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

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- Melinda Hester
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- Tom Austin
Land Protection Specialist
- Krystal Parsons
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- Denzel Wright
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MELLON FOUNDATION GRANT COMES AT PIVOTAL MOMENT

If you have not heard about this impressive grant for the Hutchinson House historic site, prepare for some big news, and if you have heard, here are some further details about this amazing funding. Before we dig into the details of the grant award, let us clarify the current situation and status of the project.

Thanks to so many generous donors over the past two years, the vast majority of the money has been raised for the final phase of restoration of the historic Hutchinson House, with construction scheduled to begin late this summer. This final phase includes the construction of the original three-sided porch, and the rear single story room on the back of the house, as well as the full restoration of the interior of the house. Completion is anticipated to be in spring of 2024.

We had already begun to set our sights on the funding needed for the next critical phase of this project, which would be the planning, design and implementation of the interpretation of this compelling story of the house and land. Just in time, thanks to the tremendous help from our top grant writing volunteer, Barb Habegger, we have been awarded a Mellon Foundation grant totaling \$950,000! These funds will be paid out over the next three years and are all dedicated toward supporting the interpretation of the Hutchinson House historic site, including research, design and exhibit installation, programming, and the hiring of a full-time director. This money will not go toward any of the structural restoration or annual maintenance of the house.

This transformational gift is incredibly generous and appreciated. It will provide the resources needed to showcase the Hutchinson House as a centerpiece for telling the full story of the African enslavement, emancipation, land ownership, resilience, and the successes one family was able to attain, on the site where all these things took place on Edisto.

Since purchasing the property in 2016, EIOILT's primary focus has been saving this endangered historic house from collapse, and then restoring it, as closely as possible, to its original appearance. While completing these tasks, the land trust has also been able to protect nearly 20 acres of land in an area on Edisto that has been a high priority for land conservation. This historic site will provide a location for us to introduce visitors to the significance of how Edisto has been guarded from over development and the need for even further preservation measures.

Funds from the Mellon Foundation have already been put into action. A second phase of archaeological work is being completed, and we have begun the search for a full time Hutchinson House Director, who will help oversee the expenditure of this grant award over the next three years while preparing the site for full public access and interpretation.

Image: Young Naturalists celebrate the end of a great year of adventures while showing some love for the Mellon Foundation grant.



30 Years in the Making!

2024 will mark EIOILT's 30th Anniversary. We are beginning to make plans now for some exciting ways to celebrate, including a special publication to mark the occasion. If you have any stories or photos related to our work over the last 30 years, we would love to see them. You can email them to us at info@edisto.org.

Thank you!

SPECIAL AUCTION ANNOUNCEMENT

We are excited to share the news that our annual auction is going to be combined with our annual Oyster Roast, creating what we know will be one exciting and eventful weekend each fall.



This year the Annual Auction will be held online Friday, October 27 and Saturday, October 28. The live auction will take place during the Oyster Roast on Sunday, October 29. Tickets for the roast will go on sale in late August. Our primary reason for making this change was based on our decision to dedicate greater effort and time toward land conservation and other measures to protect Edisto from the rapid growth that has escalated in recent years!

You can expect another fantastic line up of auction items to choose from. We already have secured an entire set of seven Blanton's Gold Bourbon, as well as a week in the Bahamas and other trips and parties. The list of items will continue to grow during the summer, so please let us know if you have something you would like to donate to the auction.

You are the reason for our success, and we thank you for your love of this special place.

HELP US WELCOME DENZEL WRIGHT TO THE EIOLT

Denzel is an Edisto Island native and a product of EIOLT's Young Naturalist experiences. After graduating from Baptist Hill High School in 2016, he was awarded a Clemente Pinckney scholarship by the Coastal Community Foundation. He attended the College of Charleston and pursued a Bachelors of Art in Studio Art. Throughout his undergraduate time, Denzel explored several fields of study within the liberal arts curriculum. One of these experiences, his summer internship with the Charleston Audubon Society, introduced him to the world of conservation. This internship gave him a tour of multiple Lowcountry organizations... Beidler Forest, Coastal Expeditions, Charleston Waterkeeper and SCDNR, where he was able to shadow the work and conservation efforts of these groups. Although Denzel's studies were focused on photography and drawing, he's always had an appreciation for cultural and environmental conservation. Denzel spent two years in the workforce and a year in Houston, Texas since his graduation from the College of Charleston in 2020, and he still practices photography in his spare time.

"I am happy to be back home and excited to be a part of the team here at the land trust. In the few weeks I've been here, I've encountered many fulfilling experiences and continue to appreciate all the work that is being done for our community. I am eager to offer my contribution in keeping Edisto... Edisto."



We have enclosed an envelope if you would like to make an additional donation or renew your support!

TWO NEW CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

The Edisto Island Open Land Trust is happy to announce that we have helped two landowners place their land under conservation easement! Both easements were several years in the making and both closed in the latter half of December of 2022. The first easement conserves 9.9 acres of upland and maritime forests along Peters Point Road on Edisto Island. It preserves the view-sheds of Peters Point Road and Store Creek, prohibits further development of the property, and borders two of EIOLT's existing conservation easements.

The second easement conserves 87.4 acres of pasture lands, maritime forests, hardwood floodplain wetlands, and salt marshes along Little Britton Road in Meggett, SC. This easement contains dozens of grand live oaks, some over 200 years old; borders an existing 300-acre conservation easement; protects the viewsheds from Little Britton Road, Toogoodoo Creek and Tom Point Creek; prohibits commercial development; and preserves its continued use as working farmlands. These two easements, along with four parcels EIOLT purchased along the Edisto Island National Scenic Byway, mean that EIOLT was able complete six new preservation projects in 2022!

Collectively, these projects exemplify EIOLT's current land protection initiatives on and beyond Edisto Island. Our core focus area is, of course, Edisto Island, where we endeavor to protect every acre we can and seek out new means to improve the conditions of our natural resources through creative measures. We protect land on Edisto both by working with willing landowners, large and small, to create

conservation easements for their lands and by accepting donations or purchasing ecologically significant land for preservation and public access. We are also always looking for new ways to facilitate our land stewardship work across the Island, improve the conservation values of the lands we own, and to provide assistance to our conservation easement landowners so they can best manage the natural resources on their properties.

Beyond Edisto Island, EIOLT is making strides to establish a lasting presence in the Toogoodoo Creek watershed as well in the Towns of Meggett, Hollywood, and Ravenel. We're expanding to staunch urban sprawl from West Ashley by providing landowners, of all sizes and throughout southern Charleston County, the help they need to protect their land, forever. All six of these projects in 2022 were funded by grants from the Charleston County Greenbelt Program and through donations from members like you.

If you own property on Edisto Island or in the greater Hollywood, Ravenel, and Adams Run area and are interested in learning how EIOLT can help you create a lasting legacy on your land, please don't hesitate to reach out! Tom and John will be happy to meet with you, walk and talk your property, and help you determine what conservation options meet your vision for your land.

You can reach Tom Austin, Land Protection Specialist, at land@edisto.org

