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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

John Girault  
*Executive Director*

Melinda Hester  
*Administrator*

Tom Austin  
*Land Protection Specialist*

Krystal Parsons  
*Young Naturalist Coordinator*

Denzel Wright  
*Community Outreach Coordinator*

Sarah Stroud Clarke  
*Hutchinson House Site Director*

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## HUTCHINSON HOUSE DIRECTOR & STORY TELLING TEAM ANNOUNCED

We are excited to announce the new interpretive team that is funded by the Mellon Foundation. The capacity building grant supports the interpretation of the house and grounds, funds the director position for three years and allows the project to hire a number of interpretive consultants.

EIOLT is thrilled to share the news that Sarah Stroud Clarke (top right) has been hired as the first Director of the Hutchinson House historic site. Sarah comes to the project from a 16-year tenure at Drayton Hall Preservation Trust (DHPT), where most recently she was Director of Museum Affairs and oversaw all curatorial, education, and museum programming work. She was also the Curator of Collections at Drayton Hall, in charge of caring for and interpreting the extensive decorative arts collection, and was the Drayton Hall archaeologist until August of 2021, overseeing all archaeological excavations and laboratory analyses. In 2018, she led the Drayton Hall curatorial team in developing the interpretive spaces of the Sally Reheard Visitors Center and the creation of the inaugural exhibit, *An Agreeable Prospect: The Creation of a South Carolina Palace and Garden* in the Stephen F. and Laura D. Gates Gallery. For the past two years, Drayton Hall has partnered with the Antiques Council in the presentation of the Charleston Antiques Show in which she envisioned and designed the entrance exhibits, *From the Vault: 18th Century Silver* (2022) and *A Century of Ceramics* (2022). Stroud Clarke also guided the changing interpretation at Drayton Hall in recent years to bring the previously untold stories of enslaved individuals to life and incorporate their stories into each aspect of interpretation. This work won the 2021 group/organization award from The South Carolina African American Heritage Commission under the theme “Preserving Our Places in History: Lest We Forget.” Sarah brings her museum expertise to the Hutchinson House historic site to guide the development of a new museum experience and to bring the vastly important stories of the Hutchinson House and surrounding community to life.

In tandem with the hiring of Sarah as the new Director, EIOLT is also thrilled to announce that Joshua Parks (bottom right) is joining the team to lead an oral history and multi-media project. Parks will create digital profiles of core Hutchinson House community members, whose memories are essential to telling the story of the Hutchinson House.



**Oyster Roast Tickets on Sale Now!**  
This event sells out every year, so do not wait.  
Online Auction Friday-Saturday October 27-28  
Oyster Roast Sunday, October 29.  
[www.edisto.org](http://www.edisto.org)  
**All proceeds help us keep Edisto . . . Edisto!**



# GREEN RIVER PRESERVE EXPERIENCE

This past June, thanks to so many wonderful supporters, the Edisto Island Open Land Trust continued the wonderful tradition of delivering several students from our Young Naturalist Program to Green River Preserve in Cedar Mountain, NC. This was the first year that the kids went to the three-week camp program, and it was an experience like no other! All three students have never been away from home that long, let alone over five hours away! The majority of them were a little homesick the first few days, but soon fell into a routine and made amazing friends. So much so that Lydia Woods says, "I made so many friends that I can't wait to see them next year and I hope we are in the same cabin. The very last night around the campfire, everyone was really sad and almost everyone was crying. I can't wait to go back next year and see everyone again!"

They went on morning mentor hikes every day. They were led by mentor naturalists and the goal was to allow the campers to explore forests, streams, and the hidden valleys of the Preserve, which is over 3,400 acres in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The campers learned to use all their senses on these hikes as they played under the waterfalls, crawled into caves, explored archaeological sites, tracked wildlife, and tasted edible plants. Henry Vincent said, "we hiked all over the mountains and saw many wild animals".

In the afternoon, campers were challenged to try new skills which included archery, arts and crafts, skeet shooting, canoeing, a climbing tower, drawing and painting, fencing, field games, fly fishing, low ropes, mountain biking, music, outdoor skills, pottery, theater, and yoga. One of Lydia's favorite things to do was paint, and she even painted part of the outdoor shower! Kiersten also painted part of a school bus. Henry enjoyed the field games as well as the fly fishing.

Part of Green River Preserve's mission is about community. During the campers' time there they are not exposed to any phones or other devices and have more time to connect to each other and to Nature. "As we form a respectful and inclusive community, we guide campers to understand that humans are also part of a larger community of living things we call the natural world. We ask that campers treat the plants and animals they encounter with respect. We ask them to think about their impact on this living community, and practice ways they can learn about, explore, share, and protect the natural world. By focusing on community, we build responsible and respectful members of Earth's ecosystems."



*From Top: Lydia paints a botanical design on a camp art project. Kiersten shows off her reptilian creation. Henry explores the bottom of a freshwater stream.*

# HUTCHINSON HOUSE TEAM - CONTINUED

Joshua Parks is a Black southern museum professional, filmmaker, and photographer, with roots that stretch back over six generations in the Lowcountry of South Carolina. His work analyzes rural communities in the Black Belt South, their relationship to land and water as the basis of subsistence, autonomy, survival and collective memory, and how these elements influence social and cultural development. Joshua has most recently worked with the International African American Museum (IAAM) and has been involved in the production of several core digital exhibitions including Carolina Gold, Gullah Geechee Overview film, Memories of the Enslaved, Praise House, Flashpoint Interviews, and more. He has also worked as the Associate Curator of the Seashore Farmers' Lodge on Sol Legare island.

The third member of the new Hutchinson House team is Denzel Wright (right), who will serve as the Hutchinson House project photographer, documenting the ongoing restoration work of the circa 1885 house, and the creation of the new museum. Denzel is an Edisto Island native and has been working with the land trust for nearly five months now. He has recently discovered that his own ancestors were one of the families who purchased land as part of the same 404 acre cooperative where the Hutchinson House is located.



This is an incredible time for the Hutchinson House project, thanks to so many of you for getting us this far, and the generous funding from the Mellon Foundation, which has made it possible for us to attract such a high level of expertise, local knowledge, and passion for this Edisto treasure.

# COMING TO A NEIGHBORHOOD NEAR YOU

In June, EIOLT invited our neighbors who live around the Hutchinson House over for brunch for an opportunity to learn about the work we're doing around the Island, the land conservation options we can offer landowners, and to participate in a Q&A session or have a one-on-one conversation about their land. John Girault shared our mission and highlighted the projects and programs we offer the Island's community. Tom Austin talked about the value of conservation easements in protecting private lands and the tax incentives and funding opportunities that may be realized by landowners today. Denzel Wright connected with our guests, as a neighbor and relative of many there, by sharing important stories about the neighborhood's history, how things have, and are, changing, and how EIOLT wants to help things change for the better. We had a good turnout, some great discussions, and are excited to start more conservation conversations on Edisto Island!

This was the third neighborhood land conservation drop-in, and they have all been a great success. Our goals with these drop-ins is to meet new landowners face-to-face in their neighborhood to break the ice, put the word out about the programs we offer to landowners, and address any questions or reservations that they may have about land conservation. Ultimately, we're hoping to engage with a wider audience on Edisto Island and sow new seeds of inspiration, which will yield future triumphs for land conservation all throughout the Edisto area. Land conservation could be coming to a neighborhood near you soon! If you're interested in hosting a land conservation drop-in in your neighborhood, whether on Edisto Island or in the Hollywood area, please reach out to Tom Austin by email at [land@edisto.org](mailto:land@edisto.org).

