



Boardwalk Talk

Fall 2010
The official newspaper
of Congaree National Park

Superintendent's Message

Welcome to fall at Congaree National Park. As the days begin to shorten and the weather cools, the Park gears up for one of our busiest seasons of the year. As the leaves begin to fall, a fresh energy comes to the Park with an exciting group of public programs and activities for visitors of all ages and abilities. The welcoming weather brings our highest visitation of the year, and for good reason! It is a great time to hit the land and water trails and experience our Wilderness first hand.

A few extra-special programs are on the horizon, including our annual living history program, Congaree Campfire Chronicles. This two-hour program engages all of your senses as we trace five hundred years of Congaree's history. The event will be held November 12th and 13th, but be sure to check our website or call for additional information on this program. In addition, our fall lecture series begins in October. These evening programs allow visitors to gain in-depth information on a variety of resource management topics important to the Park.

Lastly, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate our longest-serving park ranger-naturalist, Fran Rametta on his upcoming retirement. "Ranger Fran," as he is lovingly called, has been with the Park for nearly 30 years, and has inspired generations of visitors with his gift for bringing the Congaree message alive for those who attend his programs. Thousands of people have heard his owl hoots, and listened as owls called back to their old friend. We wish Fran well as he hangs up his "flat hat" but suspect this won't be the last we see of Ranger Fran!

Thanks again for your support of Congaree and if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to leave a note for me at the front desk.



Tracy Swartout, Park Superintendent

Happy Trails!

Tracy Swartout

Fall Flower Magnets!

Fran Rametta, Park Ranger

Fall flowers attract insects, predators and humans with their color and fragrance. Deep purple Ironweed, light purple Joe-Pye-weed, brilliant yellow goldenrods, and Cardinal-flower bloom through the fall season at Congaree. If you are lucky, you may get a whiff of licorice from the White Ladies'-tresses found blooming along the Low Boardwalk.

Wildflower colors and fragrances attract bees, wasps, ants, butterflies, Crab spiders and Ambush bugs. Explore a patch of goldenrod blooms and you may find all of these insects plus more.

Look for the emerald-colored Green Lynx Spider lurking in a goldenrod patch.

*"See a world in a grain of sand
and heaven in a wildflower.*

*Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
and eternity in an hour."*
William Blake

It is a solitary hunter and will eat large wasps and bees. It is well hidden in the green leaves of the wildflowers.

Look closely on the stalks of the goldenrods and you may see small swollen areas called galls. These galls develop when a Goldenrod Gall Fly or a Goldenrod Gall Moth lays eggs in the stem. The larvae

survive inside the gall until they grow into adults. They dig themselves out of the gall ready to continue the cycle of life.

Goldenrods attracted Native American and European herbalists to treat kidney and gall stones, bladder infections and fatigue. We often send flowers to each other on special occasions. Their colors and fragrances are powerful mood changers and can send us into ecstasy or the opposite, for hay fever sufferers. Remember the last time you received a bouquet of roses?

Humans, insects, and predators are all attracted to the colors and fragrances of our fall wildflowers. The fall wildflowers at Congaree are magnets drawing us outdoors. Come out and enjoy them.

Congaree Campfire Chronicles: November 12 & 13

Follow a guide through the forest to see costumed interpreters reenacting life in the Congaree floodplain from the 1500s to the present. Free guided tours start at 6:00 p.m. on November 12th and at 10:00 a.m. on November 13th. Tours are one mile in length and follow a trail that is handicap accessible.

Swampfest!

Join us October 2nd as we partner with other community organizations for a day of fellowship, and celebration of the rich cultural heritage this area has to offer.

Canoe Tour Reservations

The policy for ranger-guided canoe tour reservations has changed! Please see page seven for details.



Emergencies

Call 911 or contact a park ranger. Be aware that cell phone service is patchy throughout the Park.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

To:

Congaree National Park
100 National Park Road
Hopkins, SC 29061





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Congaree National Park

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 natural and historic 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 generations." 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 Swartout

Mailing Address

Congaree National Park
100 National Park Rd.
Hopkins, SC 29061

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 (& humid)
Fall: low 50s to high 80s

Eastern National



Eastern National, a non-profit cooperating association with the National Park Service, supports the mission of the National Park Service by producing educational 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 special places saved by the American 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 minimize human impact in this designated Wilderness Area, campfires are *prohibited*. All campers are required to obtain a camping permit and a list of regulations at the Harry Hampton Visitor Center prior to camping.

CANOEING/KAYAKING

Traveling by canoe or kayak is a great way to enjoy this primeval 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. In addition

to 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-



John Paul

Low Boardwalk

lina 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 four and five. 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 designated as a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy. Many migratory birds can be found during the spring and fall migrations. Bring binoculars and ask rangers for a list of documented 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.

Book Review!

Jane Weilert, Park Volunteer

The National Parks: America's Best Idea documentary film by Dayton Duncan and Ken Burns has a companion book also entitled, *The National Parks, America's Best Idea* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2009, \$50). It is written by Dayton Duncan, with a preface by Ken Burns and is divided into six chapters that follow the history of the creation of national parks. The history is told through the adventures of particular people, famous and not-so-famous, who were instrumental in getting the National Park Service started and their struggle to stay true to the ideal of the national parks idea throughout the years. These inspiring stories of ordinary citizens who were a driving force in safeguarding areas of natural wonder are told through text and photographs.

This same type of passion and dedication parallels the story of Congaree National Park. Editor and writer of *The State* newspaper, Harry Hampton, along with a passionate group of people saved this forest

from logging and development. Harry Hampton is Congaree's own John Muir. Their story can be found on a display in the Harry Hampton Visitor Center. A photo of Cedar Creek, along with text about Congaree National Park can be found on pages 355 and 356 of the book.

This is not a book to be read at the first sitting; it is meant to be savored and contemplated. The words and photographs are somewhat like a cry to battle. The stories inspire readers to take action to preserve our national parks, monuments, battlefields, seashores and historic places, as this work continues today. To become part of these efforts and learn more about our national parks, you can join a non-profit friends group, or serve as a volunteer at your favorite park.

The book is also available in CD form (\$30), along with the soundtrack from the film series (\$18.98). These items can be found at the Eastern National bookstore in the Harry Hampton Visitor Center.

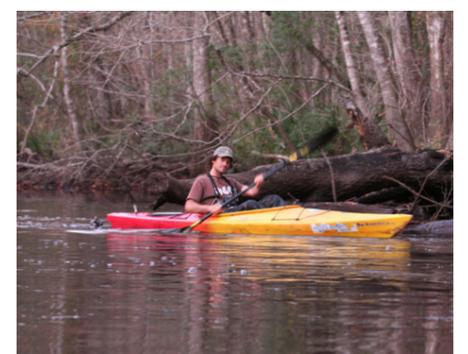
Firearms in the Park

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 buildings. It is the responsibility of visitors to understand and comply with all applicable 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/SCStateGunLaws1.aspx?MenuID=CWP 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.

Floodplain Safety Message

Congaree National Park is a floodplain forest. Water levels on Cedar Creek and the Congaree River fluctuate and changing water levels may make hiking, camping, 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.



paddling Cedar Creek

Paddling Safety

William Privett, Park Ranger

Fall is a beautiful time of year to experience the Wilderness of Congaree by canoe or kayak. Follow these tips for a safe and enjoyable paddle:

- Have as much knowledge as possible about your route; know exactly where you want to start and end your trip. Maps and information on water levels, which can drastically affect your trip, are available at the Harry Hampton Visitor Center.
- Ensure you have proper equipment. Check your boat and paddle. Have a PFD for each person and a whistle in each boat.
- Bring plenty of snacks and water. Pack more than you think you will need.
- Wear proper clothing. Bring extra clothing on cold days and keep it in a dry bag.
- Be on the lookout for spiders, snakes, and Poison Ivy. Take a first-aid kit on all trips in case of an emergency.
- The paddling trails in the Park do not run close to any on-site facilities. Make sure you are entirely prepared for making it down your intended route.
- Tell someone about your trip plans, including your expected time to return home. If you encounter trouble, this information can be essential.

A Dream Job

Karen Brown, Teacher-Ranger-Teacher

I have always loved being outdoors. Some of my earliest memories of my childhood go back to when I would dig in the backyard to see what I could find. I remember catching locusts and fireflies in jars as a child. Climbing trees was always a favorite pass-time for me. Even though I have always loved to be outside, I chose teaching as a profession. I love working with kids and was a camp counselor as a teenager and throughout college. Teaching seemed like the obvious profession for me. During the school year I am a Pre-Kindergarten teacher at a school in Columbia. I try to instill in my students a love of nature and the need to preserve it. I regularly take students on field trips, allowing them to experience the beauty and natural resources of the outdoor world. Many of them have never had these experiences.

In February, an email came across my computer. It was in reference to a job opening for a summer park ranger position at Congaree National Park. The title of the job listing was Teacher-Ranger-Teacher (TRT). TRT is made possible through an agreement between public school districts and the National Park Service. The purpose is to link national parks with teachers and students from Title I schools. Students from these schools often don't have the opportunity to experience their national parks due to a variety of social and economic factors. Teachers in the TRT program are asked to take the park resources back into the classroom, either by engaging their students in activities related to national parks or by sharing these activities and their experiences with other teachers in their school. TRTs act as a bridge between the National Park Service and their schools.

This sounded like a dream summer job to me. I would get to be outside AND teach at the same time. When I got the phone call from the Park saying that I had gotten the job, I was beside myself with excitement! I was going to get to wear a park uniform and a flat hat. My summer experience was nothing less than what I expected it to be. Working at Congaree National Park has been a valuable learning experience for me this summer. I had to first learn about the Park and its historical significance and natural resources before I could lead tours. I had the opportunity to canoe and kayak on Cedar Creek while on guided canoe tours. I led Owl Prowls and Tree Treks. I have enjoyed working with all of the park rangers as well as interacting with and educating the visitors both young and old. I am still amazed at how many people are not even aware that Congaree National Park exists and

that so many people who have lived in the Columbia area for years have never visited the Park. My two biggest concerns about working at the Park this summer were the mosquitoes and the heat; neither of which turned out to be a problem. It seems to be much cooler here than in the city.

I am excited to take back this summer's experiences to my students and my school. I am going to bring groups of Pre-Kindergarten children to the Park on field trips in the spring and allow them to experience their national park and all of its natural beauty. As Vikki Pasco, a fellow TRT, said, "Every time I hike down into the floodplain I feel like I am walking into a fairy tale." What better way to describe this place to my young four and five year old students?



Flat Hat Chat

Passport to new Experiences!

Jacky DeVos, Teacher- Ranger- Teacher

In 2005, a trip to Congaree National Park changed my life. When I tell people this, they seem skeptical until I explain how my life has been enriched. While at Congaree, a friend and I purchased the small blue *Passport to Your National Parks*. This book revealed a hidden world that has now become a great passion. When I'm taking a road trip or visiting a new city, one of the first things I do is see if there are any National Park Service sites in the area.

What is this passport book? For those who are not yet familiar, the passport program started in 1986 to generate more interest in visiting America's National Park Service sites. The little blue book is divided into nine regions, including the District of Columbia. There are two types of stamps, a cancellation, and series stamps. A cancellation is a free ink stamp unique to each site and includes the location's name, date, city and state. This cancellation creates a lasting record of your journey. Annually, the National

Park Service produces a Passport Stamp Series, featuring photographs that highlight a park from each region. A new set of ten is produced each year. There is space provided in the passport book for both the cancellation and the series stamps. Individual collectors decide which method of collecting is best for them. In 2006, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the passport program, a large deluxe binder version of the passport book was issued. This version has more space for cancellations and series stamps, but both books are great ways to collect a piece of the National Park Service. South Carolina contains many sites, in addition to Congaree National Park. Other sites include Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Monuments, Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, Ninety-Six National Historic Site, Cowpens National Battlefield, Kings Mountain National Military Park, and the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail.

Since I have had my book, I have accumulated over 60 cancellations and countless memories. The passport program draws me to locations off the beaten path, places I used to overlook a national battle field, or historic site that may be a few miles out of my way. I now go the extra mile to collect a stamp and gain a new experience. At every site I visit, I receive an education about our nation's history and meet rangers who have a wealth of knowledge and passion to share. This little blue book has enriched my life! It definitely has my "stamp" of approval!



Official cancellation stamps are available at most National Park Service sites.

Share the Experience Photo Contest 2010

Enter your favorite photos of your visits to America's Federal recreation lands by entering the 2010 *Share the Experience Photo Contest** for a chance to have your photo grace the front of the 2012 Federal Recreation Lands Pass. From June 1st to December 31st, you can submit up to three photos for the chance to earn national recognition for your picture. Great prizes include: Olympus digital cameras, trips to a Federal recreation area, Federal Recreation Lands Passes and more! For another chance to win, at the end of the photo submission period, the public will be invited to vote for their favorite photo. Each time you vote, you will be entered to win an Olympus camera! Enter by visiting www.sharetheexperience.org, or pick up a brochure and entry form while visiting a federal recreation land this year. You could have the next winning photo to adorn the Federal Recreation Lands Pass!

*The *Share the Experience Photo Contest* is sponsored by Olympus Imaging America Inc. and the National Park Foundation in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U. S. Forest Service.

Please Remember

Feeding wildlife, along with the removal, disturbance, destruction, or disfigurement 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.



Pets in the Park



Pets are welcome at Congaree National Park; however, they are not permitted on the Boardwalk. Access to

the trail system is located just outside the Harry Hampton Visitor Center. While visiting the park, keep your pet on a leash no longer than six feet in length or physically confined at all times so as not to disturb other visitors or animals that have a home in Congaree.

Do not leave your pet unattended in a vehicle or tied to an object in the Park.

Clean up after your pets by using a bag. Biodegradable bags are located at the Primitive Campground and at the beginning of the Bluff Trail outside the Harry Hampton Visitor Center. Dispose of these bags in any outdoor Park garbage can.

OCTOBER 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 1:30p Congaree Loblollies 8:00p Owl Prowl	2 9:00a Big Tree Hike 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 10:00a Swampfest!
3 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 9:30a Who Came Before 1:30p Tree Trek	4 1:30p Congaree Loblollies	5 1:30p Amazing Adaptations	6 1:30p Who Came Before 7:00p Evening Lecture	7 1:30p Cha Cha Cha Changes	8 8:00p Owl Prowl	9 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 9:30a Nature Discovery 1:30p Weston Lake Wilderness Hike
10 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 1:30p Amazing Adaptations	11 1:30p Amazing Adaptations	12	13 1:30p Tree Trek	14 1:30p Weston Lake Wilderness Hike	15 1:30p Tree Trek	16 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 9:30a Nature Discovery 1:30p Cha Cha Cha Changes
17 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 1:30p Flat Hat Chats	18 1:30p Tree Trek	19 1:30p Tree Trek	20 1:30p Congaree Loblollies	21 1:30p Nature Discovery	22 1:30p Weston Lake Wilderness Hike 8:00p Owl Prowl	23 1:30p Congaree Loblollies
24 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 1:30p Amazing Adaptations	25 1:30p Flat Hat Chats	26 1:30p Who Came Before	27 1:30p Nature Discovery	28 1:30p Tree Trek	29 1:30p Weston Lake Wilderness Hike 8:00p Campfire Program	30 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 1:30p Tree Trek 8:00p Owl Prowl
31 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 1:30p Tree Trek						

NOVEMBER 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 1:30p Tree Trek	2	3 1:30p Surviving Scorch 7:00p Evening Lecture	4	5	6 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 9:30a Nature Discovery 1:30p Skins & Bones
7 1:30p Surviving Scorch	8 1:30p Nature Discovery	9 1:30p Tree Trek	10 1:30p Who Came Before	11 10:00a Oakridge Excursion	12 6:00p Congaree Campfire Chronicles Tours	13 10:00a Congaree Campfire Chronicles Tours 11:00a Congaree Campfire Chronicles Speakers and Activities 2:00p Congaree Campfire Chronicles Tours 6:00p Congaree Campfire Chronicles Tours
14 9:30a Birds & Branches 1:30p Tree Trek	15 1:30p Amazing Adaptations	16 1:30p Nature Discovery	17 1:30p Who Came Before	18	19 1:30p Weston Lake Wilderness Hike 8:00p Owl Prowl	20 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 9:30a Nature Discovery 1:30p Tricky Tracks
21 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 9:30a Birds & Branches 1:30p Roving Ranger at Cedar Creek Canoe Access	22 1:30p Tree Trek	23 1:30p Birds & Branches	24 1:30p Tree Trek	25 1:30p Tree Trek	26 1:30p Who Came Before 8:00p Owl Prowl	27 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 1:30p Surviving Scorch
28 9:00a Guided Canoe Tour 9:30a Tree Trek 1:30p Weston Lake Wilderness Hike	29 1:30p Nature Discovery	30 1:30p Tree Trek				

DECEMBER 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 1:30p Tree Trek	2 1:30p Who Came Before	3 1:30p Skins and Bones 7:00p Owl Prowl	4 9:30a Nature Discovery 1:30p Tree Trek 2:00p Guided Canoe Tour
5 1:30p Searching For Harry 2:00p Guided Canoe Tour	6 1:30p Who Came Before	7	8 1:30p Tree Trek 7:00p Evening Lecture	9	10 1:30p Tree Trek	11 1:30p Tree Trek 2:00p Guided Canoe Tour
12 1:30p Skins & Bones 2:00p Guided Canoe Tour	13 1:30p Tree Trek	14 1:30p Nature Discovery	15 1:30p Amazing Adaptations	16 1:30p Surviving Scorch	17 1:30p Tree Trek 7:00p Owl Prowl	18 1:30p Tree Trek 2:00p Guided Canoe Tour
19 7:00a Christmas Bird Count 1:30p Amazing Adaptations 2:00p Guided Canoe Tour	20 1:30p Amazing Adaptations	21 1:30p Birds & Branches	22 1:30p Tree Trek	23 1:30p Nature Discovery	24 1:30p Who Came Before	25 Harry Hampton Visitor Center closed
26 1:30p Weston Lake Wilderness Hike	27 1:30p Who Came Before	28 1:30p Flat Hat Chats	29 1:30p Tree Trek	30 1:30p Tree Trek	31 1:30p Roving Ranger Weston Lake Overlook	



Program Descriptions

Attending Ranger guided programs

MEET THE RANGER

All programs meet at the Harry Hampton Visitor Center unless noted otherwise.

BE PREPARED

Wear weather appropriate clothing, sturdy walking shoes, and bring water.

RESERVATIONS

Certain programs require reservations by calling (803) 776-4396.

CANCELLATIONS

Programs may be cancelled for inclement weather and/or park emergencies.

PETS

Pets are not permitted to attend ranger guided programs.



Junior Ranger Program

Hey Kids! You can become a Junior Ranger and help protect your National Park! Stop by the Harry Hampton Visitor Center to pick up a Junior Ranger workbook and complete activities as you discover Congaree.



Volunteers in parks

The Park is recruiting volunteers to meet and greet visitors from around the globe. They operate the information desk and respond to questions by phone, through the mail, and in person. Use of phones, cash registers and an ability to communicate with the public are desired. The park primarily needs volunteers for Friday, Saturday or Sunday work.

The volunteer program at Congaree has grown extensively through the years. Some volunteers assist eight hours per month, others 32 hours per month or more.

If you have an interest in helping to protect your national park please call Corinne Fenner, Park Ranger at (803) 776-4396.

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.

BIG TREE HIKE

Join a ranger on this six 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.

CAMPFIRE PROGRAM

Learn about the nocturnal animals that have a home at Congaree while enjoying a crackling campfire.

CHA CHA CHA CHANGES

Change is the only constant at Congaree. Hike with a ranger and look for signs of the subtle and dramatic changes that take place in the floodplain.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Become a citizen scientist while birding in various habitats throughout the Park on December 19th at 7:00 a.m. Bring your binoculars and help assess the health of bird populations. Sign up by calling (803)776-4396.

CONGAREE CAMPFIRE CHRONICLES

Follow a guide through the forest to see costumed interpreters reenacting life in the Congaree floodplain from the 1500s to the present. Guided tours start at 6:00 p.m. on November 12th and 10:00 a.m. on November 13th. Tours are one mile in length, are approximately two hours in length and follow a trail that is handicap accessible.

CONGAREE LOBLOLLIES

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

FALL EVENING LECTURE SERIES

The Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center at Congaree National Park hosts an evening a lecture series. The purpose of this lecture series to present information about the diverse research projects being conducted at Congaree National Park an to provide a forum where scientists, park visitors, volunteers, staff and the local community can interact. Following a presentation by park researchers, guests will have the opportunity to ask questions or request additional information. All are encouraged to attend. Reservations are not required. For more information, contact Theresa Thom at 803.695.0214.

FLAT HAT CHATS

Listen and learn as rangers give 15 minute talks on different topics including Congaree history, fire, the creation of the Park, 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; Reservations for 4th Quarter open September 15th. See page seven for details.

NATURE DISCOVERY HIKE

Discover the floodplain on this guided Boardwalk hike. We'll explore the forest, looking and listening for animals.

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 for 4th Quarter open September 15th. Call (803) 776-4396.



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.

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.

SWAMPFEST!

Join us for a day of community, fellowship, stewardship, and celebration of the rich cultural heritage that this area has to offer. Activities will occur at Congaree National Park, the Harriet Barber House, and Mt. Moriah Church. Events include music, crafts, and demonstrations. Look for a detailed schedule at www.nps.gov/cong or call the Harry Hampton Visitor Center at (803) 776-4396.

TREE TREK

Discover Congaree National Park's primeval forested floodplain. Experience the extraordinarily diverse wildlife while walking among the towering trees.

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.

Junior Ranger Ecology Camp!

David C. Shelley, Ph.D., Education Coordinator,
Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center

The Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center at Congaree National Park hosted three, one-week sessions of Junior Ranger Ecology Camp in June and July, 2010. The goals of each free day camp session were to increase familiarity with the National Park Service mission, showcase the floodplain forest resources at Congaree National Park; actively engage campers in ecological research; and promote resource stewardship. The South Carolina state science education standards for 4th and 5th grade provided the core program curriculum. Activities included games that simulated animal populations; floodplain hikes; tree identification; programs about Congaree's birds and fungi; collecting scientific data on trees and aquatic macroinvertebrates; investigating pelts and skulls; singing songs; pumping groundwater; canoeing down Cedar Creek; art projects; and more. Each camp session ended in

a graduation ceremony with presentations by campers that explained various camp programs to an audience of friends and family. Campers were then sworn in as official National Park Service Junior Rangers.

Two camp sessions were open to the general public, while a third session was held through a partnership with Gadsden Elementary in Richland County School District One. This year's camp sessions included over 80 hours of program time and served 54 campers from 21 zip codes. A camper: staff ratio of 1:5 was maintained with NPS staff, Student Conservation Association (SCA) interns, and a "Volunteers in Parks" (VIP) intern from the Maryland Institute College of Art. A photo display of camp and other resource management summer activities is currently on display at the Harry Hampton Visitor Center.

Intern Corner

Steven McNamara, Photography Intern,
Krista Tomaro, SCA Intern, Sarah Schulte, SCA Intern

Interns contributed more than 1200 volunteer hours to the development and successful implementation of summer camps in 2010. They improved existing programs, developed one entirely new program, and created a variety of outreach products. In addition, summer interns assisted with resource management projects including bird banding, freshwater mussel surveys, geology research, moth inventories, and butterfly inventories. Below interns share their reflections of their unique summer experiences:

Steven McNamara, Photography Intern, Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA):

This summer I travelled down from Baltimore, MD to embark on a photography internship at Congaree National Park. I wasn't entirely sure what I was getting into, but for any nature photographer, the opportunity to spend twelve weeks living in a national park photographing your own backyard is something you don't pass up. As part of my internship, I was assigned to photograph not only the Park, but also research activities, summer camps, and behind-the-scenes maintenance tasks that keep the Park running.

I spent my first few weeks hiking trails and taking pictures, and it was during this period that I became familiar with the Park. I learned to take my tripod along everywhere under the dark canopy. I learned that the lighting is much better in the morning than in the evening, and the morning comes an hour or two later under the trees. I saw juvenile Barred Owls, invasive wild hogs, venomous snakes, and national champion trees. Most of my photos from this time are non-populated landscapes and nature scenes.

After several weeks, I started going out with other park employees, interns, and scientific researchers to grab photos of the various crews in action. I went to Weston

Lake to collect and examine aquatic macroinvertebrates, including dragonfly larvae, water scorpions, and crayfish. I went out with researchers and helped attach leg bands on birds. I took part in the 4th of July butterfly count, freshwater mussel surveys, tree surveys and moonlighted as a camp counselor. And, of course, I photographed all the while. The photos I've taken are the results of some unique opportunities. I have pictures of radio tags on mussels, pictures of wild birds at extreme magnification, and pictures of researchers wrapping their arms around giant trees covered in Poison Ivy vines in order to measure their diameters.

Throughout all of this I have taken pictures that I am proud of. I have taken pictures that will go in my portfolio and that I will pull out again to share with others—hopefully pictures that will help me get a job. In addition, I have had some amazing experiences down here in the floodplain of Congaree that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Krista Tomaro, Student Conservation Association Intern, East Stroudsburg University:

This summer, I had the privilege of working in Congaree National Park, one of the most beautiful places on Earth. As an environmental education intern, I worked with Junior Ranger Ecology Camp and Swamp Stories Camp. I gained experience with two different age groups; 5th grade and 8th grade, respectively. The summer began with an awesome orientation from Congaree's friendly staff. We got to go canoeing, hiking, and see plenty of wildlife!

The majority of my summer was spent with Junior Ranger Ecology Camp. This camp teaches students about ecology, animals, plants, fungi, and different communities within the forest here at Congaree.

Swamp Stories Camp

Corinne Fenner, Park Ranger

Congaree National Park hosted a technology based summer camp for rising 7th and 8th grade students from Hopkins and Southeast Middle Schools. With a grant from the National Park Foundation, and partnerships between Richland One School District and South Carolina Educational Television (SCETV) students had the opportunity to experience South Carolina's only National Park, and learn the latest technology in creating short films

with digital camcorders, laptops and video editing software. Throughout the week campers gathered stories about the many ways this land has been used throughout history by keeping journals, taking photographs, and interviewing local elders. Students created digital recordings to share their impressions, and re-tell stories of the Congaree in their own voices. The video documentaries will be available through a link from the Park's website in October.



Interns Sarah Schulte, Krista Tomaro, Ranger Fran Rametta and campers at Swamp Stories Camp

I helped plan and deliver a lesson called "Congaree Birds." This lesson focused on the importance of birds, why birds sing, and the calls and songs of eight common Congaree birds. Camp was an excellent learning experience for me because I would love to be an environmental educator. This summer gave me some insight into what my future job will be like, and I can't wait!

Throughout the course of this summer, I have gained experience in many different areas including bird banding, education, writing, and lesson planning. One of my favorite experiences at Congaree was bird banding; I am very interested in ornithology and see it as a potential field of study for graduate school. My time here has been an extraordinary adventure filled with memories that will last a lifetime. I'll remember all the great friends I've made and everything that I've learned. I can only hope to return to Congaree in the future!

Sarah Schulte, Student Conservation Association Intern, St. Charles Community College:

Not many people can call Congaree National Park their home but I can; this summer I have been sharing my home with champion Loblolly Pines, White-tailed deer, yellow flies and mushrooms of every variety. As an environmental education intern, I helped staff the 2010 Junior Ranger Ecology Camp and Swamp Stories Camp. These camps helped make my summer unforgettable. The greatest moments were seeing campers light up with excitement at the opportunity to canoe, see a snake, or listen to bird calls.

As I look back on this summer, one memory keeps coming to mind. During Junior Ranger Ecology Camp we took the campers on a canoe trip on Cedar Creek. One camper was afraid to go, but after a little encouragement he started to warm

up to the idea. While in the canoe, he was still very nervous, but as we paddled along, he started to become less afraid and more excited. By the end of the trip, he was having a great time. I even asked him if he thought he would go again and he said yes.

My internship wasn't just about camp. In addition to off-site educational programs and, of course, exploring the Park, I also got to experience many things while assisting park scientists. Examples included freshwater mussel surveys in the Congaree River and soil-coring expeditions. During one of my coring expeditions, I learned how to use a hand auger, a tool similar to a drill. It is used to collect samples of soil that can later be radiocarbon dated.

There are so many beautiful sights to take in. I feel so privileged to be part of such a special place and every time I hike around, I always see something new that awes me into silence. This internship has been a constant learning experience, I've learned more about myself and what I wish to do with my life. I've made memories and friendships that will last that will last a lifetime. There's nothing like a South Carolina summer.



Intern Krista Tomaro helps campers identify macroinvertebrates.

Steven McNamara

They use a line but not a pole

Michael G. Hollins, Park Volunteer

For the budding naturalist, deciding what to study and where to start can be a daunting task. In my case, I was reminded of some good advice given to me in my youth: the only thing to do with fear is to face it head on. My fear was spiders. Taking my mentor's advice, I am learning more about spiders. By doing this, I am finding not just success, but the joy that comes from gaining knowledge of the natural world.

The creatures I find to be the most fascinating are the fishing spiders. Within the Park boundaries I have observed two species of fishing spiders, the Six Spotted Fishing Spider (*Dolomedes triton*), and the Dark Fishing Spider (*Dolomedes scriptus*). While both species have their differences, they do have some similarities. All fishing spiders are gender-morphic, meaning that the female is larger than the male. Fishing spiders stand with the body close to the object being stood upon with the legs sprawled out. As part of the nursery web family, fishing spiders only build a web to provide a place for hatching young. Eggs are laid into an egg sac that the female carries suspended from the fangs and spinnerets. When the egg sac is in the web the female will stand guard.

The Six Spotted Fishing Spider has proven to be elusive, but it makes up for it by being beautifully colored. The most common coloration seen has been a dark



Six Spotted Fishing Spider

brown with golden stripes and spots. On two occasions, I have found pitch black spiders with ivory stripes and spots. The stripes run laterally along both sides of the body with spots limited to the abdomen. This animal gets its scientific name from a design on its back that resembles the three tipped weapon carried by Poseidon in Greek mythology.

The Dark Fishing Spider is abundant. It has base colors ranging from brown to red, with a "W" shape along the back of the abdomen. These chevrons are the basis for the name *scriptus* which means writing or to resemble writing.

As the common name suggests, these are semi-aquatic animals, but can be found far from water sources. Since my role in

the Park as a volunteer on ranger-guided canoe tours keeps me along Cedar Creek, I often witness the aquatic behaviors of this spider. The Dark Fishing Spider is an opportunistic hunter. It prefers aquatic insects like mayflies and dragonflies. Unlike other spiders, it does not use a web to trap prey. Instead, it uses the water to locate and overtake insects. It poises with the front legs touching or resting on the water and relies on sensitive hairs to feel vibrations. The fascinating part of this technique is that the spider can tell the difference between a leaf or an insect falling onto the water. Along with identifying what caused the vibration, it can also tell distance and direction. Displaying extraordinary instinctual mathematics it will spin a dragline of silk just long enough to ensure that it does not run past the intended prey. The hairs covering the body are hydrophobic allowing it to use surface tension to run across the water. Once prey has been caught and subdued, the spider will use claws on its front legs to drag the meal to a dry surface for consumption.

Amazingly, the hydrophobic property of the body hair permits the spider to crawl below the water by trapping air around the body and legs giving it a natural SCUBA ability. While submerged, the spider takes on the appearance of polished silver. Larger specimens have been known to eat small fish; earning the common name of fishing spider.

Birds in the Neighborhood

Kathleen O'Grady, Park Ranger

One of the most popular ranger-guided programs at the Congaree National Park is the Owl Prowl. Ranger Fran Rametta originated the Owl Prowl over 20 years ago. It is a wonderful opportunity to get out after dark, listen to the night sounds, and learn about mysterious owl species. The most commonly seen and heard owl in the Park is the Barred Owl (*Strix varia*).

Often overlooked due to its small stature and perfect camouflage is the Eastern Screech-Owl (*Megascops asio*). Frederick R. Gehlbach, who conducted a 25-year study of the Eastern Screech-Owl, wrote *The Eastern Screech-Owl: Life History, Ecology, and Behavior in the Suburbs*. Only around

eight and one half inches, about the size of the American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), complete with ear tufts, this bird comes in two color morphs, red and gray, with the latter being more predominant.

Meals include crayfish, earthworms, rodents and songbirds. The Eastern Screech-Owl hunts primarily during the evening and at night. A dietary study by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology reports that two captive males can eat up to half their body weight in prey each night. This owl has a distinctive trilling song sometimes called the "Bounce Song" which is used by family members to stay in contact,

by males to court females, and as a territorial defense. The Eastern Screech-Owl is common and found in nearly every habitat in the eastern United States and Canada.



Eastern Screech-Owl

They are year-round residents at Congaree National Park. The best place to look and listen for them is at the Bluff and Primitive Campgrounds between dusk and dawn.

If you are interested in "owling" and finding other species of birds, please consider participating in the 111th Audubon Christmas Bird Count being held at Congaree National Park on Sunday, December 19, 2010. This is a chance to be a citizen scientist and conduct a bird census. Please sign up by calling the Harry Hampton Visitor Center at (803)776-4396.

Guided Canoe Tours: New Reservation Policy

Free ranger-guided canoe tours are one of the most popular ways to experience Congaree National Park. Based on feedback from our visiting public, we have changed the reservation process.

During a ranger-guided canoe tour, rangers provide instruction and interpretation as you paddle a Park provided canoe along Cedar Creek. Congaree National Park provides seven canoes, paddles and PFDs (Personal Flotation Devices). The schedule of canoe tours is available on page four of this publication, and at www.nps.gov/cong.

Reservations can be made via telephone ONLY. Requests via voicemail will NOT be accepted. Please do NOT leave a voicemail for reservations.

Children must be at least five years of age to attend.

Extra clothes in a dry bag are required during 4th quarter (October 1-December 31) tours; water and insect repellent are recommended. Wear sturdy shoes that attach to your feet and can get muddy.

Tours will be cancelled in the event of lightning, if air temperature is below 45 degrees at the time of the tour, if the water level on Cedar Creek is above ten feet, or if winds exceed 30 miles per hour.

If you have questions, please call (803)776-4396.

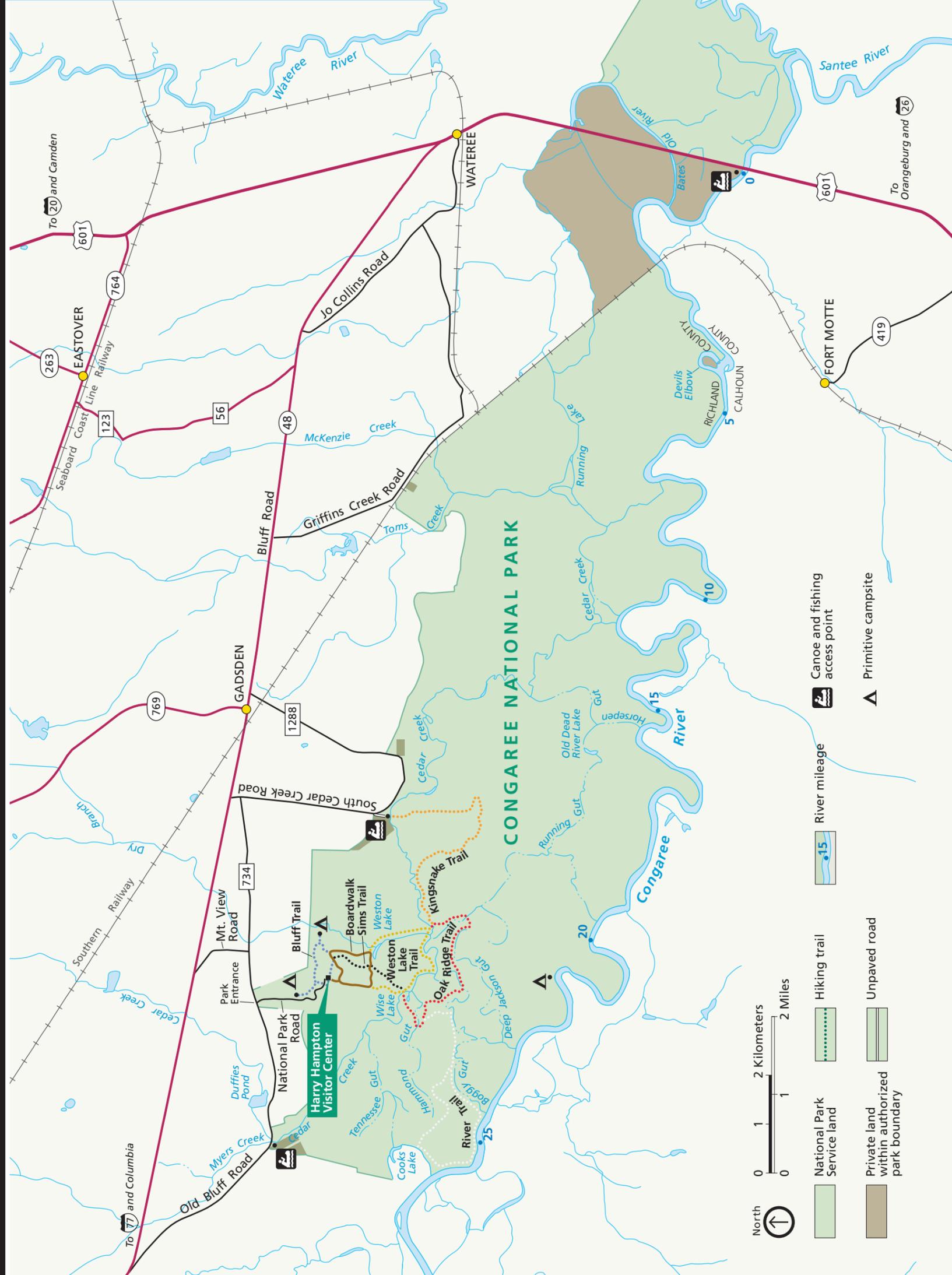
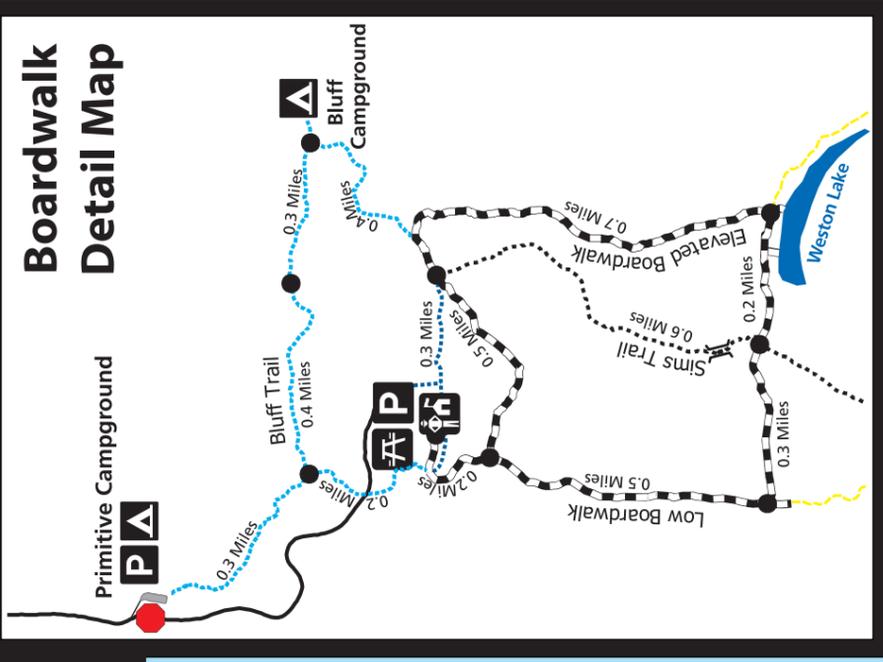
Individual tours

- Reservations taken quarterly. For the 4th quarter (October 1-December 31), reservations will open September 15th and will close when filled to capacity. For the 1st quarter of 2011 (January 1-March 31), reservations will open on December 15, 2010.
- 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.

Organized groups

- Reservations taken quarterly. Organized group tour reservations are closed for the 4th Quarter (October 1-December 31). For the 1st quarter of 2011, (January 1-March 31), reservations will open November 1 and close December 15.
- Group size must be between 10 and 18 people, and be members of an organized group, club, or common affiliation.

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.



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**
Blue Blazes
- Weston Lake Loop Trail: 2.5 Miles**
Yellow Blazes
- Oakridge Trail: 3.2 Miles**
Red Blazes
- River Trail: 5.0 Miles**
White Blazes
- Kingsnake Trail: 3.6 Miles**
Orange Blazes



- National Park Service land
- Private land within authorized park boundary
- Hiking trail
- Unpaved road
- River mileage
- Canoe and fishing access point
- Primitive campsite