



March 2016

Hello Everyone.

The first trip of 2016 was to Cheraw State Park in Chesterfield County. We had 16 members and one guest attending the trip. Members in attendance included Ben Gregory, Pat and Jerry Bright, Virginia Winn, Rita Zollinger, Greg Ross, Charlotte Morley, Wayne Grooms, Kathy Boyle, Mary Douglass, Tom Jones, Marguerite Frongillo, Brusi Alexander, Carol Jaworski, Jeff Kline, and Gordon Murphy. Our guest was Janet Witt. We gathered in the parking lot by the park office and were fortunate to have Park Ranger Chad Miller stop by and he gave us a short talk about the park.



Cheraw State Park is the oldest state park in South Carolina and was constructed by the Civil Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The park is comprised of approximately 7,361 acres and has quite a few different habitats for naturalists to explore.

On our hike along the Turkey Oak Trail, we passed through, or walked adjacent to, a variety of habitats. These included xeric sandhills dominated by long-leaf pines, turkey oaks, and wire grass; hillside seepages with dense gallberry and fetter-bush understories; mesic forests on the lower hillsides dominated by loblolly pine, oak, hickory, and beech trees; a perennial stream



with its associated bottomland hardwood floodplain; frequently flooded bottomland hardwood forest dominated by bald cypress, swamp tupelo, and Atlantic white cedar; permanently inundated, forested headwaters of Juniper Lake dominated by bald cypress and swamp tupelo; the open water habitat of Juniper Lake, which is approximately 300 acres

in size; and emergent herbaceous wetlands at various locations along the edge of the lake where three species of pitcher plants were seen. The habitat diversity at Cheraw State Park provides a wide diversity of flora and fauna.



Red-cockaded woodpecker habitat restoration is on-going at the park using controlled burns, and mechanical and hand clearing of underbrush. Controlled burns were occurring during our visit. Attached to the newsletter is a short summary of the restoration efforts at the park.

Where open areas in the canopy of the managed occurred, we could see long-leaf pine regeneration in all different phases including the grass stage, bottlebrush stage, sapling stage, and mature stage.



Grass Stage



Bottlebrush Stage



Sapling Stage

While Ranger Miller was talking about the park, he mentioned that he had kayaked up Lake Juniper, through the forested headwaters of the lake, and into Juniper Creek which he followed all the way to US 1. The idea of such a paddle trip intrigued several of us and I will be checking into setting up a President's Special before summer so we can explore the lake and swamp. We can possibly make it an overnight trip and stay in cabins or tents. Stay tuned for more information in our next newsletter!

We enjoyed a pretty tasty dinner at Hooks Barbeque following our hike. Thanks go to Jeff Kline for scouting and leading our first trip of 2016, which was also Jeff's first trip as the Regional Director.

This month we will be heading back to Caroline and Gene Ott's farm in Laurens County. We should see lots of spring ephemeral wildflowers and, with a little luck, some herptiles. I hope to see you all there!

Gordon Murphy

SC State Parks' Efforts to Restore the Red-cockaded Woodpecker

South Carolina State Parks is one of the many agencies and conservation groups in the southeastern U.S. working to ensure a future for the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW). On our properties, this special little bird can be currently found at Hampton Plantation State Historic Site (just north of McClellanville, SC) and Cheraw State Park (just south of Cheraw, SC). Both sites have initiated efforts to ensure that the woodpeckers' strict habitat needs are met and to provide enough suitable nesting cavities.

HAMPTON PLANTATION STATE HISTORIC SITE

When you visit Hampton Plantation, you will almost drive directly under an active RCW tree. There is currently one group living on this property and they have built a cluster of cavity trees immediately around the park manager's residence and the park entrance road. To the right of the entrance road, you can observe a 13-acre area of mature longleaf pine that had its hardwood understory and midstory removed in January 2008 with mulching equipment. This is very important for RCWs who will abandon an area of pine forest if the hardwoods are allowed to become too tall and thick. Historically, this didn't occur because the frequent, lightning ignited fires prevented hardwood encroachment and strongly favored the pines. Now roads and fire fighters prevent large pieces of the landscape from burning this way, and managers must use mechanical clearance and/or prescribed fire to maintain the historical forest conditions.

To the left of the entrance road, is an 80-acre piece of pine forest slated for prescribed burning when favorable weather conditions occur. This area was last burned during the 1990s and we hope to begin regularly burning it in winter 2009-2010. After a fire reduces the dead vegetation and kills some of the hardwoods, a limited amount of herbicide will be used to further reduce the hardwood understoreys.

Over time, the entire area of the park around the RCW cluster will be regularly burned and the hardwoods should largely disappear, resulting in an open, mature longleaf forest. In addition to these habitat improvements, however, managers are planning to also address the birds' need for nest cavities. Because it can take the birds several years to build a single cavity tree in a living pine tree, managers installed one artificial cavity for them in January 2008 and plan to install several more in the near future.

Staff installing new RCW cavity inserts in 2005



CHERAW STATE PARK

It is estimated that there are currently 16 RCWs living at Cheraw State Park in several colonies across this 7,300+ acre park. Managers here have been actively working in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service since 2000 to improve the habitat conditions here, to provide adequate RCW nesting conditions, and to monitor the birds' population.

Prescribed fire was reintroduced to the landscape from the beginning of these efforts to restore the longleaf pine ecosystem and this is where and how the SC State Parks' prescribed burn team began. However, because these mature forests have very high fuel accumulations, managers must progress slowly, burning small acreages at a time and under extremely specific weather conditions. Progress is moving along, however, and you can see the results of our prescribed fires along the eastern edge of Route 1 and along Dewey Thomas Rd.



Before the Habitat Restoration Pine Straw Contract Clearance at Cheraw



After the Habitat Restoration Pine Straw Contract Clearance at Cheraw

The heavy fuel loads and the large oaks also mean that it's very difficult to eliminate the hardwoods with fire alone (especially without damaging and/or killing the large pine trees). In order to make better progress against the hardwoods, several other land management techniques have been utilized and will then be followed up with fire.

- Four hundred acres were “fuel-chipped” in 2002, meaning that the large longleaf pines were left in place while all of the hardwoods were cut, chipped up into pellets for wood stoves, and removed from the site.
- In 2005, approximately 345 acres were entered into a habitat restoration pine straw contract, meaning that a contractor is allowed to rake pine straw for a few years in exchange for cutting down the hardwoods and applying an herbicide to the remaining stumps to prevent the hardwoods from resprouting.
- In 2007, 110 acres of non-native slash pine (it had been planted after a severe ice storm over 30 years ago) were sold for harvest. This area will be replanted with the native longleaf pine. An adjacent ten acres of overly thick loblolly pines were also included in this sale and was thinned closer to the level preferred by RCWs.
- Also in 2007, 490 acres were enrolled into a second habitat restoration pine straw contract.
- Finally, in 2007, approximately 900 acres were evaluated for overstory thinning potential. Part of this is now being prepared for sale while other parts may be sold in the next several years. This will help to restore the longleaf pine forest's historical conditions by opening up the forest canopy and allowing sunlight to reach the forest floor.
- In 2009, we expect to enroll several hundred more acres into habitat restoration pine straw contract. These areas will drastically improve the habitat around two abandoned RCW clusters which will then be spruced up with cavity inserts next winter.

In addition to these habitat restoration efforts at Cheraw, we have also evaluated the condition of the existing RCW nest cavities and installed 25 new artificial cavities since 2002. After the habitat efforts made in 2005 and the installation of many new cavities, four birds were even moved from the neighboring Sandhills State Forest.

COME SEE IT FOR YOURSELF

Come out to these two properties and see everything for yourself! Our mechanical efforts will be ongoing for several years to come and periodic prescribed fire will be a permanent addition to our land management approach. We expect that our RCW populations will positively respond to these management efforts, and their numbers should begin to grow over the next few years as they react to the changes.

2016 Field Trips

Locations subject to change. Check the monthly newsletter, website, or Facebook page for trip details.

February 27th

Cheraw State Park - Chesterfield County
Jeff Kline

March 26th

Gene and Carolyn Ott's Farm - Laurens County
Kathy Boyle and Wayne Grooms

April 23rd

Cooks Mountain - Richland County
Caroline Eastman

May 28th – overnight / weekend

Francis Marion Forest / Hellhole Bay Wilderness - Berkeley County
Paul Kalbach

June 25th

Rosebrock Park - Dorchester County
Paul Kalbach

July 23rd

Craig's Pond – Barnwell County
(alternate Baker State Park - McCormick County)
Kathy Boyle and Wayne Grooms

August 27th

Bear Wallow Trail - Henderson and Buncombe Counties
Rita Zollinger

September 24th

Goodale State Park and Savage Bay - Kershaw County
Rita Zollinger

October 22nd

Hilton Pond - York County
Rita Zollinger

November 19th

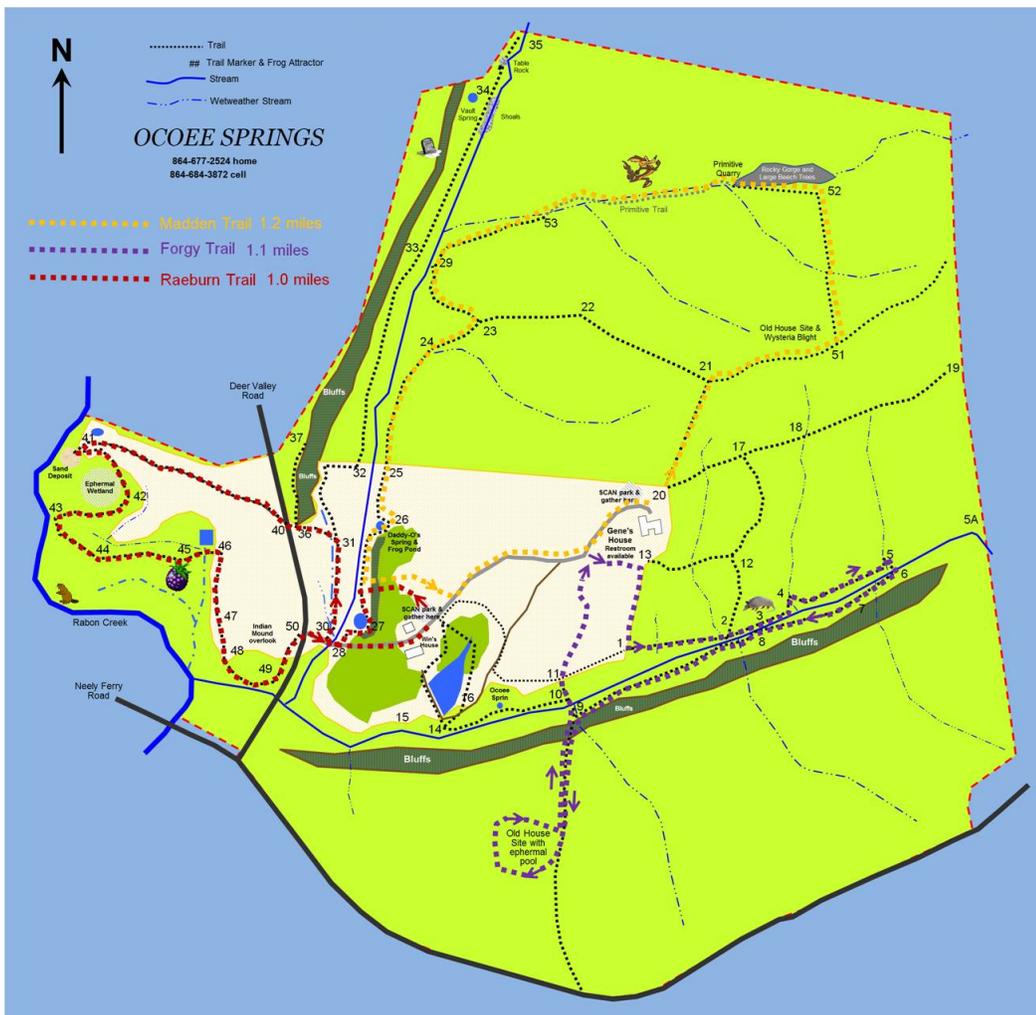
Bates Ferry Tract - Richland County
Caroline Eastman

December 10th

Vereen Memorial Park - Horry County
Jeff Kline

SCAN trip to the Gene & Carolyn Ott Farm, Laurens County, March 26, 2015

On Saturday March 26 we will meet at 10:30 AM at Gene and Carolyn Ott's house in the Piedmont of Laurens County. The house sits in the center of the property, so it's a good starting point for any of several walks we might take. Botanists may want to head north along the Madden Trail to visit the "Rocky Gorge and Large Beech Trees." The terrain here is very steep though, so to get to the base of the beech bluff it's best to continue westward to the vicinity of the quarry and then turn and follow the creek back upstream. We'll be on the lookout for some rare plants: *Cypripedium pubescens* - Yellow Lady's-slipper, *Panax quinquefolius* - Ginseng, *Trillium rugelii* - Southern Nodding Trillium, and *Viola tripartita* - Three-parted Violet. These species have been reported from Laurens County though not from the Ott property.





Eventually we'll continue downstream, toward the confluence with the larger south-flowing creek, and along the way we'll encounter a large den, perhaps made by ... a coyote? Explore with care!

Extensive wetlands are across the road to the west, and bottomlands occupy the southern portion of the property. The "old house site with ephemeral pool" looks especially intriguing! Gene will be telling us more about the property history and other features when we get there.

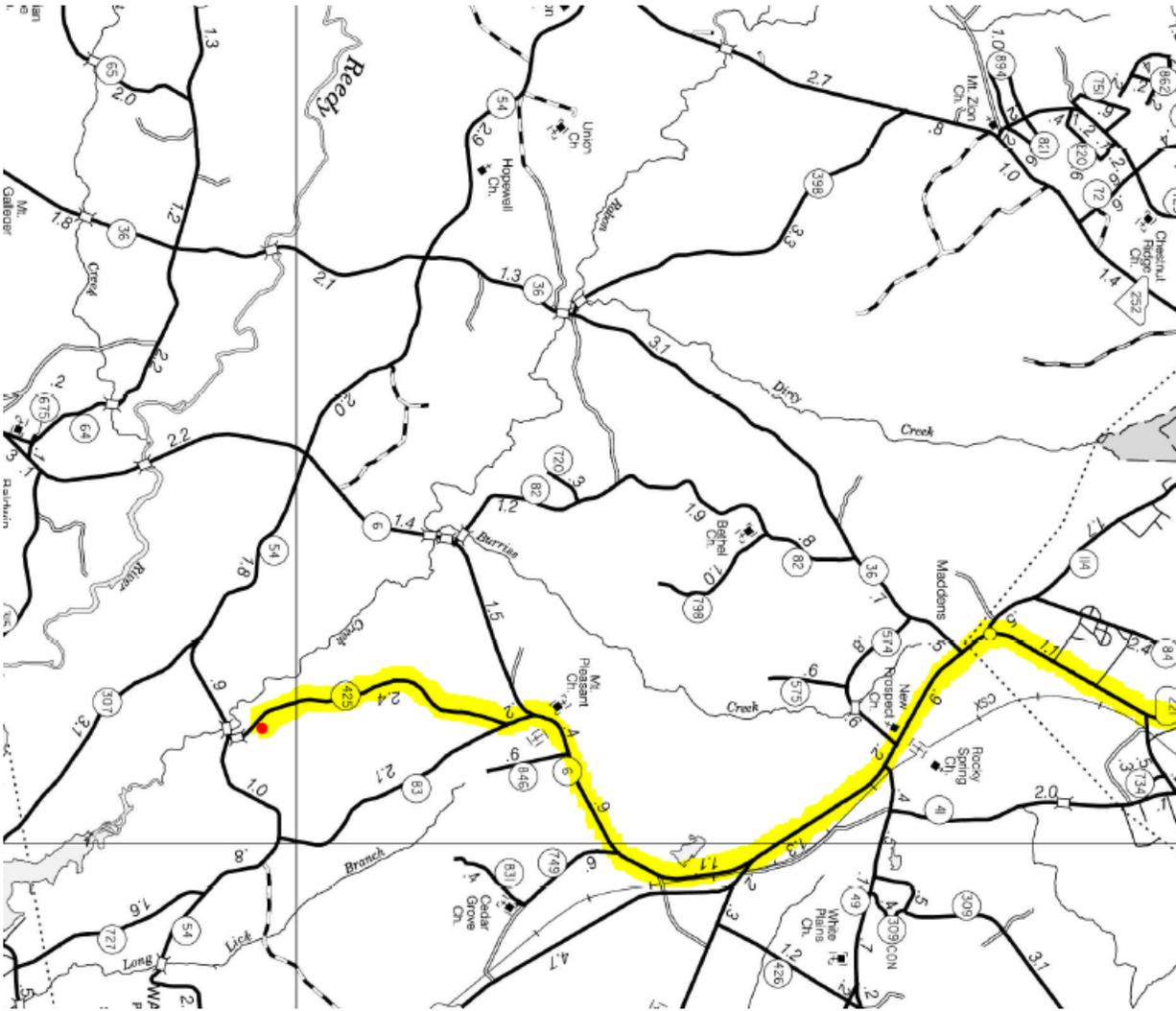
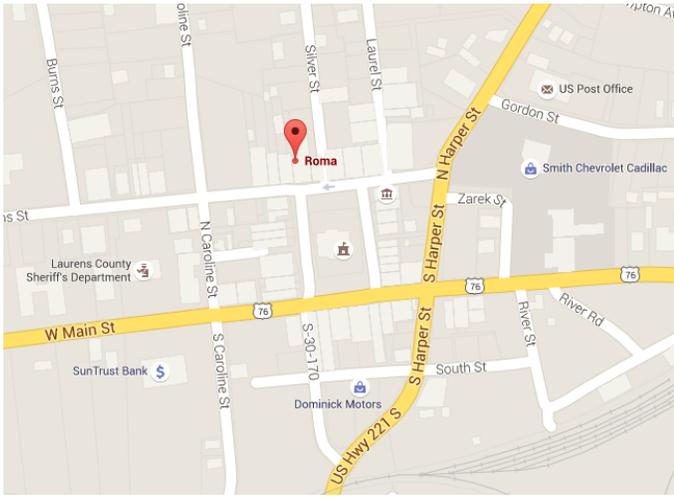
How to get there:

From the junction of US-76 and US-221 in Laurens, go 6.3 miles south on US-221 and bear right (southwest) onto State Road S-30-6 (Indian Mound Road). Go 2.5 miles southwest on S-30-6 and bear left (southeast) onto State Road S-30-83. Go 0.3 mile southeast on State Road S-30-83 and bear right (south) onto State Road S-30-425 (Deer Valley Road). Go 2.3 miles south on State Road S-30-425 and turn left (east) onto Ocoee Springs Drive. The white house at the top of the hill is Gene's (see map on next page).

Where to eat:

Roma
Italian food (no online menu currently available)
105 E Laurens St, Laurens, SC, 29360
(864) 984-6899

From the junction of US-76 and US-221 in Laurens, go one block north on US-221 and turn left (west) onto West Laurens Street. Go about two blocks and the restaurant will be on the right.



**Cheraw State Park
Chesterfield Co., SC
February 27, 2016**

This list was produced by SCAN from sightings produced by SCAN members and is subject to revision as needed. An asterisk (*) indicates a new sighting for SCAN. Send any changes or corrections to Jan Ciegler at jciegler@sc.rr.com. Please indicate exactly to which flora/fauna list you are referring. Thank you.

FLORA

Carolina Bog Clubmoss

Pseudolycopodiella caroliniana

Bracken

Pteridium aquilinum

Longleaf Pine

Pinus palustris

Pond Pine

Pinus serotina

Loblolly Pine

Pinus taeda

Atlantic White-cedar

Chamaecyparis thyoides

Bald-cypress

Taxodium distichum

Broomsedge

Andropogon glomeratus

Carolina Wiregrass

Aristida stricta

Switch Cane

Arundinaria tecta

Common Little Bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium scoparium

Curlyleaf Yucca

Yucca filamentosa

Catbrier

Smilax bona-nox

Whiteleaf Greenbrier

Smilax glauca

Common Greenbrier

Smilax rotundifolia

Jackson-brier

Smilax smallii

Southern Magnolia

Magnolia grandiflora

Sweetbay

Magnolia virginiana

Swamp Bay

Persea palustris

Sweet Gum

Liquidambar styraciflua

Mockernut Hickory

Carya tomentosa

Common Wax-myrtle

Morella cerifera

American Beech

Fagus grandifolia

Southern Red Oak

Quercus falcata

Laurel Oak

Quercus laurifolia

Blackjack Oak

Quercus marilandica marilandica

Willow Oak

Quercus phellos

Post Oak

Quercus stellata

Black Oak

Quercus velutina

Tag Alder

Alnus serrulata

Eastern Pearlwort

Sagina decumbens

Knawel

Scleranthus annuus

Common Chickweed

Stellaria media

St. Andrew's Cross

Hypericum hypericoides

Yellow Pitcherplant

Sarracenia flava

S. Purple Pitcherplant

Sarracenia purpurea venosa

Sweet Pitcherplant

Sarracenia rubra rubra

Ti-ti

Cyrilla racemiflora

Spotted Wintergreen

Chimaphila maculata

Shining Fetterbush

Lyonia lucida

Staggerbush

Lyonia mariana

Sparkleberry

Vaccinium arboreum

Elliott's Blueberry

Vaccinium elliottii

American Persimmon

Diospyros virginiana

Horsesugar

Symplocos tinctoria

Parsley-piert

Aphanes australis

Black Cherry

Prunus serotina serotina

Carolina Wild Indigo

Baptisia cinerea

Honesty-weed

Baptisia tinctoria

Flowering Dogwood

Cornus florida

Swamp Tupelo

Nyssa biflora

Big Gallberry

Ilex coriacea

Little Gallberry

Ilex glabra

American Holly

Ilex opaca opaca

Red Maple

Acer rubrum

Carolina Jessamine

Gelsemium sempervirens

Cross-vine

Bignonia capreolata

Tiny Bluet

Houstonia pusilla

Coral Honeysuckle

Lonicera sempervirens

Elephant's-foot

Elephantopus tomentosus

Coastal Dog-fennel

Eupatorium compositifolium

Grass-leaved Golden-aster

Pityopsis graminifolia latifolia

Fragrant Rabbit-tobacco

Pseudognaphalium obtusifolium

Common Dandelion

Taraxacum officinale

FAUNA

Blueberry Stem Gall (wasp)

Hemadas nubilipennis

Southern Cricket Frog

Acris gryllus

Pied-billed Grebe

Podilymbus podiceps

Double-crested Cormorant

Phalacrocorax auritus

Turkey Vulture

Cathartes aura

Black Vulture

Coragyps atratus

Wild Turkey (tracks, sign)

Meleagris gallopavo

Mourning Dove

Zenaida macroura

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Melanerpes carolinus

Downy Woodpecker

Picoides pubescens

Red-cockaded Woodpecker

Picoides borealis

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Sphyrapicus varius

Blue Jay

Cyanocitta cristata

American Crow

Corvus brachyrhynchos

Carolina Chickadee

Parus carolinensis

Tufted Titmouse

Baeolophus bicolor

White-breasted Nuthatch

Sitta carolinensis

Brown-headed Nuthatch

Sitta pusilla

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Regulus calendula

Eastern Bluebird

Sialia sialis

Northern Mockingbird

Mimus polyglottos

Yellow-throated Vireo

Vireo flavifrons

Pine Warbler

Dendroica pinus

Eastern Towhee

Pipilo erythrophthalmus

Chipping Sparrow

Spizella passerina

Dark-eyed Junco

Junco hyemalis

Gray Squirrel

Sciurus carolinensis