

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.
- Insect repellent and/or mosquito netting
- Trash bags. The refuge asks our visitors to practice **Leave No Trace** principles (pack it in; pack it out).
- Toilet paper. Each overnight campsite has a pit toilet, but bring TP in case supplies are low.

You **should** carry the following items:

- Extra flashlights and batteries
- Portable toilet with disposable bags
- Rope for pulling canoe
- First aid kit
- Rain gear
- Sleeping bag/free-standing tent or hammock for sleeping
- Insect repellent
- Duct tape for emergency repairs
- Spare paddle
- Waterproof bags/containers
- 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 Guide Special Use Permit. Permits are only issued once annually, in the fall. For more information, call 912-496-3331.

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).

Wilderness Canoe Trails

Trails within the refuge are color-coded (blue, brown, green, orange, pink, purple, red, yellow). Numbered mile markers line each trail, while wooden posts painted white on top serve as trail markers to help you find your way. At main intersections wooden signs indicate the direction of several different trails or sites.

Blue Trail

Description: 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 or Bluff Lake.

Difficulty: **moderate**

Overnight Sites: N/A

Brown Trail

Description: Campers access Mixons Hammock with an easy two-mile paddle across Billys Lake. To reach the Suwannee River Sill, paddle a total of five miles through the River Narrows. The trail continues an additional three miles along the Sill through mixed cypress, bay, and gum swamp. Trail conditions vary with water levels. There can be a current in the River Narrows, which may make the return trip difficult.

Difficulty: **easy** (to Mixons Hammock), **moderate** (River Narrows)

Overnight Sites: **Mixons Hammock (Island)** - This island is located at the west end of Billys Lake before the River Narrows on the Brown Trail. This site is only two miles from Stephen C. Foster State Park, making it a great site for less experienced paddlers and families with children. There are hiking opportunities on the island. The island has a fire ring for having a campfire.

Green Trail

Description: Kingfisher Landing to Bluff Lake is eight miles along a channel originally cut for peat mining and across open lakes and a waterway lined with pitcher plants and spatterdock. The next nine miles to Floyds Island take you through Territory and Chase Prairies with narrow closed-in channels in between the prairies that may be difficult to paddle during low water levels. Floyds Island to Stephen C. Foster State Park is nine miles of marshes and cypress forests, ending in Billys Lake.

Difficulty: **moderate - difficult**

Overnight Sites: **Bluff Lake (Platform)** - This site is located on the Green Trail (accessible from Kingfisher Landing). Paddle across Bluff Lake to get to the overnight shelter. Stars are beautiful on a dark night.

Floyds Island (Island) - This site is located on Floyds Island along the Green Trail. A ¼ mile trail traverses across the island, offering access from the east to the west side of the island. If you are camping on Floyds Island as a through trip, you must portage across the island. An old hunting cabin sits partway down the trail across from the campsite. The campsite also contains a fire ring.

Orange Trail

Description: Follow the historic Suwannee Canal, dug in the late 1800s in an attempt to drain the swamp. Six miles from the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area is a day use shelter, Coffee Bay, which is a great spot to stretch your legs and have lunch. Canal Run Shelter is a 10-mile paddle from the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area (east entrance). The trail past Canal Run Shelter becomes narrow and winding for five miles to Billys Island. Follow Billys Lake for two miles to Stephen C. Foster State Park. During times of low water levels, paddlers may be navigating stumps, peat blow-ups, and encroaching vegetation between Canal Run and Billys Island.

Difficulty: **easy to moderate due to distance** (Suwannee Canal Recreation Area to Canal Run), **difficult** (Canal Run to Stephen C. Foster State Park)

Overnight Sites: **Canal Run (Platform)** - This platform is located on the edge of the historic Suwannee Canal, where the trail is surrounded by pines, cypress, and loblolly bays dripping with Spanish moss. The platform is adjacent to a small hammock, where a campfire ring is available for use. It is located 10 miles from Suwannee Canal Recreation Area and seven miles from Stephen C. Foster State Park.

Pink Trail

Description: This trail starts off of the Suwannee Canal or Orange Trail, heading south into Chesser Prairie, then Grand Prairie, and ending at Buzzards Roost. This trail goes through some of the most iconic open prairie, where you may see alligators, wading birds, and plants such as water lilies and golden club.

Difficulty: **moderate**

Overnight Sites: **Buzzards Roost (Platform)** - This platform is located in Grand Prairie. The platform sits in Buzzards Roost Lake. This wide round lake provides excellent wildlife viewing and fishing opportunities.

Purple Trail

Description: This trail connects to the Orange Trail through Chase Prairie and back to the Blue Trail. The challenges of this trail come from the plants that may slow paddlers' progress through the prairie.

Difficulty: **moderate**

Overnight Sites: **Round Top (Platform)** - This platform is located in Chase Prairie. It offers a 360-degree view of the swamp surrounding it. Round Top is a great location for stargazing. This site also provides some of the most beautiful sunrises and sunsets.

Red Trail

Description: Kingfisher Landing to Maul Hammock is a long day of paddling 12 miles through scrub-shrub, marsh, and small lakes. The nine-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 Lake. The last 11 miles to Stephen C. Foster State Park go through cypress forest, and Minnies Lake (day-use shelter) to Minnies Run and Billys Lake. The slow current is with you as it travels towards the State Park.

Difficulty: **difficult**

Overnight Sites: **Maul Hammock (Platform)** - This platform is located on the left edge of Maul Hammock Lake, so be sure to look behind you to find your overnight stop as you enter Maul Hammock. The lake, and the other lakes along the Red Trail, provide good fishing opportunities. This site is one of the most

remote locations along the overnight camping trails. Enjoy beautiful night sky viewing from this location.

Big Water (Platform) - This platform is at the north end of Big Water Lake. The area provides great fishing opportunities (seasonally). There are fantastic night sky and sunrise/sunset viewing opportunities at this platform.

Yellow Trail

Description: This trail extends north of the Suwannee Canal into Mizell Prairie. Cedar Hammock platform lies about a mile into this trail. This area is typical Okefenokee prairie, with low growing plants and scrub-shrub habitat.

Difficulty: **easy**

Overnight Sites: **Cedar Hammock (Platform)**

This platform is located three miles from the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area, making it a great platform for less experienced paddlers and/or families with children. The platform sits in Mizell Prairie, offering open views of the surrounding area.



General information

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

Refuge hours vary seasonally. Check the website for hours of operation for the Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center and other facilities. The refuge is open daily (except Thanksgiving and Christmas).

Website: <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee>

Overnight Wilderness Canoe Information and Reservations: The Overnight Permit Reservation Line is open Tuesday through Thursday (excluding federal holidays) 7-10 am EST. Call 912-496-3331 to obtain a permit.