

the State Geologist, presented lectures at a public meeting. McCallie and an assistant had explored the Swamp twice in 1915. His black and white photos are probably the best graphic record of the Swamp at this time. Roland M. Harper made a few comments at the meeting. The members elected James Needham, a biologist at Cornell University, President of the Society. J.F. Wilson was selected to serve as Secretary. Dan L. Hebard invited members of the Society to visit Billys Island via the logging railroad. Harper, McCallie, and other members visited the island and Billys Lake, and made photographs, spent the night and returned to Waycross the following day. Their way was blocked by a derailed locomotive on their return trip to Waycross, an omen of the preservation task that lay ahead.⁷

Following the meeting the members launched a publicity campaign. A number of newspaper articles described the unique natural character of the Okefenokee Swamp and stressed the need to preserve areas in the Swamp that had not been disturbed by logging operations. Francis Harper was especially interested in preserving the area around Floyds Island. The area on and around the island had not been cut over at this time. Many newspapers and magazines, including the *Savannah Morning News*, the *Atlanta Journal*, the *New York Times*, and *Natural History*, published articles advocating preservation of the Swamp. Scientific organizations, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, also promoted the conservation effort.⁸

The Georgia Legislature passed a resolution entitled "Congress Urged to Establish a National Park in Okefenokee Swamp" in 1919.⁹ The U.S. Department of Agriculture was urged to survey the Okefenokee Swamp as a potential forest reserve or a game preserve or a national park.¹⁰

⁷ J.F. Wilson to James G. Needham, February 21, 1919, June 10, 1919, June 11, 1919; J.F. Wilson to Organization Committee, March 19, 1919; *Atlanta Journal*, April 17, 1919; *Waycross Journal-Herald*, June 2, 1919, June 3, 1919, June 4, 1919, June 6, 1919; C.T. Trowell, *Exploring the Okefenokee: Roland M. Harper in the Okefenokee Swamp*, Research Paper No. 2 September, 1988, pp. 61-68.

⁸ *Savannah Morning News*, June 13, 1920; *Waycross Journal-Herald*, June 4, 1920 (reprinting *Atlanta Journal* article); *New York Times*, May 17, 1920; Francis Harper, "Okefenokee Swamp as a Reservation," *Natural History*, (20:1), 1920, 28-41. Resolution: American Association for the Advancement of Science, St. Louis, Missouri, January 2, 1920. Francis Harper to A.G. Rehn, August 27, 1919. Francis Harper to J.F. Wilson, September 9, 1919.

⁹ *Georgia Laws*, 1919, pp. 1424-1426.

¹⁰ J.F. Wilson to Executive Committee, n.d. (probably June 1919), plus copy of proposed bill. J.F. Wilson to James G. Needham, August 8, 1919. J.F. Wilson to Albert H. Wright, December 20, 1919. J.F. Wilson to Francis Harper, December 20, 1919.