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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*

Tom Austin  
*Land Protection Specialist*

Krystal Parsons  
*Young Naturalist Coordinator*

Denzel Wright  
*Outreach Coordinator*

Sarah Stroud Clarke  
*Hutchinson House Director*

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This year's Oyster Roast was a success! Thank you all for supporting our biggest fundraiser of the year and shout out to our team of volunteers who worked so diligently behind the scenes. Stay on the lookout for announcements about next year's event. We can't wait to see you all there!

# For Land's Sake 2023 VOLUME III



## WELCOME, BETTER WATER QUALITY

### Tom Austin, Land Protection Specialist

When the Edisto Island Open Land Trust appended the preservation of “waterways” to our mission statement a few years back, it was a straight-forward addition to the suite of conservation work we do to protect the natural resources of our irreplaceable island. However, what wasn't so straight-forward was how to go about identifying sources of water pollution and solving water quality issues in the tidal waters of Edisto Island. EIOILT is hard at work on that task and we're happy to report that major progress is about to be made towards cleaning up our creeks!

Over recent decades, the levels of harmful bacteria in our waterways has dramatically risen, resulting in the closure of many of our public oyster beds, increased frequency of swim advisories on the beach, and concerns about public health and the integrity of the estuarine ecosystems we all depend on. EIOILT spearheaded the effort to get to the bottom of these issues. In December 2022, the Edisto Island Watershed-Based Plan was approved and adopted by SC-DHEC and its creation was funded by an EPA Section 319 grant. The Watershed Plan assessed the possible sources of pollution and made recommendations on potential solutions. Its adoption was the first major step taken towards improving our water quality on Edisto. One major suspected source of pollution the plan underscored was from failing septic systems. While the plan was still being finalized, EIOILT launched a pilot Septic Improvement Program in the summer of 2022, funded by a Healthy Harbors Fund grant, to provide financial assistance for septic system repairs to low-wealth Edistonians in impaired watershed areas. The pilot program was able to repair nine septic systems and

utilized all the funding available to EIOILT in just a mere four months. We were blown away by the need on the Island for a program like this!

EIOILT is happy to announce that this year the Healthy Harbors Fund awarded us a second grant, and we also received grants from the EPA's Section 319 and Charleston County's Community Investment programs to restart the Septic Program in 2024! We will lead the **Edisto Island Septic System Improvement and Assistance Program** for the next three years. We hope to repair at least another 45 septic systems on Edisto Island in impaired watershed areas. We will also undertake an island-wide education and outreach campaign over the life of the program to teach all Edistonians about how to properly care for and maintain their septic systems. Our goal with this program is to get as many damaged septic systems on Edisto Island repaired as possible, decrease their future failure rate, and make a measurable impact on cleaning up our creeks and marshes.

This new and improved septic program is just one part of EIOILT's commitment towards keeping the waters of Edisto Island pristine. We have many peers and partners in the ACE Basin assisting us in this endeavor. They are working on their own projects to independently tackle other aspects of our water quality issues. If you'd like to know about the Septic Program, the Watershed Plan, our partner's projects, and everything else concerning water quality EIOILT is working on, SCAN the QR code to visit our website and learn more!

<https://edisto.org/water-quality>





# SOUTHEASTERN MUSEUM CONFERENCE



Sarah and Denzel had a great time at the Southeastern Museum Conference (SEMC) in Louisville, Kentucky! The program committee did a wonderful job of organizing many after-hours experiences at the Louisville Slugger Museum, Churchill Downs, Speed Art Museum, Muhammad Ali Center, and more! During the day, the two were busy attending conference sessions and have come back energized and ready to engage with the Edisto community. Stay tuned for amazing events in 2024 that were dreamed up while attending SEMC. Thanks to the Mellon Foundation for funding their conference travel.



Left: Denzel Wright (who is kind of a big deal) and Sarah Stroud Clarke (Director of Awesome), along with Zinnia Watts, Charleston resident, and President of SEMC.

# NEW YEAR, NEW PLANS

As 2024 approaches us and we begin to wrap up the year with holiday cheer and family time, we want you all to take a moment to think about estate planning for your loved ones. This sounds like a daunting topic, but it really is as simple as we are making it sound. The Land Trust has partnered with FreeWill.com, a free online platform, to provide our community and members with a valuable resource. In as little as 20 minutes, you can create a will that covers all areas of your estate planning. If your estate plans aren't quite simple, you may get started on a document at your own pace, and then take it to a lawyer for more advice. Once you have it witnessed and notarized, it becomes a legal Will and Testament.

For our members who would like some guidance through this process, we have you covered! The Edisto Island Library has joined the Land Trust in efforts to provide access to this great resource. Head to 1589 Highway 174 where our local librarians can help you build your will on one of their computers. You will get assistance with accessing the website, navigating the website and most importantly... they can notarize it for you all in one place- you will need a couple witnesses. If you need to save your progress and return on another day, this platform gives you the option to do so.

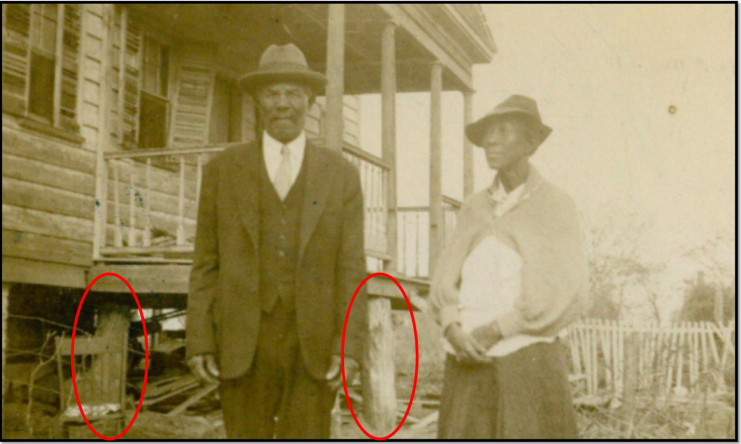
Many of our local nonprofits, as well as nonprofits nationwide, are participating in this campaign. Planned gifts are also a part of our goal to keep Edisto... Edisto. We have members who have left the Edisto Island Open Land Trust in their estate plans and are now a part of our Horizon Circle. With this campaign, we are hoping to reach an audience who may have thought about this type of gift or are curious to know more about what planned gifts look like and how they work. Scan the QR code below or go to [www.edisto.org/ways-to-give/](http://www.edisto.org/ways-to-give/) to get started with yours today!



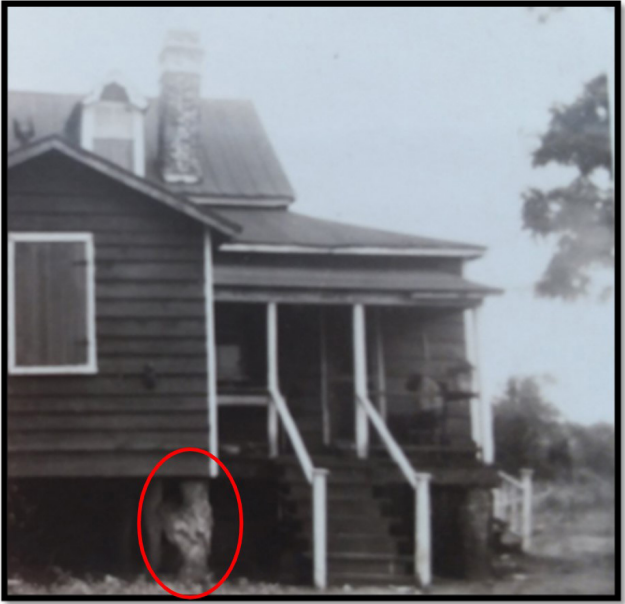
# BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION

## Sarah Stroud Clarke, Hutchinson House Director

As we begin the final phase of construction on the Hutchinson House, we are ensuring that it will stand the test of time by looking back to the original construction methods of Henry Hutchinson (1860-1941). Numerous historical photographs (right) of the Hutchinson House show unhewn tree trunks as support pillars for the various porches over time. It is difficult to determine exactly what types of trees were used in the past so EIOILT chose a tree variety known for its staying power: cedar. Southern Redcedar, (*Juniperus virginiana silicicola*), to be exact. In keeping with the mission of EIOILT, we are using trees from either protected properties, or trees that were already slated for removal.



We are grateful for the hard work of Peter Rapnikas and his crew for their assistance in gathering the trees needed for this project. Once the trees were harvested, they were transported to Nature's Manor Organic Farm and Saw-Mill in Walterboro to dry before construction begins in January. The foundation of the new three-quarter, wrap-around-porch will utilize eleven cedar trunk pillars. We are excited to see this distinctive feature of the Hutchinson House come to life in the new year. We hope that you will take a trip out to the Hutchinson House in the next few months to watch the progress of our final exterior construction phase as the house transforms into its original c.1885 appearance.



# YOUNG NATURALISTS PROGRAM UPDATE

The 2023-2024 Young Naturalists Program is off to a great start this school year with a record 17 students participating! Led by our YNP coordinator, Krystal Parsons, they are enjoying exploring the natural wonders and science of Edisto Island. They began the year at the Edisto Beach State Park learning about how important it is to keep our beach clean for the sea turtles and helped with a beach trash pickup. That is a good lesson to remember for all of us who love Edisto Beach! In October they joined our new Hutchinson House Director, Sarah Stroud Clarke (who is also a historical archaeologist), at the Hutchinson House to learn about the difference between paleontology and archaeology and helped recover and sort artifacts. The artifacts are an important part of telling the stories of the Hutchinson House in the future. In November, it was back to the beach as the Young Naturalists got to experience catching their own food by working together in small groups. They learned the art of catching crabs and shrimp in our local waterways, right where they live! Thank you to all of our dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who donate their time, talent, and patience with our inquisitive young naturalists!

