



www.friendsofcongarree.org
Summer/Fall 2003

Hawk Watch Field Trip Planned for Congaree Bluff Heritage Preserve

Sunday, Sept 28, 2003

Starting at 2:00pm

Sponsored by

Friends of Congaree Swamp

Open to everyone. No sign up.

Cancelled if raining.

Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve is a wonderful area on the south side of the Congaree River near Fort Motte, in Calhoun County. From the 120 foot high bluffs you can look out over much of Congaree Swamp National Monument.

Starting when the Heritage Preserve opened in 2001, local hawk watching enthusiasts have been coming to the overlook at Congaree Bluffs from August through early December to count migrating hawks.

The Congaree Bluffs hawk watch is not on a major hawk migration route. This means that you can sometimes sit for an hour without seeing any migrating hawks at all. But on a good day there may be dozens. In August and early September you might see good numbers of Mississippi Kites. In late September or early October, just about anything is possible.

Hawk watchers also count migrating vultures and hawks. In just three years, we have recorded an amazing 14 species of hawks and eagles, plus two vulture species, from the hawk watch.

Friends of Congaree Swamp will start the hawk watch at 2:00 PM on the afternoon of Sunday, September 28, 2003. Bring a snack, water, and lawn chairs. In case of rain the event is cancelled, since hawks usually do not migrate in the rain.

Mark Your Calendar!!!

The Friends' 2003 annual meeting will be held Oct. 19 at Wavering Place near Eastover. The meeting will begin at 3 p.m. and include an oyster roast and other delectables. Details and directions will be mailed later.

There will a chance to explore the Heritage Preserve as well as watch for hawks. This activity is open to all without a sign up. For safety reasons, no more than eight people will be allowed on the observation deck at any one time, but there will be plenty of room nearby to sit and relax and watch whatever is going on.

Bert Pittman of the SC Native Plant Society will be leading a plant walk and has invited the SC Native Plant Society members to join us. The more, the merrier!

You can follow the Congaree Bluff Hawk Count at www.hawkcount.org.

Leaders: Robin Carter and John Grego

Directions to Congaree Bluffs Heritage

Preserve: Go to the intersection of US 601 and SC 419, between Saint Matthews and the Congaree River. Here turn west onto SC 419 and follow this route into the tiny village of Fort Motte. Set your odometer to zero as you cross the railroad tracks in "downtown" Fort Motte. Continue west on SC 419 for 1.0 mile. Here look for an unpaved road off to the north (right). This is Turkey Track Road. Turn north onto Turkey Track Road, and follow this road north for 0.95 miles (1.95 miles from the railroad tracks). From Turkey Track Road go sharply to the left (west) onto the entrance road for the Heritage Preserve. Park near the white building. There is a wooden observation deck just a few yards beyond the white building.

Photograph Book Featuring Congaree Swamp National Monument Underway By Virginia Winn

The Carolina Nature Photographers Association (CNPA) (Columbia Regional Chapter), with the assistance of Friends of Congaree Swamp (FCS), is producing a small souvenir book of recently shot photographs taken at Congaree Swamp National Monument. This will be the first book of its kind of the Monument and will be sold at the Harry Hampton Visitors Center, as well as other outlets.

We are now collecting mounted slides, 8x10 prints and digital images for review. The images must have been shot after January 1, 2000, and within the Congaree Swamp or surrounding areas. If you are interested in donating images for consideration, we would like them by, or before, November 1, 2003. All contributing photographers will be acknowledged in the book and selected images will be credited to the author. All individual image rights and usages are retained by the photographer, and the photographer gives CNPA rights for use in this book only, including any possible reprints. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope so that we can return the images to you at the completion of the publication. The expected date of publication is the fall of 2005.

The images in the book will depict the diversity of the Monument and its visitors and may include scenics, aerials, close-ups of plants and wild flowers, as well as the diversity of animal life. So long as you can obtain a photo release, we are also looking for "people" shots. Let your imagination and creativity be your guide to show off the beauty of this internationally recognized ecosystem.

Please go to the Friends web site, www.friendsofcongarree.org, and download the labeling requirements and submission form. If you do not have access to the internet, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to either Andrew Eschbacher, Images of North America, PO Box 301, Irmo, SC 29063, or to Virginia Winn, 3025 Dalloz Road, Columbia, SC 29204 and request a form be mailed to you.



Photo by Pat Bright

Memorials

We would like thank LaBruce Alexander for her memorial contributions to:

Walt Hotinger
"Wag" Ripley

We would like to thank the following for their memorial contributions in John Temple's name to the Friends:

LaBruce Alexander
Dr. and Mrs. Phillip Fairey
David and Hilda Haltiwanger
William Morse
George and Mary Nichols
Truman and Jeanne Temple

In Memory of John Temple

Friends of Congaree Swamp would like to express our condolences to the family of John Temple, our friend and former Board member. He was a wonderful friend to Congaree Swamp and a long-term volunteer at the Park. We will all miss him.

Congaree Swamp National Monument Seeks Volunteers for 2003 National Public Lands Day & River Sweep

By Fran Rametta

Congaree Swamp National Monument has been chosen to participate in the annual National Public Lands Day & River Sweep to be held **Saturday, September 20, 2003**. National Public Lands Day & River Sweep will bring volunteers to work at more than 350 sites across the country in parks, forests, lakes, and other public lands that have become major recreation areas for millions of Americans. Congaree Swamp National Monument is seeking volunteers to assist the park staff in clearing debris and removing exotic plants from around the park's new visitor center and the park's foot trails. Volunteers will also assist in clearing litter from along the Cedar Creek canoe trail. Projects will be accomplished from 9:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

On this day people who use public lands give something back to special places, sharing stewardship with the agencies that have responsibility

for managing our 700 million acres of public land. Thousands of volunteers – families, groups, persons of all ages – will give time and labor to enhance and improve public lands and learn more about the role of public lands in preserving a healthy environment.

The event is a public/private partnership among land agencies such as the National Park Service, the business community and volunteers. For the sites, it is more than a clean up. Managers plan projects that result in real and needed improvements to public lands. Volunteers also see, first hand, the issues land managers' face in maintaining recreation areas.

Friends of Congaree Swamp volunteers interested in participating in the monument's National Public Lands Day & River Sweep event are asked to contact Bob Render at (803)-776-3295 by Sept. 17 so that we can register as a group.

Two "Big Tree" Field Trips Planned for Fall

John Cely has again volunteered to lead us on two "Big Tree" fields trips this fall. The first one will be on **Sunday, October 26, 2003**, from 2:00 – 5:00pm and the second one will be on **Sunday, November 9, 2003**, from 2:00 – 5:00pm. Both trips are limited to the first 30 members to sign up and will be rain or shine; major flooding doesn't count. We will meet at the Harry Hampton Visitors' Center.

Join Friends as we explore some of the back areas of Congaree Swamp National Monument and see the really big trees that Harry Hampton sought to protect. On this 3-hour/4-mile off-trail walk, we will see huge sweetgums, cypress, beech and Cherrybark Oaks, to name a few.

We will take the River Trail to the back end of Wise Lake where several sweetgum are 12-13 feet in circumference. If we are lucky, and we can find a suitable log crossing, we will go see the "Harry Hampton" cypress in Hampton Gut; several of which are 14-18 feet in circumference and one is the tallest in the swamp: 148 ft. These are virgin cypress: probably at least 500 years old. We will then back-

track and proceed along Hammond's Gut to a beautiful beech ridge, with trees 8-9 feet in circumference and 125 feet tall. Near Pearsons Pond we will encounter the largest Cherrybark Oak in the Swamp - 23 feet around and 165 feet tall. Even though Cherrybark Oak typically grow on the higher ridges, their pronounced buttress suggests a tree preferring low sites. The hallmark of the Cherrybark is its height; these trees routinely exceed 150 feet in height. Almost as impressive is their crown spread, sometimes approaching 100 feet.

Total walking miles for this trip will be about 4, **some of which will be off-trail where the terrain can be uneven and strewn with obstacles such as cypress knees, vines, and downed limbs and logs**. Hiking boots are recommended, although a sturdy pair of tennis shoes will work too. Participants should be in good physical condition.

If you would like to participate on either of these trips, please contact John Cely and let him know how many to expect. His phone number is (hm) 803-782-7450 or (wk) 803-419-9645; or you can email him at jcely@clemsun.edu.

Tallest National Champion Tree East of Idaho

By John Grego

The 167 foot Loblolly found in 2001 by Doug and Jess Riddle has been confirmed as the new National Champion Loblolly Pine, *Pinus taeda*, by American Forests, which maintains the National Register of Big Trees. This tree had earlier replaced the familiar Loblolly on the Boardwalk Loop as the State Champion Loblolly.

Doug and Jess Riddle are a father/son team from Roswell, GA, who are nationally known for identifying champion trees and pockets of old-growth forest in the Southeast United States.

Our new National Champion is also the tallest National Champion east of Idaho! But the new title bears some explanation. There are taller trees east of Idaho: White Pines 180' high, Yellow Poplars (Tulip trees) and Hemlocks over 170' high—but they are not the national champs for their respective species.

Trees nominated for the National Register are awarded points for height, average crown diameter (think of the crown as the tree's shadow), and circumference (measured 4.5 feet above the ground). The current formula awards one point for each foot of height or crown diameter, and each inch of circumference. So the formula sometimes favors short, squat trees quite different from the trees we see at Congaree Swamp.

The current National Champion Bald cypress in Louisiana, for instance, is only 83' high (83 points for height), with an unexceptional crown, but has an astonishing circumference of almost 54' (644 points for circumference). Though it has been derisively compared to an upside-down turnip by fans of a competitor tree in Florida, it wins on points!

Spring Field Trip to Congaree Creek Heritage Preserve Enjoyed By All **By Carol Jaworski**

On May 11th, 2003, a group of approximately 15 members of the Friends of Congaree Swamp were led on an interesting and fun trip by Robin Carter to a site just minutes from downtown that features 12,000 years of history and pre-history. The 627-acre Congaree Creek Heritage Preserve, which is part of the SC DNR Heritage Trust Program, is located off Old State Road in Cayce, and offers four highly significant archaeological sites. The sites include a South Appalachian-Mississippian Indian village, a 10-12,000 year old Paleo-Indian campsite, remnants of the 1731 Saxe Gotha settlement (predecessor to Columbia), and another site that spans all of these time periods. Archaeologists have found tools, pottery shards, arrowheads and other evidence that people have lived in and around the preserve for nearly 12,000 years. A road which runs nearby through part of the preserve is part of the Old Cherokee Trail, which led from the Appalachian Mountains to the coast. This 70-year-old hardwood forest at one time was farmlands. It is encouraging to see the rapid progress made toward the regeneration of the forest in such a brief period of time.

Our group enjoyed a portion of the easy 2.5-mile loop trail that featured clay pits. Beginning in the early 1900s, clay was dug from pits for the Guignard Brickworks, with peak production during World War I. The clay pits now form a series of small ponds which are home to all kinds of wildlife. Snakes, turtles, bobcats, deer, hogs, hawks, waterfowl, and other birds have all been spotted in the preserve. We even located a small alligator. The Guignard Brickworks Trail, which runs through part of the preserve, has been designated as a Community Millennium Trail. This trail, like dozens of Millennium Trails throughout the nation, reflects community history through natural settings.

From the President...

By Brusi Alexander

Armed with 3 bottles of various insect repellent, I spent a month in Costa Rica this spring. The bottles returned full to the USA. To my amazement, the first mosquito I encountered was the one in my own bathroom, the night I arrived home.

There is no spraying for insect control in the Lake Arenal, Costa Rica, area. You are warned to check carefully any shoes left outside, to see what critters have climbed into the dark shoe tunnel while you are away! Yet this, a 2 1/2, (not Third), World country, has an efficient Check and Balance system: on the small scale of mosquitoes and the larger scale of the many buzzards, which are circling the sky not just to get their hours in for Flight School.

Back now to the USA: the European Starling, totalling more than 200 million individuals, all sprang from 100 birds purposely introduced in New York's Central Park during 1890 and 1891. The birds were deliberately introduced by Eugene Scheiffelin for the amazing reason that he wanted to introduce all the bird species mentioned by Shakespeare in his writings.

"The history of the starling in North America serves as an archetypal example of what can happen when exotic species find their way into ecosystems not equipped to deal with them," adroitly comment Rene` and Christyna Laubach.

Like the Starling, House Sparrows were purposely introduced in New York City with the thought that the birds would control insect pests. In only 60 years, the species inhabited all of North America. (These birds were originally native to the Mediterranean, and are actually an Old World Weaver finch, not a true sparrow at all.) Reports show House Sparrows have attacked at least 70 other species of North American birds, mostly at nest sites. Both sparrows and starlings destroy eggs.

Here we are today, and "agricultural bureaus" are introducing, (among other anti-fire

ant artillery,) a decapitating fly, *Pseudacteon tricuspis*, to kill fire ants. Straight from a B-grade horror show—this small fly attacks fire ants and deposits an egg in an ant's head. The larvae hatches from the egg, and decapitates the fire ant while feeding on it.

What a way to go. But we all hate fire ants, eh?

How will this phorid fly, as it is called, interact long-range with other forms of insects? What happens when, like other non-natives, the phorid fly does not follow the very specific limited job description the USDA has for it?

Could the experiments releasing this phorid fly last fall over a 300 acre farm in Fairfield County affect Congaree Swamp insects? — Phoo, you say. No way. Too far away and too specialized.

Perhaps so. Hopefully, you are correct.

But as introduced species history has shown, you can't fool Mother Nature for long.

As advocates for a healthy Congaree Swamp, we need to be aware of what is happening outside the boundaries of the Monument, and hope that none of these tinkering with Nature will affect the "Grand Dame" Congaree.

So put a European Starling on a privet hedge, just next to a House Sparrow eating a phorid fly on a kudzu vine, and keep me posted.



Photo by Robin Carter
The Congaree River shot from Congaree Bluff Heritage Preserve.

Summer/Fall 2003

www.friendsofcongarere.org

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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
 \$35.00 Family
 \$50.00 Advocate
 \$100.00 Partner
 \$500.00 Benefactor
 \$1000.00 Patron

 \$50.00 Nonprofit Org.
 \$1000.00 Corporate

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Name(s): _____
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I would like to work on the following committee(s):

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<input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership
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<input type="checkbox"/> Events	<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/> Research	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

In addition to my membership, I would like to give \$ _____ as a donation to **Friends of Congaree Swamp**:
Memorial to: _____ Honorarium for: _____

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

I would like to order the following items (proceeds benefit FOCS projects): \$ _____

copies of **"Reflections of Congaree Swamp"** CD screensaver for Windows 95 or higher @ ~~\$14.95~~ **\$7.50 s/h included**
 copies of the beautifully detailed **"Map of Congaree Swamp National Monument and Vicinity"** @ \$12.95 each/plus \$3.50 s/h

Sale!

Thank You For Supporting **Friends of Congaree Swamp!**
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