

C.L. Spencer and Ernest L. Hill of Jacksonville promoted a plan to build a dam across the upper St. Mary's River in 1925. They applied to the Federal Water Power Commission for a permit. The firm proposed to create a reservoir and build a hydroelectric plant to provide the Jacksonville area with "fresh, soft water" and electricity. The plan was opposed by the Hebard Lumber Company, owners of most of the Swamp property, and George MacDonnell of the Okefenokee National Association. Although a permit was granted to Spencer-Hill in 1926, opposition continued through 1927. The venture failed to materialize.<sup>14</sup>

Proposals to build a cross-swamp canal increased in popularity during the 1920s. The St. Mary's - St. Marks Canal Project had been popular in Florida for years. By 1929 enough support had been organized in Georgia to persuade the U.S. Corps of Engineers to survey a canal route and conduct another feasibility study. The route across the Okefenokee was mapped from photographs made from an airplane piloted by Laurie Yonge of Jacksonville. The Georgia Association (Chamber of Commerce) publicized the flight and sent an artist with Yonge to make sketches of the Swamp. The Georgia Legislature created a commission in 1929 to promote the venture. The canal scheme continued to be promoted as late as 1934. It was a pie-in-the-sky venture to provide hope in the depths of the Depression. The reservoir and the canal proposals finally galvanized efforts by individuals interested in preserving the Swamp as a wildlife refuge, including Dan Hebard of Hebard Lumber Company.<sup>15</sup>

By the beginning of the century tourists on their way to Florida passed through miles and miles of cut-over woods in southern Georgia and northern Florida. While speculators promoted these lands as ideal farms for truck crops, only a fraction of the lands were sold for this purpose. By the 1920s several families were purchasing and fencing large tracts around the Okefenokee rim for cattle pastures. Mrs. Lydia Stone Crews

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<sup>14</sup>Waycross Journal-Herald, November 29, 1925; November 20, 1926; August 2, 1927; December 8, 1927. Clinch County News, November 5, 1926.

<sup>15</sup>Waycross Journal-Herald, July 10, 1929; August 9, 1929; May 17, 1933; May 24, 1933; August 14, 1933; August 30, 1933, August 31, 1933; November 24, 1933; February 5, 1934; February 15, 1934; March 21, 1934; April 30, 1934. Atlanta Journal, May 27, 1929; July 28, 1929; July 29, 1929; July 30, 1929. Jacksonville Journal, July 29, 1929; July 30, 1929. Charlton County Herald, August 2, 1929.