

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge

Special Conditions for Commercial Guides

The Permittee is authorized to conduct the activities listed on the final Special Use Permit (SUP) during the date(s) and time(s) stated on the SUP and in accordance with these Special Conditions attached to the SUP to ensure compatibility and minimize disturbance to wildlife, resources, and the visitor experience:

1. Each Commercial Guiding SUP is valid for one fiscal year (October 1-September 30).
2. Permittee must pay an annual permit fee of \$200 for overnight guiding or \$50 for day-use guiding prior to October 1 of each year.
3. Permittee must 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 special use permit number.
4. Permittee and all employees must furnish proof of and maintain current and valid First Aid/CPR certification.
5. The permittee must submit an annual report form including dates, number of trips taken into the refuge, total number of participants for each trip, and total fees collected per trip the refuge by October 14 annually.
6. Day-use Guides must pay daily entrance fees based on the number of passengers in the vehicle: up to nine people: \$5/day, 10-25 people: \$25/day, 26 or more: \$50/day. Entrance fees are included in the Overnight Camping Permit for Overnight Guides.
7. A per trip shuttle fee must be paid to Okefenokee Adventures either in person, by calling 912-496-7156, or by emailing eric.looft@okeswamp.org.
8. Overnight Guides must contact the Overnight Permit Line (912-496-3331) from Tuesday to Thursday between 7:00 am to 10:00 am to make reservations for a camping platform and to obtain an Overnight Camping Permit.
9. Day-use Guides must guide only during public operational hours and sunset tours must launch only at Kingfisher Landing.
10. Permittee must follow federal, state, local, and refuge regulations regarding alcohol, illegal drugs, and firearms while on refuge property. Guides who are convicted of possession of an illegal substance, violations involving alcohol, or illegal possession of a firearm will immediately have their permit revoked permanently.
11. Permittee must follow established trails, adhere to refuge hours, and operate under the conditions of both the Overnight Camping Permit and Special Use Permit (i.e. no motors, must be on the water by 10:00 a.m., off the water times, etc.).
12. Permittee must always be considerate of their guests, other refuge visitors, and refuge staff. All complaints against guides or the guiding company on refuge trips must be submitted to refuge staff for investigation.

13. Permittee must be able to explain the mission and objectives of Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, describe management policies, understand safety and emergency procedures, and other topics discussed in Refuge Training Materials (provided by refuge staff). Guides must protect the natural resources of Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge; they will not pick plants, feed wildlife, drink untreated swamp water, leave trash or litter, or dispose of wastewater in the swamp. Guides will be committed to “Leave No Trace” principles and will leave trails, campsites, and other facilities in better condition than they were found.

Definitions

Day-Use Guiding: Any organization or business who charges or includes a fee or donation to the public for fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, or interpretation.

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

Commercial Organization: An organization that uses the national wildlife refuge for economic gain.

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.

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

Recreational Use: Any activity relating to recreation on the refuge.