



SCAN *South Carolina Association of Naturalists*
Post Office Box 5651, Columbia, South Carolina 29250-5651

October 2009

Hello Everyone,

Overcast skies and a light breeze provided perfect conditions for exploring a portion of the Great Pee Dee River floodplain last month. The Wallace Tract, a part of the Sandhills Wildlife Refuge, contains a variety of habitats, most of which show the influence of mans early settlement of the area and agricultural practices. Natural habitats included the mature bottomland tree species lining the riverbank, a wonderful beaver pond on Husband Creek, which flows through the tract, and the Great Pee Dee River. Other habitats included late successional old-field with young trees, an old-field meadow, and a power line easement loaded with fall wildflowers in full bloom. We parked under the U.S. Highway 1 bridge over the River and hiked along an access road that parallels the river and leads to the north boundary of the Tract where we walked along the power line easement until we reached the beaver pond. In addition to the wildflowers in bloom, there were butterflies and other flying insects seen sipping nectar at the flowers, and a beautiful king snake was seen next to the beaver pond.

After a quick lunch, the second stop of the day was at Campbell's Pond, a millpond that feeds Juniper Creek. Some of us explored the shoreline of the pond while others paddled among the pond cypress growing out in the water. It was a pleasant paddle with lots of herbaceous species to be seen clinging to the bases of the cypress such as yellow-eyed grass, hat-pins, sundew, and fetter bush. Care had to be taken not to bump the trees with the boat or paddle as several pie pan sized wasp nests were seen hidden in the fetter bush. Thank you Peggy O'Neal for hosting and scouting the Wallace Tract and Campbell's Pond trip.

The 2010 SCAN planning meeting will be held on November 7th this year. The meeting is open to all SCAN members but if you cannot attend, please forward any ideas you have for a fieldtrip to one of the Regional Coordinators or me so that we can include it in the discussions. Jan Ciegler has graciously offered the use of her dining room table for the meeting. The meeting will start at 10:30 and should break up in the early afternoon. We will break for lunch at one of the nearby restaurants.

Also, the end of the year is quickly approaching and it's time to start thinking about selecting new officers. If anyone is interested in holding an office please let Pat Bright or me know and we'll get you on the ballot. If you would like to find out more about the responsibilities of the positions prior to making a decision, we will be glad to discuss it with you.

Don't forget about the change in schedule for this month and next! We will be going to Ridgehope this month.

See you at Ridgehope,

Gordon

Ridge Hope

Florence County--Eastern Region

10:30

10/24/09

(Peggy O'Neal)

No, you're not mistaken! Ridge Hope was originally scheduled for November 14th but in a lemons-to-lemonade twist (scheduling conflict) we're getting to go a month early, when fall color should be appearing in the Ervin's enchanted woods.

When I arrived at Ridge Hope on my scouting trip the security gate was unexpectedly inoperable, so I got out of my car and started walking the quarter mile to the Ervin's house. En route I was intrigued by graceful paths branching off the main road, signs with thought-provoking sentiments posted on trees, and bits of colored glass sparkling on the road bed. Were these woods inhabited by fairies or gnomes or an artist-in-residence, perhaps?

The 230 acre tract now known as "Ridge Hope" was in the Ervin family for over 100 years before Dr. Dewey Ervin bought it. It's on the Florence-Darlington County line in the Pocket Road, or Back Swamp, community. The artist-in-residence is Dr. Ervin's wife Dr. Donna Goodman, Professor Emeritus of Art and Education at Francis Marion University. Since her retirement Donna and an unusually calm Jack Russell terrier (calm? terrier? Oxymoron?) have rambled over oak-hickory ridges, through old fields, and around beaver ponds to create about 6 miles of drivable trails. Anyone who has ever bushwhacked with SCAN will appreciate the luxury of being able to drive through this diverse and beautiful property.

The presence of a north-facing bluff gives SCAN another opportunity to find the elusive Magnolia pyramidata. Jerry Bright's offer to buy dinner for the finder still stands. And if that's not incentive enough, we'll be eating at Shuler's after the trip. They serve a piquant Pee Dee-style barbeque that's not to be missed.

Some highlights of my regrettably brief scouting trip were sighting a summer tanager, white breasted nuthatches, pink Indian pipes, horsemint, and cardinal flowers. As a mere "50-something" I never thought I'd consider quail a rare sight. The Ervin's have 2 long leaf pine areas as part of a quail restoration project and they recently saw a large covey with young birds. Hopefully, we'll be as lucky.

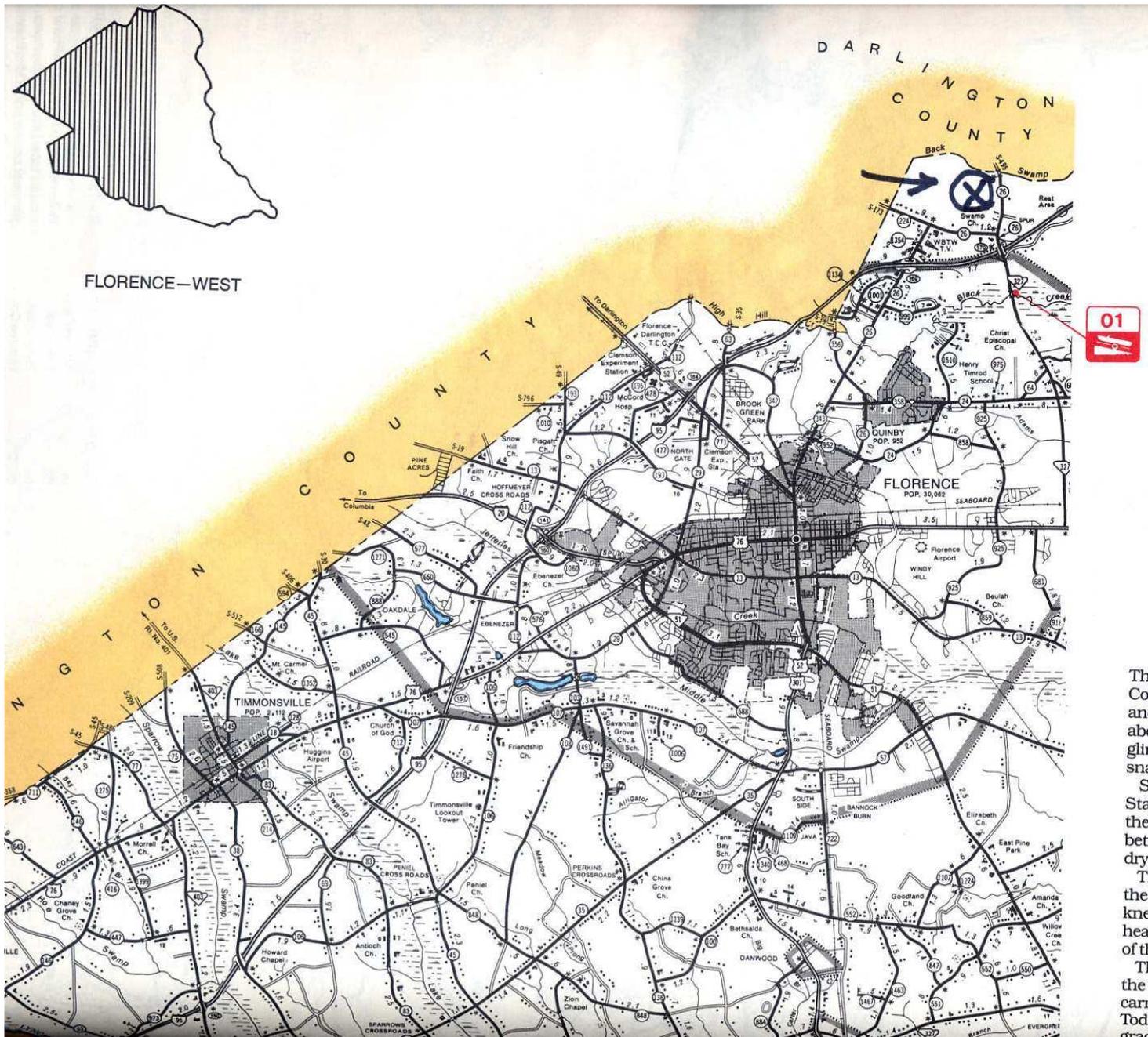
Dewey and Donna have invited us to camp on Saturday night. If you want to camp, please call me and leave a confirmation message at 803-787-8526. I'd like a 'head count' by 10/17/09.

As always, bring your lunch, water, and insect repellent. Those who camp may want to bring their breakfast for Sunday morning.

Directions: Take I-20 E to I-95 N toward Fayetteville. Go about 9 miles to exit 170. Turn left back over I-95 and go almost exactly 1 mile. Look for a big red 2-story house surrounded by a white fence on the left. Begin slowing down at this landmark as you head downhill toward the Darlington County line. About 50 yards 'this side' of the bridge marking the county line their unpaved road is on the LEFT and has a black iron security gate. Drive one-quarter mile to the house. Distance from northeast Columbia (Clemson Road area) is about 75 miles.



Ridge Hope trail system – in blue



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The September Fauna/Flora List will be in next month's Newsletter.

New SCAN member

Molly French

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Myrtle Beach, SC 295877

843-424-1009

mfrench@coastal.edu

Please change Chanda Cooper's e-mail address to chanda.cooper1@gmail.com.

Wallace Tract







Campbell's Pond





