



SPRING 2014

For Land's Sake!

A Look Back at the Beginning

Twenty years ago, the Edisto Island Open Land Trust was only an idea to protect the views and vistas on Edisto Island for future generations to enjoy. A few members of the Charleston County Comprehensive Land Use Committee (CCCLU) were becoming aware of the need to work with developers to ensure the landscape would remain intact. After several CCCLU conversations, a small group was created, led by Jenks Mikell. He researched other land trusts in the area in order for the process to begin for the establishment of a land trust to protect Edisto Island. The by-laws from the Beaufort Land Trust were used as a pattern and the trust was on the way to becoming a reality. In November 1994, the Edisto Island Open Land Trust received our federal exemption approval and the land trust was officially established. Our first office consisted of a cardboard box carried around in the trunks of our cars!

The first task at hand was to begin preserving land either by fee simple purchase or by holding voluntary conservation easements. Dr. and Mrs. Ritchie Belser generously hosted one of our first events at Sunny Side Plantation with Robert Marvin, noted landscape architect, as our speaker. With a large turnout at this event, our membership was growing and interest was spreading about the

Views and Vistas Preservation Project. Before long, the trust was able to purchase property on Highway 174 which began our efforts to secure the open space necessary to preserve the quality of the Island. Because of the conservation work that has been done by a number of groups working together over the years, Edisto has over 50% of the Island land preserved to date. The spectacular view upon crossing the Dawhoo can largely be attributed to the efforts made by our land trust.

Good development combined with strategic conservation is important for any community. My property is protected with a conservation easement that preserves the views and vistas for the next owner. I have been involved with the Edisto Island Open Land Trust for 20 years, hopefully helping Edisto retain its natural beauty. We have indeed progressed significantly in 20 years' time from a cardboard box to our office located on National Scenic Byway 174 with a full time Executive Director and another full time staff member and I am thrilled to have been a part of the important conservation work we have all done.

Ellen Unger, EIOLT Founding Board Member

Historic Middleton Plantation Property Preserved



The Edisto Island Open Land Trust (EIOLT) added one more exciting conservation project to our inventory of protected properties at the end of 2013. The Clarkson Family placed a conservation easement on Middleton Plantation, agreeing to restrict any future development on the historic nine acre property. Thanks to the Clarksons' generosity and the financial support from the Charleston County Greenbelt program, this iconic location on Store Creek will be preserved forever!

The protection of Middleton Plantation goes beyond its immediate waters. The conservation easement, by restricting future development and additional impervious surfaces, prevents future sources of non-point pollution, sedimentation, and noise/light disturbance. This, in turn, protects Store Creek, St. Pierre Creek, and the South Edisto River estuary.

There is a great deal of cultural significance to this property as well. Conserving our standing plantation homes on Edisto Island helps residents and visitors understand and experience an important part of our heritage by providing a living exhibit of our past. Ensuring that the remaining acres surrounding the historic home at Middleton will not be developed is an important part of the public benefit of this project. EIOLT is committed to further land conservation on Edisto Island, and more willing landowners like the Clarksons combined with continued financial support from land trust members and business donors will help ensure more of Edisto is protected for our future generations to enjoy.

"Middleton has been in our family for over 110 years. My mother grew up here and loved this place. Her dream was to have the house and the yard stay intact and in the family for as long as possible. Stephanie and I are fortunate that she entrusted the family home to us. There is not a way that we can guarantee that the property will stay in the family forever but by placing an easement with EIOLT on the property we can certainly ensure that the home and surrounding property stay intact." Townsend Clarkson



Townsend and Stephanie Clarkson

EDISTO ISLAND OPEN LAND TRUST

Mission

*To preserve and protect
lands, scenic vistas, heritage
and conservation resources
of Edisto Island for future
generations, including
education and outreach.*

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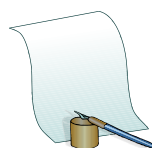
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A Note from John

As we enjoy our Lowcountry Spring and already plan for Summer, our Board and staff are working hard to maintain some of the wonderful momentum generated in 2013, momentum that you helped create! You are receiving this newsletter because you believe in our conservation efforts and find our mission important enough for financial support, our events exciting enough to attend and our projects worthy enough to volunteer your time. This year marks our 20th Anniversary and we could not be more proud of what we have accomplished since our formation in 1994 and we hope you share our enthusiasm.

We still have much to do! We have identified many properties on Edisto that are strategically important for protection and we continue to work with willing landowners to conserve these areas in order to protect the scenic vistas along Highway 174, ensure the best water quality along beautiful stretches of our marsh and meandering creeks, and preserve property surrounding historic houses and working farms that all contribute to Edisto Island's rural charm and distinctive quality of life.

There is a great deal of passion in this conservation community to continue preserving more of what we love, and we are extremely fortunate to have so many loyal members contributing to the land trust and helping us achieve this goal. This spring newsletter includes our annual list of members and sponsors, and offers us a chance to express how deeply grateful we are for your support. Thank you so very much for all you do and enjoy the rest of Spring!

John Girault
Executive Director

Welcome New Board Members

Doug MacIntyre, a retired information technology executive, is a native South Carolinian who is a graduate of West Point and also received a master's degree from Boston University. Doug is most interested in helping the land trust protect the island from harmful development that detracts from its natural beauty, with sensitivity to the needs of Edisto Island residents.



Doug MacIntyre & Rowland Alston

Rowland Alston retired after 42 years with Clemson University. You will know him as the host of SCTV's "Making It Grow". He personally has over 300 acres of property under conservation easement with the Congaree Land Trust. He comes to our Board with a sincere interest in helping us expand the acreage we have under conservation easements.

Events and Activities

Spring has sprung and we are ready to embrace the great outdoors. Our Back to Nature Excursion Series began with a Spring Migratory Bird Walk presented by Dr. Sidney Gauthreaux, Professor Emeritus of Ornithology, Clemson University and member of EIOLT Board of Directors. These walks with Dr. Gauthreaux are always popular and his next event will be scheduled soon, so keep an eye on our website for more birding trips later in the season.

Legacy Live Oak Celebration



We invite you to join us on Sunday, May 18 at 2 PM for our Legacy Live Oak Dedication Ceremony and Conservation Celebration. It will be held at the barn on beautiful Indigo Farms, 2944 Highway 174, which is one of our protected properties. Rowland Alston, new EIOLT Board member and former host of SCTV's "Making It Grow", will give our keynote address. Following will be a reception under the canopy of the live oak trees. Come out and enjoy the day with us!

Ecosystem Nature Walk

Come out for a special visit to one of our privately owned conservation easement properties that showcases so many of the natural features we work so hard to protect. Enjoy a nature walk through a variety of habitats beginning with a look at our tidal creeks and wetlands, so critical to our economy and culture, then we will transition through several agricultural fields where we will experience a variety of plants, insects and butterflies, and we will finish the walk in a sea island forest to explore the variety of flora and fauna found within. This trip will be led by **Billy McCord**, environmental ecologist recently retired after more than 30 years with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. Billy has given a number of outdoor lectures for EIOLT in the past and they always book quickly. The event will be held on Saturday, June 7, from 9:30 AM to Noon, at a cost of \$25/EIOLT Members, \$30/Non-members. Advance payments are required. Please call 843.869.9004.



Auction and Cocktail Party

If you don't do anything else this year, mark your calendar and get your tickets now for the Auction and Cocktail Party on Friday, June 20 at the Club Room at the Plantation Course. Last year's event surpassed our expectations for the auction items, the number of you who attended, and for the fun we all had! Tom Crawford of the Channel 4 weather team will once again be our celebrity auctioneer. There will also be many silent auction items under the tent for your consideration. Fabulous trips, handmade artisans' pieces from John Martin, Roy Smoak and others, catered dinners, golf packages and many other great offerings will be featured. The cost is \$50 per person and includes fabulous food and an open bar. Visit our website, edisto.org for reservations. Or call 843.869.9004.

Tomato Open Golf Tournament



June 21 is the date for the 7th Annual Tomato Open Golf Tournament. Always a hit with the golfers, the tournament includes greens fees, breakfast, lunch and on-course refreshments. It is played in the "Shamble" format, and includes Hole In One prizes for a chance for a new car from Rizer Chevrolet Buick GMC, a Million Dollar Shoot Out, a \$5,000 Putting Contest, and Longest Drive and Closest to the Pin prizes! Our website, edisto.org, has all the details for team registration.

We hope you enjoy the long awaited spring weather and that you make your plans now to join us for all these fantastic upcoming events.



Please find enclosed a return envelope if you would like to make an additional tax deductible contribution.

YOUR GIFTS SUPPORT OUR CONSERVATION WORK – THANK YOU! ANNUAL CONTRIBUTORS IN 2013

We make every effort to ensure all entries are correct, however occasionally errors do occur. Please contact us if you feel a mistake has been made.

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		John Kennelly	Mike & Jennifer Schock	



Legacy Live Oak Park Receives New Benches

Thanks to a dedicated group of Botany Bay “Grunt Tuesday” volunteers, we now have two beautiful wooden benches at our Legacy Live Oak Park on Highway 174. They are situated to take advantage of the peaceful view and surroundings of this special property. This little slice of heaven also contains our Legacy Live Oak sign with the names of all who have had a live oak tree planted in their honor. We offer our deep appreciation for the hard work by these folks and invite all of you to visit the park and “come set a spell”. Bring your camera for some great sunset shots, or a good book for a read in the shade of the overhanging branches.

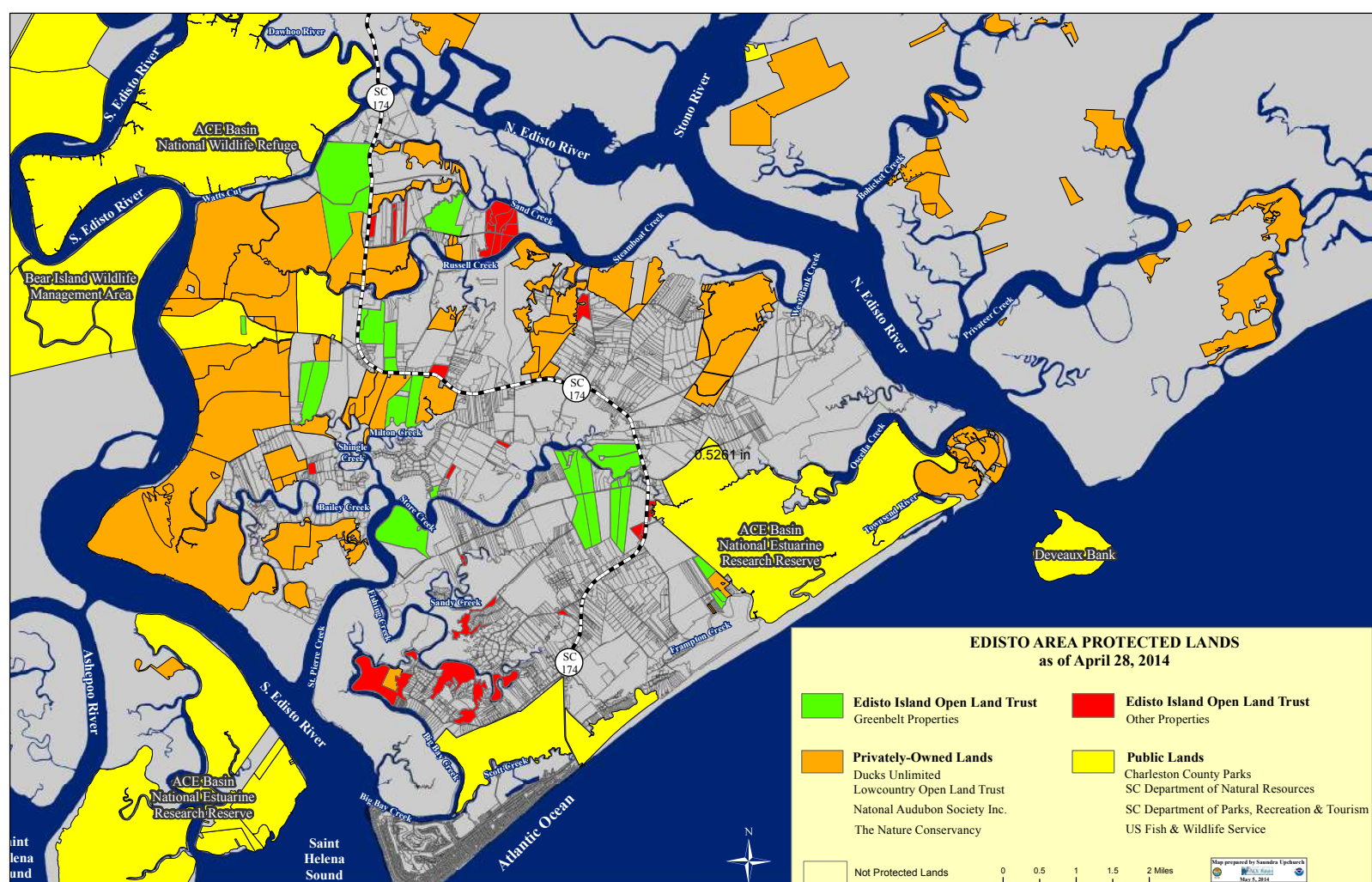
Our Partners in the Greening of Edisto Island

Nine years ago, Charleston County voters approved a ½ cent sales tax measure and the bond referendum that followed, to provide, in part, grant funds for preserving green space in the County including rural lands and farms. In 2007 the Charleston County Greenbelt Fund was launched. EIOLT was eagerly one of the initial land trusts in line for the first cycle of Greenbelt grants in 2007, and by the end of that first round, we were successful in securing grant funding to purchase conservation easements on three tracts, comprising 400 acres of Edisto farmland and forests. One of these was a threatened tract that had been approved for imminent subdivision and development, and another was a farmland tract that was preserved in partnership with The Nature Conservancy. That first year and ever since, the South Carolina Conservation Bank has been a critical partner in providing additional funds for leveraging the Greenbelt funding on EIOLT's projects.

At the end of 2013, over 3,400 acres on Edisto Island had been placed under conservation easement as a result of Greenbelt funding. The following were the tracts of land that EIOLT was successful in preserving, with the help of both Greenbelt and South Carolina Conservation Bank funds, and half of these projects were closed in the year 2009:

Belser-Sunny Side Property	Graves Ashe Pointe Farm	Creek Farm	Middleton Plantation
Thompson-Sunny Side Property	Newton-Frogmore Property	Keefe Farm	Sand Creek Farm
Sasser-Sunny Side Property	Peters Point Plantation	Britton Property	Indigo Farms
Rice-Sunny Side Property	Hastings-Governors Bluff	Polk Farm	Paradise Shrimp Farm

Edisto Island sits within the easternmost edge of the ACE Basin, an estuarine basin fed by the Ashepoo, Combahee, and Edisto Rivers. EIOLT is a member of the ACE Basin Task Force, which is a small group of land trusts and conservation non-profits, public agencies, and private landowners who have collaborated to preserve over 200,000 acres in the ACE Basin Project. EIOLT Task Force partners were successful in acquiring Greenbelt funding to preserve seven Edisto tracts over the last few years. All of these lands are under conservation easement, which is the most cost-effective way for lands to be preserved with public funding. Easements are also an option that gives landowners continued ownership and use of the land, while providing excellent financial benefits for the development rights relinquished. One Edisto landowner who sold many of his development rights, now held in an easement with EIOLT, was quoted as saying it was "the best decision I've ever made." Not only did he receive some payment for the easement (partial value), but he was able to write off the remainder of the easement's appraised value on his annual tax returns; AND he had the peace of mind of knowing that his land will always be protected as a family farm and landscape of natural beauty.





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Legacy Live Oak Program

Give a Lasting Gift



Live oaks draped in Spanish moss are one of Edisto's most enduring images. The Edisto Island Open Land Trust's vision is to restore the majestic oak trees along Highway 174 that have been lost over the years. The *Legacy Live Oak* program provides a way to honor family and friends while contributing to Edisto's historic beauty. 134 *Legacy Live Oak* trees have been planted along Scenic Highway 174.

All *Legacy Live Oak* donations are fully tax deductible as charitable contributions. With a contribution of five hundred dollars, a *Legacy Live Oak* tree will be planted along Scenic Highway 174 on Edisto Island in honor or memory of a loved one. This is a lasting way to honor those who give meaning to our lives, while perpetuating a legacy for the future. Information on this program is available on our website, edisto.org, or by calling our office, 843.869.9004.