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Sign up for our eNews at edisto.org

Our Mission: To preserve the rural quality of life on Edisto by protecting lands, waterways, scenic vistas, and heritage through conservation and education.

STAFF

- John Girault
Executive Director
- Melinda Hester
Administrator
- Tom Austin
Land Protection Specialist
- Melinda Hare
Outreach Coordinator
- Tapley Baxter
Donor Relations Manager

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For Land's Sake SPRING 2021



A PARTNERSHIP FOR THE COMMUNITY

Tom Austin, Land Protection Specialist

The Edisto Island Open Land Trust announces our collaboration with Edisto Island Youth Recreation (EIYR) that includes an important conservation easement on their Edisto Island Community Recreation Area project. EIYR is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization on the Island whose mission is to provide opportunities for athletics and recreational activities for the youth of Edisto Island and neighboring communities. They maintain the Pat Stuart Ball Field on Indigo Hill Road and have regular after school programs. With our assistance, EIYR successfully applied to the Charleston County Greenbelt Program for the purchase of land to build a community recreation area, for use by all of Edisto Island.

make it a public recreation center and community hub for all of Edisto Island.

EIYR is only allowed to utilize a fraction of the land to build the facilities and infrastructure. Their plan is to design their complex to minimize damage to the environment and the land's conservation values. Knowing this, they approached EIOLT to help identify important and sensitive habitat before applying to the Greenbelt Program. The Greenbelt application was approved in July of 2020 with the requirement that a conservation easement be placed on the property to ensure its protection into the future.

Not only does this mean the permanent protection of the property's habitat, wetlands, and most productive farm land, it also creates an opportunity for much needed amenities for the health and well-being of the people of Edisto Island. Much like the Hutchinson House, this is an example of community conservation at work, a process when a land trust expands its mission to bridge the gap between the needs of the environment and the needs of its community to work towards a mutually beneficial project. With this conservation easement, we hope a brighter future for Edisto Island will be created and protected.



Online Auction brought to you by **Synovus Private Wealth**



The Beck family winning most creative Porch Party photo during 2020's Party on Your Porch Social Media Contest.

HOORAY FOR NEW STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS



We are thrilled to announce we have some new faces who have our same love of the land to help us protect more of Edisto! The generosity of our donors has made it possible for us to bring on a new, full-time Donor Relations Manager, and **Tabley Baxter** is already doing amazing things.

Tabley is originally from North Carolina but has made South Carolina her home since 1994. A graduate of the College of Charleston, she has worked in several industries over the years. She has worked as an event planner, real estate sales, print and digital marketing sales with her husband's business and most recently in the senior care field. She now combines all of these experiences to help further the work of EIOLT. Tabley lives on Johns Island with her husband Bo Baxter and two children, Justice and Campbell.



On the volunteer front, we have three wonderful new board members who are carving out their own precious time to help us further our mission and we are grateful for their commitment.

Greg Estevez is a native of Edisto Island and he has been a part of our Hutchinson House committee for over a year. Greg served for 20 years in the United States Navy and retired in 2004, and then went on to work in the criminal justice system helping council criminal offenders in Florida. He is the great-great grandson of Henry Hutchinson, who built the Hutchinson House. Greg's family spans six generations or more on Edisto and his deep appreciation for the history and culture of Edisto and the Sea Islands of South Carolina has driven him to author two books that highlight the Gullah Geechee history, culture, and influence on Edisto and throughout the United States.



Barbara Neale was born and has lived almost her entire life in the Lowcountry of South Carolina and has lived in the Edisto area in the Town of Meggett since 1994. Barbara and her husband, Tom Hutto, placed their property under conservation easement with EIOLT in 2006. She has been serving on the EIOLT Land Protection Committee and is currently working with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (SCDHEC-OCRM). Her background applying regulations to the general public combined with extensive experience in regional and national coastal organizations gives her a unique perspective that provides valuable expertise at the local, state and national level.



Aleta Riesberg was graduated from Porter-Gaud School before pursuing a degree in business with an emphasis in marketing at Florida State University. She completed her final semester in December 1989, (3 months after Hurricane Hugo) at the College of Charleston. Aleta has been the President of Contractor Nail and Tool since 2003 and she is also the owner and manager of Anchor Line Properties. Aleta has been volunteering on our Hutchinson House and Auction committees. She and her husband Brian and three children, Adam, Lauren and Annie, have been volunteering at land trust events for over seven years and always bring amazing energy and happiness to each auction and oyster roast.

We have enclosed a return envelope if you would like to make a donation.

VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS WITH CONVERSATIONS IN THE FIELD

Connecting everyone who loves Edisto through educational outreach programs has always been an important part of our mission. In previous years at the Educational Learning Center at Edisto Beach State Park, we have offered in-person lectures with guest speakers in a variety of fields. Field trips have taken place visiting a beekeeper's property, kayaking on Big Bay Creek, birding on local protected properties and learning how to crab in our local creeks. During the past year, these options were no longer available but the need to provide educational experiences were even more important as we worked to stay connected to each other and our environment. Melinda Hare, Education Outreach Coordinator, created the concept of "Conversations in the Field" and a new method of delivering programming was born.

Our first episode took our viewers, literally, into the farm fields of Rooting Down Farms, an organic farm on Edisto Island. Harleston Towles, a young and successful farmer, engaged and enlightened us all about the importance of local farmers, regenerative farming and this agricultural model.

Lindsey Young, EIOLT board member, treated us to a virtual kayaking experience in Big Bay Creek and St. Helena Sound in Episode 2. Using her local knowledge as a kayak guide and master naturalist, we took a leisurely paddle, seen through her eyes, to view our local waterways and wildlife.

We showcased the botanical environment surrounding the Hutchinson House with our Land Protection Specialist and biologist, Tom Austin, in Episode 3. Learning about this small but mighty ecosystem gave us all a new appreciation for the biodiversity surrounding us.

The Conversations in the Field episode just released features Dr. Sidney Gauthreaux, local ornithologist and past Chairman of the EIOLT board. Sid's vast knowledge and expertise in the field of bird migration and radar tracking technology made for a fascinating discussion. We even came up with another episode idea about the decline and disappearance of so many bird species.



Lindsey Young paddling with Katie.



Harleston Towles showing off his produce.

Because of our generous donors, we have been able to purchase new video and recording equipment to use in the field. Our future lineup of conversations is in the planning stages now. We hope to bring you with us as we visit a unique mariculture operation with our Executive Director, John Girault, and a behind the scenes tour of Botany Bay Plantation with the lady who knows it best, Bess Kellett.

We are excited to begin hosting future live events soon, but for now, these recorded video programs will keep Edisto lovers connected, even though you cannot always travel to the island in person. If you missed any of our first Conversations in the Field, be sure to visit our website, edisto.org and follow the links to our YouTube channel and learn more. Let's Stay Connected!