



FRESpace Findings

Spring/Summer 2021

President's Report

Although this year has seen many challenges due to COVID, the Park has made improvements to facilities and displays at the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) with FRESpace funding. Board meetings continue to be held virtually.

COVID has also impacted the Loggerhead sea turtle project. The Turtle Fest and programs preceding the Turtle Nightwalks were cancelled, and the walks themselves were held with reduced participants. Despite this, the Sea Turtle staff and volunteers protected and inventoried the 181 nests, yielding 11,940 hatchlings. Congratulations to Sea Turtle Specialist Leah Schwartzenuber, her interns, and volunteers for a successful season.

Our membership is 375 family and 16 corporate memberships. Our family memberships dropped in 2020 due to the impact of COVID.

The Park staff tackled some significant projects. FRESpace contributed over \$16,000 for 15 projects which were completed by the Park staff. Please see the complete list of projects listed in the Accomplishments page on the back of the proxy sheet. Major items included turtle safety signs at beach accesses, new audio/visual equipment for the ELC conference room, fencing for dune protection, improvements to four ELC displays, and construction of a new live terrapin exhibit. Please visit the ELC and see Edisto's best kept secret.



Volunteer activities were limited this past year due to COVID, but the Blowhards regularly blew off Park trails. As the pandemic abates, we expect to see our volunteer activities increase. Watch our website, Facebook page, and emails for notice of when volunteer activities are scheduled.

SC Parks increased their admission fees, and the Edisto Beach State Park is no exception. To maintain parity between Park admission fees and FRESpace membership fees, the Park requested we increase our annual membership fee, which has remained at \$25 since FRESpace was founded in 2002. The Board approved an increase to \$40. The fee for an annual corporate sponsorship remains at \$100.

As a reminder, here are some of the benefits included in membership:

- Entry to the State Park
- Boat ramp privileges at Live Oak Landing
- Use of picnic shelters and grills
- Parking and use of restroom at the beach

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- Admission to the ELC
- Use of Park trails for hiking and biking
- Membership in an organization helping to preserve Edisto's natural beauty.

We are grateful to one of our corporate sponsors, Edisto Saltwater Tours, who made a donation to the ELC in honor of Edward L. Albenesius. These funds will be used to further educational opportunities through the resources and exhibits at ELC.

Our annual meeting for the FRESpace membership will be held virtually on Saturday, April 17 at 9:00 a.m. Unfortunately, logistics will not enable participation by the full membership. However, prior to the meeting, you will receive an email with details regarding the agenda, meeting reports, and opportunities to provide input to the Board. Our bylaws require attendance/proxies by 15% of our membership, so we appreciate you emailing your proxy to edistofrespace@gmail.com no later than April 3 so the Board can transact business in that meeting.

Thanks to each of you for your support. Together, we are making a difference.

Bill Andrews, FRESpace President

Park Manager's Report

It has been a busy winter season at the Park. We averaged over 80% occupancy for both camping and cabins. The Park continues its efforts to keep a safe and clean environment for our staff and guests. Park staff have been vigilant in practicing social distancing and wearing masks. Park facilities remain at limited capacity to follow CDC guidelines. Since our last newsletter, we have had some personnel changes. David Boyert was hired as our Assistant Maintenance Supervisor in October. The position became available when Darrin Moore (former Assistant Maintenance Supervisor)

was promoted to Maintenance Supervisor. In other news, the cabin dock replacement project has begun. Weather permitting, we hope to have this completed by May.

As of now, programs remain suspended until further notice. The ELC staff has been contributing program videos along with other state Parks. Check them out at www.southcarolinaparks.com.

We are preparing for turtle season and ordering supplies. Leah Schwartzenruber will return to serve as the Sea Turtle Specialist. Leah is due to arrive at the beginning of April. We hope to hear final word on our annual Turtlefest soon. Sadly, last year it was cancelled due to COVID. Check the Park's and FRESpace websites for the final word.

The touch tank customer covers have arrived! Samantha Pettit did an awesome job in designing them. This project was funded by FRESpace

This season we have been working on several Park projects. The staff have been working on the following projects:

1. Replacing day-use beach showers
2. Updating appliances and furniture in cabins
3. Replacing dock piling braces
4. Repairing roads throughout the Park
5. Repairing floors in Cabins 2 and 3
6. Repairing residences
7. Working with SCDOT, State Engineers on redesigning the dump station entrance and exit lanes

This year, more than ever, we anticipate a busy spring and summer season. As the temperatures warm, please keep in mind that if you plan to visit the Park, come early. Due to limited capacity in our parking lot, we will control traffic and periodically close the gates when we reach

capacity. Once we reach capacity, we must wait for the optimum amount of spaces to open.

This past December the ELC was given a generous donation of \$15,000 from the Albenesius Family in memory of Edward L. Albenesius. The memorial donation is to further educational opportunities for the general public and school-aged children through ELC opportunities.

Thank y'all for your continued support. You joined FRESpace because of your love and desire to support the Park. Your support is vital in helping us maintain, update, and operate Edisto Beach State Park. We look forward to seeing you at the Park, as well as out in our great community here in Edisto Beach!

Kyle Bullock, Park Manager

Interpretive Ranger's Report

We have all had challenges this past year, but it's a new year and that means a fresh start! We began the new year with the first self-guided First Day Hike. Bad weather was forecasted, so all participating Parks had a First Weekend Hike. There were 134 hikers that participated and about 412 miles hiked!

It's been a busy off-season with minor projects and higher than average visitation numbers. We still have our guidelines of limited capacity and masks at the ELC. When visiting the ELC during busier times, there may be some waiting time if we are at capacity. We still aren't doing face to face programs, but we have virtual programs in the works. As we move forward into the spring and summer, it will be a great season.

Since September, we have focused on maintaining our exhibits at the ELC. Lucas and Pat are doing an awesome job taking care of our animals. We have a few new additions if you haven't visited in

a while. We have a new turtle exhibit built by one of our hosts, OB. He did an incredible job, and the turtles are happy with their palace! We received our touch tank covers which are streamlined and lightweight compared to the previous ones. They offer protection for our critters but allow visitors to still see them.



New Turtle Exhibit

We have been doing research on the history of the Park and the Island to create programs. We want to incorporate programs highlighting the Native American and Gullah histories that are prevalent on the island and within the Park. Be on the lookout for our virtual programs on the South Carolina State Parks Facebook page.

The next time you visit, be sure to check out the recent upgrades and be on the lookout for future upgrades. We are grateful to the Albenesius family for their donation to the ELC and plan on putting it towards exhibit improvements throughout the ELC and the grounds.

We look forward to the summer season and more improvements to the ELC. Thank you all for supporting this special place!

Sam Pettit, Interpretive Ranger



FRESpace Results & Accomplishments – 2020

- Supported the EBSP Loggerhead Sea Turtle project. This year there were 181 nests laid, the 3rd highest in the last 11 years. The nests yielded 11,940 hatchlings.
- FRESpace membership level is at 375 families and 16 corporate sponsors (All Clear System, Carolina One – Seal Island Realty, Charleston Fossil Adventures, Edisto Bike Rentals, Edisto Kennels, Edisto Saltwater Tours, Edisto Watersports & Tackle, The Edistonian Gift Shop & Gallery, Green Boat Discount Liquors, Home Advantage Realty, The Joggle Factory, Kennerty Surveying, McConkey’s Jungle Shack, Russ Hewitt State Farm Insurance, Slo Boat Construction, and Tyler A. Smyth Architects).

FRESpace – PROXY Information

The nominating committee recommends the following for election to the Board of Directors to fill the positions whose terms expire in 2021.

| <u>Nominee</u> | <u>Term</u> |
|----------------|-------------|
| Iddy Andrews | 2 years |
| Peter Beck | 2 years |
| Dave Blauch | 2 years |
| Ann Luckadoo | 2 years |
| Lisa Van Dort | 2 years |
| Self | |

Replaces Through our group dubbed the Blowhards, Self cleared debris from and blew off the Park trails bi-weekly.

Self Through the EBSP Exchange Gift Shop, generated approximately \$2,000 in donations and revenue from the sale of Turtle Nightwalk T-shirts to fund turtle-related projects. We expect to again provide T-shirts for sale in The Exchange this coming season.

- FRESpace contributed over \$16,000 to 15 projects including the following:
 - Purchased turtle safety signs for EBSP beach accesses
 - Purchased materials for rope and fencing to protect dunes

****IMPORTANT****

TO HAVE A QUORUM AND CONDUCT THE ANNUAL MEETING, ATTENDANCE BY 15% OF THE MEMBERSHIP IN PERSON OR BY PROXY IS REQUIRED. SINCE THE MEETING WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY, EMAIL US YOUR CHOICE FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS BY INDIVIDUAL NAMES OR BY DESIGNATING THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO VOTE YOUR PROXY TO edistofrespace@gmail.com NO LATER THAN APRIL 3, 2021.

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- Funded bird seed for the ELC bird sanctuary
- Purchased materials for fencing around the Bache Monument
- Provided new audio/visual/equipment for the ELC conference room
- Funded ELC display improvements including pelt boxes, alligator exhibit foliage, and an interactive touchscreen
- Funded repairs to Blowhards' cart
- Produced semi-annual newsletters and mailed to the full membership
- Provided materials for the new terrapin exhibit in the ELC
- Provided a removable screen to protect the animals in the ELC touch tank
- Maintained our communication to our membership and those planning to visit the Edisto Beach State Park through our newsletter, our website, and our Facebook account. We currently have 5,280 followers on Facebook.
- Updated our rack cards and distributed them to 44 businesses around Edisto Beach.
- Maintained Chamber membership and contributed articles to the Edisto News to provide local visibility and promote Park programs and activities.

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