



Conserving Land
for People

June 23, 2003

The Honorable Ernest F. Hollings
United States Senate
125 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hollings:

I am writing today on behalf of The Trust for Public Land in support of legislation to expand the boundaries of the Congaree Swamp National Monument and designate it as a National Park in the State of South Carolina.

As you know, the Congaree Swamp National Monument was authorized as a unit of the National Park Service in 1976. The park rests on a floodplain of the Congaree River and is recognized as an International Biosphere Reserve, National Natural Landmark, Wilderness Area, and "Globally Important Bird Area," with over 90 tree species including old growth loblolly pines and bald cypress. The Congaree hosts the nation's largest tract of old-growth bottomland hardwood forest, and contains some of the tallest trees in the eastern U.S., with some pines reaching over 160 feet. The Congaree's outstanding natural resources are frequented by outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy canoeing, kayaking, picnicking, camping, and fishing.

In 1994, the expansion area was the subject of a biological and hydrological evaluation to determine its resource value for protection and addition to the Congaree Swamp National Monument. The report concluded that expanding the National Monument to include this area would conserve a unique hydrological system integrally connected to the hydrology of the Congaree River and that of lands currently within the Congaree Swamp National Monument. Once protected, these lands would form a conservation corridor connecting the Congaree with other protected state and federal lands further downstream.

Additional protection of the Congaree Swamp National Monument would not only play a critical role in enhancing South Carolina's recreation needs, it would further enrich South Carolina's impressive historic and cultural resources as well as its significant wildlife and ecological resources.

The Trust for Public Land commends your leadership on this matter and looks forward to working with you on enacting such legislation.

Sincerely,

Alan Front
Senior Vice President

The Trust for Public Land
660 Pennsylvania Ave., SE, Suite 401
Washington, D.C. 20003

(202) 543-7552
Fax (202) 544-4723

www.tpl.org

