

FENCE Venture To Congaree Swamp



A caravan of 25 people headed south to the Congaree Swamp National Monument near Columbia, South Carolina on April 11th. Congaree, the last significant stand of old growth riverbottom hardwood forest, found protection from the saw and axe with its inclusion in the National Park System in 1976. The Congaree River and Swamp is formed by the confluence of the Saluda & Broad Rivers which drain over 8,000 square miles of northwest South Carolina and western North Carolina. Within the area there are more than 90 tree species — including Baldcypress — with circumferences of 27 feet and knees up to 7 feet high. Loblolly Pines several hundred years old with one a state record 169 feet tall. Hugo tore through this area and left evidence of its force with many giant trees splintered or toppled creating gaps in the forest canopy.

Our tour along the Boardwalk to Weston Lake included frequent pauses to observe plant life and birds. Highlights were a Barred Owl feasting on a crawfish, the Hooded, Prothonotary and Parula Warblers, Great Blue

Heron, Osprey, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks and several varieties of woodpeckers for a total of 30 different species. We did observe tracks of deer and turkey. David Riddle found a rough green snake sunning itself on the path and held it so that we could touch it and observe it close up.

David Riddle and Simon Thompson, from FENCE, always make these trips so informative and interesting. Our special thanks to Guy Taylor, retired Congaree Ranger residing in Tryon, who accompanied our group and shared his experiences and knowledge of this area. Guy showed us an area of quicksand where a bulldozer sank, never to be recovered.

The next FENCE Venture is to the Riverbanks Zoo in Columbia, S.C. on Saturday, May 26th. Call 859-9021 for reservations. — Bob Crow, Reporter

HELP WANTED:
Conscientious person to do grounds maintenance, weed and mow. \$6 per hour. Call Don 894-3024. adv. 10, 11c.

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Tryon Daily Bulletin, Fri., May 11, 1990

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