

The following information is for the group leader/organizer requesting to visit the Black River Cypress Preserve (BRCP). Please read the following information and share with your group prior to scheduling a visit.

Mission statement and purpose:

The Black River Cypress Preserve (BRCP) is a privately owned nature preserve. Its primary purposes are conserving flora and fauna, protecting the ecological functions of the Black River and its watershed, and preserving the aesthetic beauty of the river and its associated forests.

Over the past four years, BRCP has sponsored ongoing systematic investigation into the history and natural resources of the area, including ornithological surveys, botanical inventories, herpetological surveys and historical research. BRCP has been under development for the past six years and is currently in the second and final phase of buildout. The goal is to create the finest semi-tropical preserve in the world in the field of education and community benefit.

Who we are:

BRCP is privately owned and managed by a charitable family foundation, Butler Conservation/Park Builders International (BC/PBI). BRCP is not affiliated with any local/community, County, or State Park(s) and is not open to the public. BRCP has received thousands of students and adult group visitations through invitation and/or an appointment only visitation policy.

BRCP is complementary to and distinct from the proposed Black River State Park, which is progressing under the leadership of SC Parks, Recreation and Tourism, the Open Space Institute, The Nature Conservancy, and the Pee Dee Land Trust. BC/PBI has been a major funder of conservation on the Black River, supporting land protection by the organizations listed above, along with Ducks Unlimited, the Lowcountry Land Trust, and the Winyah Bay Conservancy. BC/PBI has also been an early and major funder of land acquisition for the Black River State Park, having provided grants to buy three of the four parcels currently under State ownership.

BRCP serves as an operating base for the leadership organization working on the Black River. The BRCP has illustrated the potential for sustainable recreation on the river and will continue to play that role in the future. BRCP and its predecessors have been operating outdoor education programs along the Eastern Seaboard, in South America and in Scotland for the past fifteen years.

What to expect:

Currently, the policy of the Preserve is to welcome invited visitors from a wide range of groups, and by appointment only (via website), who agree to follow protocols that protect the natural, historic, and scenic resources of the property. A minimum of six visitors per group is required and will be accompanied by BRCP staff while on the Preserve. The staff and invited guests will maintain the pristine conditions of the park.

Groups that choose to kayak (at least 6 participants required) will hire licensed guides who have been pre-approved by the Preserve. Visitors can use bicycles on the extensive network of trails, a

few of which have been designated exclusively for walking. The Preserve offers a special experience of quiet meditation, birdwatching, plant identification, and education about the history of the area's natural resources as examined, catalogued, and revealed over the past 300 years.

As the Preserve formally opens, we expect to host at least one group per day. To maintain the quality of the experience at the Preserve, we expect total daily visitation not to exceed 100. The Preserve will close every year in July-August and December-January when the weather is less hospitable and for maintenance and improvements.

Visitation Policies at the Black River Cypress Preserve & Peninsula Tract:

The Black River Cypress Preserve and Peninsula Tract properties are privately owned and does not have set hours of operation, nor is it open to the public. There are only two ways to visit the property(s):

1. Request and receive approval for a group outing at cypresspreserve.org/contact-us
2. Accept an invitation extended by BRCP public relations outreach.

Group Visitation Expectations and Policies:

- The Black River Cypress Preserve has a group only visitation policy. We require at least 6 people per group in order for a visitation request to be considered. BRCP requires that a guide accommodate all groups.
- When visiting BRCP all participants will be required to hike and/or bike to the various points of interest on the property. If your activities include kayaking, you will be required to hike and/or bike to the launch/landing. Shuttling participants with motorized vehicles is not an option. Please communicate this to your entire group so there is no misunderstanding.
- No motorized vehicles are permitted anywhere other than the parking lot.
- We ask that the group organizer/leader review and understand the rules and policies thoroughly. The group leader/organizer is responsible for providing their group with a description of the planned activities prior to their arrival. Each participant should feel comfortable with activities prior to arrival/committing.
- The activities offered at BRCP may not necessarily fit everyone's abilities.
- There is no cost for visiting BRCP. However, if you make a request to kayak, your group will be responsible and required to directly pay one of the certified guides offered. Rates available upon request.
- Biking, hiking, and kayaking are at visitor's own risk. All individual guests are required to sign a liability waiver prior to arrival.

Park Rules & Etiquette:

- Motorized vehicles are not permitted beyond the visitor parking lot.
- Bikes are stationed in the visitor parking lot. There are multiple bike sheds located throughout the property (see map). Bikes can be used and dropped off at any of the bike shed locations.
- Please leave bikes at one of the bike sheds prior to leaving the property. In the event a bike has a flat tire or some other issue, please notify your guide or a staff member.
- Hiking and biking are the only means of transportation allowed on the trails and roads. There are no exceptions.
- Personal bicycles may be used, however, E-bikes or any other motorized vehicles are not permitted.
- Picnicking is encouraged at BRCP. We are a carry in/carry out facility. Leave no trace. All food, drink, and other waste must be carried out.
- There are two pavilions along/near Swampside Trail available for guest use: Sweetbay Pond Pavilion & Johns Lake Pavilion (refer to map). There is a port-a-let and bike shed at Sweetbay Pond Site.
- Grand Junction has a bike shed, vault toilet, and picnic table.
- We encourage everyone to use a recyclable water container. Please refrain from using plastic bottles on the property.
- Pets are not permitted, nor should they be left in one's car.
- Smoking, hunting, fishing, or metal detecting is not permitted.
- No collection of plants or animals. This includes collecting wildflowers or other wild plants and their seeds, collecting mushrooms, and otherwise removing or damaging any plants or trees.
- There are several private buildings that are marked with an "Authorized Personnel Only" signs. Please heed request.
- Once you reach Sweetbay Pond on Swampside Trail, the remainder of Swampside Trail is designated for **hiking only**.
- We attempt to schedule multiple groups each day and parking is limited. We ask that all individuals in your group not to linger after your visitation is complete.

Helpful items to wear and bring:

- Supportive and comfortable footwear
- Recyclable water bottle
- Protection from the sun. We encourage everyone to wear a hat and sunscreen.
- A backpack is helpful to carry water receptacle, map, raincoat, or an extra layer of clothing.
- Binoculars
- EpiPen or something similar for those with severe reactions to insect bites.