

Okefenokee NWR

Who needs a Guiding Permit?

Okefenokee NWR policy requires that: ***Any person or business that charges or includes a fee for guiding on the refuge is required to have a guiding permit.*** This includes non-profit organizations. Okefenokee has defined two types of guiding permits: day use and overnight. Individuals and businesses may require more than one type of permit.

Types of Guiding Permits:

	Overnight Guiding Permit	Day Use Guiding Permit
Issued for:	Guides/organizations that lead overnight canoe trips for a fee. (reservations required)	Guides/organizations that lead activities including fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, and interpretation for a fee.
Length of permit	1 year*	1 year
Price of permit	\$200/year to be paid at beginning of permit	\$25/year to be paid at beginning of permit
Number of permits issued	15 total 1 st come/1 st served Must meet application standards	100/year 1 st come/1 st served Must meet application standards

Requirements

Insurance (\$500,000/occurrence General Liability) Refuge Training Current First Aid and CPR Training for all employees	Insurance (\$300,000/occurrence General Liability) Refuge Training Current First Aid and CPR Training for all employees
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Entrance Fees

Pay Wilderness Canoe system fees during trip. Entrance fees apply for other visits.	9 people in vehicle: \$5/day 10-25 people: \$25/day 26 or more: \$50/day
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Date Issued

October 1 - September 30	October 1 - September 30
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** Guiding Permits will be renewed automatically, upon receipt of application, if performance is acceptable. No formal evaluation will take place, however, a list of conditions and requirements will be provided to guides. An application form will be required before any permit is issued.*

Guiding Requirements Insurance

All guides will be required to furnish proof of liability insurance by an insurance company which is acceptable to the Service. Day-use guides will be required to furnish \$300,000 general liability/occurrence; overnight guides will furnish \$500,000 general liability/occurrence. Each policy or certificate evidencing the insurance shall contain an endorsement which provides that the insurance company will notify the refuge 30 days prior to the effective date of any cancellation or termination of the policy or certificate or any modification of the policy or certificate which adversely affects the interest of the Government in such insurance. The notice shall be sent by registered mail and shall identify the permittee and the number of the special use permit.

Training

All permittees and their employees who guide on Okefenokee NWR shall attend a training course that describes the refuge and its mission, the habitats and history of the area, and the customer service standards expected of all permittees. Training will take place on the refuge, in an eight-hour (1 day) session. Guides who have attended a previous training course are required to participate every three years in a four-hour refresher session. All guides that work on Okefenokee NWR will be required to maintain current Red Cross First Aid and CPR certification.

Reservations

Guides will not receive any special privileges in scheduling or reserving canoe trails

and platforms. The refuge does not accept reservations for the picnic shelter or picnic area, auditorium, Chesser Island Homestead or other facilities.

Entrance Fees

All day use guides will be required to pay daily entrance fees based on the number of passengers in the vehicle. For overnight guides, the entrance fee is included in the canoe permit fee. (However, any guiding outside a canoe permit requires the appropriate entrance fee.) Guiding permits do not exempt permittees or their employees from entrance or other fees when visiting for non-work related activities. Any other commercial use on the refuge, including but not limited to catering, shuttle service, and outfitting will require the minimum \$25.00 commercial vehicle fee (up to 25 people), 26 or more \$50.00. If you are guiding a group with an educational/scientific entrance fee waiver, you must either board their vehicle to enter the refuge or pay the commercial vehicle rate for your vehicle.

Reporting

At the end of the permit year, permittees are required to fill out a short form revealing dates, times and number of trips they took into Okefenokee NWR; total number of participants for each trip; and total fees collected per trip. There will also be space to list problems encountered and additional comments.

Definitions

Day-Use Guiding: Any organization or business that charges or includes a fee or donation for fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, interpretation, or other services.

Overnight Guiding: Any organization or business that charges or includes a fee or donation for guided overnight trips on the Wilderness Canoe Trail System.

Commercial Organization: An organization that uses the National Wildlife Refuge for economic use.

Commercial Vehicle: Any conveyance (car, van, bus, truck, etc.) that provides the operator, passengers, and/or equipment with access to a National Wildlife Refuge for economic uses.

Economic Use: Any activity involving the use of a National Wildlife Refuge or its resources for a profit.

Guiding Permit: A Special Use Permit issued by the refuge to an individual, business, or organizations for a particular commercial recreational use.

Private Non-commercial Vehicle: Any passenger vehicle utilized to gain access to a refuge for personal recreation purposes.

Recreational Use: Any activity relating to recreational use of the refuge. If a monetary gain (profit) is the objective of such use, the use is then treated as an economic use and administered accordingly.

Fee Waivers: Fee waivers are only issued in advance for educational or scientific purposes related to the resources of the refuge. The group must apply for and receive a fee waiver by submitting documentation of their recognition as an educational or scientific institution along with a statement of their proposed visit. The following information must be submitted on letterhead to the refuge at least two weeks prior to the trip. Describe the educational purpose of the proposed visit. Describe how the purpose and the Okefenokee are tied into your current school curriculum. Furnish a sample of questionnaires, data sheets, problems or data that will guide your students on this field trip. Visits that are strictly for recreational or experiential purposes do not qualify for a fee waiver. Successful applicants will be notified by fax.