



# FRESpace Findings

Fall/Winter 2021

## President's Report

Heading into the tourist season, numerous improvements to Park facilities and the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) were implemented, some of which were funded by FRESpace. Details are included in the Park Manager's and Interpretive Ranger's reports below.

The loggerhead sea turtle project also returned to some normalcy. The nightwalks and programs resumed with some safety protocols, and the annual Turtle Fest was expanded to multiple days with more activities for families. FRESpace was proud to again sponsor this popular event.



Sea Turtle Specialist Leah Schwartzenruber, her interns, and volunteers protected and inventoried 206 nests, which was the third largest number in the past twelve years. As of September 7, these nests yielded 16,145 hatchlings with 35 nests yet to emerge. Congratulations to our turtle team for all their work on behalf of our turtles.



*Our turtle patrol was surprised this year to find a two-headed hatchling. While not unheard of, this is very rare.*

This calendar year, FRESpace funded projects to the tune of \$11,820 and has authorized an additional \$3,620 for projects still in process. Major projects include beach access mats, sea turtle supplies, ELC bird feeders and feed, tie-dye shirts for an ELC program, beach/river sweep, and an ELC media upgrade. Most of these funds come from your membership dues. Please visit the ELC to see the improvements being made and programs offered. It truly is Edisto's best kept secret.

Although volunteer activities were limited this past year, opportunities for volunteerism are returning. The Blowhards have continued to blow off the four miles of trails. FRESpace is working to improve our process for proactively seeking volunteer opportunities and communicating them to our membership. We continue to emphasize communications to our membership. We currently have 5454 Facebook followers. Watch our website ([www.frespace.org](http://www.frespace.org)), Face-

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book ([www.facebook.com/frespace](http://www.facebook.com/frespace)), and emails ([edistofrespace@gmail.com](mailto:edistofrespace@gmail.com)) for volunteer opportunities. Please note that the mailing address for FRESpace has changed from the Cabin Road address to P.O. Box 523, Edisto Island, SC 29438.



*The Blowhards blow off the trails every two weeks.*

Our membership numbers and renewal rate have remained solid through the pandemic. We currently have 361 family and a record 19 corporate memberships. Our business sponsors are: All Clear System; Charleston Fossil Adventures; Cope Concrete; Edisto Bike Rentals; Edisto Kennels; Edisto Saltwater Tours; Edisto Watersports and Tackle; Green Boat Discount Liquors; The Happie Chicks; Home Advantage Realty; The Joggle Factory; Kennerty Surveying; McConkey's Jungle Shack; O-Hair by Lisa; Positive ZENergy Massage Therapy; Slo Boat Construction; Tyler A. Smyth Architects; Walterboro Motor Sales; and The Wills Agency. Please patronize these businesses and thank them for their support of FRESpace. The annual fee for a family membership is \$40 and for a business sponsor is \$100.

Some of the benefits of membership are:

- Entry to the State Park (camping not included)
- Boat ramp privileges at the Live Oak Landing
- Use of picnic shelters, tables, and grills
- Parking and use of restroom facilities
- Admission to the ELC

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

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

*Bill Andrews, FRESpace President*

## **Park Manager's Report**

Greetings FRESpace Members!

It has been a hot and busy summer season. Our parking lots were full most weekends and even some weekdays. We held at 90% occupancy in both camping and cabins.

Since our last newsletter, we have had some personnel changes. My assistant manager, Kaley Foley, was promoted to Park Manager of Givhans Ferry State Park. Alex Kellner was promoted to Lake Wateree State Park. To fill the vacancy, we hired Matthew Coleman from Huntington Beach State Park. Matthew has worked at both Myrtle Beach and Huntington Beach State Parks. Recently, our maintenance supervisor, Darrin Moore, accepted a position with Charleston County School District. We hope to fill that position within the next month.

As of June 1, we resumed in-person programming. Our interpretive staff has been excited to be able to conduct programs once again. As expected, our turtle walk programs were popular. A big thanks to FRESpace for helping with hole patrols. These volunteers filled holes and picked up trash along the beach before turtle walks.

This season we completed the extension of sand dune fencing past our beach front campground. Even in this short amount of time, you can notice the sand collect and build up. As this continues, we will be able to naturally collect the sand and build our dune system. The sand fencing and materials were provided by FRESpace. Each year we hope to keep adding extensions. If you're out walking the beach, come check it out.

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We continue to replace cabin furniture. Our new entrance and exit lanes are open for the dump station. Due to time constraints and staff change-over, this project has slowed. Once we fill some vacancies, we will add new dump ports. So far this has been a huge relief to traffic flow on SC HWY 174. Since the new lanes have been open, we have not experienced any lane blockages.

During the month of July, we had a scare with Tropical Storm Elsa. This storm caused damage to our beach front campground. Fortunately, no one was hurt. The Park staff worked diligently to clean up the damage and make the area safe and secure.

As always, thank y'all for your continued support. We look forward to seeing you in the park, as well as in our great community here in Edisto Beach!

*Kyle Bullock, Park Manager*

## **Interpretive Ranger's Report**

Hey FRESpace!

This summer has flown by, and we have had some changes. We had an incredible group of interns this summer - three sea turtle interns, Karoline, Ashlyn, and Chase. They were a great help to our busy turtle season and to the ELC. For the ELC, we had two educational interns, Haley and Stefani. They were wonderful additions. All of them were passionate about the environment and everything we do here. It was sad to see these interns move on, but I know they will do great things.

After over a year without programs, we resumed in-person programs on June 1. This was extremely exciting for us! We started back with limited numbers, but in July, we returned to full capacity. We still have some programs with limited space so be sure to call ahead to make sure we aren't full. With everything returning to normal, we have had one of the busiest summers. Our attendance this summer surpassed 2019's summer attendance.

Our program specialist, Lucas, left in May to take a historic interpreter position with NC State Parks. Lucas started here as an intern back in 2018 and moved up to program specialist. He was a great asset to the ELC and we miss him tremendously. We hired our new program specialist, Mary Burnett, in June. She joined our team during a hectic time but has been a great addition. She hopes to incorporate more children-based and sustainability programs. Next time you are at the ELC, be sure to stop in and say hi.



*Turnip was the Critter of the Month for June at the ELC*

Some more exciting news! We are working on updating our movie theater. It will include a touchscreen video selection to make it more interactive. This new upgrade is possible with FRESpace funding and the Albenesius donation from earlier this year. Thank you to both FRESpace and the Albenesius family for supporting the ELC. This update will be complete later this year. We received news that DNR will be working with us on a water quality exhibit. This is a lengthy process, so it will be a while until it is completed. Be on the lookout for these exciting updates. See you around on Edisto!

*Sam Pettit, Interpretive Ranger*

*In Memorial- We are sad to inform FRESpace members that Bob Sandifer, long time president and supporter of FRESpace, passed away July 21 of this year. Bob was an active supporter and leader of FRESpace and other local organizations for years. He will be sadly missed by many.*

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