

Southeast Georgia Gems: Big Hammock and Canoochee Bogs

June 17, 2017

Field Trip Leader: Lisa Kruse

Description: Big Hammock Wildlife Management Area is outstanding for its geologic features and natural community diversity. Big Hammock is an isolated sand ridge rising nearly 100 feet from the expansive Altamaha River floodplain. The ridge supports the largest known population of state-endemic Georgia Plume (*Elliottia racemosa*), which will be in bloom. Changing topography brings stark contrasts. Extremely dry, old-growth longleaf sandhill scrub showcases abundant lichens, scattered grasses and wildflowers on a white-sand canvas. The slope descends through gnarled evergreen oak forest to pond cypress-tupelo strands. In between, sheltered mesic flats have grand white oak, spruce pine, and American hornbeam. Big Hammock is also a National Natural Landmark Site on the register of the National Park Service, dedicated in 1976.

Canoochee Bogs is the Botanical Society's inaugural habitat conservation project; Bot Soc is a contributing partner in their protection efforts. These bogs are unique in their high plant diversity; blooms are present all season. We expect to see three species of pitcher plants including the Coastal plain purple pitcher plant, which occurs only at this site in Georgia. Other likely treats are milkweeds, sandhills ironweed, water cowbane, bog asphodel, and- if blooming early- possibly orange-fringed orchid or even snowy orchid.

The trip will consist of two parts. In the morning we will caravan from Glennville to the Big Hammock nature trail, where we will spend about two hours. We will rest for lunch, either a picnic or indoors as we caravan to Bellville near the Canoochee Bogs for a pit-stop for refreshments and a restroom. From Bellville it is about a 1-mile drive to the bogs. We will spend about 2 hours at the bogs. Expect to finish about 4 PM.

Bring: Snacks and/or lunch and plenty of water! Sun protection and insect repellent recommended.

Meeting location:

10 AM, McDonalds in Glennville, on Hwy 301/25 (S. Veteran's Blvd) about 0.5 miles south of the intersection of Hwy 144 (Barnard St.).

Walking Difficulty: Easy to moderate with slopes and sandy trails. At Big Hammock we will be on a nature trail. At the bogs we will be mostly in low herbaceous vegetation, maximum about 1 meter tall. There is a stream crossing where feet may get wet depending on water levels.

Bathroom Facilities: None at the walking sites, but available during lunch break.

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