



FRESpace Findings

Summer /Fall 2016

President's Report

2016 has been a remarkable year for the Edisto Beach State Park and FRESpace. This year, we had 240 Loggerhead turtle nests! FRESpace volunteers sold "I Survived" T-shirts at the night walks generating \$1,141 profit to directly benefit the EBSP Turtle Project. Many thanks to those selling the shirts and those who purchased them.

Ann Luckadoo, our Membership Chair, is putting a strong focus on local recruitment and our membership continues to grow. Here are some of the benefits of membership (still only \$25/year):

- Free entry to the State Park (camping not included)
- Free boat ramp privileges at the Live Oak Landing
- Free use of picnic shelters, tables and Grills
- Parking and use of restroom facilities at the beach
- Free admission to the Environmental Learning Center (ELC)
- Use of Park trails for hiking and biking
- Membership in an organization that makes a difference in preserving the natural beauty of Edisto Island



The Turtle Fest this year was a ringing success. The weather cooperated, and we had several

hundred visitors who participated in activities that entertained and educated about sea turtle biology. Representatives from the South Carolina

Aquarium were present with a variety of turtles to see and touch. Our thanks to the FRESpace volunteers who supported the Park staff in coordinating the activities.

Through our membership drive and sales of T-shirts, FRESpace has been able to fund the following projects in the past year:

- Lowcountry animal decals for the ELC
- Repairs to the turtle golf cart
- Bird seed for the ELC bird sanctuary
- ELC Touch tank Plexiglas backdrop
- Display upgrades for new ELC animal tanks
- Membership for FRESpace/EBSP in the Edisto Chamber of Commerce
- Purchase of "I Survived" T-shirts
- Additional screens to protect sea turtle nests from predation
- A GPS to precisely record sea turtle nest locations

Iddy Andrews has been making a concerted effort to improve our communication to our membership and those visiting or planning to visit the Edisto Beach State Park. We invite you to check out our improved website at www.frespace.org, to "like" us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/frespace, or to contact us at frespacefriends@gmail.com. FRESpace is now a member of the Edisto Chamber of Commerce, and we are working with them to communicate Park programs and activities.

Park personnel, who have done an excellent job in adding sand and trimming back vegetation along the Park's hiking and biking trails, and the Blowhards, who regularly clear debris and blow off those trails, have combined to make the trails

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among the best maintained in the SC park system. Thanks to Cameron Andrews, Ted Luckadoo, John McInerney, and Larry Urbik who join me in this effort.

Looking ahead we see more opportunities for FRESpace volunteerism. Archaeological work on the Spanish Mount shell mound has been completed, and the mound will be reconstructed at a site not threatened by creek erosion. Rebuilding the mound will be a collaborative effort with Park personnel and FRESpace volunteer help will be greatly appreciated. We also anticipate a SCORE (South Carolina Oyster Restoration and Enhancement) project to place recycled oyster shells along the area of the original shell mound. Volunteers have traditionally played a large role in these projects. Watch our website for notice of these volunteer opportunities. Thanks to each of you for your support. Together we are making a difference.

Bill Andrews, FRESpace President

Park Manager's Report

As summer comes to an end and the kids return to school, it is one of my favorite times of year. The Park is still busy with campers and cabin guests, but day visitation slows letting us take a breath! This summer the Park has been near or exceeding carrying capacity. Every weekend from early May to August we have had to close the park due to lack of parking. In the past few years this has only occurred on the major holidays.

We have not only been busy with guests but also managing our natural resources, especially the Loggerheads! This summer we broke last year's nesting record. To date we are at 240 nests. I would like to thank the volunteer turtle patrol team. Leah, Hillary, and Nicole have also done an excellent job! Thank you for all your hard work this season, What a huge achievement for the Park and the turtles!

This summer a team of archeologists excavated the Spanish Mound. During the public viewing dates, numerous visitors viewed the process and discussed their findings. The artifacts found were

taken back to the lab for further analysis. Dr. Karen Smith and team will provide the Park with a paper on their findings once complete and return their findings to the park. A plan to conduct a volunteer dig this fall is in the planning stages. The Park partnered with SCDNR and the SCORE project to place oyster shell reefs at both ends of the sea wall in hopes of delaying the erosion around the mound.

The other great news this summer is that the park was the recipient of a couple of large donations. The first is something I have wanted here at the Park since taking over as Manager.



I Can See for Isaac donated two beach wheel chairs. They are located at the beachfront office and have been frequently used. They are a huge asset to enable all guest beach access. The second donation was from Honda America Corporation who donated two Honda Pioneers to the State Park Service. One is staying at Edisto, and the other will be located at Hunting Island State Park. We are thrilled to have these new additions to the Park.

During the first week of August the Live Oak Boat Landing got a great new addition. If you have not visited that area of the park lately you



will notice something is missing. The port-a-potty is gone! We received funding to install a new vault-style restroom. The new addition is made of concrete and should last a

lifetime with minimal maintenance. We are pleased to have a permanent facility at the boat landing.

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Once again the Park is participating in the “Hunger Takes No Vacation” food drive. The Park is collecting non-perishable food items through November 30. The drop off locations are the Ranger Station on State Cabin Road and also the Welcome Station at the beachfront park. So far the park has collected and dropped off nearly 300lbs of food to the Low Country Food Bank. As always thanks for the continued support and look forward to seeing you all in the park!

Jon Greider, Park Manager

Interpretive Ranger’s Report

This summer has been one for the record books at the Learning Center. And remember all of those renovations we made last winter? Our summer visitors have admired them and provided glowing compliments on the hard work our staff put into making this landmark even more beautiful.

Kicking off our summer, we welcomed aboard three new wonderful staff members: Leah Schwartzenruber, our Sea Turtle Specialist, and Hilary Kordecki and Nicole Lynch, our Sea Turtle Interns. This team, together with our invaluable volunteers, powered through the largest turtle season our park has seen to date. A total of 240 nests were laid on our humble 1.5 miles of shoreline, which blows last year’s record of 178 nests out of the water. Our Turtle Night Walks in June and July were also a great success. Participants witnessed turtle activity on 70% of the walks.

No turtle season would be complete without our annual Turtle Fest celebration for the returning loggerheads. This year we had our best festival to date, with 300 people in attendance! Of those, 40 completed the entire event. All in all, it was a remarkable increase from prior years, and one we wish to sustain in years to come.

Right now, come out every Wednesday and Friday at 6:30 p.m. to the State Park beach for our

sea turtle nest inventories. A record laying season means a record inventory season as we dig up these nests to count the hatched and unhatched eggs and release any hatchlings out to sea. Nest inventories are your best chance to see turtles during daylight hours. Scheduled inventories run through September 16. To stay up to date with all turtle-related events, check out Leah’s personal blog at ebspturtletalk.com!

Each year we partner with the SC Department of Natural Resources to celebrate the ACE Basin through public boat cruises examining the biodiversity found in our tidal creeks. We had four successful trips out in August. Call the center next July to pre-register. Just like our cabins, these popular tours fill up each season!



As we march into fall, come by and see new animals in our aquariums. The gator is now over 21 inches long. Our snake

exhibit houses a scarlet king snake, yellow rat snake, corn snakes, and garter snake. Our estuary tank has a pretty incredible shrimp eel that puts on a good show at feeding.

Whatever you do, just be sure to *Come out and Play* at Edisto Beach State Park!

Ashby “Ranger Ash” Gale, Interpretive Ranger

Please check the membership expiration date on the top of your mailing address label on the front of this newsletter. If your membership has expired, we hope you will renew.

Beach Sweep – September 17, 2016; 9:00 a.m. at Access #1 by Finn’s Restaurant