

In 1929 it was impossible to build a political consensus on what to do with the Okefenokee property because of the many proposals being promoted. The Garden Clubs of Georgia favored the plan to make the Okefenokee a national park. F.M. Oliver, a Savannah attorney, was one of the first to attempt to organize the movement to create a national park. The national park plan made little headway. The members of the Georgia Society of Naturalists were not distracted by the calls for national parks, forest reserves, and canals. They wanted the Federal government to purchase the property as a wildlife sanctuary. But it required over a year for these able men to initiate a sustained campaign. Most of the field trips in 1930 were visits to areas in northern Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. Meanwhile, individual members began to popularize the Okefenokee Swamp as a unique natural area. For example, William A. Horne of Macon visited the Okefenokee and described batteries, houses, and the process of plant succession in the Okefenokee prairies.<sup>24</sup>

The Society assisted in persuading the U.S. Senate Committee investigating sites for wildlife refuges to visit the Okefenokee Swamp in 1931. The Committee was chaired by Senator Frederick C. Walcott. Other members included Harry B. Hawes, Key Pittman, Charles McNary, and Peter Norbeck. McNary did not make the trip. Norbeck would later chair the Committee that made the decision to purchase the Hebard property in 1936. Georgia Senator Walter George met the members of the Committee in Waycross. He gave his support to the purchase of the property as a wildlife refuge. Dr. Paul Reddington, Chief of the U.S. Biological Survey, Dr. T. Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Association of Audubon Society, Lucien Harris, Jr. of the Georgia Society of Naturalists, and Earle Greene and Walter Winn of the *Atlanta Journal* joined the party in Waycross.

Members of the party arrived by train at Folkston on the morning of Tuesday, March 10, 1931. After a shad breakfast and many speeches of welcome, several Senators were taken in a "six place cabin plane" for a hurried flight over the Okefenokee Swamp by Joe Duckworth. The remaining members of the party proceeded to Waycross by automobile.

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<sup>24</sup>Macon Telegraph, June 29, 1930. Greene, A Lifetime With The Birds, pp. 46-48. Savannah Morning News, March 12, 1931; January 3, 1932. Charlton County Herald, January 1, 1932.