Friends of Congaree Swamp

www.friendsofcongaree.org

Fall 2004

South Carolina's First National Park

The Congaree Swamp National Monument officially took its place as South Carolina's first, and the nation's newest, national park at a dedication ceremony October 25.

Among the dignitaries attending were three members of the state's Congressional delegation, two of whom had played integral roles in bringing about the event.

Sen. Ernest F. "Fritz" Hollings, D-S.C., has been an advocate for the Congaree Swamp for more than 30 years, ever since Harry Hampton enlisted his help to save the swamp from loggers who were decimating its old-growth trees.

Hollings, who serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee, has been instrumental in securing Senate votes and funding to create the monument and secure the national park designation.

The original bill in 1976 set aside 15,000 acres for the Congaree Swamp National Monument. In 1988, Congress expanded the boundary by 7,000 acres and re-designated most of it as wilderness. In 2003, the monument boundary was increased by 4,500 acres and on Nov. 10, 2003, the area became the nation's 57th national park.

Holdings praised Hampton's efforts, noting that the national park designation was a "result of the vision of Harry Hampton."

Hampton died in 1980, but his daughter, Harriott Hampton Faucette, and granddaughter, Mardie Faucette, were on hand to see his dream come true.

Rep. Jim Clyburn, who represents South Carolina's Sixth Congressional District, introduced the bill for the park designation in the House.

He quipped that the ceremony was "part of today's stop on the Fritz Hollings legacy tour." Hollings, 82, is retiring after his seventh term in the Senate.

Clyburn's remarks at a town hall meeting in the Lower Richland community in the fall of 2003 did much to allay residents' fears about the effects a national park designation might have on their property.

He said that meeting "opened eyes and opened minds" and opened the way for the Congaree Swamp

Dedication continued page 2

"Friends" Board members Brusi Alexander and Jim Welch appear on WIS News 10 Midday with David Stanton to promote the Annual Meeting and the Park dedication. The promotion aired Friday, October 22.

President's Corner

Dr. John Grego

Congaree SwampFest 2004

Information on this year's SwampFest, sponsored by the Lower Richland Ministerial Alliance, has only become available recently. The Festival will be held Saturday, November 27 from 10 AM to 4 PM. Just like last year, the Friends will have an information table in the Vendor Village. Unlike last year, the Vendor Village will be at Old Mt. Moriah Church (at the intersection of Mt View Road and Old Bluff Road). Activities will be scheduled at Congaree National Park as well, and we hope to help Park Service staff with tours as needed.

At SwampFest 2003, Friends gathered information on possible contacts for a cultural history project. Stephen Criswell of Benedict College and current president of the South Carolina Traditional Arts Network (SCTAN) saw the opportunity to integrate such a project into Benedict College's service learning program. He will use NEH funds to hire Leslie Williams (founder of SCTAN and currently working independently in NC) to conduct initial interviews and train interviewers later this month.

Benedict College students will work with Friends to obtain additional information on the community's historic and present relations to the Swamp at this year's SwampFest as well. In the Spring, Benedict College professors in Folklore, Media Arts and Literature will integrate cultural history Service Learning in their courses. Eventually, these efforts could add another interesting dimension to the Park's interpretive efforts.

Visitor's Log

Though Friends had saved 34,000 Visitor's Log entries from 1996 to the present in electronic format, we really had not made the information easy to use for Park Service staff to use. My co-worker Roumen Vesselinov has more experience with databases than I do, and graciously volunteered to develop an electronic data entry screen, and automatically-updated reports. Data can now be entered on a daily basis by volunteers, and reports listing visitors by month, year, country of origin, state of origin, etc. are easily produced.

Dedication continued

National Monument to become the "crown jewel of the National Park Service."

Also during the ceremony, Dick Watkins, a founding member of Friends and longtime conservationist, received the 2003 Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award.

Don Barger, Southeast regional director of the National Parks Conservation Association, presented the award, citing Watkins as a person who has "cared passionately and worked tirelessly in support of preservation" of the swamp's unique ecosystem.

Watkins said the day was significant to him because it was 35 years ago to the day when he first visited Congaree Swamp with the Sierra Club.

Rep. Joe Wilson, the state's Second District representative, noted that Watkins has also been instrumental in getting the Scenic Rivers Act passed.

"Dick is everywhere good things occur," Wilson said.

Also attending the ceremony were Fran Mainella, director of the National Park Service, and Patricia Hooks, NPS Southeast regional director.

Jim Elder, who was a high school biology teacher in the early 1970s when he joined Hampton in the fight to save the swamp, came from Virginia for the ceremony.

"I didn't think I'd ever see the day," Elder said.

Park volunteer catches the ear of Jim Elder, front.

2003 Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award Presented to Richard Watkins at Dedication to Congaree National Park, October 24, 2004

Don Barger's Remarks

Don Barger, right, Southeast regional director of the National Parks Conservation Association, presented the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award for 2003 to Richard Watkins at the Congaree National Park dedication ceremony on October 25, 2004. The National Parks Conservation Association is the nation's leading parks advocacy conservation organization. This award is presented annually to recognize the efforts of an individual or group that result in protection of a unit or proposed unit of the National Park System.

The National Park System is an American invention; Wallace Stegner called it "the best idea America ever had." It was created as a system of public lands by an Act of Congress in 1916, this nation's first commitment to sustainability. We're still learning what it means to conserve a place unimpaired for the enjoyment of this and future generations.

Three years later, in 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association was created to promote that mission. We've been called the park service's "chief advocate and critic" and it's our responsibility to fill both roles. Over our 85 years of existence, the role of the citizen advocate has been a consistent factor whenever one of these precious places is preserved as a component of our collective heritage. Behind the creation of almost every national park is a handful of people who cared passionately and worked tirelessly for its recognition. In most cases the park would have never been realized without their efforts.

Sometimes these people are high-profile members of our society—politicians, authors, philanthropists. More often, they are common, ordinary people who we learn are, in fact, neither common nor ordinary. With enduring respect for the woman who's Herculean efforts led to the creation of Everglades National Park, NPCA created the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award to honor the efforts of individuals whose passion and dedication have contributed so profoundly to the collective treasure we call the National Park System.

The award I am presenting today is actually our 2003 award. The decision was made many months ago, but we wanted to wait for this day to make the formal presentation.

Richard Watkins is a pretty quiet guy. As America was landing men on the moon, he was quietly gathering support for the preservation of the national park we stand in today and was a leader, along with others mentioned here today, in the grassroots campaign during the 1970's that resulted in its establishment. A now-retired chemical engineer, Dick has continued to apply his technical and researching skills to the eternal vigilance necessary to see a small, obscure national monument become the appropriately-recognized National Park that it, in fact, is. He has worked to insure that the park encompasses a properly functioning ecosystem; he has worked to organize allies and information whenever the park's essential resources are threatened; he is a founding member and a Board member of the Friends of

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Award continued

Congaree Swamp; and, characteristically, he was the person who picked up the phone and called me to get NPCA working in support of the national park designation of this magnificent place.

We all owe Dick Watkins and those with similar heart and spirit a debt of gratitude for what their lives have wrought. I am honored to present to Richard Watkins NPCA's 2003 Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award.

Following are Richard Watkins' remarks when receiving the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award at the Congaree National Park dedication ceremony:

A full moon ascended over Congaree Swamp on October 25th – thirty-five years ago. Earlier that day, Sierra Club conducted its first Congaree Swamp outing. For most participants, it was our first visit to Congaree's majestic old-growth forest. That trip led to the campaign of the 1970s to "Preserve Congaree Swamp."

Today – October 25th – we dedicate Congaree National Park.

I gratefully accept the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award – on behalf of the many people whose involvement has led to today's celebration of Congaree National Park. I want to recognize advocates, landowners, and elected officials.

Most of us know of Harry Hampton, who, in the early 1950s – a half-century ago – began his advocacy to protect Congaree's old-growth forest. His daughter – Harriott Hampton Faucette – is here today.

Harry Hampton's advocacy was followed by the grassroots Congaree campaign of the 1970s. Any celebration of Congaree must recognize Jim Elder's creative and inspirational leadership of the 1970s Congaree campaign. Jim is here today from Virginia.

Also present today are some of the volunteers in the Congaree campaign. And our celebration of Congaree must also remember the thousands of citizens who communicated their support to "Preserve Congaree Swamp."

Grassroots citizen support led to political support. Since the mid-1970s, Congaree has received superb bipartisan support – from Congressman Spence, Senator Thurmond, and Senator Hollings, all of whom introduced Congaree bills in 1976. Since redistricting in the early 1990s, Congaree has also received Congressman Clyburn's support. In addition, several South Carolina governors, various state legislators (including Congressman Wilson, when he was a state senator), Richland County Council, and Mayor Coble have supported Congaree. I'll say more about political support in a few minutes.

The landowners whose lands now comprise Congaree National Park are an integral part of Congaree's success. The crucial prerequisite to purchasing land for Congaree Swamp National Monument – now Congaree National Park – was to authorize boundaries within which the Park Service can purchase land from willing sellers. Today's dedication ceremony would not have happened without landowners who allowed their land to be authorized for acquisition and who subsequently sold their land to the Park Service.

Looking back at the Congaree campaign of the 1970s, there is no denying that the initial boundary proposal alarmed some landowners. From the 1970s campaign, I and others learned a lesson about dialogue with affected landowners. Consequently, the polarization of the 1970s campaign was avoided with the boundary authorizations in 1988 and 2003.

The 1976 legislation encompassed a single tract – with the Beidler family allowing its 15,000-acre tract to be included in the legislation. The Congaree legislation in 1988 included more than 30 parcels, with only two landowners asking that their parcel be withdrawn from consideration. The 2003 boundary authorization consisted of four riverfront tracts, whose owners granted permission to include their land.

Congaree is fortunate to have received this landowner support. The boundary authorizations in 1976, 1988, and 2003 would not have happened without landowner goodwill and trust. I don't know how many Congaree landowners are present today, but they deserve thanks for their key role in Congaree's success.

Passage of Congaree legislation in 1976 attested to the teamwork and effectiveness of the South

Carolina Delegation members as they raced against congressional adjournment and the clock. Many years ago, I wrote a newsletter article about the remarkable series of actions by Senator Hollings and Senator Thurmond to get the Congaree bill through the Senate, after which Congaree was the last bill in 1976 to pass under Suspension of the Rules in the House of Representatives.

When preparation of Congaree's General Management Plan stalled in the mid-1980s, Senator Thurmond, Senator Hollings, and Congressman Spence – all working together – interceded to get the planning process back on track. This, in turn, led to introduction of legislation in 1988 to authorize a 7,000-acre boundary expansion.

Passage of Congaree legislation in 1988 was another example of congressional delegation teamwork, including assistance by Congressman Spratt and Congressman Ravenel while Congressman Spence was hospitalized. We also witnessed some of Sen. Hollings' magic in 1988 when he secured an FY 89 appropriation for Congaree land acquisition even before Congress completed the boundary authorization.

We witnessed more of Sen. Hollings' magic in 2003 with "National Park" designation and authorization to expand Congaree's eastern boundary. The Trust for Public Land described passage of these Congaree provisions by exclaiming, "What an amazing accomplishment!" Perhaps Sen. Hollings will share with us how he persuaded Senate colleagues to include these provisions in the Interior Appropriations bill.

I think back, also, to 1992, when I interviewed Mr. Clyburn as he ran for election to the House of Representatives. During the interview, I mentioned a tract that was available – from a willing seller – to be added to Congaree Swamp National Monument. That tract is part of the Congaree boundary authorization in 2003, thanks to the legislation introduced by Sen. Hollings and Congressman Clyburn. And I continue to hear compliments about Congressman Clyburn's skillful management of the Congaree public meeting in October 2003.

My remarks today have touched briefly on a half-century of history – in which the advocacy of many citizens, the stewardship and goodwill of affected landowners, and the actions of elected officials have enabled us to gather today to celebrate Congaree National Park – South Carolina's national park.

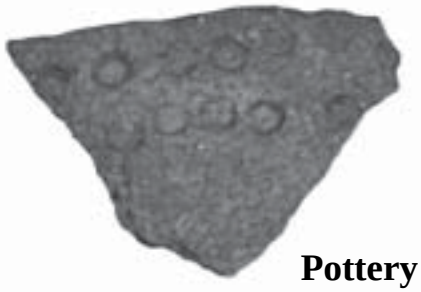
I will close with three wishes:

My first wish is directed to one of Congaree's many advocates: The Trust for Public Land. I wish for success in TPL's efforts to facilitate acquisition of the two largest tracts in the 2003 boundary authorization.

My second wish is directed to elected officials. Congaree has received superb bipartisan support during the past three decades. My wish is that Congaree National Park will always receive superb bipartisan support, including funding to implement the 2003 boundary authorization and to complete acquisitions within the 1988 boundary authorization.

My final wish today is directed to Congaree National Park neighbors, especially on the south side of the river. I include myself – because I am a Congaree landowner in Calhoun County. Our continued ownership of our land is not threatened by Congaree National Park. The threat to our lands is future development pressure. My wish is that we Congaree landowners will inform ourselves about conservation easements – a private, non-governmental way in which we can voluntarily protect our family lands for the traditional uses that we cherish.

Again, on behalf of all who have had a role in establishing Congaree National Park, I thank the National Parks Conservation Association for the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award, and I thank NPCA for its steadfast support of Congaree.



Pottery Shard Early Mississippian

Chris Judge, archaeologist for DNR's Heritage Trust Program, says the pottery shard, with the interesting circular markings we found on the Western Boundary Hike, is early Mississippian (1200-1350 AD), and that the style is Belmont Neck phase. Belmont Neck is a big meander in the Wateree River just south of I-20 and the site of the earliest Indian Mound in the Wateree valley. He called the decorations "reed punctuate".

Annual Meeting Held At Millaree

Robin Carter, not pictured, led a birding fieldtrip, while John Nelson, center, led a botany fieldtrip at the Friends annual meeting at Millaree.

Pictured is Ansley Jeffords.

Tom Mancke, our guest speaker, demonstrated Native American crafts such as fire-making.

Wet weather on the morning of the Friends' Annual Meeting made for a sloppy ride to Millaree Hunt Club, but did not deter turnout or affect activities. Both the clubhouse itself and its physical setting were impressive-many thanks to Brusi Alexander for arranging the location. Mill Creek forms a deep lake at the back of the clubhouse and the numerous water tupelos made a beautiful backdrop to a large cherrybark oak shading the clubhouse facilities.

John Nelson's botany tour followed the banks of Mill Creek, while Robin Carter led birders across the powerline cut and, hopefully, away from hunters in the field. Mission accomplished, everyone returned unscathed for Tom Mancke's primitive technology demonstration. Tom's hour-long demonstration covered everything from Native American spirituality, to fire-building, and tool-making, to music-making with a didgeridoo. Tom has probably never had an easier target for his blow-pipe demonstration than the massive trunk of the aforementioned oak.

The real fun began when the business meeting opened. President John Grego encouraged all present to attend the Congaree National Park Dedication the next day. As their contribution to the festivities, the Friends sponsored the catered breakfast and the Pinnacle Brass quintet from USC.

The proposed Slate of Directors for the Friends of Congaree Board was presented. Current directors Harriott Faucette, John Grego, Bob Render and Jim Welch agreed to serve new 3-year terms. Proposed new directors John Cely and Barry Beasley were approved by acclamation. John Cely is a past Order of the Cypress winner, and his exploits on behalf of Congaree Swamp are well-known. John recently retired from South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SC DNR) after 26 years as a wildlife biologist where he specialized in research and management of nongame and endangered birds including the Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Swallow-tailed Kite. Barry Beasley has been active in river conservation since the early 1980s. His experience in river conservation began in Columbia when Beasley and a group of friends created a grassroots organization to save the Saluda River from a proposed dam. This work eventually led to a career in river conservation and natural resources

management. Beasley now manages the Heritage Trust program at SC DNR.

President Grego presented a review of accomplishments, and updated information for on-going projects. The Friends completed canisters for cigarette disposal, finished the picnic shelter, and started regular trail maintenance including the Oakridge, Weston Lake, Boardwalk and Sims trails. The next trail clean-up will take place the Saturday before Thanksgiving, and USC students have expressed interest in participation as part of a service requirement for coursework. Dick Watkins reviewed advocacy for the land acquisition process. Although no final appropriation has been provided by Congress, $6 million is included in the Senate appropriations bill. A photography project to develop a book featuring Congaree Swamp is nearing completion. The canoe put-ins at Bannister and South Cedar Creek are moving forward with input from USC engineering students as part of their Senior Design Project. Friends of Congaree have made efforts to replace outdated highway signs and install additional signs. The outdated signs have not yet been removed, but the South Carolina Department of Transportation has agreed to replace them this year.

We introduced our host, Marion Burnside, who shared a couple stories about Millaree. President Grego introduced two out-of-town guests: Mark Kinzer from Atlanta, Georgia and Jim Elder from Fairfax, Virginia. Jim led the Congaree Action Now compaign to create Congaree Swamp National Monument in the 1970s. Mark has long been active in the swamp and currently works at the Southeast Region office of the National Park Service in Environmental Protection. We also acknowledged Park Superintendent Martha Bogle, just arrived after preparing for the dedication ceremony the next day. Martha was accompanied by her mother and sister, who were visiting from out-of-town.

The meeting was adjourned and the group enjoyed a delicious supper catered by Palmetto Pig, with an ample assist by Friends board members, who provided vegetarian side dishes and desserts. Local guitarist Alan Knight provided classical guitar music during our meal. A final thanks to Bob Render, Sharon Kelly, Mary Kelly, and Tom Wagner, who helped with the program and arrangements, registration, set-up, and breakdown.

FREE Portable Ashtrays

We need your help to Keep South Carolina's natural areas beautiful.

Each year, 4.5 trillion butts are discarded worldwide as litter. Made of plastic (cellulose acetate), cigarette butts do not decompose. Worse yet, the filters in used cigarettes butts contain toxic chemicals which can leach into waters.

Please, do your part and keep cigarette butts off South Carolina's natural areas.

Remember also never to discard cigarette butts out your car window or onto streets and sidewalks. They will end up in storm drains that travel to our rivers, swamps, and beaches, where some animal might mistake them for food.

For a **free portable ashtray** to carry your used butts, visit Congaree National Park or look for merchant displays provided by the Friends of Congaree Swamp.

Upcoming Field Trips, Lectures, & Events

Congaree Swamp Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 19, 2004
7:00 AM — After hours parking lot

Each year since 1900, bird enthusiasts have been conducting Christmas Bird Counts in North America. A Christmas Bird Count (or CBC) is an all-day effort to find and identify as many wild birds as possible within a 15-mile diameter circle. This effort, which now engages over 10,000 participants annually, is sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Results may be viewed at http://www.Audubon.org/bird/cbc. We have a CBC for the Congaree Swamp that includes most of the national park and adjacent areas, from just north of Gadsden to just north of St. Matthews. Join us to help out. You do not have to be a birder, just someone who wants to help and is willing to walk a few hours on the park trails. Meet at the after-hours parking lot at 7:00 AM on Sunday, December 19, 2004. You may help out as long as you like. Many participants just help out for a few hours, but some will stick it out all day. There is a $5.00 participation fee that goes to the National Audubon Society to help cover the costs of processing the data. If you have any questions please contact Robin Carter at 782-8820 or email to rcarter@sc.rr.com.

Tom's Creek Area Hike

Saturday, January 22, 2005
1:00 PM — After hours parking lot

Hike into the Tom's Creek area of the park. In 1990 an expansion of Congaree Swamp National Monument brought into the park a large parcel of land near Kingville. This included a lot of pine plantations which were cut just before being included in the park. We will explore some of this regenerating forest, with its 16 year old pine plantation, as well as some second-growth floodplain forest and a slough along Tom's Creek. This area also has traces of the historic 1842 railroad from Branchville to Columbia, one of the oldest railroads in the world. This will be a somewhat demanding hike since some of the old logging roads in the area are rather overgrown and often blocked by downed trees from last winter's ice storms. Meet at the after-hours parking area at 1:00 PM. We will carpool to the Kingville area. Be prepared for a bit of bushwhacking. If you have any questions please contact Robin Carter at 782-8820 or email to rcarter@sc.rr.com.

Walk In The Park:

Volunteers in Congaree National Park

by Jim Welch

On September 6 volunteers from the Midlands gathered at the Harry Hampton Visitors Center of the Congaree National Park in order to take part in Adopt a Trail Day. The Congaree National Park, our nations newest, uses volunteer assistance in the maintenance of 18+ miles of trails and throughout the park's 22,200 acre interior.

Ranger Fran Rametta and Park Staff member John Torrence, briefed the eager group on trails requiring attention and divided the group into units which were assigned designated areas. John Grego, Ann Jennings and Jim Welch took the 4.4 mile Weston Lake Loop, while Bob Render, Steve Dennis and Joe Kegley, took the 6.6 mile Oakridge Trail. We encountered a third team of the Park's maintenance staff and Volunteers (VIPs), in special foot gear (waterproof Duct Tape wrapped around boots and pant legs to keep out unwanted plants, animals and creek mud) assigned the harder task of cleaning up parts of the Cedar Creek Canoe Trail.

John Grego, President of the Board of Directors for Friends of Congaree Swamp, led the group to which I was assigned, to the Weston Lake trailhead, where he, Ann Jennings, Executive Director of the Congaree Land Trust and I made our first cuts. It was 9:30 in the morning when we cleared a few overhanging branches across the old access road to the lake. What I had anticipated to be a hard day's work, became little more than a pleasant walk in the park with very little debris to be found along the trail. Despite a wrathful 1989 visit from Hurricane Hugo, much of the park's beauty can be attributed to its trees: giant loblolly pines, massive sweet gums, majestic bald cypress and swamp tupelos, and sheltering oaks, many still claiming state championship status. A walk in Congaree National Park carries visitors into the largest intact old growth forest in the U.S. Often called "the redwoods of the east" this flood-plain forest actually consists of over 600 species of vascular plants, among them 80 species of trees, with no less than 15 species of oaks. Of the 500 national parks in North America, only the Great Smoky Mountain National Park boasts more tree species than the Congaree. As we sauntered along a boardwalk, accompanied by several five-lined skinks and one lone American toad, our walk was cadenced by the steady drone of cicadas. Occassionally a pileated woodpecker or barred owl called out, and intermittently a trilling warbler lent us his song. We looked carefully along the edge of a tupelo-cypress slough and over the banks of Cedar Creek hoping to spot a snake but the day proved to be snake-less. At the several scatterings of pawpaw trees, we ate the fruits that had recently ripened and fallen to the ground. The pawpaw fruit looks like a short banana and the fleshy pulp tastes somewhat like custard pudding. Although our unit did clean up its share of switch-cane growing up through the boardwalk spaces, and did push dirt and grasses from between the slats of a few waterway bridges, there was but a single time in our five hour hike when we were required to break a sweat. A rather large fallen oak had to be removed from the Weston Lake Trail.

The Congaree National Park offers educational and philanthropic opportunities. For general information, annual membership and business meetings, volunteer participation including Adopt a Trail Outings, educational programs, and guided nature walks, you may log on to the website, www.Friendsofcongaree.org

Western Boundary Hike

Sixteen members of Friends met at Bannister Bridge for the re-scheudled Western Boundary walk on October 17. The hike started off on an unusual note—with a poetry reading. The eponymous ballad of Bannister Bridge is part of a folk collection published in 1929 by Dr. E.C.L. (Ned) Adams and inspired largely by stories told to him by Thaddeus Goodson. According to the ballad, the bridge was a gateway to the Swamp for runaways wrongly prosecuted by the law.

We first stopped at the agricultural dikes built by James Adams and his sons in the late 1830's , and had our initial encounter with the clouds of mosquitoes who would be our constant companions on the rest of the hike. On a scouting trip, the mosquitoes hadn't been much in evidence after the recent flooding, but unseasonably warm weather and variable winds brought them out. Everyone was either too well-prepared or too polite to complain much, and the mosquitoes didn't really affect our agenda.

With a little effort, we found John Cely's overcup oak, currently nominated though not yet an official National Champion. Finding this tree is always an adventure; whether or not it is found, you're sure to see impressive willow oaks, laurel oaks, sweetgums and sycamores in your search.

We walked on to the river, with brief stops at Cook's Lake and the groundwater gauging station at the boat ramp. The USGS has just finished an 18-month groundwater monitoring project that should be useful in studying the effect of Lake Murray Dam management on water levels in the Park. At this particular station, located so close to the river bank, the groundwater level basically mimics the river level. A groundwater station next to Cedar Creek at Wise Lake shows the same effect. Effects on groundwater farther from the river and Cedar Creek are not so straightforward.

On our way from the boat ramp to an exposed sandbar, Joe Kegley found a dead Ruby-crowned Kinglet along the trail. The kinglets have only recently arrived in the Park, and are one of the most plentiful birds in the Park during the winter.

What a relief to reach the sandbar—it was only the spot on our hike with no mosquitoes, and the recently-deposited sand from Hurricane Frances made a great bench for reclining. We also found several Mississippian pottery fragments (see the sidebar on our best piece)—I was accused of "salting" the bar. I had had every intention of doing just that on my scouting trip, but hadn't found anything noteworthy. The extra sets of eyes clearly helped..

From the bar, we made long walk back to our cars. Look for future (shorter) hikes along the Western Boundary—there are other interesting features—a champion Shumard oak, a large black gum, and a clear sidestream of Cedar Creek—that are definitely worth a visit.

Sparkleberry Canoe Trip Big Success

A Friends Flotilla of ten colorful kayaks and canoes launched from Sparkleberry Landing in Sumter County on the morning of October 30 to tour the beautiful Upper Santee Swamp. We paddled through the first stretch of open water, Jones Flat, then proceeded through a forest of tupelo trees, and went through more open water, Mill Creek Flat, which featured clumps of the beautiful "Sparkleberry sunflower", *Bidens laevis*, which is actually one of the "stick tight" plants. We also saw Belted Kingfishers and heard Wood Ducks calling from back in the gum sloughs.

After passing through a smaller flat, we then paddled down the prettiest stretch of the trip, the "Creek of No Return" a.k.a. "Catfish Creek" and "Snake Creek." The creek winds through a tunnel of tupelo-cypress trees flanked by walls of flooded forest. We heard many woodpeckers calling, especially flickers and red-bellies. The area is a woodpecker haven due to the many dead and dying trees killed by the flooding.

We saw at least four anhinga, also known as water turkeys or snakebirds. These primitive appearing waterbirds resemble cormorants but have larger fan-shaped tails and longer, spear-like beaks. Because they have no oil glands to keep their plumage waterproof, anhingas spend much time perching and spreading their wings to dry in the sun.

The beautiful creek eventually merged into Otter Flat, a major swamp thoroughfare, and we paddled from there to McGirt's Lake, an old oxbow of the Santee River. Near McGirt's we found a very healthy clump of elephants ears (*Colocasia*), some of which were in bloom. This exotic, non-native found its way into the Santee some years ago and developed into extensive stands that impeded navigation in places. However, it gets knocked back in freezing weather and the introduced grass carp probably put a dent in it as well.

After about three hours on the water, we made it back to the landing with all hands accounted for. For some of us, a trip to Sparkleberry is not complete without a break for barbeque at Bubba Sikes on the way back.

I regret that due to space limitations we could not take everyone that wanted to go but promise to schedule another trip in the future.

Post Office Box 7746
Columbia, SC 29202-7746

www.friendsofcongaree.org

Fall 2004

Advocates for Congaree National Park and its unique environment.

Be a FRIEND: Get a Friend to Join Today!

Yes, I would like to support conservation of Congaree Swamp for future generations. Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of $ _____ . Please make your check payable to Friends of Congaree Swamp.

_____ $ 15.00 Individual _____ $ 50.00 Advocate _____ $ 500.00 Benefactor _____ $ 50.00 Nonprofit Org.
_____ $ 35.00 Family _____ $ 100.00 Partner _____ $ 1000.00 Patron _____ $ 1000.00 Corporate

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I would like to work on the following committee(s):
_____ Field Trips _____ Fundraising
_____ Public Relations _____ Membership
_____ Education _____ Advocacy
_____ Events _____ Newsletter
_____ Research _____ Other: _____

In addition to my membership, I would like to give $ _____ as a donation to Friends of Congaree Swamp:
In Memory of: _____
In Honor of: _____
As a Gift Membership to: _____

Please provide contact information so we can inform the person or family:
Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

I would like to order the following items (proceeds benefit FCS projects): $_____ enclosed.
_____ copies of ***"Reflections of Congaree Swamp"*** CD screensaver for Windows 95 or higher @ ~~$14.95~~ ***Sale!*** $7.50 s/h included
_____ copies of the beautifully detailed ***"Map of Congaree National Park and Vicinity"*** @ $12.95 each/plus $3.50 s/h

Thank You For Supporting Friends of Congaree Swamp!

Friends of Congaree Swamp, PO Box 7746, Columbia, SC 29202-7746
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