

members of the Atlanta Bird Club and the Georgia Ornithological Society. Lucien Harris, Jr., the grandson of Joel Chandler Harris, was elected President of the Society. Harris was especially interested in butterflies. Members recognized him as "The Grand Caterpillar." The naturalists rejuvenated their interest in the Okefenokee project by visiting the area several times a year, frequently spending several days on Floyds Island as guests of Dan and Fred Hebard.²⁰

In July 1929, the House Conservation Committee in the Georgia Legislature began to discuss a bill introduced by Rep. Bonnell Stone of Union County, chairman of the Committee. The bill proposed that the Federal government be permitted to acquire the Hebard Lumber Company property and establish "national forest reserves, forest experiment stations, wildlife sanctuaries, or for any other development purposes best suited on these lands." Members of the Conservation Committee visited southern Georgia in late July. They examined the reforested lands of Alex Sessoms west of Waycross, took a boat trip on the Suwanee Canal with John Hopkins, and traveled to St. Mary's to discuss the St. Mary's - St. Marks Canal proposal. Mr. Hopkins planned an overnight stay at the Hebard cabin on Floyds Island, but high water levels made this impractical. Instead, Mr. Hopkins treated the committee members to a barbecue supper.²¹

Following the junket, the Legislature passed the bill. The Governor signed it on August 17, 1929.²²

Despite initial opposition by the Georgia Forestry Association, Senator W.J. Harris promoted the purchase of the Okefenokee property as a national forest reserve. Initially he proposed its purchase as a national park. Senator Harris envisioned a national forest preserve extending from the Osceola National Forest in northern Florida northward to include the Okefenokee Swamp.²³

²⁰Earle S. Greene, A Lifetime with the Birds, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, 1966), pp. 45-60.

²¹Brantley [County] Enterprise, February 28, 1929; July 4, 1929. Waycross Journal-Herald, May 31, 1929; June 5, 1929; July 13, 1929; July 20, 1929; July 26, 1929. Atlanta Journal, July 22, 1929; July 25, 1929; July 28, 1929. Charlton County Herald, June 14, 1929; July 5, 1929; August 2, 1929.

²²Georgia Laws, 1929, pp. 239-240.

²³Charlton County Herald, March 15, 1929; June 14, 1929. Brantley [County] Enterprise, February 28, 1929. Atlanta Journal, May 20, 1929. Waycross Journal-Herald, May 31, 1929.