



Friends Of Congaree Swamp

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Botany Along the Bluff... ...the OTHER Side of the River

John Nelson

They had predicted rain in the morning, but fortunately the worst weather conditions ended up being streaky skies and blustery breezes. A big crowd gathered at Lucy's, where we had gathered for a nice cozy breakfast, with plenty of chatter and stories swapped before the walk.

A short ride west, which featured downtown Ft. Motte, soon got us to the site. Our small but intrepid army assembled for instructions and a short lecture or two on the history of the site. The view north from the Calhoun County side of the river is truly amazing: bluffs towering above the floodplain up to 200' give the viewer a very different perspective of a coastal plain swamp.

After final directives from Brusi, off we went. A spirited walk down the hill brought us to a narrow flood plain and levee ecosystem. The birders went one way, the botanists went the other.

Many of the same plants featured at the National Monument occur commonly, and expectedly, on the south side of the river. Red maple and box elder (which is in fact a maple), along with sycamore, American holly, hackberry, and cherrybark oak were common along the narrow floodplain, especially near the river edge. We saw a narrow stand of bald cypress just back of the levee, with plenty of knees scattered around. One or two spice-bushes (*Lindera benzoin*) were just showing their yellow flower buds: their leaves, during the summer, yield a wonderfully aromatic scent, and the berries are a brilliant, shiny red.

The vegetable bad news, however, was easily apparent. Just like in the National Monument, privet and Japanese honeysuckle were easy to find. Perhaps one day there will be practical controls for these pests.

Up the trail and along



the base of the bluff, it was easy to compare this site to a place in the upcountry. Mountain laurel was a common shrub. Red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*) was just showing its first leaves (each one with five *palmate* leaflets), crane-fly orchid, and wild ginger were common below the hickories, oaks, and short-needle pine.

By the time we were finished, it was sunny and warm at the top of the bluff, and time for another view north, across the swamp. The bluffs form a natural part of the Congaree Swamp ecosystem; maybe one day they too will be protected.



New Harry Hampton Visitors Center Opens

Carol Kososki

The new Harry Hampton Visitors Center and a new entrance road at the Congaree Swamp National Monument is now open. The modern yet rustic 12,000 square-foot facility is open to the public and will provide hundreds of thousands of visitors an opportunity to learn about the Congaree Swamp: the last intact tract of old-growth, bottomland, hardwood forest in the United States, an International Biosphere Reserve and a Congressionally designated wilderness.

The new paved road winds through a pine forest and brings the visitor to a beautiful building which houses interpretive exhibits, a multi-purpose room where visitors can watch films and presentations about the park and houses administrative offices. An open-air, screened classroom will be used by staff and teachers to teach lessons and present programs that educate the more than 600 school groups that visit the park each year.



Due to a unique partnership of the National Park Service, the Air National Guard, Richland County and the River Alliance the new center was built at especially low costs. The building cost the Park Service only \$2 million because of the contribution of free labor from the Air National Guard and other contributed sources. Park Superintendent Martha Bogle is particularly pleased with the outcome of this partnership and is especially glad that Guard troops managed to save so many trees close to the building.

Friends of Congaree were instrumental in advocating for the new center and the new access road with members of Congress and wish to thank Senator Ernest Hollings and his staff for helping to secure federal funding for the project.

Now that the new center is open, go see it! The park is open 8:30 AM until 5:00 PM every day. Call 776-4396 for information.

Voices in the Swamp

— seeking the breeding birds of
Congaree Swamp National
Monument

WHERE: Congaree Swamp NM Boardwalks
WHEN: 8:30 AM, Saturday
June 2, 2001
PLACE: Congaree Swamp NM Visitor
Center
DURATION: 3 hours; easy walking
LEADER: Robin Carter
LIMITED TO: 15 participants.
NOTE: If more sign up, efforts will be
made to find a second leader.

A June morning can be a magical time in the swamp. Along the boardwalks dozens of pairs of birds will be engaged in breeding activities. Many of these birds are tricky to spot in the thick vegetation, but let us know their presence by loud, persistent bird song. One of the goals of this outing is to gain an appreciation of the numbers and diversity of breeding birds along the boardwalk by being introduced to their songs. Of course we will also try to actually see the birds, but this is often not possible.

Registration Form

Please **CHECK** the fieldtrip you wish to attend:

- "Voices in the Swamp" with Robin Carter
 "Moolight Float Trip" with John Cely

Member's Name (s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

E-Mail: _____

Registration Deadline: May 29, 2001 (Tuesday)

Mail to: Friends of Congaree Swamp Field Trips
c/o Carol Kososki
5225 Lakeshore Drive
Columbia, SC 29206

Phone: 803.787.1706

Moonlight Float Trip Through the Congaree

WHERE: 8:30 PM, Wednesday
WHEN: **June 6, 2001** (full moon)
PLACE: Meet at at the Iron Bridge
canoe put-in (not the ranger
station which will be closed off
anyway) just off South Cedar
Creek Road.
DURATION: 2 1/2 to 3 hours. Count on
getting back to Columbia about
11:00 PM or so.
LEADER: John Cely
LIMITED TO: Limit 10 canoes (20 members)
NOTE: 7 canoes will be supplied by Congaree
National Monument. Up to 3 personal
canoes can be included but please
let us know you are bringing one.
Please don't just show up since there is a 10
canoe limit.
Life Preservers: We will provide as many
life preservers as we can. If you
have a preserver please bring it
with you.

A great way to experience an intimate and unique perspective of the Swamp. We will hear the swamp's "voices of the night" including katydids, barred owls, frogs and toads, and always an unknown sound or two to make it a little mysterious. Lightning bugs and bats should be out too. This will be an easy float trip down a short stretch of Cedar Creek to "Dawson's Lake." Bring a flashlight; bug spray and snack/beverage optional. This is a week night trip in order to take advantage of the full moon.

OYSTER ROAST
planned for fall
membership meeting.

Date, place and time
to be announced.

May, 2001

www.friendsofcongaree.org

803.776.9105

Columbia SC 29202-7746

PO Box 7746

Friends of Congaree Swamp



Friends of Congaree Swamp Memorials and Honorariums

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Sent By:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (_____) _____

Please notify:

Name _____

Address _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____

Mail to: **Friends of Congaree Swamp**
PO Box 7746, Columbia, SC 29202-7746

Friends of Congaree Swamp Membership Application

INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES

- ___ \$15-34 (Individual)
- ___ \$35-49 (Family)
- ___ \$50-99 (Advocate)
- ___ \$100-499 (Partner)
- ___ \$500-999 (Benefactor)
- ___ \$1000-up (Patron)

Name:

Address:

Home Phone:

(_____) _____

Work Phone:

(_____) _____

Fax:

(_____) _____

E-Mail Address:

**ORGANIZATIONS, BUSI-
NESSES &
CORPORATIONS**

- ___ \$50-99 (Non-Profit Org.)
- ___ \$100-499 (Affiliate)
- ___ \$500-999 (Associate)
- ___ \$1000-up (Corporate)

AMOUNT ENCLOSED:

"Be a Friend...Get A Friend to Join!"