Friends of Congaree Swamp

www.friendsofcongaree.org

Winter 2005

US 601 Bridge Replacement

From its intersection with SC 48 (Bluff Road), US 601 passes south over 4 bridges in Richland County: one bridge over a small stream, then 2 bridges across Bates Old River, and finally the bridge over the Congaree River. The Congaree River's floodplain starts just north of Bates Old River, and the roadway is constructed on a high earthen embankment that crosses the floodplain.

US 601 bridge over the Congaree River. Photo by Virginia Winn

The bridges, completed in 1949, are structurally deficient; the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SC DOT) awarded Florence & Hutcheson the design contract to replace these bridges in Fall 2003. As part of the contract, Florence & Hutcheson has studied alternative bridge plans that include replacing the bridges in place, or realigning the bridges, but not the roadbed. None of the designs under consideration would replace the current bridges with a single bridge spanning the floodplain.

The design favored by SC DOT and Florence & Hutcheson would shift the bridges west, farther away from SCE&G's high-voltage transmission lines that currently parallel US 601 the entire width of the floodplain. This plan would impact some of the relatively intact wetlands and forest to the west of US 601. Replacing the bridges in place would close US 601 during much of the construction. Realigning bridges to the east would move them too close to the transmission lines, which would require, in turn, relocation of the transmission lines farther east.

Given that US 601's right-of-way is bordered on both sides by lands within Congaree National Park's 2003 boundary expansion, bridge re-design could offer an opportunity to address several issues related to Park expansion. There is currently public access from US 601 to both Bates Old River and the Congaree River. Any re-design should take into consideration possible future uses for these valuable public assets.

The current view along US 601 to the east is unattractive. Two sets of transmission lines parallel the road and the entire area between the highway and the power lines is kept clear cut. In addition, the embankment itself obscures the interesting ridge-and-swale topography of the Bates Old River area and alters the hydrology of the Congaree River during floods.

601 Bridge continued page 7

President's Corner

Dr. John Grego

New Officers:

The Friends of Congaree Swamp Board recently elected a "new" slate of officers-I, Mary Kelly and Carol Kososki continue as President, Treasurer, and Secretary, respectively, while Sharon Kelly, our Public Relations Chair, replaces Ann Kirkley as Vice President. Ann Kirkley resigned from the Board to return to work full-time. Ann had worked effectively with Sharon in Public Relations this past year, particularly with our airport advertising, coordination with the SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, and the effort to update the Park's highway signs.

Ann had also suggested year-long themes for our newsletters. Last year, it was natural to focus on the boundary expansion, while this year, we will discuss progress on the US 601 bridges over the floodplain.

Adopt-a-Trail

The November trail clean-up saw participation from Service Learning students for the first time. Six students from Midlands Technical College and Carolyn Hudson's University of South Carolina Geology 103 class accompanied me on the Weston Lake Trail. I would particularly like to acknowledge students Pierce Cook, Mackenzie Cross and Anna Wingard for their hard work and good company. In addition, Tony Martin and his son Cantor came all the way from Asheville, NC to help out. Along with Alice Steinke and Allen Gibbes, they cleared the Oak Ridge Trail.

The regular effort must have an effect-both the August and November clean-ups required only modest work. This may give us the flexibility to work on the River Trail and Kingsnake Trail from time to time. Friends also cleared the Bluff Trail for the first time. This is a low maintenance effort, though there were a lot of shoots sprouting from sweetgum stumps that needed pruning after the recent controlled burn.

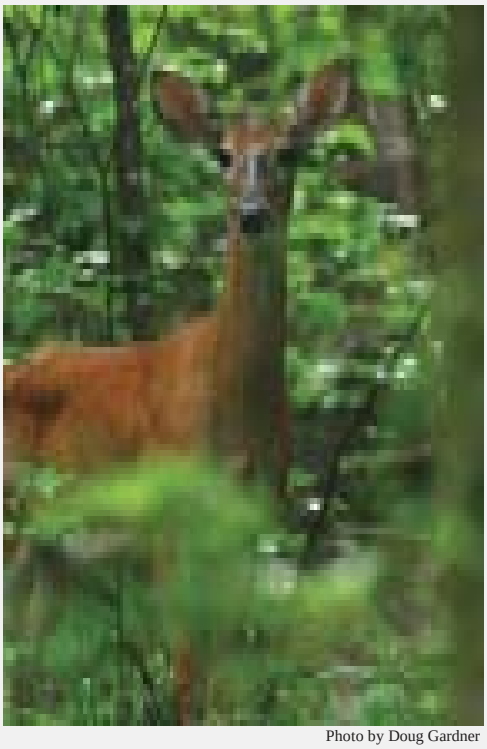


Photo by Doug Gardner

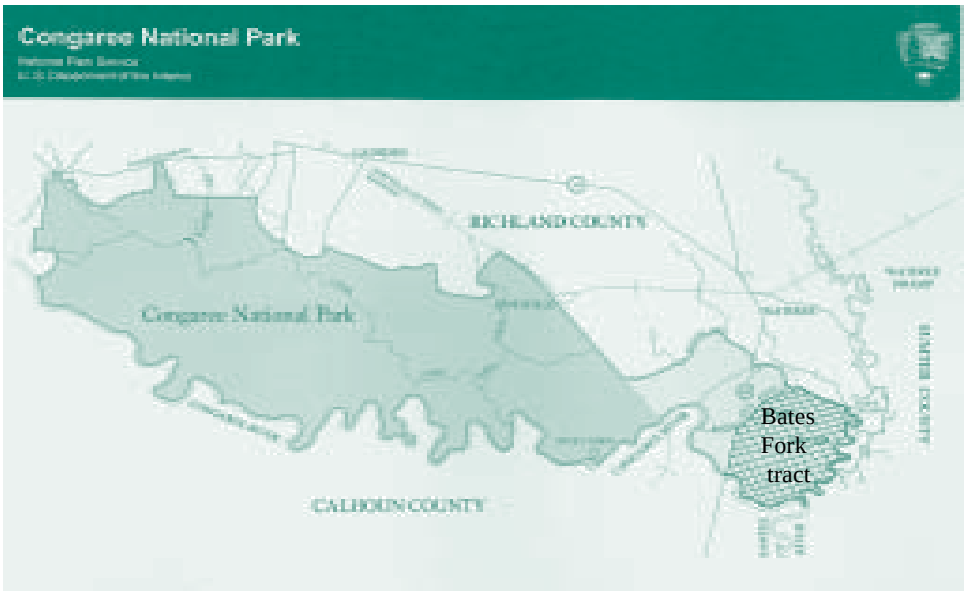
On Not Butting Out

The Friends of Congaree Swamp has initiated a way to remind smokers not to throw cigarette butts on the ground, out the window, or in the water. We are recycling plastic film canisters, and then partially filling them with sand: the little canisters then serve as ashtrays for a smoker's pocket!

Put in dispensing baskets and given out free at the Harry Hampton Visitors' Center and at various outdoor-oriented businesses in the Midlands, the ashtray-canisters have been a big success. They have received rave reviews at some sites. We have already had to replenish the baskets, so anyone who wishes to donate plastic film canisters to help with this project, please give them to one of the Friends' Board members.

Each year, 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are estimated to be discarded as litter worldwide. And the cellulose acetate plastic in cigarette butts does not decompose. The toxic chemicals in filters can also leach into waters. That is why we are doing our small part to help bring about public awareness.

And who knows: perhaps a free cigarette butt canister may even prevent a wildfire some day!



Congress Appropriates $6 Million for Congaree Land Acquisition

Boundary expansion at Congaree National Park is typically a two-phase process in the U.S. Congress. First, Congress authorizes the boundary expansion. Thereafter, Congress appropriates money to purchase land within the authorized boundary.

In November 2003, Congress authorized a 4,576-acre expansion of Congaree Swamp National Monument while changing Congaree's designation from "National Monument" to "National Park."

In November 2004, Congress approved the "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005." Among the law's many provisions, it earmarks $6 million to purchase land for Congaree National Park.

The boundary expansion – authorized in 2003 – extends a portion of Congaree's eastern boundary from the Norfolk Southern Railroad to the west bank of the Wateree River. This expansion area consists of three tracts, the largest of which is 2,420 acres, known as the Bates Fork tract. The name is derived from the tract's location in the fork between the Congaree and Wateree rivers. The name also reflects the tract's ownership in the 1800s by the Bates family of Wateree.

Since 2002, The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has negotiated with the landowner – the Beidler Family – to facilitate acquisition of the Bates Fork tract. TPL's Fall 2004 *Carolinas* newsletter reported that TPL has signed an option contract to purchase the tract. Currently, an appraisal of the tract's fair market value is approaching completion. If the landowner accepts the appraised value, TPL will purchase the Bates Fork tract and promptly convey it to the National Park Service.

Friends of Congaree Swamp are grateful for the Beidler Family's willingness to include the Bates Fork tract in Congaree's authorized boundary. We are grateful, also, for TPL's participation in the boundary authorization process and the current land acquisition process.

Photo by Carolyn Hudson

Photo by Andrew Eschbacher

Photo by Carl Moser

Photo by George Xenakis

Photo by Lisel Shoffner

Images of Congaree National Park Coming Mid-Summer

Sharon Kelly

The wonders of Congaree National Park will soon be available at your fingertips, thanks to the efforts of the Carolinas' Nature Photographers Association and Friends of Congaree Swamp.

Images of Congaree National Park will be on sale for $10 at the park by late summer, according to Virginia Winn, a member of both Friends of Congaree Swamp, Carolinas' Nature Photographers Association and the committee that compiled the book.

Committee members also include Drew Eschbacher, Doug Gardner, and Betty Mandell from the Carolinas' Nature Photographers Association and LaBruce Alexander and Mary Kelly from Friends of Congaree Swamp.

Photographs of many of the park's creatures and breathtaking pictures of their habitats offer a window into the unique environmental treasures the park preserves.

"I am thrilled about the book, *Images of Congaree National Park.* Congaree National Park can be difficult to photograph, however the photographers whose works are in the book did an outstanding job of capturing the beauty of this special place. For years, we have wanted to have a park specific book available for our visitors. Now we will have the opportunity to sell a quality book with exceptional photography at a very reasonable price," said Martha Bogle, Park Superintendent

The committee worked for almost four years gathering pictures and soliciting funds, selecting entries and designing the page layout. More than 1,000 images were reviewed for possible inclusion.

"We have all put in many hour working on this project over several years, but it has been well worth the effort. We feel we have produced one of the best books of its kind, thanks to all the photographers that have donated their images and the sponsors that have funded this project," said Virginia Winn.

Photo by William Graf

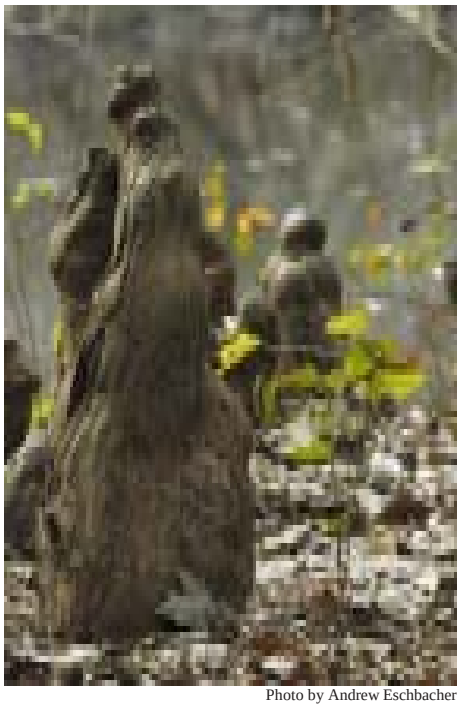


Photo by Andrew Eschbacher

Research & Education at the Park

Spring 2005 Volunteer Opportunities at Congaree National Park

Congaree National Park is seeking volunteer assistance with Spring research activities. If you are interested in assisting researchers with data collection, serving as a hiking partner, recording research data, photo-documenting field activities, and/or searching for plants and other wildlife, please contact the park's Biological Technician, Theresa Yednock, at 803-776-4396 ext. 21.

ACOUSTIC MONITORING

Researchers from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology will return to Congaree National Park in early Spring to continue an acoustic monitoring project that was initiated last year. Volunteers are needed to assist with installing sophisticated tape recorders, known as autonomous recording units (ARUs) at various locations throughout the park. Work will include off-trail hiking, carrying equipment, and photodocumentation of field activities. The ARU's will be set to record ambient sounds during the early morning hours and early evening in order to detect bird species, amphibian calls, and to monitor overflight noise from aircraft. Following initial deployment of the recorders, volunteer citizen scientists may also be used to monitor and/or retrieve the recording equipment. The recordings will then be analyzed with a computer program at Cornell University to identify wildlife species of special concern that may be residing in the park.

CAROLINA BOGMINT STUDY

Congaree National Park is thought to contain the largest population of the rare flowering plant, Carolina Bogmint (*Macbridea caroliniana).* Research is being conducted by Clemson University to record the distribution of this plant throughout the Congaree forest. Volunteers are invited to assist with this project during the late Spring and Summer, 2005. Participation will include hiking off-trail in wet areas, counting plants, recording data, as well as searching for particular plants. This is a great way to learn how to identify a variety of different plants!

GEOLOGY MAPPING

Congaree National Park has partnered with the South Carolina Geological Survey and the University of South Carolina Department of Geography to develop a baseline geology map of the floodplain and elevated bluffs within the park boundary. A series of core samples will be drilled and analyzed to interpret the underlying geology throughout the park. Volunteers may assist with obtaining core samples, recording data and carrying field tools and equipment. Off-trail hiking and/or boating may be required.

FERAL HOG RESEARCH

The U.S. Geological Survey and Clemson University will initiate a new feral hog research project this Spring to determine animal movement patterns throughout the Congaree floodplain. Volunteers may be needed to assist with setting/checking hog traps and to assist with radio telemetry of study animals. Participation will include recording field data and off-trail hiking. The results of this study will enable the most successful management program to be designed to maximize future hog control efforts at the park.

Photo by Joe Kegley

Feral hogs cause damage to landscape at Congaree National Park.

CRAYFISH INVENTORY

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Clemson University will initiate a baseline inventory of the crayfish present throughout Congaree National Park. Field surveys are planned for March through May, and volunteers are invited to assist with locating burrows, field sampling and data collection. Off-trail hiking is required, and other aquatic sites may be accessed by canoe.

EXOTIC PLANT REMOVAL

Volunteers are always needed to assist the park with removal of non-native, invasive plant species, such as Chinese privet (Ligustrum sinense) and Japanese Stilt Grass (Microstegium vimineum). Volunteers can work independently or as part of an organized group to manually remove plants and seedlings from designated areas. Long pants and sturdy shoes are required. Some off-trail hiking may also be required.

Forest of Champions

John Cely

Of all the great attributes that make Congaree worthy of a national park designation (I'm still not used to that term and like the way it rolls around on my tongue), none are more significant and striking than its big trees. Going back to the 1950s and before, naturalists and outdoorsmen have come away marveling at the size of Congaree's sweetgums, oaks, hollies, elms, pines, cypress, and others. Harry Hampton, in his Woods and Waters column and other articles in The State newspaper, was the first to report to the outside world the unprecedented dimensions of these forest giants. The 1963 report by Park Service officials, recommending national protection for this remnant old growth bottomland hardwood forest, was probably the first official record documenting Congaree's big trees. Later, in the 1970s, conservationists, in an effort to highlight the extraordinary qualities of the Congaree forest, began submitting big tree measurements to the official state register of champion trees, maintained by Clemson's Forestry Department. Congaree's big trees were quickly rewriting the record books, to the extent that just about every tree species that occurred in a bottomland hardwood forest in South Carolina had a state champion representative at Congaree. By 1979, 30 species of trees were state champions, and 9 of these were also national champions, meaning they were the biggest of their kind in the country. This number was perhaps unprecedented, and pointed out that Congaree probably had more record trees per acre than any other forest in North America.

The most thorough and comprehensive treatment of Congaree's big trees was done by Auburn University forestry professor Dr. Robert Jones, who conducted a multi-year big tree inventory and ecological study in the early 1990s. Dr. Jones and his students basically rewrote the book on Congaree's champion trees, especially since Hurricane Hugo and old age had wiped out many of the champions of the 70s. Jones found 23 new state or national champions and was the first to document the extraordinary heights of Congaree's big trees, calling it one of the tallest hardwood forests in the temperate world and perhaps " the world's greatest concentration of super-tall temperate deciduous trees."

Photo by Virginia Winn

Congaree National Park's persimmon, formerly a national co-champion, was recently "dethroned."

More than a third of the large canopy trees measured by Jones were over 130 feet tall and eight were greater than 155 feet; the very tallest was a cherrybark oak at 170 feet and a loblolly pine at 169 feet. The term "world-class" is often overused but the Congaree has proven to be truly a world-class forest.

How are big trees measured and scored? A total score, as determined by the American Forestry Association which maintains the national champion register, is derived by giving a point for each inch of tree circumference, measured at 41/2 feet (what the foresters call dbh or diameter breast high) off the ground, a point for every foot of tree height (measured with a clinometer) and a point for every four feet of crown spread. This formula is biased in favor of circumference, followed by height and then crown spread. As a result, many national champion trees are found growing in fields and other open situations where girth is put on at the expense of height, whereas trees grown in a dense forest like the Congaree tend to express themselves in height more than girth.

Just one example where Congaree trees are at a disadvantage in champion tree measurements is our persimmon, formerly a national co-champion that was recently "dethroned" by an open-grown persimmon found in Ohio that was more than four feet bigger in circumference; however, the Congaree persimmon is 40 feet taller!

Currently Congaree's official tally of record trees stands at 22 state champions and two national champions – a loblolly pine and a water hickory. Until recently the national figure was four but our persimmon and possumhaw (a deciduous holly) were recently dethroned. We do however, have a new pending national champion, a Shumard oak measuring 22 feet in circumference and more than 140 feet tall.

It's going to be tough to get the national list back up to nine where it was in the 1970s because there are many more people out searching for champion trees than 30 years ago and there will always be a fat oak or other hardwood found growing in someone's yard or fencerow that will rack up more points than most of Congaree's forest-grown trees. However, with a little searching, I'm sure we can get the state total back up to near 30 and perhaps add another new national champ or two. We recently submitted to Clemson two new potential state champs from Congaree, a bitternut hickory ten feet in circumference and 127 feet high and a sugarberry (a lowland equivalent of a hackberry) 13.5 feet in circumference and 120 feet tall. Some other potential Congaree state champs to be looked for include swamp cottonwood, eastern cottonwood, hawthorne, ironwood, spicebush, Carolina ash, pumpkin ash, and water locust.

You can check out the state big tree register at:
www.clemson.edu/champtree/SouthCarolinaChampionTree.htm
and the national register of big trees at the American Forestry Association website:
www.americanforests.org

601 Bridge cont.

SC DOT has been collecting public input throughout the planning process, though one of the best opportunities to comment on Florence & Hutcheson's design plans will occur at a public hearing to be held at St. Luke AME Church. A firm date for the hearing has not been set, though it should take place soon. State and federal agencies, including the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and the National Park Service, can have impact through their review of a draft environmental assessment. The assessment is almost complete and will be distributed shortly.

The Friends' advocacy committee has been following this issue closely since its inception. Look for action alert updates on the project in future newsletters.

Upcoming Field Trips, Lectures, & Events

The Bluff Trail and Beyond

Saturday, March 19, 2005, 2:00 PM-5:00 PM, Meet at the CNP After-hours Parking Lot
Leader: John Grego

On this hike, we will follow the Bluff Trail to the Group Camping Area and keep heading east. We will cross the deceptively-named Dry Branch, and explore the longleaf/loblolly savanna and gum swamp more typically visited from Garrick Road.

The entire route of this hike was burned last Spring, and we will discuss last year's controlled burn and fire management at the Park. In addition, we will tour the Learning Center, point out former red-cockaded woodpecker cavity trees, and discuss long term-effects of Hurricane Hugo at a research site monitored by the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory since 1990.

Most of the hike will be off-trail, and we will be walking through tall grass. Participants should be in moderate physical shape. Bring water and insect repellent; long pants are recommended. Jogging shoes or light hiking boots are appropriate. This hike is limited to the first 30 people to sign up. We will meet in the after-hours parking lot. Call John Grego in Columbia at (803) 777-5110 (work) or (803) 783-9270 (home); Email: jrgrego@mindspring.com or grego@stat.sc.edu.

4th Annual Harriott Hampton Faucette Big Tree Hike

Sunday, 10 April 2005, 1:30 PM—around 5:30 PM, Meet at the Bannister Bridge "Parking Lot"
Leader: John Cely

This year's hike will be in the vicinity of the Western Boundary Road where we will visit three champion trees: an 18-foot circumference overcup oak, *Quercus lyrata*, (state champion); a 15-foot circumference swamp tupelo (blackgum), *Nyssa biflora* (state champion), and a pending national champion, the 22-foot circumference Shumard oak (*Quercus shumardii*). We will also stop and examine an antebellum dike (c. 1839) built by James Adams, member of a prominent Lower Richland family, in a futile effort to cultivate the rich bottomlands of the Congaree.

Please note that this walk will be mostly off-trail; the terrain is uneven with vines, limbs, and scattered cypress knees lying in wait to trip up the unwary hiker; strong ankles and steady legs are required. Total hiking length will be about 4 miles, and we should get back to our vehicles around 5-5:30.

NOTE: Do NOT meet at the Visitors' Center; rather we will meet at the small parking area at the Bannister Bridge canoe put-in. Bannister Bridge is at the very western tip of the Park, on Old Bluff Road as you approach the Park from the direction of Columbia. The parking area is on the right (south) side of the road. Please also note that in anticipation of construction work on the Bridge, the east side of the bridge (the Visitors' Center side) will probably be closed to traffic. We should know more about the progress of bridge construction as April approaches.

Space for this hike will be limited. Contact John Cely at jecely@sc.rr.com or 803-782-7450 (Columbia) to sign up.

Bates Old River Canoe/Kayak Trip

Sunday, May 15, 2005, 1:30 PM—5:00 PM, Meet at the CNP After-hours Parking Lot
Leader: Guy Jones

The River Runner Outdoor Center will be sponsoring a canoe/kayak trip on Bates Old River for Friends of Congaree Swamp. Bates Old River is one of the largest ox bow lakes in South Carolina, and is accessible to the public, though not widely visited.

This should be paddling at its easiest. Bates Old River is crossed twice by Highway 601, and the trip from the public access at the northern crossing to the southern crossing and back will take about two hours. The lake has no current under most conditions and there should be opportunities for viewing wildlife, including alligators, wading birds, osprey, and anhinga.

We will meet at 1:30 at the after-hours parking lot on National Park Road and then carpool to the landing. Costs will be $35 for canoe/kayak rental, while the trip will be free for those who provide their own boat. This trip is limited to the first 20 people to sign up. Call Guy Jones at (803) 771-0353 for reservations.

Upcoming Field Trips, Lectures, & Events

Adopt-a-Trail Workday Here Again

Saturday, May 21, 2005, 9:00 AM—around 2:00 PM, Meet at the CNP Visitors' Center
Leader: John Grego

Photo by Virginia Winn

Just because it's called a "trail clean-up" doesn't mean it's all work. Often Friends' members get side-tracked visiting natural and cultural history areas of the Park. Here you see the February 19th Kingsnake Trail cleaners taking a side bar to Cooner's Mound. Pictured are Alice Steinke, Joe Kegley, and John Cely.

It will be time for a little Spring cleaning on our adopted trails-the Weston Lake Trail and the Oak Ridge Trail. Memorial Day weekend is the busiest weekend of the year at the Park, and we would like to have the trails looking good for our Spring visitors. We will be clearing the trails of fallen limbs, and intruding branches, vines and cane; there should be a lot of Spring growth to cut back. Friends will provide refreshments at the Visitor's Center.

We will meet at the Visitor's Center at 9 AM for a brief orientation and will finish in the early afternoon. I anticipate separate work groups for the two trails. Work gloves, long pants, light hiking boots, water, and a snack are recommended. If you have loppers, long-handled shears (good for switch cane) or bow saws, bring them along. Please contact John Grego at work (grego@stat.sc.edu; 803-777-5110) or home (jrgrego@mindspring.com; 803-783-9270) if interested.

Dawn Chorus at Congaree National Park

Saturday, Jun 4, 2005, 5:00 AM (this is early morning folks), Visitors' Center, Congaree National Park
Leader: Robin Carter

One of the most important features of Congaree National Park is that it is the home and breeding area of large numbers of birds, including many so-called Neotropical migrants—species which breed in North America but go south in the winter to Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, or South America. This is one of the main reasons why Congaree National Park has been named a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy and Birdlife International. An excellent way to help this dry fact become a personal experience is to be out in the park at dawn during the main breeding season (late April through early June) and listen to the dawn chorus of bird song.

This is easy enough to do. The one drawback is that you have to be in the park at dawn. Unless you are camping out this requires a bit of effort. To encourage you to get up at oh-dark-thirty and come out to the park we are having a Friends of Congaree Swamp Dawn Chorus Walk on Saturday, June 4, 2005. We will gather at the Visitors Center at 5:00 AM (ouch!). This will let give us a chance to listen to the pre-dawn chorus of Barred Owls, Whip-poor-wills, and Chuck-will's-widows before the main event, which begins about a half hour before sunrise, give or take a few minutes. We can reasonably expect to hear as many as forty species of birds calling—hundreds of individual birds. We will have bird song experts on hand to help you identify what you hear, or you can just listen and take in the experience.

Plans are afoot to top this off with a picnic breakfast at about 7:30 or so. Stay tuned. Some things are worth missing a little sleep for.

Contact Robin Carter, rcarter@sc.rr.com

Congaree Swamp Christmas Bird Count:

87 species, 13,524 individuals

Robin Carter

Good participation and good weather combined to make this year's Congaree Swamp Christmas Bird Count the best ever. Sixteen volunteers turned out for the bird count on December 19, 2004—turning up 87 species. We split up into eight parties—five in the park, two outside of the park, and one party both in the park and outside—to cover the 15-mile diameter Christmas Bird Count circle. The circle takes in most of Congaree National Park as well as a bit of southeastern Richland County and northern Calhoun County. Counters found a few unusual species, including a Merlin (first record for Congaree National Park) and a Northern Parula (first winter record for the park). Record high numbers were recorded for several species.

Here is a rundown what we found:

Canada Goose — 8*
(*record high count)
Wood Duck — 49
Mallard — 1
Northern Bobwhite — 2
Pied-billed Grebe — 1
Double-crested Cormorant — 3
Anhinga — 1
Great Blue Heron — 5
Black Vulture — 68*
(*record high count)
Turkey Vulture — 74
Northern Harrier — 2
Cooper's Hawk — 1
Red-shouldered Hawk — 21*
(*record high count)
Red-tailed Hawk — 11
Merlin — 1*
(*new to the count)
American Kestrel — 14
Killdeer — 27
American Woodcock — 1
Ring-billed Gull — 1
Rock Pigeon — 1
Eurasian Collared-Dove — 12
Mourning Dove — 142
Eastern Screech-Owl — 1
Barred Owl — 8
Great Horned Owl — 4
Belted Kingfisher — 3
Red-headed Woodpecker — 8
Red-bellied Woodpecker — 105
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker — 56
Downy Woodpecker — 39
Hairy Woodpecker — 3
Northern Flicker — 125
Pileated Woodpecker — 40
Eastern Phoebe — 48
Loggerhead Shrike — 8
White-eyed Vireo — 2
Blue-headed Vireo — 19*
(record high count)
Blue Jay — 38
American Crow — 104
Horned Lark — 2
Carolina Chickadee — 89
Tufted Titmouse — 78
White-breasted Nuthatch — 22
Brown-headed Nuthatch — 13
Brown Creeper — 7*
(*record high count)
Carolina Wren — 117*
(*record high count)
House Wren — 7*
(*record high count)
Winter Wren — 25*
(*ties the old record)
Golden-crowned Kinglet — 38
Ruby-crowned Kinglet — 209
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher — 1
Eastern Bluebird — 57
Hermit Thrush — 118*
(*record high count)
American Robin — 2667*
(*record high count)
Gray Catbird — 1
Northern Mockingbird — 35
Brown Thrasher — 13
European Starling — 144
American Pipit — 176
Cedar Waxwing — 193
Northern Parula — 1*
(*new to the count)
Yellow-rumped Warbler — 88
Yellow-throated Warbler — 1
Pine Warbler — 42
Black-and-white Warbler — 5*
(*record high count)
Common Yellowthroat — 2
Eastern Towhee — 52
Chipping Sparrow — 194*
(*record high count)
Field Sparrow — 9
Vesper Sparrow — 4
Savannah Sparrow — 19
Fox Sparrow — 19
Song Sparrow — 77
Swamp Sparrow — 17
White-throated Sparrow — 328
White-crowned Sparrow — 8*
(*ties old record)
Dark-eyed Junco — 85
sparrow sp. — 1
Northern Cardinal — 148
Red-winged Blackbird — 4431
Eastern Meadowlark — 29
Rusty Blackbird — 8
Common Grackle — 2480*
(*record high count)
Brown-headed Cowbird — 10
Purple Finch — 9*
(*record high count)
House Finch — 11
American Goldfinch — 368
House Sparrow — 1

Photo by Caroline Eastman

Robin Carter, leader trip to Tom's Creek Area.

Photo by Caroline Eastman

John Grego, left, and Quitman Marshall join Robin as he calls up the local birds.

Friends Explore the Tom's Creek Area

Caroline Eastman

Saturday afternoon, January 22, a small group led by Robin Carter explored Tom's Creek area of Congaree National Park. After crossing the railroad tracks near Kingsville, we bushwhacked through woods and over ditches to reach the dirt roads that would take us into the Tom's Creek area. On the way we found remnants of the railroad town, remains of an old still, a wild hog trap, and some deer bones—and, *none* of us tripped on the branches or fell into the ditches.

I have been to this area several times, but not in recent years. The clear-cut area where Savannah Sparrows and Loggerhead Shrikes once lived is now woodland. I had to look hard to see that the underlying topography I remembered was still there. We took roads into two different sections of the Tom's Slough, including Jack's Landing, but did not go all the way to Tom's Creek. We decided to return on the road rather than go back through the woods.

Birds were not abundant on that afternoon although we saw a total of 24 species. They included six species of woodpecker and both species of kinglets.

The weather was pleasant though windy and not nearly as bad as anticipated during the morning rain. We were all glad the rain had not discouraged us although I suspect that some potential participants were deterred.

© Ronda Grego

Swamp Fest Participants Enjoy Hay Ride to Congaree National Park

Swamp Fest 2004 was held Saturday, November 27 at Old Mount Moriah Baptist Church. The Friends sponsored an information table featuring our cigarette canisters and general information about the Swamp. We were joined by two Benedict College Service Learning students: Dedra Hardaway and Lakeisha Williams. Dedra and Lakeisha surveyed those in attendance for their knowledge of traditional crafts as part of a cultural history project supervised by Professor Stephen Criswell.

Friends of Congaree Swamp

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www.friendsofcongaree.org

Winter 2005

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

_____ New Member _____ Renewal

Name(s): _____
Mailing Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Hm Phone: (____) _____ Wk Phone: (____) _____
E-mail: _____

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 of your donation:
Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

I would like to order the following items (proceeds benefit FCS projects): $_____ enclosed.
_____ 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
FCS is a nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation, EIN: 56-2057087.