ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

Nestled in the dense, forested swamps of the Outer Coastal Plain of South Carolina is a river-bottom land of hardwoods and sloughs known as Wambaw Swamp Wilderness. Little Wambaw Swamp Wilderness lies on the Lowcountry’s Francis Marion National Forest which spans over 259,000 acres of a lush landscape rich with history, wildlife, and unique opportunities. The Wilderness contains an area characterized by a creek swamp whose wetlands are often covered with freshwater tables that fluctuate from just below the mucky soils, to more than a foot during rainy seasons. The shallow ponds, sloughs, and creeks hold darkened, brown water colored by decomposing humus, minerals, and tannic acid. Native plant communities such as old-growth bald cypress water tupelo, bottomland hardwood/yellow pine, and sweetgum oak thrive here. The surrounding bald cypress, water tupelo, sweetgum, oak, and bottomland hardwood/yellow pine forests range in age from 101-120 years.

FLORA & FAUNA

Thick briars and impenetrable walls of vegetation provide a haven for a diverse array of wildlife. Whitetail deer seek, roam and forage across the uplands and swamps. Black bear, wood duck, fox, snake and raccoon can also be found. Expected small mammals include several species of bats, mice and rats. Song and migratory birds seek the unique marshland, wetland and savannah habitats, while eastern wild turkey seek the hardwood and mixed conifer hardwood forests with scattered openings and seasonal marshes. The rare, endangered red cockaded woodpeckers are known to nest in proximity to the Wilderness and forage in its pine uplands. In the understory and open areas dominated by water - wild iris, orchids pickerelweed, and carnivorous plants can all be found among the dense grasses and sedges.

THREATS

Main threats include adjacent private lands and proximity of the four lane U.S. Hwy 17 on the south and southeastern borders of the Wilderness provide no buffer between the boundary and developments.

ACCESS

The public is invited to hunt, camp, canoe, hike, and fish; however, no trails or trail navigational aids exist at this site.

SOURCES

U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Francis Marion National Forest