



For Immediate Release

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Okefenokee Swamp Park Announces \$497,000 in New Federal Funding for African American CCC Preservation Project

Waycross, GA – Today The Okefenokee Swamp Park announced a \$497,000 Congressionally Directed Spending Request from U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock that will help fund a \$541,428 project dedicated to collecting, preserving, and digitizing the historical records and manuscripts of the Okefenokee Swamp [Civilian Conservation Corps Company 1433](#), a historically underrepresented group of nearly 200 young African-American laborers who were instrumental to the foundation and development of the Okefenokee refuge from 1937 to 1941.

This project presents a new opportunity to highlight the Civilian Conservation Corps Company 1433, the group of laborers responsible for saving the wildlife species which were on the verge of losing their habitats, and their historic contributions to the Okefenokee region. These federal funds will be utilized to purchase the equipment and hire the personnel necessary to preserve, digitize, and archive the historic records that help tell this story. These funds will also support the contractor fees associated with collecting records to create a fully functioning archival database that will build awareness for the historical significance of the African-American community and engage local stakeholders in meaningful dialogue in the Okefenokee region.

“The Okefenokee region was a crucial safe haven for many Black Americans in the New Deal era,” **said Senator Reverend Raphael Warnock.** “This all-Black Civilian Conservation Corps revitalized the broader region, which is important and often overlooked in our state’s history. I was proud to secure federal funds to ensure the stories of these patriotic Americans will be preserved and digitized to inspire future generations.”

The history of this all-Black Civilian Conservation Corps unit will be accessible via a centralized online database, public exhibitions at the Okefenokee Swamp Park, and

classrooms across the South Georgia region – immersing students and visitors in an educational experience that will promote understanding, appreciation, and conversation surrounding the historical and cultural significance of the Civilian Conservation Corps to the surrounding region.

“The Okefenokee Swamp Park is grateful for Senator Warnock’s willingness to join our mission of encouraging a deeper appreciation and understanding of the Swamp’s intrinsic, economic, and cultural value to the local community,” **said Kim Bednarek, Executive Director, Okefenokee Swamp Park.** “These funds will help us preserve an untold, yet critically important piece of history – and continue building on the success of our preservation, education, and economic development mission for years to come”.

About the Okefenokee Swamp Park

The Okefenokee Swamp is a world-renowned National Wildlife Refuge that is home to a wide variety of threatened and endangered wildlife, including over 1,000 unique species of plants and animals. The Okefenokee Swamp Park opened at the northern entrance into the 407,000-acre Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Waycross more than 75 years ago and has evolved into a regional educational organization that inspires conservation advocacy for the Okefenokee. The Okefenokee Swamp Park has welcomed millions of visitors since its founding and provides them with an experience that educates and encourages the preservation of this natural wonder. To read more about the Okefenokee Swamp Park and its mission, visit our [website](#).