

For Land's Sake!

Hutchinson House Heritage Project



Hutchinson House 2017

In case you haven't heard, we bought the historic Hutchinson House! So why would a land trust do that? The Edisto Island Open Land Trust borrowed \$100,000 from the Coastal Community Foundation's Conservation Loan Fund, and purchased the Hutchinson House and ten surrounding acres in the fall of 2016, with the intent of protecting the land and the home. This has been widely received as an extremely worthy project, but historic building restoration isn't exactly our expertise. Why are we, a land trust, venturing into this project? Because it isn't just about the house. It's about the land the house stands on, and the people who owned, lived and worked on that land. It is impossible to separate the natural history and ecology of Edisto Island from the story of land ownership on the island. The remarkable account of the original land and homeowner is an important part of Edisto's heritage.

Henry Hutchinson, the initial owner, was born into slavery in 1860. After the end of the Civil War, Henry and his family were freed from slavery, but were then free to do what? Henry's father, James Hutchinson, recognized that renting land would never allow true freedom. James began advocating for African Americans to own land and to vote, two key ways to gain economic, political and social footholds in American society.

We have not discovered yet exactly how James Hutchinson was able to acquire large tracts of land on Edisto Island, but we do know he was described as a successful farmer, businessman, and community leader. James deeded some of his land to his children, including Henry Hutchinson. By 1885, the year the house was built, Henry was also successful in business, owning land and a steam-powered cotton gin. Henry and his wife raised four children in the house, which remained in the family until it was purchased by EIOLT. Hutchinson descendants still own some of the adjacent property.



Hutchinson House 1900

Our initial goal was the conservation of this 10-acre parcel, which is located in an area of high priority for protection, and to save the historic home from falling into the wrong hands. Both of those goals have been achieved and we are moving into the next phase of stabilizing the structure. We are excited to be collaborating with some outstanding local resources, starting with the American College for the Building Arts, which is going to be completing an evaluation and documentation of the house, helping to identify the scope of restoration. Many other individuals and organizations have come forward to offer expertise and support, including The Slave Dwelling Project, The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission and the Preservation Society of Charleston, just to name a few. The Edisto Island Historic Preservation Society has been an invaluable resource from the very beginning of this project, and the Edisto Museum is an excellent starting point for those interested in learning more about the Hutchinson family while we determine the future of this project. We look forward to gaining knowledge and sharing it with you along the way.

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.

STAFF

John Girault
Executive Director

Melinda Hester
Administrator

Tom Austin
Land Protection Associate

Melinda Hare
Outreach Coordinator

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mark T. Crawford
President

Randy Snow
Vice President

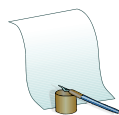
Ellen E. Unger
Secretary

John I. Kirven, Jr.
Treasurer

Robert E. "BoBo" Lee, Jr.
Past President

Sidney A. Gauthreaux
James O. Kempson, Jr.
Burnet R. Maybank III
I. Jenkins Mikell, Jr.
Sue H. Thornton
Fisher C. Walter, Jr.
Lindsey Young

Edisto Island Open Land Trust
Post Office Box 1
547 Highway 174, Suite 7G
Edisto Island, SC 29438
Phone: (843) 869-9004
Fax: (843) 869-7820
info@edisto.org
edisto.org



A Note from the Executive Director

Is it me, or has there been a whole heck of a lot going on this summer? With the season coming to an end, I have been intrigued by how many folks are commenting on how this one has flown by. I could not agree more, by the way! For the land trust, I know it has to do with how much activity we have had this year, especially over the past few months. With you and each of our donors' help, we have continued to protect more land and pursue other properties of importance; hosted a lecture on man and nature's impact on our landscape; taken adventurous types out kayaking in Big Bay Creek; taught all about Blue Crabs and we've thrown two great big fundraising events in June. Yes, this summer has zipped on by.

Another project also has been keeping us busy, as you see on the cover of this newsletter. We have embarked upon a one-of-a-kind opportunity. The Hutchinson House has stood as an iconic structure for many years, enthralling passersby with its green and red colors. It is often draped in purple wisteria and it is no wonder it has intrigued so many. Admirers have been photographing, painting and, especially, worrying about its future. Others of you did not know the house existed until now. The many stories of struggle and triumph connected to this land and house will be preserved and told in honor of the Hutchinson family and all the African American families who worked to acquire land on Edisto during this important period of transition after the Civil War that has often been overlooked.

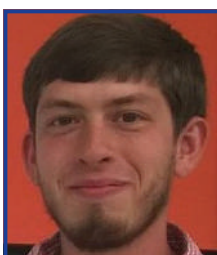
We do not expect to slow down this fall, with the Young Naturalist program starting back up as school begins this month and our many nature programs and outings, the annual Oyster Roast on November 5 and the pursuit of continued land conservation. Thank you for staying along for the ride and supporting all the efforts we make to ensure Edisto remains one of the greatest places to live and visit.

We Welcome Our New Staff Members



Melinda Hare

Melinda Hare and her husband Bob have achieved the dream of many, they retired full time on Edisto in 2015. Because of the combination of Melinda's passion to educate children and her love of all things natural on Edisto, she began volunteering with the Young Naturalist program in 2016. When the Education Outreach position became available last fall, she agreed to step in to lead the program for the land trust. With over 30 years in the Lexington-Richland 5 school system, she brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, making learning an adventure to remember for our future generations.



Tom Austin

Tom Austin joined us this spring as our new Land Protection Associate. He is a recent Clemson graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology. His depth of expertise identifying our local flora and fauna has already made him a huge asset as he catalogs the habitat types on our protected properties. On weekends, Tom is the Caretaker of Roxbury Park, where he continues to share his knowledge and help connect visitors to the natural world.

Young Naturalist News

How do you grow a “Citizen Scientist”? The Edisto Island Open Land Trust’s Young Naturalist program offers a monthly environmental learning group to our students at Jane Edwards Elementary as well as local home schooled students. It takes a village, and that is exactly what we have supporting this program. Thanks to you and other generous donors, the Young Naturalists will continue exploring Edisto for another year. After a successful fundraising night during our auction in June, we raised over \$12,000 for the children’s program.

The last programs of the school year took place at two of our favorite locations, the State Park Learning Center and the beach. The students learned about sea level rise and its impact on our local salt marshes. They participated in hands on experiences with climate maps, a demonstration of the earth’s temperature variations and a walk in the marsh to learn about plants and animals that would be affected by rising sea levels.



Fossil hunting with Ashby Gale

In May, Young Naturalists were treated to a fun fossil adventure led by Ashby Gale of Charleston Fossil Adventures. Learning about the giant creatures who lived in the Pleistocene Era and the ocean creatures who swam our sea sparked lots of curiosity and conversation among our young “Citizen Scientists”.

This year our theme is “Water, Water, Everywhere”. We will explore the Edisto watershed, learn about water quality, test saltwater and freshwater areas on our island and investigate how water quality affects humans and animals where we live. Studying the impact of plastics in our oceans is also of major importance as we grow our next generation of Citizen Scientists.



Searching for animals that could be affected by climate change

Thanks to the generous support of you, our donors and volunteers, we are building the future generation of “Citizen Scientists” who can work to protect and preserve this place we all call home. **If you would like to donate to our program or to volunteer with us, please call or email Melinda Hare, Education Outreach Coordinator at outreach@edisto.org.**



30 More Protected Acres Added to Indigo Farms

Mike and Cathy Furlow purchased Indigo Farms in 2008 and immediately began to restore the grounds, repair the barn and enhance the landscaping on the property. You will likely see them out cutting the grass or tending to their pecan tree grove, while they continue to maintain one of the prettiest views along National Scenic Byway 174. We are excited to tell you that they recently added an adjacent 30-acre parcel to the farm, which they promptly protected with the land trust as part of their nearly 200 acres of conserved land.

The conservation of this new Furlow tract will also preserve important upland and wetland habitats for wildlife. These habitats, particularly the forested wetlands, perform a number of important ecological functions including floodwater abatement, ground water recharge, pollutant filtration, and suspended sediment trapping. This preserves the ecological integrity of St. Pierre Creek downstream as well as the larger South Edisto River estuary. We are most grateful to the Furlows for their donation of this acreage that increases the corridor along Scenic Byway 174.



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



Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Charleston, SC
Permit No. 137

Post Office Box 1
Edisto Island, SC 29438

843-869-9004
www.edisto.org



Calendar of Events

Annual Oyster Roast

Sunday, November 5, Sand Creek Farm

Wear your favorite team colors!

It's football season!

Details at edisto.org



Back to Nature Events

August 31 • Butterfly Walk with Dr. Dennis Forsythe

October 7 • Bird Watching with Dr. Sid Gauthreaux

October 21 • Fly Fishing Clinic with Captain John Irwin

November 4 • Botany Bay Beach Exploration

Back to Nature Events Sponsored by



Oyster Roast Title Sponsor

