Superintendent’s Message

Welcome to Congaree National Park! This summer edition of the Boardwalk Talk is full of great information to help you make the most of your visit to Congaree. As summer gets underway, the Park is buzzing with activity. There are several new ranger-guided programs being offered, as well as many familiar ones. Check the schedule for one that interests you. Summer in South Carolina may mean heat and humidity, but it also means wonderfully pleasant mornings and evenings, and the chance to witness the June return of the synchronized fireflies! Ask a ranger for more information on this natural phenomenon.

With the intense daytime heat come frequent spectacular afternoon thunderstorms, so always be sure to stop by the front desk and check weather forecasts before you hike, paddle, or camp in the Park. With proper planning, the summer is a great time to get out and enjoy hiking or paddling in Congaree’s wilderness. In fact, one of our most popular guided programs is the free guided canoe tour. Over the last four years we have more than quadrupled the number of tours offered, and the demand still exceeds the number of spaces available. We’ve recently added a special evening canoe tour for those who are interested in a truly unique opportunity to experience the Park. Based on visitor feedback, we are also pleased to announce a change in our canoe tour reservation policy that should improve everyone’s opportunity to join these exciting tours. See inside this edition of the Boardwalk Talk for more information.

We are conducting four children’s camps this summer, and they are all also filled to capacity. Don’t be surprised if you encounter our Congaree Ecology Campers and Swamp Stories Campers while you are out in the Park! In addition, we have more than a dozen summer interns and seasonal employees working in all park divisions (assisting with camps, clearing park trails, leading guided walks and talks, removing exotic plants, and working as geologists or photographers). It is my hope that if you return to the Park in a couple of years you will find some of these talented people working permanently here at Congaree!

Enjoy your visit, and as always, please feel free to share with me your experiences at Congaree by leaving a message for me at the front desk.

Safe Travels,
Tracy Swartout, Park Superintendent

A Summer Storm
Fran Rametta, Park Ranger

In summer, we hear the shriek of the Barred Owlets and see Water Moccasins sunning themselves on debris piles along the Low Boardwalk. For me, summer is a season of special memories. I first arrived on duty as a park ranger at Congaree on June 15th, 1980. It was a little too hot and muggy for a man who hailed from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and was accustomed to cooler temperatures at higher elevations.

Within the first month, I was introduced to a South Carolina thunderstorm. I was parked at the old hunt club near Cedar Creek and Wise Lake. I had finished patrolling for the day and was watching white clouds march across an azure blue sky. Gradually, the sky grew darker as the temperature began to drop. I felt a peculiar calmness in the air. A light breeze rattled leaves from nearby trees. The sky turned dark yellow, and then black. The wind picked up, gusting around me. It sounded like a freight train barreling towards me. As rain began pummeling me and my truck, I decided to get out of the forest as quickly as possible.

I recalled a similar storm that occurred when I was a child living in Oklahoma. That one spawned tornadoes. It dawned on me that there might be a tornado very close. I pushed the gas pedal and drove away from the hunt club. I drove a hundred yards to find a 130-foot Loblolly Pine tree blocking the road after crashing to the ground. I jumped out of the truck and ran up what we now call the Sims Trail. I counted two, three, four large Loblolly Pines blocking my way. I heard other trees falling throughout the forest. Abandoning my truck, I walked up Old Bluff Road toward Columbia. I was thankful for the passerby who gave me a ride home. I did not see another storm like that until Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

This is just one of many summer memories I have of Congaree National Park. I hope you will visit the Park and have some of your own memorable experiences.
Congaree Boardwalk Talk

The Boardwalk Talk is a publication of the National Park Service for the orientation and education of visitors to Congaree National Park. The National Park Service was established on August 25, 1916, “to conserve the scenery and the historic and natural objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for future genera- tions.” In 1976, Congaree became part of the National Park Service as Congaree Swamp National Monument to preserve the largest remaining tract of old-growth bottomland hardwood forest in the United States. It was re-designated as Congaree National Park in 2003.

Superintendent
Tracy Swartzout

Mailing Address
Congaree National Park
100 National Park Rd.
Hopkins, SC 29016

Phone
(803) 776-4396

Website
www.nps.gov/cong

Email
cosw_information@nps.gov

Operating Hours
Congaree National Park is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Harry Hampton Visitor Center is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and open until 7:00 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays during Daylight Savings Time. The visitor center is closed on December 25th.

Fees
Congaree National Park does not charge an admission fee and all programs are free of charge.

Climate
Winter: low 30s to high 60s
Spring: low 50s to high 80s
Summer: low 60s to high 90s (and humid)
Fall: low 50s to high 80s

Eastern National
Eastern National, a non-profit cooperat- ing association with the National Park Service, supports the mission of the National Park Service by producing edu- cational materials, and has provided the generous funds for this publication.

Photograph Credits
All un-credited images in this publication are NPS photos.

The National Park Service cares for the people so that all may experience our heritage.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Things To Do

CAMPING
The Primitive Campground has fire rings, portable toilets, and picnic tables. There are eight sites available on a first-come, first-served basis. Each site is limited to eight campers. The Bluff Campground provides picnic tables and fire rings and is ideal for group camping.

Camping is also permitted by hiking or canoeing into the backcountry. To mini- mize human impact in this designated Wilderness Area, campfires are prohib- ited. All campers are required to obtain a camping permit and a list of regulations at the Harry Hampton Visitor Center prior to camping.

BOAT ADVENTURES
Canoe/Kayaking
Traveling by canoe or kayak is a great way to enjoy this pristine wilderness while floating past some of the tallest trees in eastern North America. Paddling is also a thrilling way to encounter the diverse wildlife of the park including deer, otters, turtles, snakes, and raccoons. Besides adventures on Cedar Creek, opportunities are also available on the Congaree and Wateree River Blue Trails. Please check with rangers for current conditions.

FISHING
All waterways except Weston Lake are open to fishing with a valid South Caro- lina state fishing license. Please do not use the Boardwalk to access waterways if you are carrying fishing gear. Please obtain a complete list of fishing regulations from the Harry Hampton Visitor Center or online at www.nps.gov/cong.

WALKS AND TALKS
Rangers provide a variety of guided walks, talks, campfire programs, and canoe tours. For a complete list of ranger guided interpretive programs, see pages six and seven. Listen and learn as rangers give talks on various topics, or take you on a hike through the old growth forest.

BIRDING
Congaree National Park has been design- nated as a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy. Many migratory birds can be found during the spring and fall migrations. Bring binocu- lars and ask rangers for a list of docu- mented species within the park.

PICKNICKING
A picnic shelter with trash and recycling receptacles is available on a first- come, first-served basis at the Harry Hampton Visitor Center.

Safety First

WHAT IS A HEATED RELATED ILLNESS?
Heat related illnesses occur when the body is unable to maintain a normal tem- perature of 98.6 degrees and generates too much heat. Exposure to heat and humidity causes body temperature to rise. The body sweats in response to excess heat and heat is lost as sweat evaporates. One can lose up to one liter (two pints) of sweat per hour. On extremely humid days, sweat does not evaporate quickly, and may cause the body to overheat. Here at Congaree National Park, high tempera- tures and high humidity combine to create conditions that may lead to heat related illnesses. If you experience any signs or symptoms of heat related illnesses, call 911 or call a park ranger immediately.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?
Heat Cramps: Heat cramps commonly occur in the muscles of the legs and abdomen and are accompanied by heavy sweating. If you experience heat cramps, rest and sip water for relief.
Heat Exhaustion: Heat exhaustion causes weakness, cold, pale, clammy skin, faint- ing, and vomiting. Move to a cooler envi- ronment and apply cool, wet cloths to the body.
Heat Stroke: Heat stroke occurs when the body temperature reaches 106 de- grees or higher. Skin is hot and dry and unconsciousness may occur. This is a life threatening illness, Seek medical attention immediately.

HOW CAN I PREVENT A HEATED RELATED ILLNESS?
Be aware of the weather conditions. Up- to-date information is available at the Harry Hampton Visitor Center. The Heat Index is a measure of how hot it feels when relative humidity is added to air temperature.
Drink water or other non- alcoholic bev- erages before you become thirsty. The body needs water to keep cool. Water bottles can be purchased at the Harry Hampton Visitor Center; bottled water is also available.
Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing to help keep cool. Pace yourself and plan activities for the coolest part of the day.

Book Review!

Jane Weilert, Park Volunteer

Guidebooks are invaluable for enjoying nature and sating the human need to name things. The majority of guidebooks are specific to one topic, too large to carry around, and usually have too much information for the occasional naturalist.

A solution to this predicament is a pocket guide, a small book about 200 pages in length. A pocket guide concentrates on the major species that would likely be encountered by the occasional naturalist on a walk through nature.

There are two series of pocket guides available at the Eastern National Bookstore in the Harry Hampton Visitor Center, The Golden Guides (St. Martin’s Press, $6.95) and the National Audubon Society Pocket Guides (Chanticleer Press, $9.95). Both series have guides for birds, flowers, butterflies, moths, and insects. The National Audubon Society has a guide for amphibians, while the Golden Guide provides a guide to mammals.

The Golden Guides use illustrations of plants and animals in their natural habits. Because the book is illustrated, more details about each animal and plant are provided. For example, in the wildflower guide, different color varieties of a plant are shown as well as details of the flower. The butterfly and moth guide illustrates the different larval stages.

The National Audubon Society Pocket Guides use color photos of each species. The plants and animals are photographed in their natural habitats. These guides give detailed descriptions of each specimen.

Both series of books have introductory information that describe the basics for identifying the species. This includes the anatomy of the animal and parts of the plant. Both series have indexes and dis- play both common and scientific names. Both series show maps of North America and illustrate the geographic distribution of the species.

So impress your friends and family with your ability to identify and expound on the habitat and habits of the familiar spe- cies of plants and animals at Congaree National Park, or your own backyard. Buy a few pocket guides. It’s an amazing world!

Firearms in the Park

A new federal law allows people who can legally possess firearms under applicable federal, state, and local laws, to legally possess firearms in this Park. However, firearms are prohibited in federal build- ings. It is the responsibility of visitors to understand and comply with all applica- ble state, local, and federal firearms laws before entering this park. As a starting point, please visit our state’s website at www.sled.sc.gov/SCStateGunLaw1.asp?Main=IDCWP to become familiar with the state gun laws in South Carolina.

While this law affects a person’s ability to possess a firearm in the park, using firearms within Congaree National Park is still prohibited by law.
Volunteers in Parks

Do you enjoy spending time outdoors? Do you enjoy interacting with people? Do you enjoy canoeing and kayaking? Are you interested in science?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, Congaree National Park has opportunities for you. Volunteers help protect and preserve Congaree National Park in a variety of ways including staffing the information desk, maintaining trails, assisting with guided canoe tours and conducting research as a citizen scientist.

Numerous volunteer opportunities are available each year at Congaree. Volunteers work in all divisions, including Natural and Cultural Resources, Education, Interpretation, and Facility Maintenance. Volunteers are also needed to assist with special events held at the Park and off-site.

Opportunities accommodate a wide range of skills and interests.

The Life of an Intern

Heather Otte, Park Volunteer

I arrived in Congaree National Park on the last day of a balmy November, or maybe my judgment was skewed coming from below freezing temperatures of Indiana. I was tasked with generating a map of Switchcane across the Barrens. Barred Owls’ calls became infrequent, as I walked into the forest, dropping excrement from the sky like little vitamin pills for the plants. It dawned on me, that there must be something wrong. After three more vultures emerge from the same tree 50 meters away, I realized that there was something wrong with the park with weekly canoe tours, guided walks, talks, and staffing the information desk. Volunteers can also assist with school groups and off-site education/interpretation programs. Contact: Fran Rametta at (803) 647-3969.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events can assist the Park with the annual Nature Fest, Public Lands Day (September), Swamp Fest (October), and Congaree Campfire Chronicles (November), providing valuable assistance to park visitors and park staff. Contact: Fran Rametta at (803) 647-3969.

INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

Interpretation and Education volunteers assist the park with weekly canoe tours, guided walks, talks, and staffing the information desk. Volunteers can also assist with school groups and off-site education/interpretation programs. Contact: Fran Rametta at (803) 647-3969.

FACILITY MAINTENANCE

Facility maintenance volunteers assist the Park with trail work (canoe routes, hiking trails, and boardwalks), construction projects, litter removal, and day-to-day operations. Contact: John Torrence at (803) 647-3981.

Volunteers in Parks

Will you be able to recognize the song quicker. It is easier to distinguish once you know the tune and lyrics, and I know them well.

I thought I could hear the trees grow. I thought I could hear and appreciate their song in the silence. I will carry that song with me as I leave Congaree. In the future, I will be able to recognize the song quicker. I thought I could hear the trees grow.

What is Wilderness?

Cortine Fenner, Park Ranger

Ask this question to those strolling the streets of Columbia, South Carolina and you will receive a different answer from each person. To some wilderness is a word filled, to others it is the entire universe. What is wilderness to you?

Congress National Park protects and provides a refuge of designated Wilderness where you cannot expect solitude and total immerssion in an undisturbed natural area. The current size of Congaree National Park is 24,480 acres with 10,010 designated as Wilderness, and another 7,500 acres proposed as Wilderness that are managed as such.

Theories defining wilderness developed as a response to shrinking natural areas in the 19th century. As wilderness areas were disappearing, the movement to protect them grew, with proponents highlighting the many values of wilderness areas to our society and the world. Howard Zahniser, one of the authors of the Wilderness Act of 1964, saw the Wilderness movement as a redefinition of progress, countering the urbanization that was destroying America’s wilderness. Aldo Leopold believed wilderness experiences shaped individual and national character, while Bob Marshall argued wilderness experiences could prevent moral deterioration. John Muir believed the freedom, solitude, and beauty found in wilderness areas could satisfy all human needs and is vital to our bodies, minds, and spirits.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law, giving designated wilderness areas permanent protection and giving Congress exclusive power to designate Wilderness areas. It also recognized the four bureaus that care for Wilderness areas including the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. Managers of wilderness areas have to balance visitor experiences and the preservation of wilderness as areas free of human impact.

Designated wilderness areas differ from protected lands because wilderness areas are protected by law. Lands that are not protected by the Wilderness Act could be subject to future development. The Wilderness Act defines wilderness as:

“...in an area in contrast with areas where man and his works dominate the landscape. It is an area where the Earth and its community of life is left untrammeled (unrestricted) by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” What is Wilderness? Take a hike at Congaree and discover for yourself.

Wilderness Quote

“For me and for thousands with similar inclinations, the most important passion of life is the overpowering desire to escape periodically from the clutches of a mechanistic civilization. To us the enjoyment of solitude, complete independence, and the beauty of unfeigned panoramas is absolutely essential to happiness.”

Bob Marshall (Co-founder of the Wilderness Society)

Volunteers help clean up the Park.

Mapping Switch Cane

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Congaree, but without question my favorite time was night. I remember at night, it felt like I became the sole beneficiary of the trees. When the birds stopped calling and even the Barred Owls’ calls became infrequent, I heard the trees grow.

Corinne Fenner, Park Ranger

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Bob Marshall (Co-founder of the Wilderness Society)
Native and Invasive Species
Heath Browder, Park Volunteer

Non-native species are organisms (both plants and animals) that have been intro-
duced to the environment as a result of deliberate or accidental human activities.
Some non-native species can become “invasive” when they escape cultivation, spread rapidly, and aggressively compete with native species. Non-native invasive species can grow, adapt, multiply and spread to unmanageable levels, which can significantly reduce biodiversity and threaten the stability and sustainability of natural ecosystems.

The floodplain ecosystem protected by Congaree National Park is not immune to the threats posed by non-native spe-
cies. Wild Hogs, Asian Clams and more than 60 different non-native plant spe-
cies are known to occur within the Park. Since Congaree National Park was estab-
lished to protect one of the last stands of old-growth bottomland forest in North America, non-native invasive plant species are a top management concern. Signifi-
cant resources are expended each year on controlling several known populations of non-native invasive plants. Species such as Kudzu, Chinese Wisteria, Chinese Privet and others are actively managed through chemical and manual removal efforts. Fortunately, everyone can help prevent the spread and introduction of invasive species. Native gardening is one way to reduce the number of invasive plants that can escape into natural ecosystems. Seeds of non-native garden plants can spread to other ecosystems through bird droppings, wind, or runoff. Below are a few native alternatives to invasive plants you may consider adding to your garden.

Invasive species are organisms (both plants and animals) that have been intro-
duced to the environment as a result of deliberate or accidental human activities.

Invasive shrub: Chinese Privet (Ligustrum sinense) is a popular non-native shrub with white flowers. It is a semi-
evergreen that is used to create hedges. It is shade tolerant and grows to 30 feet in height. Native alternative: Pagoda Dogwood or Alternate Leaf Dogwood (Cornus alterni-
folia) works well to create a hedge, growing 20-35 feet in height. It prefers light partial shade, and will produce white flower clusters in spring, blue-black berries, and fiery red autumn color.

Invasive tree: Chinaberry (Melia azeda-rach) grows up to 90 feet tall with white flowers, yellow autumn leaves, and yellow berries. The fruits are poisonous to humans and small mammals.

Native alternative: Devil’s Walking Stick (Aralia spinosa) reaches over 24 feet with domed clusters of white flowers in the spring, followed in autumn with yellow leaves and deep purple berries that attract the Black-throated Blue Warbler. This tree can be used to create a fence-like barrier. You can observe Devil’s Walking Stick outside the Harry Hampton Visitor Center. Ask a ranger to point it out to you.

The Mystery of Cypress Knees
Stuart Greeter, Park Ranger

RARELY does a guided hike end without a visitor asking the question, “What is the function of Bald Cypress knees?” Right or wrong, we have a propensity to assign a reason to everything we see. I usually turn the question back to the group and ask them why they think these trees grow knees. No one knows for sure why Bald Cypress knees grow.

In his report Cypress Knees: An Enduring Enigma, Christopher Briand considers many of the popular theories and sup-
porting evidence for Bald Cypress knees. Botanists have been wondering about their purpose for almost 200 years. Theo-
ries include the following.

AERATION
Paul Kramer, at Duke University, enclosed Bald Cypress knees in plastic containers, sealed them with paraffin (beeswax), and used an oxygen analyzer to measure the amount of oxygen consumed. He con-
cluded, “the available evidence indicates that cypress knees play an important role as aeration organs.” Other studies found that the plant tissue typically used for gas exchange in other plants was not found in Bald Cypress knees.

METHANE EMISSION
Other scientists hypothesized that knees emit methane gas, the rotten-egg smell produced by bacteria in mud. Different experiments found that the extremely small amount of methane gas emitted was probably from bacteria on the surface of the knee. At this point, there is no ex-
perimental evidence supporting methane emission.

VEGETATIVE REPRODUCTION
Some scientists have surmised that knees grow new Bald Cypress trees. I have observed thousands of Bald Cypress knees over my lifetime and have observed this happening only once. Those who have worked at Congaree for years report observing this phenomenon in two in-
stances. Vegetative reproduction is not frequent enough to provide evidence that this is the primary purpose of the knees.

CARBOHYDRATE STORAGE
Research has confirmed the presence of “granules” that store starch in Bald Cypress knees. Briand wonders if starch may be found throughout the entire root system of the Bald Cypress tree. Additional work needs to be completed to confirm starch storage as the overall purpose of knees.

NUTRIENT ACCUMULATION
Some research suggests that knees ac-
cumulate organic nutrients during peri-
ods of flooding. In Florida, root density increased with an increase in dead Bald Cypress stumps, but no direct evidence of nutrient acquisition by knees was found.

MECHANICAL SUPPORT
In 1898, one botanist suggested, “the most important function of the Cypress knee is to stiffen and strengthen the root, in order that a great tree might anchor itself safely to stiffen and strengthen the root.” At this point, there is no ex-
perimental evidence supporting the theory.

LOST IN TIME?
Referring to the purpose of Bald Cy-
pres knees, botanist Andre’ Michaux wrote, “No cause can be assigned to their existence.” Nearly 200 years later, we still do not know their function. Briand concludes that “cypress knees evolved in response to past environmental pressures that no longer exist, in which case their function may be lost in the depths of time.”

Floodplain Safety Message
Congaree National Park is a floodplain forest. Water levels on Cedar Creek and the Congaree River fluctuate and chang-
ing water levels may make hiking, camp-
ing, and canoeing difficult. Please be aware of current water level conditions before you begin exploring. For current conditions visit or call the Harry Hampton Visitor Center at (803) 776-4396.

Cypress knees among the floodplain.

Cypress knees emerge from flood water.

Invasive vine: Japanese Honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica) is a vine with a sweet smelling yellow and white flower that blooms in May.

Native alternative: Trumpet Honeysuckle (Lonicera sempervirens) has bright coral colored flowers that attract humming-
birds in the spring. You can see this beautiful vine at the Boardwalk entrance, just outside the Harry Hampton Visitor Center.

Invasive tree: Devil’s Walking Stick (Aralia spinosa) reaches over 24 feet with domed clusters of white flowers in the spring, followed in autumn with yellow leaves and deep purple berries that attract the Black-throated Blue Warbler. This tree can be used to create a fence-like barrier. You can observe Devil’s Walking Stick outside the Harry Hampton Visitor Center. Ask a ranger to point it out to you.

Please Remember
Feeding wildlife, along with the removal, disturbance, destruction, or disfigure-
ment of any park resource, is unlawful. If everyone took just one piece of Spanish Moss, or any other plant, our national heritage would soon be gone. Thank you for helping to protect your National Park.
Freddy Fungus and Alice Algae
John Galbary, Park Volunteer

Fungi cannot survive without its algal partner. This long term relationship where both species benefit is called mutualistic symbiosis. You can observe this when examining a patch of lichen on a dead branch at Congaree National Park.

Most of the lichens you see are healthy, but a few patches of fungi on the edges have died, failing to find and incorporate an algal partner. Lichens are a unique life form brought about through this combination of two different organisms. This relationship is a win-win, plus-plus situation supporting the growth, maintenance, repair, survival, and reproduction of both species. Here are two different species living together, two kingdoms of life represented in a unique bond. The fungi provides the structure in which the algae, either photosynthetic algae of Kingdom Protista, or blue-green/cyanobacteria of Kingdom Eubacteria, dwells. The fungal partner absorbs and retains water and minerals carried in the atmosphere that both species use in cell metabolism. The fungi also secrete a weak carbonic acid which assists in nutrient cycling via decomposition and provides lichens with useful materials for survival.

Lichens do no harm as they attach to the outer bark of trees, and to dead wood. The algae uses photons from a star 93 million miles away, the sun, to produce carbohydrates and oxygen through photosynthesis.

There are more than 20,000 species of lichens worldwide. Congaree National Park contains 88 reported species of lichens represented in three types, found on pieces of wood and on the ground throughout the floodplain forest of Congaree National Park.

These types are crustose (crusty and flat), foliose (leafy), and fruticose (branched) lichens.

Lichens are an important component of healthy ecosystems as food for animals, nesting materials for bats and birds, nutrient recyclers, oxygen releasers and nitrogen fixers, colonizers in patchy environments, holders of soil and water (combating erosion, retaining excess water after a rain and slowly releasing it to the environment). Lichens are a beneficial component of a forest’s biodiversity. They are also an indicator species for air quality. They cannot thrive in polluted air. Hardy through both temperature change and nutrient scarcity, lichens are characteristic-ally sensitive to air pollutants. They are one of the proverbial canaries in the coal mine, telling us that a wasteful use of resources harms the environment and may eventually harm us.

Lichens reproduce sexually through sporaulation, and asexually through fragmentation. Both processes gain dissemination via wind, mammals (fur), insects, birds, and water currents.

To sum up this relationship, one can say: Freddy fungus and Alice alga took a lichen to each other! Lichens have adapted to and live at all seven layers of the forest. Lichens can be found on the surface-layer of soil and rocks, among the grasses and herbaceous plants, within the shrub layer, in the understory, the sub-canopy, the canopy, and even in the emergent layer far above in the Lobolly Pines. Look for these amazing life forms as you explore Congaree.

Guided Canoe Tours: New Reservation Policy begins September 15

If you are looking for one of the most elusive birds on the East Coast, you can begin your quest this summer at Congaree National Park.

The Swainson’s Warbler (Locustella swainsoni) has returned to Congaree from its wintering grounds in Central America, ready to establish territory in this ideal habitat. One of the most sought after and least observed of all the wood warblers, the Swainson’s is a skulking bird with drab brown coloring that camouflages it from birders. The most prominent field marks are a brown crown, a light eyebrow stripe, and a long bill.

This small, five- and-a-half-inch songbird, holds a large territory that scientists estimate can range from seven to forty-five acres. Some of this data may soon be verified as Congaree National Park is hosting researchers from Campbell University to study this wonderful warbler.

If you are interested in learning more about the bird species in Congaree National Park, join us for the North American Migration Day Bird Count on September 11, 2010, or for the Big Bird Hike on September 25, 2010. See page six for more details on these programs.

John Galbary
Park Volunteer

- Each individual may make only one reservation per quarter.
- Each individual caller may reserve up to two canoes for up to six seats per tour.
- Each individual may make only one reservation per quarter.

For tours through the end of September, we will continue with our current policy, which is, reservations must be made exactly two weeks in advance by calling (803)-776-4396. Please note: Tours typically fill within 15 minutes.

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Birds in the Neighborhood
Kathleen O’Grady, Park Ranger

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**JULY 2010**

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**Program Descriptions**

**AMAZING ADAPTATIONS**
Stroll around the 2.4 mile Boardwalk and become familiar with some of the amazing adaptations that allow plants and animals to survive here.

**ANIMAL OLYMPICS**
Hey Kids! Do you know which animal is the fastest, longest, and tallest? Join a ranger to learn about animal extremes and participate in some Olympic events that highlight these amazing creatures. Wear your running shoes and bring water.

**BIG BIRD HIKE**
Come on out for a forest field trip. We will explore several different trails as we look for migrating birds moving through Congaree National Park on their way back to their winter homes.

**BIG TREE HIKE**
Join a ranger on this 6 mile off-trail hike to some of the largest trees at Congaree. Look forward to scoring a few to see if they’re “champions.” Reservations required. (803) 776-4396.

**BIRDS AND BRANCHES**
Fly into the visitor center and meet a ranger for a guided hike. Bring your binoculars and search out who may be currently residing in the forest.

**BUTTERFLY COUNT**
This is a one day inventory conducted by citizen scientists of butterfly species throughout Congaree National Park. Help search for and identify butterfly species within various habitats. Reservations required.

**CAMPFIRE PROGRAM**
Learn about the nocturnal animals that have a home at Congaree while enjoying a cracking campfire.

**CONGAREE LOBOLLIES**
Stroll down Sims Trail and out the Weston Lake Loop Trail to measure some of the large Lobolly Pines in the Park. Develop your own theory on how they got here and visit the current National Champion Lobolly Pine!

**DAMSELS AND DRAGONS**
Stop by the exhibit table to find out what species of damsels and dragonflies are found in the forest. Who knows, you may spot some of them as you get out and explore the Park.

**FLAT HAT CHATS**
Listen and learn as rangers give 15 minute talks on different topics, including Congaree history, fire, swamps vs. floodplains, and owls. Please visit the Harry Hampton Visitor Center for specific times.

**GUIDED CANOE TOUR**
Enjoy the ambiance of this old-growth forest while paddling under Bald Cypress and tupelo trees. Bring water, a snack, and a change of clothes. Reservations required. See page five for details.

**INSECT SAFARI**
Hey Kids! Are you interested in learning about some of the smallest members of the animal kingdom? Join a ranger for a hike through the floodplain as we search for insects along the trail.

**MUCK AND MUD**
Hey Kids! Do you know what’s squirming and wiggling in the mud in the park? Join a ranger for a hike to Weston Lake to see what creatures you can catch!

**NATURAL DISCOVERY HIKE**
Discover the floodplain on this guided Boardwalk hike. We’ll explore the forest, looking and listening for animals.

**NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION DAY COUNT**
Participate in a bird count of the resident and migratory birds that are in the Congaree National Park. This census gives researchers a snapshot of the species in the area and allows you to be a Citizen Scientist.

**OAKRIDGE EXCURSION**
Bring water, a sack lunch, and sturdy hiking boots for this 6.6 mile hike among some of the park’s largest oaks.

**OWL PROWL**
Explore the world of owls on this guided night hike in the forest. We almost always hear the owls asking, “Who cooks for you, who cooks for you, who cooks for y’all?” Reservations required. (803) 776-4396.

**RIVER TRAIL TROMP**
Explore the path less traveled. Join a ranger on this 10 mile, five hour wilderness hike to the Congaree River. Bring a sack lunch to enjoy on the river’s edge.

**ROVING RANGER**
Rendezvous with a ranger at various locations throughout the Park including Weston Lake Overlook, Cedar Creek Canoe Access, or along the Boardwalk. The ranger may have some exciting things to show you, and you’ll have the opportunity to ask the expert questions. A ranger will be at the specified location for two hours.

**SEARCHING FOR HARRY**
In the 1950s, Harry Hampton appeared on the back cover of S.C. Wildlife Magazine, standing next to a large Bald Cypress tree. At the time, he was the sole proponent working to preserve Congaree. His initiative led to the establishment of Congaree National Park. Join a ranger during this four hour, off-trail guided hike to the Harry Hampton Bald Cypress tree.

**SCATOLOGY**
Hey Kids! Do you know the tips on turds, facts on feces, or data on dung? Plop into the Harry Hampton Visitor Center for a fun look at the science of what animals leave behind.

**SKINS AND BONES**
For kids of all ages! Have you ever wondered what animals are wearing under and over their skin? Join a Ranger for a look at some of the skulls and furs of the Congaree mammals.

**SURVIVING SCORCH**
Join a ranger for a guided walk along the Bluff Trail to learn about fire ecology and search for evidence of fire activity.

**TREE TREK**
Discover Congaree National Park’s primeval forested floodplain. Experience the extraordinarily diverse wildlife while walking among the towering trees.

**TREES WITH KNEES**
Join a Ranger to learn some fascinating facts about the Bald Cypress and the ongoing debate about the function of its knees. Are they snorkels or anchors?

**TRICKY TRACKS**
Hey Kids! Have you ever wondered whose footprints you were following in the park? Join a ranger for some games that will help you recognize animal tracks and then search for some along the trail.

**WESTON LAKE WILDERNESS HIKE**
Immerse yourself in a designated Wilderness Area as you hike 4.5 miles on the Weston Lake Trail. Perhaps you’ll spot a River Otter in Cedar Creek!

**WHO CAME BEFORE**
Join a ranger on a hike through time. Learn about the people who ventured into Congaree before it became a park.
Trail Descriptions
Trail mileage is given to indicate one-way travel for each trail. For a detailed trail map, visit the Harry Hampton Visitor Center.

Boardwalk: 2.4 Miles
Sims Trail: 1.2 Miles
Bluff Trail: 2.1 Miles
Yellow Blazes
Weston Lake Loop Trail: 2.5 Miles
Red Blazes
Oakridge Trail: 3.2 Miles
White Blazes
River Trail: 5.0 Miles
Kingsnake Trail: 3.6 Miles
Orange Blazes