



# Friends of Congaree Swamp

www.friendsofcongarere.org

Spring 2002

## Western Boundary Hike

By John Grego

The Friends had a very enjoyable hike along the western boundary on March 2. Using the Boat Landing Road as our touchstone, we made several detours to interesting sites along the way to the river and back. Since much of the hike is either close to or on private property, we first familiarized ourselves with the current owners and the National Park Service boundaries.

Once on NPS property, our first stop was to an old levee and borrow pit, constructed but never completed by James Adams in the 1840s. The borrow pits along the levee are good places to find wood ducks in the winter when the weather is not so dry: they look singularly unpromising as wildlife habitat after three years' drought.

There is an older even-age stand of loblolly pines near the levee (some actually grow on the levee), and we took the opportunity to discuss research by the Savannah River Ecological Laboratory (SREL) on the origin of these stands. When older stands of pines are as dense as this stand (and the stands near the boardwalk with which swamp visitors are so familiar), the SREL concluded that they originated from cleared land, rather than fire or storm-related

blow-downs.

From the levee, we returned briefly to the trail, visited an active hog-wallow at the base of a tip-up and then moved on to see an eighteen-foot circumference overcup oak recently found by John Cely. Our last highlight before reaching the river was Cook's Lake, an oxbow lake that became isolated from the river within historical times. From the southern bank of the lake (The lake lies entirely within private property.), you can see otter and waterfowl in the winter, including wood ducks and hooded mergansers; waterfowl can also be found in the small sloughs on the opposite side of the road from Cook's Lake. No otter or ducks, but we heard red-shouldered hawks approaching and got a wonderful view of the hawks circling less than 75 feet directly overhead.

At the river, we headed to the sandbar, beachcombed at the upstream end of the bar for the abundant shards of Indian pottery (All of which were examined and then returned.) and had some lunch. On the way back, we had a couple of hog encounters. A small herd of hogs was working its way through a heavy stand of switch cane only 10 yards from the trail. An exact count wasn't possible because the view was obscured by a rear-guard of two very large hogs—one black and one red—but there seemed to be fewer than 10 hogs. They were not immediately alarmed by us, but eventually starting running and could be heard trampling through the switch cane for some time. A little later,

***Boundary Hike*** continued page 3

### Elected Positions for 2002

The Board of Directors of Friends of Congaree Swamp has elected the following officers:

LaBruce Alexander, President  
Bob Render, Vice-President  
Carol Kososki, Secretary  
Mary Kelly, Treasurer

The Executive Committee will consist of the above officers, plus At-Large elected representatives:

John Nelson  
Elenor Niestat  
Richard Watkins

The committee Chairs are the following:

Bob Bundy, Education  
Frank Caggiano, Fundraising  
John Grego, Research  
Ellen Hellman,  
Computer Operations  
Bob Render, Public Relations  
John Nelson, Field Trips  
Eleanor Niestat, Membership  
Virginia Winn, Newsletter

*Hog Wild*

# Rooting and Wallowing in the Congaree Swamp

By Scott Zengel  
Clemson University and Research Planning, Inc.

One of the things that many new visitors to Congaree Swamp get excited about are the “wild hogs”, whether they have seen them first-hand, or wondered about the abundant signs of rooting along the boardwalks or Cedar Creek. Most FOCS members, resource managers, and researchers familiar with Congaree are also very interested and concerned about the potential impacts of non-native feral hogs (*Sus scrofa*) on native plants and animals at the park, and the effects of hogs on the ecosystem in general.

Starting in September 2000, a hog disturbance monitoring project was initiated, tracking the abundance and persistence of hog rooting, wallowing, and hog game trails in four forest types at the park: three wetland types (mixed bottomland hardwoods, cypress-water tupelo swamp, swamp tupelo seepage forest) and one upland type directly adjacent to the floodplain (mixed pine and upland hardwoods). The study aims to quantify the degree of hog disturbance at the park, to help address resource concerns and provide information for park management.

FOCS has provided funding for film processing of time-series photo-quadrants being recorded as a part of the project. Several FOCS members have also provided volunteer field help and other assistance, all of which is greatly appreciated.

To date, permanent forest plots have been sampled every other month through March 2002. The study will continue through at least July 2003, which will complete three years of monitoring.

All wetland plots on the floodplain have shown significant signs of hog disturbance, while upland



A large hog wallow and several tree rubs.

## FRIENDS Grant Awarded

Scott Zengel, a Ph.D. candidate at Clemson University, has been awarded a monetary grant from FRIENDS. Mr. Zengel is conducting a three-year study to document the impact of hogs on the Congaree Swamp National Monument's ecosystem and plans to identify strategies for controlling said population. Mr. Zengel's original grant did not cover some items FRIENDS OF CONGAREE SWAMP has awarded a grant of \$600 to cover the remaining expenses.

plots have shown very little to no hog disturbance. Over the course of the first year of the project, disturbance on the floodplain generally increased with time, with a peak recorded in September 2001, followed by a decline in disturbance detection in November when leaf fall partially obscured rooting sign. So far this year, rooting disturbance is back on the increase in most plots, similar to observations in 2001.

In September 2001, hog disturbance per area sampled averaged 20% in mixed bottomland hardwood, 29% in cypress-water tupelo swamp, 10% in seepage forest, and <1% in mixed pine and upland hardwoods. Plots located further to the east and south also seem to have had greater disturbance during most sampling periods. Disturbance along stream banks and the margins of flooded sloughs has also been substantial.

Predation on large native muskels and crayfish in and along

creeks has been observed. Disturbance in upland forest plots has been practically non-existent, although other hog sign, such as tracks and scat, have been observed on a regular basis. Substantial hog disturbance has been recorded in other non-wetland habitats, particularly in one area of upland longleaf pine savanna, a habitat type of high conservation and restoration interest.

There has been some indication that hog disturbance may be more severe and persistent in certain floodplain habitat types, particularly in the seepage forest, where dark organic muck soils, groundwater seepage from the bluff, swamp tupelo trees, American holly, coastal dog hobble, various large ferns, and Sphagnum moss predominate. Many rooted areas in the seepage forest plots have remained largely unchanged for more than one year, with little sign of recovery. Disturbance does not appear to be as persistent in the other floodplain forest types.



Carolina birds-in-a-nest or bog mint.

In July 2001, Carolina birds-in-a-nest or bog mint (*Macbridea caroliniana*), an imperiled plant species with only about 30 known populations world-wide, was documented in two of

the seepage forest plots. Over 200 stems were recorded for one of the sites. As an addition to the hog disturbance study, bogmint locations and stem counts in the plots will be monitored each year during the peak flowering period and compared to hog disturbance locations, to help assess the potential for hog impacts on this rare plant.

Now back to the hogs. They are seen quite frequently during sampling periods, and rooting, game trails, scat and other sign are prevalent almost everywhere on the floodplain, abundantly in some areas. The top sighting so far was about 15 hogs in one day, although I'm sure John Cely and some other swamp veterans can top that.

One highlight was a sow and six shoats that wandered into one of the plots, rooting away, while the plot was being sampled. The sow was black with a white shoulder-band, but with a body shape, coarse coat texture, and "razorback" of a typical feral hog. Three young matched her markings, one was dark brown, one reddish-brown, and one was brown with light spots and stripes, like a juvenile wild boar. Hybrids between wild boar and feral hogs were reportedly introduced to the Congaree in the past, so some of this ancestry may still be present in the population.

Most of the hogs seen during this project are dark brown or black and are usually not any larger than about 150 lbs., although there are stories of the "big one" out by the river that may go 300-400 lbs. Hogs this large have been taken recently by hunters at nearby Mill Creek Hunt Club, so there is definitely the potential for some very large animals at Congaree, perhaps contributing to the occasional bear sightings reported at the visitor center.

Field workers on this project have been charged on two occasions while working in narrow sloughs and thick cane breaks, so be careful where hog sign looks fresh and abundant, especially where cover is dense. Approaching hogs seen along the trails, creeks, or other areas is probably not a good idea, either.

By the way, volunteer field help is needed during the upcoming pleasant summer months—any takers?

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## **Funding of new employees Congaree Swamp's Learning Center's 5-year Budget**

It has been reported that all employees hired under the Learning Center proposal will become full-time employees. An education specialist and a GIS specialist will be hired this year under the grant. Next year a "technician" will be hired (more than likely a biology specialist) and two years after that another technician will be hired.

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## ***Boundary Hike*** *continued*

a solitary boar, a classic razorback, made a long arcing run around us.

We made one more detour along an old lumber road to a now-abandoned target range and then returned to the parking area at Bannister Bridge. The trip was inspired in part by John Cely's new map: using a familiar trail as a frame of reference, many of the record trees, floodplain features and historical features on the map can be located with a little compass work and a lot of patience. Similarly "themed" Friends trips are a strong possibility in the future.

This article was reprinted in part from The Times and Democrat. To visit the site, link to [www.thetandd.com](http://www.thetandd.com).

## Purchasing Land for Congaree Bluffs Major Victory

By saving pristine lands such as Congaree Bluffs in Calhoun County, the Heritage Trust program again proves its importance as savior of pristine lands.

Whether it's through concern about prospective industries or worry about the impact of development around neighboring Colum-

bia, the people of Calhoun County have proven over and over they care about the environment. Calhoun County has acre after acre of pristine rural landscape worth protecting.

A giant step in the history of South Carolina's efforts to save natural lands was taken in Calhoun County recently when the S.C. Department of Natural Resources Heritage Trust Program purchased 201 acres to be known as Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve.

The acquisition was made possible by a cooperative effort among Congaree Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Calhoun Soil and Water Conservation District and Friends of Congaree Swamp, all of which provided earnest money before Heritage Trust purchased the property.

Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve is directly across the Congaree River from Congaree Swamp National Monument. Purchase price for the Congaree Bluffs was \$900,000, or \$4,478 per acre, which was paid out of DNR's Heritage Trust Land Fund. Acquisition by Heritage Trust averted plans to divide the property into 15 riverfront lots.

It's the kind of purchase that has made the Heritage Trust Land Fund a success in protecting the most significant natural and cultural lands in South Carolina—lands such as the ACE Basin and, now, Congaree Bluffs.

Formed by state law in 1976, Heritage Trust has protected about 79,241 acres on 65 state heritage preserves throughout South Carolina. The 79,241 acres in

heritage preserves harbor 12 percent of the state's most significant archaeological sites and 34 percent of the state's rare plant species.

There is plenty to protect at Congaree Bluffs in Calhoun County.

A study by Dr. Wade T. Batson, University of South Carolina professor emeritus, identified more than 100 species of trees, shrubs and woody vines from the ridge base to the crest of the north-facing bluffs, and the total number of woody plants may number 200 species.

Heritage Trust staff will work with the Calhoun Soil and Water Conservation District and the Calhoun County Museum and Cultural Center to establish an environmental and cultural education center in an existing house on Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve.

Calhoun County Rep. Harry Ott of St. Matthews said the first heritage preserve in Calhoun County is significant for the protection it affords and the educational opportunities it offers.

We echo his words in calling the purchase of the land for Congaree Bluffs "a great day for conservation in Calhoun County" — and in South Carolina.

Excerpts reprinted from Congaree Land Trust, Outlook Newsletter, Volume 8, Number 1, Spring 2002.

### Congaree Bluffs HP Needs Funds to Document Cultural and Historic Sites

By Chris Judge  
Archaeologist for the SC Heritage Trust Program

The Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve in Calhoun County was acquired primarily to protect a diverse natural plant community that may contain as many as 200 species of woody plants. It ... also contains archaeological components dating from 8,000-6,000 BC, 200 BC, 500 AD [and] an early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century occupation... The Preserve needs \$9,000 to document [and preserve these archaeological resources.]... Work will begin in April.

If you are interested in helping fund this work, contact Chris Judge, archaeologist for SC Heritage Trust Program, PO Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202, 803-734-3753, [chrisj@scdnr.state.sc.us](mailto:chrisj@scdnr.state.sc.us).

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## Memorials

Friends would like to thank **Katherine Elliott** for her memorial to **Amelia Dunn**.

**NATURE WALKS AT CSNM  
Congaree Swamp National Monument**

**Topics will vary  
2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of Every Month  
10:00 am (unless otherwise stated) – Early Afternoon  
No Registration Required – Open to the Public**

Friends of Congaree Swamp is conducting a nature walk series on the second Saturday of each month. Each of these walks will be led by a member of the Friends of Congaree Swamp and be open to the GENERAL PUBLIC. The focus of these walks will be various aspects of the natural and human history of the swamp. We have experts on topics from birds to botany, who will try to tie the life and physical features of the swamp together.

Come and join us for a walk each second Saturday of the month. We will meet at the back porch of the Harry Hampton Visitors Center at 10:00 AM.

Contact Bob Bundy, Education Chair, if you have any questions or suggestions, 803-776-4535 or e-mail: [BundyR@aol.com](mailto:BundyR@aol.com).

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**HIKE TO THE RIVER  
Saturday, September 28, 2002  
Leader: John Nelson**

This will be an all day field trip which will either follow the River Trail, all the way down to the river, or an excursion to Alfred Burnside's property upstream from the National Monument. This could involve a SWIMMING event at one of the nicest sand bars along the river.

More information to follow in a future newsletter.

**Nature Walks do not require registration and are open to the public.** The other field trips are for members of Friends of Congaree Swamp and their guests. Please register below or contact John Nelson directly.

MAIL TO: Friends of Congaree Swamp,  
c/o John Nelson, 3801 Duncan St., Columbia, SC 29205  
Home: 803-252-1417 [johnbnelson@sc.rr.com]  
Work: 803-777-8196 [nelson@sc.edu]

**Sept 28—Hike to the River**

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

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

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

for (which trip): \_\_\_\_\_

**Friends of Congaree Swamp is not liable for any injuries, personal or otherwise, incurred while attending this event.**

**2002 Field Trips & Other Events**

- June 8 —Nature Walk at CSNM, 10:00 am
- July 13 —Nature Walk at CSNM, 10:00 am
- Aug 10 —Nature Walk at CSNM, 10:00 am
- Sept 14 —Nature Walk at CSNM, 10:00 am
- Sept 28 —Hike to the River with Dr. John Nelson
- Oct 12 —Nature Walk at CSNM, 10:00 am
- Nov 9 —Nature Walk at CSNM, 10:00 am
- Dec 14 —Nature Walk at CSNM, 10:00 am

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Excerpts reprinted from Wild Things, Summer 2001, Carolina Wildlife Care, Inc., a non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to the rehabilitation and release of orphaned and injured SC wildlife. [www.carolinawildlife.org](http://www.carolinawildlife.org)

**A Chattering in your Chimney**

Do you hear a chattering in your chimney? If so, you are lucky to be host to...Chimney Swifts. These birds are unusual for several reasons:

- They never perch, but eat, bathe, court, and even nap on the wing. They are estimated to fly hundreds of miles a day collecting flying insects, especially mosquitoes.
- They nest in chimneys because there are no longer enough dead trees with holes for nesting.
- They migrate to South America each September, returning in April [actually late March] to the SAME

**CHIMNEY!**

Each year, Carolina Wildlife Care (CWC) receives around 100 baby Chimney Swifts. These babies are some of our most demanding, requiring a feeding every half-hour from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.! The hatchling birds start out in a warm incubator. As they develop, they are housed in a box with real swift nests glued inside. The sound you hear in your chimney is the sound of the babies begging for food when the parent returns to the chimney. When the babies are flying on their own, the chattering will stop. At CWC, when their eyes are open and they are well feath-

***Swifts*** continued page 6

# Friends Help Park Clean-up

By John Grego

Friends of Congaree Swamp, Park Maintenance Staff and Volunteers in Parks (VIPs) teamed up to help clean a recently-acquired tract. The Sox-Goff property was a privately-owned property comprising 391 acres within the National Monument's official boundary along the Congaree River. The previous owners maintained a hunting camp on the property and many years' worth of "camp supplies" (You'll see that they lived quite well.), and building materials remain at the site. The owners have removed much of the material themselves, but much remains behind.

We split into three teams: one traveled by river immediately to the site, while two others traveled

along Oak Ridge Trail, left the trail at Running Gut and then split up at the old property boundary. One team traveled the western boundary, the other the eastern boundary, while methodically removing old National Park Service boundary signs (not a good job for those sensitive to poison ivy).

The first team spent all morning cleaning out a dry gut that had been used as a refuse pile. The remaining teams eventually made their way to the river, rejoined the first team at the camp, and then we all removed the really large items from the gut: a refrigerator (with resident rabbit), air conditioner, chest freezer (with resident field mouse), 55-gallon drums, tractor tires, tractor batteries,

smoker, grill, patio umbrella, lawn chairs, mailbox and post—you name it. The Park Service staff muscled much of this onto their jon boat and delivered it to a dump truck at the western boundary boat landing.

The tract has been farmed and hunted for a very long time and there are some interesting features to the property: a decrepit cabin and an old cattle mound and a beautiful river view—that would make a visit to the new property an interesting part of the Congaree Swamp experience. There are tentative plans to make a return trip to the site, though we will need something sturdier than a jon boat for a really thorough clean-up.

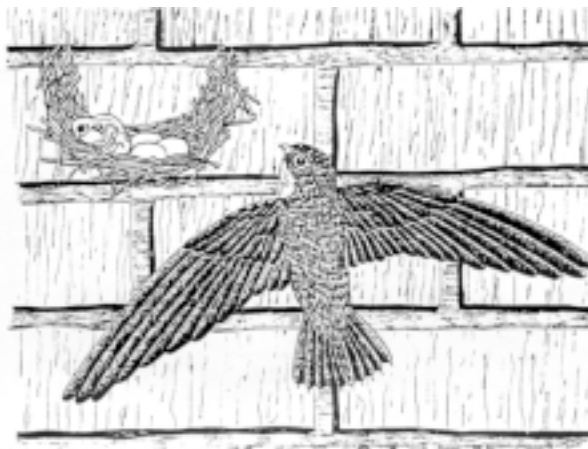
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## **Swifts** *continued*

ered, they will hang from a blanket on the wall in the special Swift room, where they can flap their wings and practice flying from one side of the room to the other. They still need to be fed every half hour for 15 hours a day!

Several years ago we discovered that Chimney Swifts who are raising a brood of swiftlets are happy to adopt a few more. We have had great success placing juvenile birds up into chimneys with same-age babies. The parents take over the feeding, and the birds get real flight training. When we run out of adoptive chimneys, we raise the birds to flight age [here at The Nest.] ...

Swifts are expert nest builders. They snap off tiny twigs and "glue" them to the inside of the chimney with a special thick saliva. The resulting delicate twig cup holds 4-5 eggs. Both parents feed the young, which fledged at



around 30 days. The nest does not damage the chimney. Sometimes during a heavy rain, however, the "glue" holding up the nest will melt, causing the nest to fall. **If the damper is closed, the parents will continue to care for their young.** However, if the damper has been left open, the babies will fall to the fireplace floor, where the parents can not reach them. This is what has happened to most of the babies that arrived at CWC.

...Each Swift will consume up to 1,000 flying insects each day, mostly mosquitoes. They share the chimney with you,

only using it during the summer, when you don't need it. They do everything on the wing, including flying hundreds of miles during fall migration. One banded bird traveled 1.35 million miles during the 9 years it was tracked. These birds are actually related to Hummingbirds. They both belong to the group **Apodidae**, which means "without feet." Of course Swifts have feet, but they are very small and weak in comparison to the size of their bodies, just like

*Swifts continued page 7*



**Reflections of Congaree  
Swamp Screensaver  
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\$14.95**

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

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

**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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Checks to be made payable to **FRIENDS OF CONGAREE SWAMP**.

\_\_\_\_ \$15.00 Individual \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal  
\_\_\_\_ \$35.00 Family  
\_\_\_\_ \$50.00 Advocate Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ \$100.00 Partner Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ \$500.00 Benefactor \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ \$1000.00 Patron Hm Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ \$50.00 Nonprofit Org. Wk Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ \$1000.00 Corporate 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**:

Memorial to \_\_\_\_\_

Honorarium for \_\_\_\_\_

Gift Membership to \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide contact information so we can inform the person/family:

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

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

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

**Thank You For Supporting FRIENDS OF CONGAREE SWAMP!**  
Friends of Congaree Swamp, PO Box 7746, Columbia, SC 29202-7746  
FOCS is a nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation, EIN: 56-2057087.

**Swifts** *continued*

Hummingbirds' feet.

So now you know—if you have a chattering in your chimney, you are lucky indeed!

Editor's Note: The article implies, but does not state, that the most harm we can do to swifts is to block access to chimneys with caps. Since the swift do not harm the chimney in any way—they use your chimney in the spring and summer, while you use it in the fall and winter—if you really feel you need a cap, try to find one that has open sides: that way the swifts can still get inside.

**Beautifully Detailed Map of  
Congaree Swamp National Monument and Vicinity  
\$12.95 each**

John Cely has designed an intricately detailed 24" x 44" map of CSNM showing natural features, along with place names and dates.

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies @ \$12.95 each / plus \$3.50 s&h.  
Make checks payable to **FRIENDS OF CONGAREE SWAMP**.  
ALL proceeds go to FOCS.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Map of CSNM, c/o John Cely, 4724 Cedar Springs Road, Columbia, 29206

*Spring 2002*

*www.friendsofcongarveswamp.org*

*Post Office Box 7746  
Columbia SC 29202-7746*



## **Friends Enjoyed a Day of Bird Banding at Wenee Woods**

by Carol Jaworski

On Saturday, April 20th, The **Friends** joined members of the Columbia Audubon Society at the farm of Evelyn and Tommy Dabbs in Sumter County. The Dabbs property, Wenee Woods, consists of acres of hardwoods, wetlands, and transitional zones, as well as an area transected by the Black River.

As a certified participant in Cornell University's effort to band birds and track their movements, Evelyn has established an elaborate methodology which utilizes mist nets and trained handlers to capture birds and band them for Cornell's migratory songbird study.

Evelyn provided explanations and demonstrations, as well as encouraged volunteers to participate in the banding and release process under her watchful eye. Those attending were privileged to see warblers, cardinals, titmouse, brown thrashers, and

other birds captured, banded, and released. Evelyn's enthusiasm and care reminded us all of the importance and fragility of our feathered friends.

In addition to banding birds, the **Friends** were invited to explore the many trails throughout the woods, where wildflowers like mayapples, trilliums, violets, wild ginger and many varieties of ferns were observed in addition to native buckeye, sassafras, and other hardwoods and softwoods.

Some members opted to take a boat ride on the Black River, where a Brown Rat Snake posed on a limb near the river's edge throughout the afternoon for the boaters.

Glorious weather and friendly faces made for a fun and educational field trip. Many thanks to both the Columbia Audubon Society and especially Evelyn Dabbs for inviting us!