



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MORE THAN 30 GROUPS ORGANIZE TO SAVE OKEFENOKEE SWAMP**

**GEORGIA (July 14, 2020)** More than 30 national, state, and local organizations have joined forces in the fight to protect the Okefenokee Swamp. The new coalition, known as the Okefenokee Protection Alliance (OPA), recently formed in response to a new and alarming threat to the Okefenokee in the form of proposed heavy mineral sands mining adjacent to the swamp.

In July 2019, Twin Pines Minerals, LLC, submitted a permit application to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) seeking authorization to mine the first phase of what would eventually become a 12,000-acre project abutting the southeast corner of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

After the Corps was deluged with letters opposing the project, Twin Pines withdrew that application and submitted a second application to excavate a roughly 900-acre first phase of the mine. The Corps is now weighing whether to approve that second application. Twin Pines must also secure permission from the state of Georgia.

“The new Okefenokee Protection Alliance is the first collaborative effort to have an exclusive focus on the protection of what is arguably our country’s healthiest remaining wetland of significance,” says Christian Hunt, Southeast Program Representative for Defenders of Wildlife. “Everyone came together because of Twin Pines’ permit application, but by design we intend to be active over the long-term and address the present threat that we are dealing with today, as well as future threats that stand to compromise the Okefenokee.”