

Capt. Bo Gator's

A Unique Look at the Cooper River

By Marc Rapport

Jim Rozier knows the Cooper River Lowcountry as well as anyone, and now he's sharing it with everyone willing to go for a two-hour ride in his 25-foot "john boat on steroids."



Rozier, the Berkeley County Council chairman and supervisor, operates the new Capt. Bo Gator's Boat Tours on the upper reaches of the Cooper River.

The tour service uses a john boat base to take up to a couple-dozen passengers on twice-daily trips year-round, covering about 22 miles of river, swamps, rice fields and colorful history lessons.

"We leave from Moncks Corner and go down the river past a dozen old plantations and rice fields, then back up past Mepkin Abbey and on to the head of the Santee Cooper tailrace canal, which has the tallest single-phase lock in the world, at 75 feet high," Rozier says.

Rozier said his self-described "john boat on steroids" provides a comfortable ride for the passengers and his team of guide captains, who regale their guests with views of wildlife and history-filled sites, and with "true, always true, stories about the past around here. We don't have to embellish things. The truth is amazing enough."

There's plenty to tell. Henry Laurens, the first president of the Continental Congress, who spent time imprisoned in the Tower of London, had his plantation along the river. And Francis Marion, the legendary Swamp Fox, fought the British from these swamps.

Then there's the scenery—vast rice fields, lush riverbank foliage often in bloom, deep cypress swamps and a vast array of birds, turtles and alligators—"sometimes 15 feet long," Rozier says.

"The beauty and scale of what we have here is hard to understand and appreciate until you see it from water level," he says. "Even people who have lived here their whole lives are surprised when they see it for the first time from the river."

Helping people appreciate this special Lowcountry setting also helps preserve it, Rozier adds—an effort that's already well established.

"I think it's important to realize that 48 percent of our county is already under preservation or conservation

easements of some kind, and in my years on council, I've been privileged to be able to play a part in helping make a lot of that happen," says the longtime councilman who grew up hunting and fishing on and around the river.

"And now, when we go on those tours, it's great to be able to look around and know that my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be able to see the same things I'm

looking at today," says Rozier.

"And to me that's very exciting." Capt. Bo Gator's Boat Tours also offers a smaller pontoon and customized charters on the Cooper and into Lake Moultrie. The service, based next to Gilligan's at the Dock Restaurant in Moncks Corner, also offers package deals with other attractions in Berkeley County that may include picnic lunches and more.



Find out more...

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