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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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LIZ SMYLIE'S LEGACY FOR HER LAND

Last year we lost a friend, a neighbor, and a champion for Edisto Island. On August 25th, 2023, Elizabeth “Liz” Smylie passed away. Liz was the rural mail carrier for all of Edisto Island for many years. Liz was many things. She was an animal lover, a naturalist, an artist, and was passionate about protecting the unique and special lands of Edisto Island.

Liz’s love for Edisto Island was immense and sincere. So much so that Liz dedicated a final gift towards the protection of our island. Through her will, Liz made a planned gift of the land she cherished, her home, to the Edisto Island Open Land Trust to be utilized in the manner which best fulfills our mission and for that land to be forever protected by a perpetual conservation easement. As of June 2024, EIOLT accepted Liz’s final gift. EIOLT now owns and protects her six-acre property.

Liz’s home stands today along Oyster Factory Road, tucked seamlessly amidst six acres of woods and wetlands, hidden from sight but welcoming to wildlife. The land was first part of Shergould Plantation. In 1875, it was purchased and divided by John Thorne, one of the “Black Kings of Edisto,” in a Reconstruction Era freedmen land co-op. The piece that Liz called home was divided to Billy Seabrook. The Seabrook family lived on the property for generations, the original home being built in the rear of the property. That home was torn down and in 1949, Billy’s grandson, Ben Wright, built the cinder block house that stands today on the front of the parcel. Liz purchased the house and land in 1984 and lived there the rest of her life.

Although Liz’s passing came as a shock, her gift of land was not a surprise. Liz’s bequest was a planned gift, a donation from her estate written into her will, a plan she shared with EIOLT. In 2012, Liz informed EIOLT of her wish to leave her property to the land trust. Over the next year, a conservation easement was written and filed with her will, to protect the property forever. That winter some 10 years ago, Liz shared her plans with the world on the front page of our 2013 winter newsletter. In Liz’s own words,

“As I watched Edisto grow, I was distressed that this beautiful island was being cleared and so many houses were being built. I guess it was to be expected, as Edisto is so special. But it saddened me. Because of the love I have for my land, I feel a strong need to protect it... So I have chosen to leave my six acres to EIOLT... My six acres sounds small, but if more people would protect their small pieces of Edisto, what a difference it would make...”

Those words ring as true today as they did in the decade past. Liz wished to inspire others to do the same for the piece of land that they themselves hold dear, to help protect all of Edisto that we can.

This home, this land, this island meant the world to Liz. And so, this gift is a tremendous honor to receive. We are humbled and thankful, as we look forward to our promise for the future, our mission, to protect Edisto Island, *forever*.

ANOTHER UNIQUE & INSPIRATIONAL GIFT

We love to highlight donors who make an extra special gift to the land trust. Henry and Kitty Beard have done just that this year, when they donated a pair of life insurance policies to us and brought big smiles to all of our faces.

“Edisto is our second home. Henry’s great aunt Sarah Holmes (wife of McGowan Holmes) was the first year round resident on Edisto Beach.” Kitty’s grandparents, aunt and uncle, and Henry’s family all owned houses on the front beach at some point. Kitty and Henry had the first “live aboard” sailboat at Edisto beginning in 1978 and rented a private dock on Scott Creek from 1990-2021. They took their boat from Edisto to the Bahamas, Key West, the Chesapeake, and 100 miles up the Hudson River above NYC.

“We believe in preserving land for future generations so we belong to several land trusts in SC particularly the Congaree Land Trust and the Edisto Island Open Land Trust. The CLT because our home and property above Camden, SC borders on the Wateree River and the EIOLT due to our devotion to Edisto.”



Left: Kitty and Henry Beard boating around Edisto. Clearly, they love being on the water!

Want to know more about gifting life insurance policies to protect Edisto in perpetuity? Reach out to John Girault at 843-869-9004 or john@edisto.org

CONTRACTOR SPOTLIGHT

Since launching the second round of our Septic Improvement program at the beginning of the year, we have completed 32 projects with 15 in progress as of September 10, 2024. Some projects are more severe than others and need a complete system replacement; some are less troublesome, needing only new drainfield or a minor repair; and some are a complicated puzzle needing plumbing, sewage clean-up, specialized pump systems, and an electrician’s help. We work with a diverse group of companies who help us lift the financial weight for our many applicants, offering a service to our precious environment.

Looking back over the past nine months, there is much gratitude given to our amazing contractors. We are shining the spotlight on our two septic company partners, who work diligently to get these projects underway and completed. They are teaching us so much about this line of work, and are great resources for septic education. You have likely spotted Island Septic Services and GrassChoppers Landscaping trucks around the island, taking care of our septic needs. Give them a honk to show your appreciation for how hard they are working with us!

Birthered in August of 1999, Island Septic Service (ISS) started out with one pump truck, dump truck, backhoe, and two employees.. Rhett Hanckel, Sr. and Greg Hanckel. All pumping and installations were completed by these two alone. Prior to starting the Wadmalaw based company, the Hanckels ran a farm on the Island, while also experimenting with other business ventures. They had an opportunity to jump into the field of septic systems after Rhett’s brother closed his septic



Above: c.1920s photograph of Mabel Hutchinson (1900-1988) with her bicycle in front of the Hutchinson House with shingles. Courtesy of the Hutchinson Family Photograph Collection.

Top right: Undated mid-20th century photograph of the Hutchinson House painted white. Courtesy of the Hutchinson Family Photograph Collection.

Bottom right: Porch roof progress, June 2024.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

An enormous thank you to all of our EIOLT supporters that showed up this summer for the Hutchinson House final construction campaign! We issued our need of raising the final \$275,000 to complete the construction process and you collectively raised \$75,000 in two months! It was absolutely inspirational to see our supporters rally behind the Hutchinson House project and inspired a new donor to pledge another \$50,000 match in honor of his wife’s love of Edisto. The perfect opportunity to make your donation go further and show your love of Edisto. Thank you!

Text Hutchinson to 76278 to donate, or scan the QR code to donate online.



A NEW ROOF FOR THE HUTCHINSON HOUSE

When the Edisto Island Open Land Trust (EIOLT) began the restoration of the Hutchinson House in 2019, the decision was made to restore the house to its original c.1885 footprint and appearance. Henry and Rosa Hutchinson built their home in the Black settlement community known as the Clark Community where Henry’s father, James “Jim” Hutchinson had purchased 404 acres of the former Clark plantation in 1875.

Over the summer, the exterior of the Hutchinson House slowly transformed before our eyes into its original c.1885 appearance. One of the most dramatic changes is the color and material of the roof. The modern, bright-red roof was installed in 2019 as a stop-gap to keep out rain and other weather elements until we reached this point in the restoration. This change might come as a shock to visitors who have come to expect the red roof, but the new, permanent roof is what most closely matches the appearance of the earliest terne metal roof seen in the oldest picture we have of the Hutchinson House. Over time, the Hutchinson House had a series of roofing types: in the 1920s the roof appears to have shingles, in the mid-20th century there is a metal roof again as seen in the undated picture of the house painted white, in January of 1969, a receipt for repairs to the house lists a line item to paint the roof red. That painted red roof had in later years rusted to an even deeper shade of red, and is the roof that came with the house when it was purchased by the EIOLT in 2016.

The new roof is the best match of the original terne metal roof. We are grateful to our partners at Huss, Inc. and the amazing team at Picquet Roofing for installing the new roof with hand-folded 1” standing seams made to last at least another 100 years. With a new, weather-proof roof, we are one step closer to opening the Hutchinson House to the public and preserving the house in perpetuity.



Finished roof, August 2024.

business, and it worked out in their favor. Today ISS operates with two pump trucks, two dump trucks, a backhoe, a trackhoe, a skidsteer, several trailers for hauling equipment, and 10 employees!

We all recognize that the water table plays a huge role in where and how septic systems are installed. ISS is noticing that SCDHEC (now SCDES) requires more shallow system installations than before, which is something to consider when deciding where your system will be built. Materials across most industries are also costing more, and this factors into all that is required to build these systems. To keep your system on the healthy side, ISS recommends that you 1) know where your tank and drainfield are located 2) never flush baby wipes, or let grease/oil enter your system, 3) pump out your system routinely and 4) prevent root growth into your system. Taking care of those four things will help prolong your system’s life.



Island Septic Service employees (Left to Right) William Frasier, Dylan Eynon and Crisitan Drum in front of one of their two pump trucks.

You can find more information about our Septic contractors at [Edisto.org/septic](https://edisto.org/septic). Be sure to follow Island Septic Services and GrassChoppers Landscaping on Facebook to see more of the work they are doing.

GrassChoppers Landscaping (GC) is a family extension of what was S&S Construction, founded in the early 2000s. Elijah Sanders worked for his father at S&S construction for 20 years before launching his own business. GC started in 2020 completing around three land clearing jobs a month and installing roughly four septic systems at the same rate. Sanders runs the business with his wife, Maleka, and father, Perk. They saw a need for septic system installations as they began to work with property owners who were building their new homes. Today, GC operates with one semi truck, one dump truck, one backhoe, and several trailers. Their services have expanded to offering hauling and demolition. As the Lowcountry continues to grow in population, GC is seeing a greater need for septic installations, but they are also noticing the need for septic repairs as longtime, rural community residents have old block systems that are unable to keep up with the demands of growing population pressures and environmental changes. GC stresses the importance of getting routine service to your system. It prevents major issues from arising and lowers the need for complete system replacements.

Perk, Elijah and Maleka Sanders of GrassChoppers Landscaping



CAMPERS COME HOME INSPIRED

This summer we sent seven girls (all the boys declined their offer to go, and do they ever regret it) to camp in the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina. All of our EIOLT campers had amazing experiences while at camp. They truly discover so much about themselves during this two-week program all without the use of any electronic devices. One of the most impactful parts of the program are the daily morning Mentor Hikes with a certified counselor. The lessons learned at this camp are valuable and carry over into real life situations. One mother of an Edisto camper reported that her daughter has so much more confidence in herself and is pursuing acting now because she was able to experience that activity along with many others at camp. We are so proud and thankful to send these girls to a camp that encourages them to be their best selves while learning how to be the best steward of our land and resources. Here are some of their experiences shared through several questions we asked them on their return drive to Edisto:

Capers: A lesson that was amazing and life-changing for her, was measuring their food waste at meal times. It was eye-opening for her to see how much food we waste. She’s going to try and do better to not waste food. Being from such a small community, it was also really amazing for Capers to go and meet so many other kids from so many other places around the state. Her favorite thing about camp was free time and being able to explore the outdoors. She tried fencing, something that not on her radar before. She had the opportunity to enter a cave, which Capers was a little nervous and apprehensive about doing something so out of her comfort zone, but the experience of the counselors and their expertise helped guide her so she felt comfortable.

Capers would love to experience camp again next year, if chosen. She feels like she found and was a valuable part of the community there. She helped everybody. She learned many life skills and she had an absolutely amazing time.

Lydia: “My favorite thing was the water hikes and the lake” I kept trying new food. I want to go back to the lake and I loved the hikes. I ate grilled cheese (which I don’t normally eat).”



Journey: “My favorite thing was pottery because it was fun and I got to do anything I wanted to do. I loved going in the water on the hikes, and I would want to go back because I can do different things out of my comfort zone.”

Rain: “I loved everything about camp, but my favorite thing was canoeing because the counselors tipped our canoes over (on purpose) and that was a lot of fun. Nothing pushed me out of my comfort zone, other than the root I slept on during our 3 day overnight hike. I felt really comfortable at camp. I would absolutely love to go back to camp because it was the most fun I’ve ever had in my life. And I would love to go back because I miss my friends and all the fun I had when I was there. Going to camp was a fantastic experience and I just want to say thank you to everyone who contributed to making it happen.”

Dalilah: “What I enjoyed most about camp was GLP (Group Learning Project) because it was fun and I enjoyed doing the activities. One thing that was out of my comfort zone was having to use the bathroom at night.

If I was given the opportunity, I would love to go back to camp because I had a lot of fun and it was a great experience and I would love to have the opportunity to go back next year. I really liked fly fishing and catching fish. But before I did it, I

did not expect to like it but I really did and I would like to do it again.”

Marley: “What I enjoyed most about camp was when we did our GLP’s (Group Learning Project) all day because I got to swim all day and have fun. One thing that was out of my comfort zone was having to use the bathroom in the middle of nowhere and having no toilet paper.

Yes! I would love to go back. I had such a great time, if given the opportunity to go back I would love to learn more and meet new people. Going camping and backpacking was pretty new to me and at first I didn’t want to do it but it ended up being so much fun and I would love to do it again, it was a once and a lifetime opportunity.”

