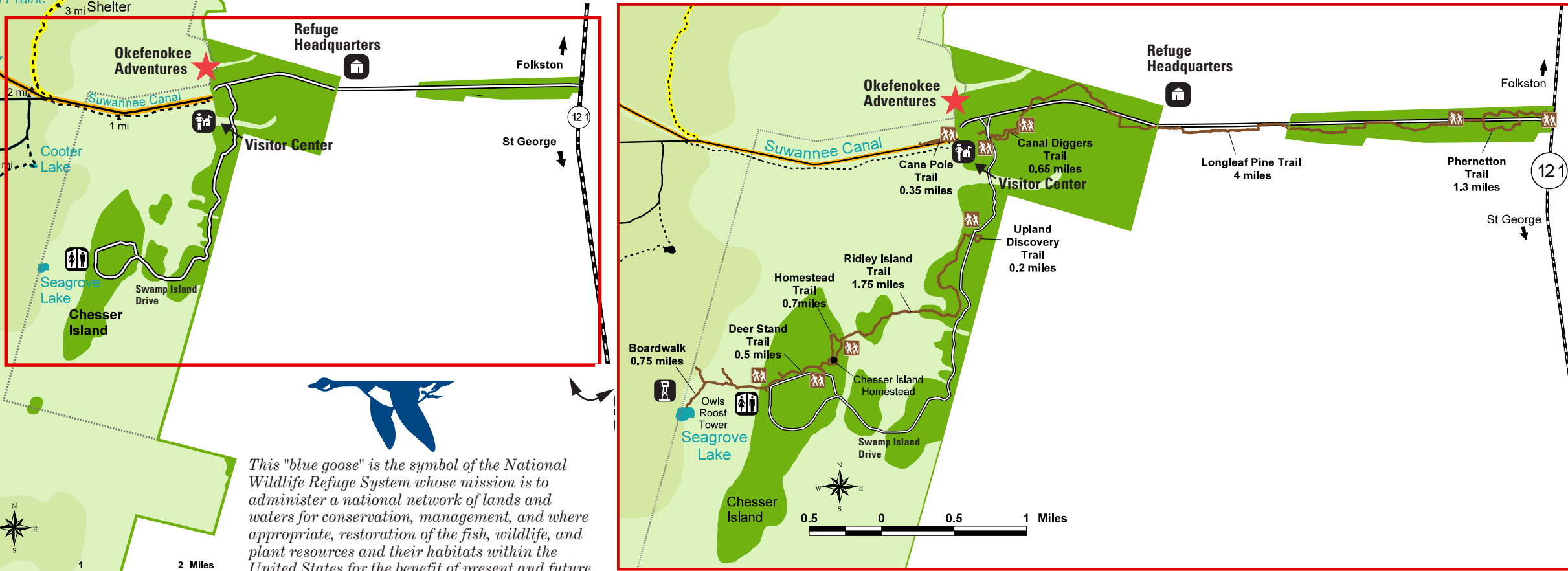
Okefenokee Adventures partners with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide visitor services at the east entrance. Take a guided boat tour, rent a boat, eat lunch, or buy a souvenir to remember your visit. You can also launch your own boat and purchase or rent camping and fishing supplies for a trip into the swamp. **Be sure to register with their staff before boating—it's required!** Call 912/496 7156 for more information.

Wilderness Canoeing

Permits are available for two to five day trips through the Okefenokee NWR. You may make reservations no more than two months in advance. Call 912/496 3331 between 7:00 am- 10:00 am, Monday - Friday excluding Federal holidays.



In case of an emergency, call 912/496 7156 or 911



This "blue goose" is the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System whose mission is to administer a national network of lands and waters for conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.