



FRESpace Findings

Spring/Summer 2022

President's Report

In spite of the lingering COVID threat, Edisto Beach State Park and FRESpace have had another banner year. The Park made many improvements to its facilities, including the Environmental Learning Center (ELC).

This year has been the second most productive in the 32-year history of the EBSP sea turtle project with 206 nests and 18,672 hatchlings. In addition to nest protection, inventories, and education, the sea turtle volunteers began hole patrols to pick up trash and fill in diggings that endanger turtles and beach walkers. Thanks to Sea Turtle Specialist, Leah Schwartzentruber, her interns, and our volunteers for another successful season.

FRESpace is working with the Park staff to provide more opportunities for members to participate in Park projects and programs. Additionally, our group dubbed the Blowhards regularly blew off the four miles of the trails keeping them among the best maintained in the state park system. We will communicate volunteer opportunities through email, Facebook, and our website and encourage your involvement.

FRESpace membership stands at 343 family and 20 corporate memberships. Our renewal rate remains high, and we added four corporate sponsors. Corporate members are All Clear System; Charleston Fossil Adventures, Cope Concrete, Edisto Bike Rentals, Edisto Kennels, Edisto Saltwater Tours, Edisto Watersports & Tackle, Green Boat Discount Liquors, The Happy Chicks, Home Advantage Realty, The Joggle

Factory, Kennerty Surveying, McConkey's Jungle Shack, Mueller Electric, O-Hair by Lisa, Positive Zenergy, Swann Associates, Tyler A. Smyth Architects, Walterboro Motor Sales, and the Wills Agency. Please patronize these businesses and thank them for their support of FRESpace.

FRESpace contributed over \$12,000 for 12 projects, largely attributable to membership fees which comprise our major source of revenue. Major items implemented included turtle safety signs at EBSP 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.

We are continuing the emphasis on communications to our FRESpace membership and those who are visiting or planning to visit the Edisto Beach State Park. We currently have 5,538 Facebook followers. Watch our frequently updated website (www.frespace.org), Facebook (www.facebook.com/frespace), and emails (edistofrespace@gmail.com) for notice of when volunteer activities are scheduled.

Here are some of the benefits of membership:

- Entry to the State Park
- Boat ramp privileges at Live Oak Landing;
- Use of picnic shelters, tables and grills;
- Parking and restroom facilities;
- Admission to the ELC;
- Use of Park trails for hiking and biking;

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- Membership in an organization helping preserve Edisto's natural beauty.

The annual EBSP Turtle Fest will again be held in the late spring. This wonderful event is growing in offerings and popularity. Please check our website and Facebook for details on this event.

Our annual meeting for the FRESpace membership will be held Saturday, April 23rd at 9:00 AM. At this point we are planning on meeting in the Environmental Learning Center, but this is subject to assessment of COVID. You will be notified by email of any changes. Our bylaws require attendance or proxies by 15% of our membership, so we appreciate you emailing your proxy to edistofrespace@gmail.com no later than April 16 so the Board can transact business at that meeting.

Thank you for your support. Together we are making a difference.

Bill Andrews, FRESpace President

Park Manager's Report

Greetings FRESpace Members!

This winter season has been interesting to say the least. In the past, the winter season was a time for park staff to work on projects. Last winter we were so busy, we didn't have much time for off-season projects. Luckily, this year we had a slight dip in occupancy to resemble those seasons pre-COVID. The staff has been working on numerous projects in anticipation for this upcoming busy season.

Park staff has cleaned out the retention ponds in our Day Use parking lot. These ponds had cattail populations which compromised the working intent of the ponds. Staff were able to treat the cattails and dig them out. All that is left is to add grass and create a buffer along the bank edge. We have begun building the concrete forms to add two additional dump station ports. These additional ports along with the new en-

trance and exit lanes will help with the flow and efficiency of traffic. Our target date for completion is March 1.

Recently the park staff worked with a group of FRESpace volunteers on Big Bay trail maintenance and Bache monument trails as well as clearing brush from around the Environmental Learning Center. A big thanks to Ron Steele, who coordinated the project and staff. Our park staff really enjoyed working with the volunteers and appreciated the help. We look forward to future projects Ron has planned in the future. Be sure to look on the FRESpace website and in your emails for project opportunities.



Volunteers clearing trails

Since our last newsletter, we have had some personnel changes. Alan Foreman joined the team as Maintenance Supervisor. Alan served as the Maintenance Supervisor at Calhoun Falls State Park prior to his arrival. He stepped in and has done a great job in the transition while leading the maintenance team. Reilly Simpson, our Assistant Ranger, left for a job opportunity with the Mississippi State Park system. Reilly did a great job, and we wish her luck in her future endeavors. Since then, we have hired Thomas Gilen as our new Assistant Ranger. Thomas is a graduate of Coastal Carolina University. We look forward to his contributions to our state park team.

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As we approach the upcoming summer season, we have a few projects to finish. Of note are some FRESpace funded projects. In the coming months, we will complete our ELC Cinema upgrade. This upgrade will include a 6' video touch screen selector in which users can select which video they wish to view. We will also extend our sand fencing further past the beach front campground. This project is vital in creating and protecting the sand dunes which help with wildlife habitat and storm protection. This is not possible without the efforts and support of FRESpace. Thank y'all for your continued support. We look forward to seeing you out in the park, as well as out in our great community here in Edisto Beach!

Kyle Bullock, Park Manager

Interpretive Ranger's Report

Hey FRESpace!

This off season has been busy with small projects and big changes, In October, I was promoted to a full-time position at the park, and it has been a great opportunity to grow. In November, I hired Brandi Driggers as the Assistant Interpreter. She comes from Paris Mountain State Park and Hunting Island State Park. She loves providing programs to the public and educating them on conservation practices. Since she started, she has taken over the program scheduling and the ELC Instagram account created by one of our summer interns. She wants to promote everything the ELC has to offer. Take a look at the [ebsp.elc](https://www.instagram.com/ebsp.elc) Instagram for additional information.

Another big change was trading out Marsh, our resident alligator for the past three and a half years. She was getting too big for her exhibit and needed to be swapped out. Alligator Adventure came to pick her up and brought two new yearlings. We are in the process of voting on names so be on the lookout for information. Stop by and check out our new additions during one of our reptile programs.



Marsh's Last Day at ELC



Name the new ELC gators!

We are still working on our movie theater upgrade. 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 completed in the next few months. We also received news that DNR received a grant, and we will work with them to put in a water quality exhibit at the ELC. 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 the park!

Sam Pettit, Interpretive Ranger

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