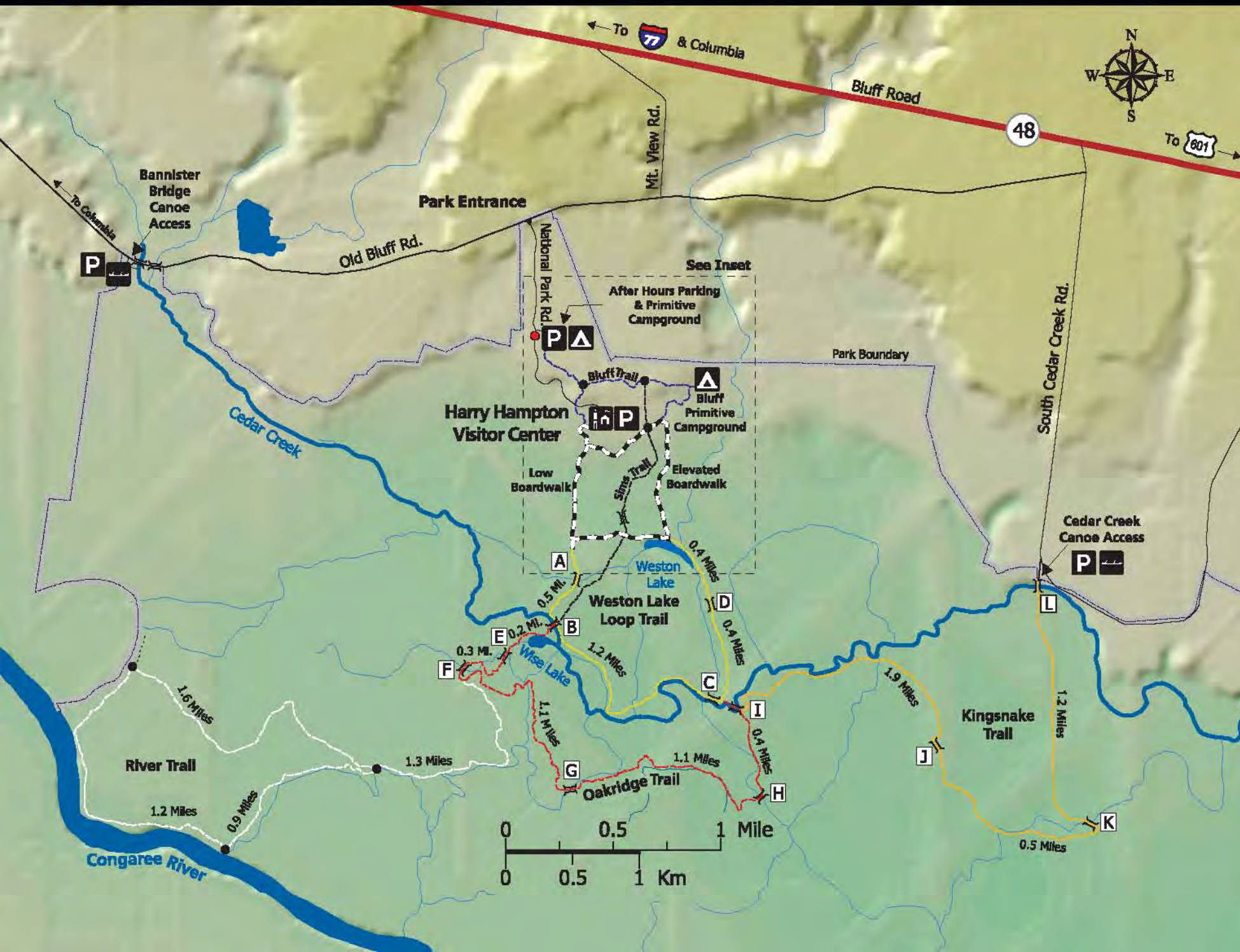




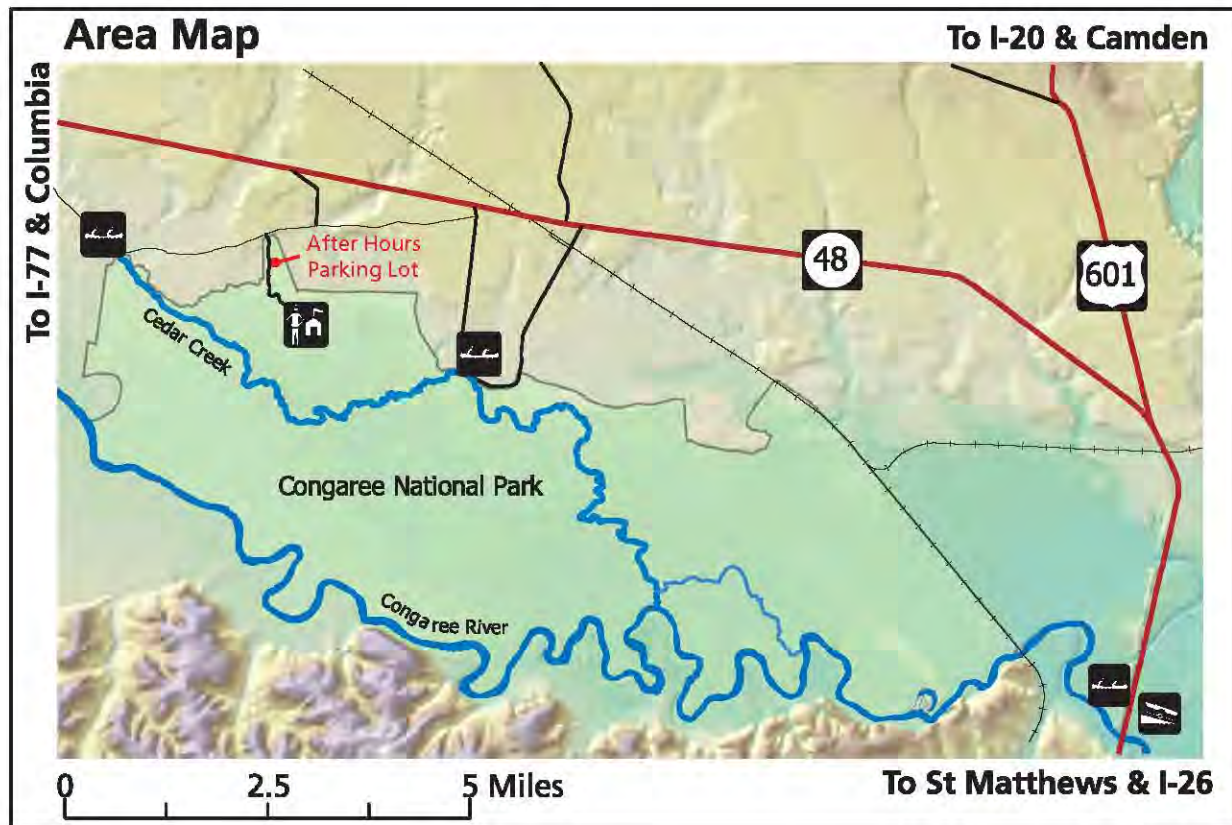
Congaree National Park Trail Guide



Legend

	Boardwalks		Trails		Park Boundary
	Streams		Cedar Creek Canoe Trail		Trail Distances
	Trail Bridges				

Primary Trail Bridges are Marked with the Letters **A - L**



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Congaree National Park is a natural sanctuary and ALL PLANTS & ANIMALS ARE PROTECTED. Help preserve the park for future generations by not disturbing or removing native inhabitants.

Visitor center hours are normally from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. During daylight-saving time, hours are extended to 7:00 p.m. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Pets must be on a leash and are permitted on all trails except for the boardwalks.

Fishing is permitted anywhere in the park **EXCEPT FOR WESTON LAKE**. A valid South Carolina fishing license is required.

We want your experience at Congaree National Park to be safe and enjoyable. During your visit, please be alert for biting and stinging insects, such as fire ants, yellow jackets, wasps, biting flies, and ticks; snakes and other animals, such as wild hogs and bobcats; and poisonous plants such as poison ivy. In the backcountry, take drinking water with you or plan to boil, filter or chemically treat any water taken from the park's lakes and creeks. Additional visitor and safety information may be obtained at the visitor center or by calling (803)776-4396.

TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS

Low Boardwalk – 1.1 Miles

Much different than the Elevated Boardwalk, the Low Boardwalk passes through a primeval swampy flat dominated by bald cypress and water tupelo. The cone-shaped cypress “knees” that protrude from the forest floor lend the area a mystical quality. The knees, which are part of the tree’s root system, are thought to help aerate the roots and anchor the cypress in the floodplain’s wet soil.

Elevated Boardwalk – 1.3 Miles

Raised above the forest floor, the Elevated Boardwalk winds through an unusual mixture of bottomland hardwoods and upland pines. This forest, particularly the massive pines, was heavily altered by Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Listen for woodpeckers hammering away in the tall trees and snags above. The Elevated Boardwalk terminates at Weston Lake, an old channel of the Congaree River. A ramp leads to the Low Boardwalk.

Bluff Trail - 1.7 Miles - Blue Blazes

This upland trail forms a large half circle north of the visitor center. A spur provides access from the After Hours parking lot to the visitor center and boardwalks. The Bluff Trail passes through a young forest of loblolly pines and mixed hardwoods.

Weston Lake Loop Trail - 4.4 Miles - Yellow Blazes

This loop traverses an old-growth forest as it skirts the edge of Weston Lake, runs alongside a cypress-tupelo slough, and follows the northern bank of Cedar Creek before connecting to the Low Boardwalk. Cedar Creek is the largest channel in the floodplain and wildlife is often spotted along its banks. Look for river otters and beavers swimming in the dark creek waters.

Oakridge Trail - 6.6 Miles - Red Blazes

Passing through a rich stretch of old-growth forest, the Oakridge Trail is a moderate three to four hour hike. Along the way, the trail crosses a number of “guts” or small creeks that carry floodwaters into and out of the park’s floodplain as the level of the Congaree River rises and falls.

River Trail - 10.0 Miles - White Blazes

This trail leads to the Congaree River, the lifeblood of the park’s great natural diversity. Approximately 10 times a year, floodwaters from the river cover nearly 80 percent of the park. When the river is low, a large sandbar may be visible. Much of the forest along the river was logged prior to the park’s establishment and vegetation here is notably denser than that of other trails.

Kingsnake Trail - 11.7 Miles - Orange Blazes

The Kingsnake Trail explores a more remote part of the park. It offers excellent bird watching. Hikers may spot deer, raccoons, opossums, and bobcat tracks. About midway, the trail passes a large cypress-tupelo slough. Giant cherrybark oak trees stand near the trail.