

Francis Marion National Forest

South Carolina



Carolina Bays

Southern Region, USDA Forest Service

Date:06/11/2002

Highlights

Carolina Bays have been a source of fascination for visitors to the lowcountry of South Carolina since the time of their discovery. They are fragile and unique ecosystems: wetland habitats that exhibit a variety of vegetative components. Some bays are open-water depressions dotted with pondcypress trees and rimmed by pitcher plants and sundew. Some bays are thick pocosins of shrubby sweet bay, fetterbush and pond pines. They can be 1 acre or thousands of acres.

Carolina Bays are symmetrical. They are generally oval depressions and the long axis always runs from northwest to southeast. The geological origin of these wetlands remains a mystery.

Only about 200 of South Carolina's original 2,600 natural bays have remained in their pristine state. Many have fallen victim to drainage and clearing. There are about 25 well-defined Carolina Bays on the Francis Marion National Forest.

The map shows some of the Carolina Bays that can be explored on the forest. All of the bays on the forest are protected.

Some of the unique plant and animals to discover include:

- * Amphibians
- * Blueflax
- * Carnivorous plants: trumpet pitcher plant and sundew
- * Pond pine
- * Pond cypress
- * Songbirds

For More Information

Wambaw Office

P.O. Box 788

McClellanville, SC 29458

Phone: (843) 887-3257

Fax: (843) 887-3848

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Directions: See map for directions to some of the Carolina Bays.

Camping: Not permitted.

Safety: During temperate months, be prepared for biting insects and high temperatures.

Further reading: Porcher, R.D. 1980. Final Report: Inventory of populations of proposed endangered and threatened species of vascular plants on the Francis Marion National Forest in Berkeley and Charleston Counties, South Carolina. Contract No. 53-43ZP-8-00008, USDA Forest Service, Southern Region, Atlanta, GA.

Witherbee Office

2421 Witherbee Road

Cordesville, SC 29434

Phone: (843) 336-3248

Fax: (843) 336-4789

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Sewee Visitor and Environmental Education Center

5821 Highway 17 North

Awendaw, SC 29429

Phone: (843) 928-3368

Fax: (843) 928-3828

TDD: (843) 928-3833

Hours: Tuesday–Sunday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Francis Marion & Sumter National Forests

4931 Broad River Road, Columbia, SC 29212-3530 (803) 561-4000



CAROLINA BAYS OF THE FRANCIS MARION NATIONAL FOREST

