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@edistoislandopenlandtrust

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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.

#### **STAFF**

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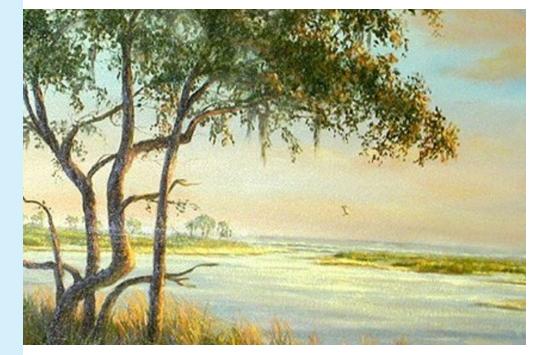
Tom Austin Land Protection Specialist

**Krystal Parsons** Young Naturalist Coordinator

Denzel Wright Outreach Coordinator

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### **30** Years in the Making!

2024 will mark EIOLT'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!

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## **MELLON FOUNDATION GRANT COMES AT PIVOTAL MOMENT**

If you have not heard about this impressive grant for the This transformational gift is incredibly generous and Hutchinson House historic site, prepare for some big news, appreciated. It will provide the resources needed to and if you have heard, here are some further details about showcase the Hutchinson House as a centerpiece for telling the full story of the African enslavement, emancipation, this amazing funding. Before we dig into the details of the land ownership, resilience, and the successes one family grant award, let us clarify the current situation and status was able to attain, on the site where all these things took of the project. place on Edisto.

Thanks to so many generous donors over the past two Since purchasing the property in 2016, EIOLT's primary years, the vast majority of the money has been raised for focus has been saving this endangered historic house from the final phase of restoration of the historic Hutchinson collapse, and then restoring it, as closely as possible, to House, with construction scheduled to begin late this its original appearance. While completing these tasks, the summer. This final phase includes the construction of the land trust has also been able to protect nearly 20 acres of original three-sided porch, and the rear single story room land in an area on Edisto that has been a high priority for on the back of the house, as well as the full restoration of the interior of the house. Completion is anticipated to be land conservation. This historic site will provide a location for us to introduce visitors to the significance of how Edisto in spring of 2024. has been guarded from over development and the need for We had already begun to set our sights on the funding even further preservation measures.

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 Habhegger, 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.

# OPEN LAND TRUST

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.* 

## **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!

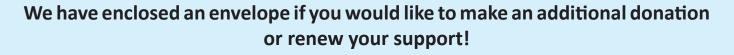
You can expect another fantastic line up of auction items to choose from. We already have secured an entire set of seven Blanton's Gold Bourbon, as well as a week in the Bahamas and other trips and parties. The list of items will continue to grow during the summer, so please let us know if you have something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



## **TWO NEW CONSERVATION EASEMENTS**

The Edisto Island Open Land Trust is happy to announce conservation easements for their lands and by accepting that we have helped two landowners place their land donations or purchasing ecologically significant land for under conservation easement! Both easements were preservation and public access. We are also always looking several years in the making and both closed in the latter for new ways to facilitate our land stewardship work across half of December of 2022. The first easement conserves the Island, improve the conservation values of the lands 9.9 acres of upland and maritime forests along Peters we own, and to provide assistance to our conservation Point Road on Edisto Island. It preserves the view-sheds easement landowners so they can best manage the natural of Peters Point Road and Store Creek, prohibits further resources on their properties. development of the property, and borders two of EIOLT's existing conservation easements.

Beyond Edisto Island, EIOLT is making strides to establish a lasting presence in the Toogoodoo Creek watershed as well The second easement conserves 87.4 acres of pasture in the Towns of Meggett, Hollywood, and Ravenel. We're lands, maritime forests, hardwood floodplain wetlands, and expanding to staunch urban sprawl from West Ashley by salt marshes along Little Britton Road in Meggett, SC. This providing landowners, of all sizes and throughout southern easement contains dozens of grand live oaks, some over Charleston County, the help they need to protect their 200 years old; borders an existing 300-acre conservation land, forever. All six of these projects in 2022 were funded easement; protects the viewsheds from Little Britton by grants from the Charleston County Greenbelt Program Road, Toogoodoo Creek and Tom Point Creek; prohibits and through donations from members like you. commercial development; and preserves its continued use as working farmlands. These two easements, along If you own property on Edisto Island or in the greater with four parcels EIOLT purchased along the Edisto Island Hollywood, Ravenel, and Adams Run area and are National Scenic Byway, mean that EIOLT was able complete interested in learning how EIOLT can help you create a six new preservation projects in 2022! lasting legacy on your land, please don't hesitate to reach out! Tom and John will be happy to meet with you, walk Collectively, these projects exemplify EIOLT's current land and talk your property, and help you determine what protection initiatives on and beyond Edisto Island. Our core conservation options meet your vision for your land.

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



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