



# Friends Of Congaree Swamp

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## 4TH ANNUAL SWAMP STOMP AND MEMBERSHIP MEETING

with

# Ben Moise's World Famous Oyster Roast

Sunday, November 11, 2001

1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

(Rain or Shine)

Join Friends as we enjoy a majestic outdoor setting in the Midlands of South Carolina. We will explore one of the highest bluffs in Calhoun County, 220' above the Congaree River, directly across from the National Monument. The views are spectacular and should be enhanced by fall colors.

We'll be meeting on private property and our host will provide historical information about the use of the bluffs, dating back to the 1730's, and the perspective of local landowners who have maintained the intergrity of the bluffs for generations. Since we have partnered with Congaree Land Trust for a celebration of the Park founding 25 years ago on Nov. 4th (see page 5), we've invited CLT members to join us on the bluff!

1:30 Registration begins (see page 3 for registration form)

1:45 - 3:00 Nature Walks

3:00 - 3:30 Annual Meeting/Bluff Talk

3:30 - 5:30 Oyster Roast (& chili)

Wear comfortable clothes and shoes and insect repellent may still be useful. Bring binoculars for birding and bluff viewing, and your own lawn chair or quilt!

### **Directions to Friends' 4th Annual Swamp Stomp and Oyster Roast:**

From the intersection of I-77 & I-26, go east on I-26 for approximately 1-mile. Exit onto Hwy 176 south and drive about 14-miles towards St Matthews. After passing a pond on the right, you will climb a steep hill and pass Bethel Church on the left. (It's an old white church.) Go approximately .25-mile beyond Bethel Church and turn left onto Old Belleville Rd. Proceed 4.3 miles (.6 miles beyond fire station) and turn left onto dirt road (Sikes Pond Rd). Go .2-mile and turn right onto Dolin Hill Lane and follow to the end of the road (about 1.5 miles) to the bluff! Call Ann Timberlake (446-6400) if you need directions from Hwy 601.

## Congaree Bluffs Preserved Through Help of Many

South Carolina has a new heritage preserve - the Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve, near Fort Motte, in Calhoun County. The SC Dept. of Natural Resources (SCDNR) purchased the property July 19, 2001, followed by a well-attended dedication ceremony on August 10, 2001. The preserve's most spectacular feature is the high bluff overlooking the Congaree River and Congaree Swamp National Monument. The bluff is approx. 130 feet higher than the Congaree floodplain.

Protection of this 201-acre tract is a fascinating year-long story, involving many entities, including Friends of Congaree Swamp (FCS).

On July 29, 2000, Richard Watkins reviewed real estate listings in The State newspaper of July 23. Watkins noticed Earth Properties' listing of 200 acres on the Congaree River at Fort Motte. He immediately called Cynthia Kohn, broker-in-charge at Earth Properties. Ms. Kohn identified the tract as property owned by James Sarvis.

On August 2, 2000, Richard Watkins and FCS president LaBruce Alexander toured the tract with Ms. Kohn and Earth Properties sales associate Mary Sparrow. The tract was actually 204 acres. The asking price was \$1.1 million. If the owner could not sell the property intact, he was prepared to subdivide the tract into riverfront lots.

In the following months, LaBruce Alexander worked diligently - but without success - to recruit private conservation buyers for the tract. Twenty-two individuals were approached about conservation purchases, but nothing was solidifying. At this point, Watkins and Alexander approached the Congaree Land Trust (CLT) about participating to protect the tract.

Ms. Alexander continued to talk with landowner James Sarvis, Earth Properties Inc., and the Congaree Land Trust. CLT, in turn, approached The Nature Conservancy (TNC) of South Carolina, which, in turn, approached

the Heritage Trust Program at the SC Dept. of Natural Resources. Meanwhile, on November 17, 2000, the landowner sold a 3-acre riverfront lot at the northeast corner of the tract.

CLT Executive Director Ann Jennings discussed the tract with state Rep. Harry Ott, whose district includes Calhoun County. Thereafter, Rep. Ott mentioned this tract to Fred Gantt III, a Calhoun Soil & Water Conservation District commissioner. As luck would have it, the Conservation District commissioners were seeking a site for an environmental education center. The Conservation District commissioners were immediately interested in the tract, and Rep. Ott was supportive as a member of the Calhoun County Legislative Delegation.

A proposal evolved whereby SCDNR would buy the remaining 201 acres. SC Natural Resources Board member Ben Gregg was instrumental in enlisting SCDNR support to acquire the tract, but many steps and many approvals were required before SCDNR could purchase the land. These steps and approvals took time, but the landowner wanted a commitment sooner rather than later. Accordingly, the Congaree Land Trust, assisted by The Nature Conservancy, drafted a contract to protect the tract through August 2001, by which time the many steps could be completed for SCDNR to acquire the tract.

In February 2001, the SC Heritage Trust Advisory Board formally recommended that SCDNR acquire the 201-acre tract to become a heritage preserve. Several days later, on February 16, 2001, the SC Natural Resources Board voted its approval. Later the same day (February 16), CLT signed the contract with the landowner and paid \$10,000 earnest money to the landowner (\$5,000 from CLT, and \$5,000 from TNC).

Meanwhile, FCS president LaBruce Alexander had obtained the landowner's permission for FCS to conduct a field trip at the tract. The field trip - on February 17 - acquainted more than 30 FCS members with the

riverfront and the spectacular view from the bluff.

CLT's contract with the landowner required a second payment of earnest money in mid-April. On March 20, the FCS Board of Directors approved an interest-free loan of \$15,000 from FCS to the Congaree Land Trust as part of the second payment (\$40,000) of earnest money. CLT put up \$10,000; TNC put up \$10,000; and the Calhoun Soil & Water Conservation District put up \$5,000. An appraisal of the tract's fair market value was completed before the second payment of earnest money.

The last major hurdle was cleared May 8, 2001, when the State Budget and Control Board authorized SCDNR to proceed to acquire the tract. SCDNR purchased the tract on July 19, at a price of \$900,000, utilizing the state's Heritage Land Trust Fund.

Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve is the state's 65th heritage preserve, but the first in Calhoun County. The preserve has received very favorable news media coverage in St. Matthews, Orangeburg, and Columbia.

The Calhoun Soil & Water Conservation District and the Calhoun County Museum & Cultural Center look forward to utilizing the heritage preserve for educational programs to benefit students in Calhoun County and to encourage protection of other significant natural and cultural resources in Calhoun County.

The Calhoun County Museum and SCDNR submitted a grant application October 5 to the SC Dept. of Archives and History for an archaeological survey of Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve. Dr. Walter Edgar, author of South Carolina: A History, has endorsed this proposal.

SCDNR will prepare a management plan for Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve, with Friends of Congaree Swamp having input to the management plan.

## Friends' 4th Annual Swamp Stomp & Oyster Roast Sunday, November 11, 2001

### Registration Form

**R.S.V.P. by November 5, 2001. Call 803-776-9105 with questions.**

You must be a current member to attend. Guests of members are welcome.

Memberships are tax-deductible. Admission to events are not deductible.

Member(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Adults: \$15.00 each x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Guest(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Children (under 12) : \$ 5.00 each x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Oyster Roast Reservation Sub-Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

New/Renewing Membership of Friends: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Current member of *Friends*

\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_ Renewing member of *Friends* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**I want to support Friends of Congaree Swamp  
with my tax-deductible membership of:**

\_\_ \$15+ \_\_ \$35+ \_\_ \$50+ \_\_ \$100+ \_\_ \$500+ \_\_ \$1000+

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to **Friends of Congaree Swamp** and mail, along with registration form, to: Swamp Stomp, Friends of Congaree Swamp, PO Box 7746, Columbia, SC 20202.

No tickets will be mailed. Your check will be your reservation.

**Please note that we will be on private property  
and the property owner will require you to sign  
a liability release on arrival at the property.**

## Tree Identification Finds Enthusiastic Group

Bob Bundy

BundyR@aol.com or 803-776-4535

Friends of Congaree Swamp hosted its first Tree Identification Seminar on September 8th to an enthusiastic group, ready to learn the intricacies of identifying plants by the use of keys.

We started out with some basic terminology while on the back porch of the Harry Hampton Visitors Center. Sitting on the back porch, we were able to turn right around and start using plant keys to identify some of the trees around us. Many of the trees that we worked on were from familiar families, but we concentrated on the specific characteristics that distinguish these trees from others. A short walk down to the beginning of the service road, opened up a world of leaves being opposite or alternate, simple or compound, and leaves being lobed or entire: a few of the characteristics that readily distinguish one tree from another. A little discussion on unequal leaf bases and leaf variations on plants brought about the realization that identification of trees involves more than looking at leaves. Also bark, tree shape and branching arrangement, and habitat must be considered.

The group had much to offer each other and we discussed some medicinal uses of plants, the tendency for the presence of certain trees to identify other features of the land, parasitism among some plants, and much more.

Thanks to all who participated and offered so much to making our first seminar on "trees" a success.

We are now in the process of planning more seminars such as this. If you have any ideas or suggestions for areas of study that particularly interest you, please forward your ideas to one of the Education Committee members.

## Congaree Bluffs Proves Prime Birding Site

Robin Carter  
rcarter@sc.rr.com

Today (11 Aug 2001) I spent a couple of hours in the early afternoon at the new Congaree Bluff Heritage Bluff, near Fort Motte, Calhoun County, SC. This is a new heritage preserve protecting about 200 acres along the high bluff of the Congaree River, across the river from Congaree Swamp National Monument.

Good news — this place is wonderful! The hilltop part of the preserve is a rather ordinary pine plantation with weedy fields. But the bluff itself is a magical place. There are two lookouts some 140 feet above the floodplain of the Congaree River. From these vantage points you can look out to the north for at least 15 miles in some directions. The view encompasses about 120 degrees of arc. I have only visited a couple of other sites in the southeastern Coastal Plain which are anywhere near as dramatic—Torreya State Park on the Apalachicola River in Florida and the loess bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River at Vicksburg, MS.

Preliminary surveys have found about 200 species of woody plants on this preserve, a very high diversity. The area is great for butterflies and dragonflies, which I will not even attempt to identify. I mostly know the birds, but the non-feathered fliers are still mostly new for me.

I did find a few birds, which is amazing. The conditions today were terrible. The temperature was about 98 F., with a heat index of close to 110 F. I spend most of my

time sitting quietly in the shade, waiting for the birds to come by.

Congaree Bluff may finally fulfill a decade long quest of mine—to find a reasonable hawk watch on public land fairly close to Columbia. The site is about 40 miles from downtown Columbia, or about 25 miles by road from the visitors' center at Congaree Swamp National Monument. I challenge South Carolina hawk watchers to help me establish a hawk watch at the wonderful site

Here is my bird list for the preserve today:

Black Vulture—6  
Turkey Vulture—12  
Mississippi Kite—4  
Yellow-billed Cuckoo—1  
Chimney Swift—1  
Ruby-throated Hummingbird—2  
Red-headed Woodpecker—1  
Red-bellied Woodpecker—4  
Downy Woodpecker—1  
Hairy Woodpecker—1  
Pileated Woodpecker—1  
Great Crested Flycatcher—2  
White-eyed Vireo—6  
Red-eyed Vireo—2  
American Crow—4  
Fish Crow—1  
Carolina Chickadee—10  
Tufted Titmouse—6  
Carolina Wren—8  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher—1  
Northern Parula—8  
Hooded Warbler—4  
Summer Tanager—2  
Eastern Towhee—2  
Northern Cardinal—12  
Indigo Bunting—5  
American Goldfinch—2

### Reminder:

**Congaree Swamp  
National  
Monument  
along with  
The National Park  
Service, The South  
Carolina National  
Guard, The River  
Alliance, and The  
Richland County  
Legislative Delegation**

***cordially invite  
Members of Friends of  
Congaree Swamp***

***to attend the  
25th Anniversary  
Celebration and  
Harry Hampton Visitor  
Center Dedication***

***Thursday,  
October 18, 2001  
10:30 a.m.***

### **Honorariums Received**

Friends of Congaree Swamp would like to thank Frank Hill for his donations honoring LaBruce Alexander, Richard Watkins and Virginia Winn.

**\*\*If you see an asterick on your mailing label please renew your membership. \*\***

The Congaree Land Trust and Friends of Congaree Swamp  
hold a

**Tribute to  
Harry Hampton in Celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of  
Congaree Swamp National Monument**

**Sunday, November 4, 2001  
Congaree Swamp National Monument  
\$15 per adult / Children under 10 free**

You must be a current member of CLT or Friends to attend. Guests of members are welcomed.  
R.S.V.P. by October 31, 2001. Call Friends @ 803-776-9105 for more information.

Make checks payable to Congaree Land Trust for \$15.00 per person over the age of 10.  
Member's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Guest(s) Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form and your check to:  
**Harry Hampton Tribute, Congaree Land Trust, PO Box 232, Columbia, SC 29202**

## Congaree Swamp Loses a Friend

Congaree Swamp National Monument lost a friend with the death of Congressman Floyd Spence on August 16, 2001.

In February 1976, Congressman Spence introduced the legislation that Congress passed in September 1976 to establish Congaree Swamp National Monument. This legislation authorized the National Park Service to acquire the 15,138-acre Beidler tract.

Twelve years later, in October 1988, Congress passed legislation to add 7,000 acres to Congaree Swamp National Monument and to include most of the monument in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Sen. Thurmond and Sen. Hollings sponsored this legislation in the Senate. Congressman Spence introduced this legislation in the House of Representatives.

When congressional districts were redrawn in 1992, Congaree Swamp National Monument became part of the 6th District, no longer part of the 2nd District. Although Rep. Spence was no longer "Congaree's congressman," he did not forget Congaree Swamp and the National Park System.

February 16, 2001 was the 25th anniversary of Rep. Spence's introduction of Congaree Swamp legislation. On that 25th anniversary, Friends of Congaree Swamp sent a letter to Rep. Spence, thanking him for his leadership to preserve Congaree's old-growth bottomland forest ecosystem for the education, inspiration, and enjoyment of present and future generations.

## **New Friends of Congaree Swamp Screen Saver Coming Soon!**

*Congaree Swamp Reflections  
22 Beautiful Images of  
Congaree Swamp for  
Only \$14.95*

**Would Make a Great  
Stocking Stuffer or Office Present**

**Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies  
@ 14.95 each / plus \$3.50 s&h**

(Windows 95 or higher)

Make checks payable to *Friends of Congaree Swamp*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Screen Saver, Friends of Congaree Swamp,  
PO Box 7746, Columbia, SC20202.

**Details and registration form inside.**

County side of the Congaree River.  
Enjoy an oyster roast from a bluff overlook on the Calhoun  
4th Annual Swamp Stomp, Sunday, November 11, 2001.

**Mark Your Calendar:**

**October, 2001**

www.friendsofcongarree.org

803.776.9105

“Be a Friend...  
Get A Friend to Join!”

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+ (Individual)

\_\_\_ \$35+ (Family)

\_\_\_ \$50+ (Advocate)

\_\_\_ \$100+ (Partner)

\_\_\_ \$500+ (Benefactor)

\_\_\_ \$1000+ (Patron)

**Name:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Address:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone:**

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**Work Phone:**

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax:**

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail Address:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**ORGANIZATIONS,  
BUSINESSES &  
CORPORATIONS**

\_\_\_ \$50+ (Non-Profit Org.)

\_\_\_ \$100+ (Affiliate)

\_\_\_ \$500+ (Associate)

\_\_\_ \$1000+ (Corporate)

**AMOUNT ENCLOSED:**

\_\_\_\_\_

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