



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Old-Growth Bottomland Forest
Research and Education Center
Congaree National Park

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Congaree News Release

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Annual Congaree Butterfly Programs

Have you ever marveled at a butterfly flitting about a flower on a hot afternoon, and wondered what it was doing? Would you like to help scientists discover the wonders of your National Park? If so, then please attend the upcoming, FREE butterfly programs at Congaree National Park. These programs are coordinated through a partnership with the Carolina Butterfly Society and the North American Butterfly Association (NABA).

Butterflies are one of the most beautiful elements of the natural world, and ecologically important as pollinators, consumers, and food sources for other animals. Scientists recognize that butterflies are important indicators of ecosystem health. The goal of the upcoming programs at Congaree National Park is to engage citizen scientist volunteers to help identify and count butterflies.

These programs will provide data not only for the park, but will also contribute to long-term, nationwide monitoring of butterfly populations. The NABA Butterfly Count has been held annually since 1975, when only 29 counts were held. In 2009, 463 counts were held in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Volunteers around North America select a count area 15 miles in diameter and conduct a one-day census of all butterflies observed within that circle. Several seasonal counts are held from spring into late summer.

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Three separate programs are being offered at Congaree National Park in relation to the 2010 NABA 4th of July Butterfly Count. In addition to the actual count, two optional training sessions will provide a pre- count introduction for beginners. The full schedule is as follows:

Saturday, May 1, 2010, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Butterfly Identification Training: This optional program will involve a short, powerpoint introduction to butterflies of Congaree and basic butterfly skills before a short hike to practice new skills.

Saturday, May 22, 2010, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Butterfly Identification Training: This optional program will involve a short, powerpoint introduction to butterflies of Congaree and basic butterfly skills before a short hike to practice new skills.

Saturday, June 26, 2010, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. – NABA 4th of July Butterfly Count: This is a day of field observations on the trail system and within various habitats of Congaree National Park. The count will last until about 4:00 p.m. weather permitting.

All ages and experience levels are welcome. These programs are free, but space is limited. **Advance reservations are required.** Appropriate clothing is required of all participants, including long- pants and closed- toed shoes that attach to the feet. Sun protection, bug spray, water and snacks are recommended. Binoculars are recommended as well, but not required; a limited supply of binoculars will be available for use during these programs, and these may be reserved ahead of time at the front desk. For more information please contact David C. Shelley, education coordinator, at david_shelley@nps.gov 803.647.3966.

To make reservations or to find more information about how you can experience Congaree National Park, please call the front desk at 803.776.4396, ext. 0 or visit our website at www.nps.gov/cong.

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