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**Naturalist Rudy Mancke to take part in Great Swamp Sanctuary Day in Walterboro**  
*Mancke to lead tour of the only “braided creek” swamp accessible to the public*

**Walterboro, S.C.** – The Friends of the Great Swamp Sanctuary will play host to renowned naturalist Rudy Mancke on March 12, 2011, in celebration of Great Swamp Sanctuary Day. The event will take place in the City of Walterboro, known for both its historic charm and abundant natural resources.

Starting Saturday at 9 a.m., Mancke will share his knowledge and love of ecosystems with a “Walk and Talk” in the Great Swamp Sanctuary. The walking tour begins at the entrance of Deterville Street (off of S. Jeffries Boulevard at Live Oak Cemetery). The event is free and open to the public.

Later that day, Mancke will identify artifacts brought in by visitors during the “What is This?” session. Each guest may bring up to two items, and the cost is \$5.00 per person. The event will be held from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and will take place at Waterfall Memorial Park in the 200 block of E. Washington Street. In the event of rain, the location will shift to the Walterboro Fire Department, located behind City Hall at 242 Hampton Street.

The evening will come to a close with a program by Mancke entitled “Love of the Lowcountry,” followed by a reception. This program will run from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. and will be held at the Colleton County Auditorium, located at 494 Hampton Street. A reception will follow from 7:15 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the S.C. Artisans Center, located at 318 Wichman Street. The cost is \$10.00 per person for the program and the reception. All proceeds will benefit the Great Swamp Sanctuary’s Discovery Center. For further information about Great Swamp Sanctuary Day, contact Celeste Stone at 843-549-7658.

Mancke grew up in Spartanburg, S.C., and spent his childhood exploring habitats while roaming the woods and meadows of the Piedmont. Once he found an item that sparked his curiosity, he would peruse books in the library until he identified his newly-found treasure. He loved identifying plants and animals of the area. He continued such studies at Wofford College before going on to earn a graduate degree at the University of South Carolina. He has since received honorary doctorate degrees from the College of Charleston, Winthrop University, and Wofford College. After serving as the natural history curator at the South Carolina State Museum for 10 years, Mancke hosted SCETV’s “NatureScene” from 1978 until 2002. He retired in 2008, but still continues to teach about flora and fauna in his Natural History of South Carolina course at the University of South Carolina, where he has been appointed Carolina’s First Naturalist in Residence. In addition to teaching this course, Mancke hosts field trips for various groups during the year.

Located within the ACE Basin, the East Coast's largest estuarine preserve, the Great Swamp Sanctuary is a nature based center that combines history, culture, recreation, and education in a singularly southern lowlands setting. The 842 acre sanctuary, which may be the only "braided creek" swamp accessible to the public, features a network of boardwalks, hiking, biking, and canoe trails that provide viewpoints for observing the diversity of wildlife inhabiting the black water bottomland.

Established in 1826, the City of Walterboro is hailed as the "front porch of the Lowcountry," with its historic charm, plentiful natural resources and warm Southern hospitality. The area around the city, rich with forests and vast quantities of water, is also known as the gateway to the ACE Basin, one of the largest undeveloped estuaries on the East Coast. Centrally located between Charleston, Savannah, Hilton Head, and Columbia, the city is home to many historic buildings, antique stores, the Great Swamp Sanctuary and the S.C. Artisans Center, designated by the state's legislature as the "Official South Carolina Folk Art and Craft Center." In addition, the city is home to the largest general aviation airport in the state. Walterboro serves as the economic heart of Colleton County and maintains a small-town Americana atmosphere. For more information, call 843-549-2545 or visit [www.walterborosc.org](http://www.walterborosc.org).

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