

## Evaluation Criteria - Guides Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge

Guiding permits will be renewed annually, October 1 - September 30, upon application, unless unacceptable performance problems occur during the year. Below are criteria we expect guides to follow when on Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. **If a company has three infractions for any reason, the company will permanently lose their permit.**

1. **1.** All guides will follow federal, state, local, and refuge regulations regarding alcohol, illegal drugs, firearms and other felony offenses. Guides who are convicted of possession of an illegal substance, violations involving alcohol, or illegal possession of a firearm will immediately have their license revoked permanently.
2. **2.** Guides are expected to follow established trails, adhere to visitor hours, and operate under the conditions of both the Wilderness Canoe Permit and Special Use Permit (i.e. no motors, must leave before 10:00 a.m., etc.) Guides who are out of compliance with refuge regulations will have their permit revoked.
3. **3.** Guides will be considerate of their guests, other refuge visitors, and refuge staff at all times. All complaints against guides or the guiding company from refuge trips must be submitted to Refuge Staff for investigation. Three or more justifiable complaints against a guiding company will result in probation for one year. Complaints will be evaluated at the end of the year to determine if the permit should be renewed. Satisfactory "complaint-free performance" must be demonstrated during the probation period to establish eligibility to re-apply for a permit.
4. **4.** Guides will be able to explain the mission and objectives of Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, describe management goals, understand safety and emergency procedures, and other topics discussed in Refuge Training. Guides will protect the natural resources of Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge - they will not pick plants, feed wildlife, drink untreated swamp water, or dispose of wastewater in the swamp. They will dispose of all waste, including human waste, in a proper manner. Guides will be committed to leaving trails, campsites, and other facilities in better condition than they were found.

