

Teacher Activity Guide

Introduction

For more than a century our national parks have been called upon to preserve and protect America's greatest natural and historical treasures. The more than 370 units of the National Park System include over 80 million acres of lands and waters. America's parks represent our nation's greatest features and provide all Americans with opportunities for enjoyment, education and inspiration. On August 25, 1916, the United States Congress created the National Park Service to protect and preserve our common heritage.

The only National Park Service "natural history" unit in South Carolina is the Congaree Swamp National Monument. The monument was created by an act of Congress on October 18, 1976, "...in order to preserve and protect for the education, inspiration and enjoyment of present and future generations an outstanding example of a near-virgin southern hardwood forest...." The Congaree forest was designated a National Landmark in 1974. On June 30, 1983, the monument was designated as an International Biosphere Reserve. A biosphere reserve serves as a genetic library, protecting all of its species. It also acts as a barometer of environmental change, indicating the relative health of our planet. In 1988, Congress designated 98.4% of the monument's lands as wilderness.

Congaree Swamp National Monument protects the largest intact tract of old-growth bottomland hardwood forest in the United States. It includes one of the tallest temperate deciduous forests in the world and features many state and national champion-sized trees. And, it provides suitable habitat for future champions. Because of minimal human contact, the monument is an ideal location for benchmark research. It is an ecosystem with high biodiversity.

The monument was established as the result of a grass roots movement by South Carolinians united in the effort to protect the "greatest unprotected forest in the continental United States." Many partners were involved with its preservation. Some of the key players were the Sierra Club, Audubon Society, South Carolina Environmental Coalition, the Congaree Swamp National Preserve Association, and local garden clubs. To ensure the continuation of the monument's preservation, another wave of partners has materialized. This new wave includes The River Alliance, Friends of Congaree Swamp, the National Guard, the South Carolina Department of Education, and the Richland County Delegation.

Also among the new wave are those who hold the future of the monument in their hands, the children of South Carolina.

As resource users and future decision-makers, the fate of the Congaree Swamp lies in their hands. As responsible owners of this valuable resource, they must protect the monument for themselves and future generations. This guide will help educators teach students about the Congaree Swamp and the responsible action needed to ensure its survival into the 21st century. Share the guide with colleagues, parents and students. Together we can all claim responsibility as Congaree Swamp "treasure keepers."

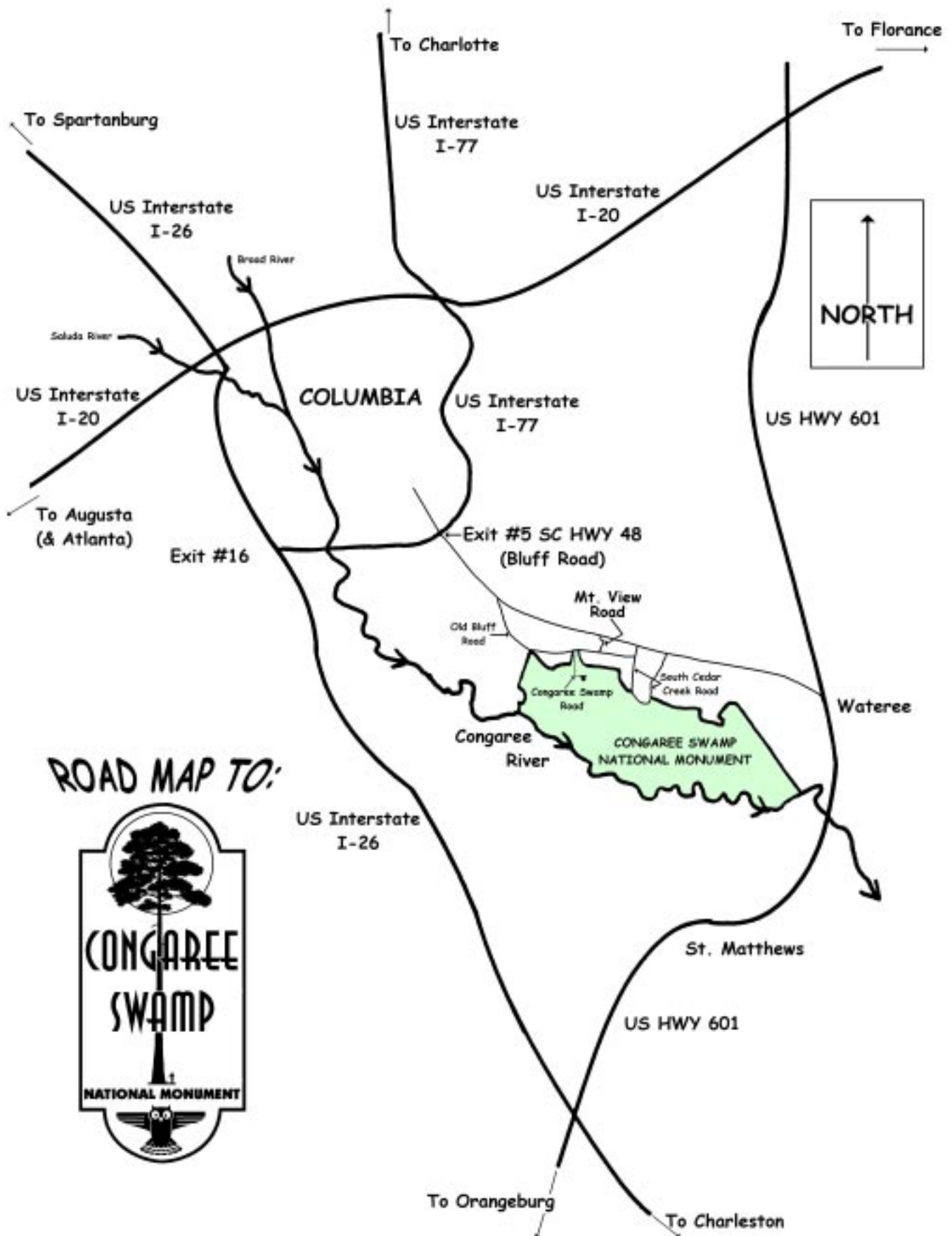
The objectives of this instructional guide are to:

- 1) Increase awareness of careers available to men and women in the National Park Service and the world in general.
- 2) Inspire students to make career choices in the environmental and/or natural resource fields.
- 3) Increase awareness of, and respect for, the ecosystems, plants and animals of the Congaree Swamp National Monument as well as the environment in general.
- 4) Increase awareness of threats (environmental, residential and industrial) to the Congaree Swamp National Monument as well as other parks within the National Park System.
- 5) Empower students to make changes that will positively impact the Congaree Swamp National Monument.

This guide is derived from a myriad of educational sources. Classroom teachers and counselors working in tandem with the South Carolina Occupational Information System (SCOIS) and monument staff created activities and projects covered in this guide. Where possible, credit has been given, with the realization that this guide and the monument's environmental and career education program would not exist without the help of all the teachers, students, parents, and park staff who have participated in its formulation. It is to you that this activity guide is dedicated.

If you have any comments or suggestions for the next edition, please contact the monument at:

**Superintendent
Congaree Swamp National Monument
200 Caroline Sims Road
Hopkins, SC 29061
(803) 776-4396**



Directions to Congaree Swamp National Monument

Congaree Swamp National Monument is located approximately 20 miles from downtown Columbia, SC in the community of Hopkins, SC. Directions to the Monument are as follows:

From I-77, take exit 5 to Bluff Road (SC Highway 48). Follow the brown and white "Congaree Swamp National Monument" directional signs to the park.

The signs will take you the following route: you will travel east approximately 12 miles on SC 48; then turn right onto Mountain View Road and travel .8 mile. Turn right onto Old Bluff Road and travel .3 mile. Turn left onto a privately owned gravel road (Caroline Sims Road) and travel one mile to enter the park.