



# FRIENDS

## OF COASTAL SOUTH CAROLINA

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SUPPORTING OUR NATIONAL FOREST AND WILDLIFE REFUGES •

Winter 2014

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## **SEWEE ASSOCIATION GOES COASTAL!**

**Introducing our new name + logo**

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**Secretary of the Interior  
Sally Jewell visits Cape Romain**

**Battling invasive Species**



## From the Director

Dear Friends,

Although much work remains to be done we have much to celebrate as we come to the end of another year. This year we officially adopted our new name and logo. I assure you that although we are now Friends of Coastal South Carolina you will still be supporting all the same great work we have been doing since 1996 as the SEWEE Association. The reason for the change is simple; your generous support, and the success of our programs, has allowed us to grow to now serve 100 miles of the South Carolina coast. As a result we needed an identity that better reflected our growing geographic reach. In addition, we wanted to highlight our ongoing commitment to supporting our national forest and wildlife refuges. I hope you will agree that we have accomplished those goals, and that you will join us in proudly displaying our new logo. We offer our sincere thanks to Gil Shuler and his team for their great work on this project. In honor of our new logo we are sharing with you in this issue some of the best egret photos (great and snowy) we could find. The great egret is one of the most recognizable birds along our coast and, with your help, our new logo will soon be equally recognizable.

We also celebrate the anniversary of two monumental conservation efforts this year. Locally, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ACE Basin Task Force. The task force's work, which to date has protected 200,000 acres of land, began when a small group of citizens organized to defeat a development proposal which would have resulted in devastation of a pristine region and the traditional way of life of those who lived there. The effort has grown to include many partners and hundreds of citizens and has served as a national model for the contribution private land protection, and public/private partnerships can make to conservation. Nationally, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act (page 6). Supporters of the Act did not give up even though the Act endured 66 revisions before it finally became law. The Act has protected 110 million acres of land to date.

Margaret Mead said "never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has". Both of these efforts prove just how right she was, and remind us what a powerful role citizens can have in protecting our irreplaceable natural resources, as well as what an important responsibility we have to do so. They also remind us of the growing importance of our organization's mission to promote citizen stewardship. With many threats impacting our coast, the role of citizens in protecting the iconic resources of our forest and refuges has never been more important.

Finally, we will be celebrating the launch of our new website the week of December 8th. Beyond making it easier for you to support our conservation efforts with improved online donation capabilities, the new site will allow us to keep you better informed about the impacts of your support, and to let you know when your action is needed on critical issues. Our new address is **[sccoastalfriends.org](http://sccoastalfriends.org)**. Let us know what you think about the new site!

Sincere thanks for all you have joined us in accomplishing!

Gratefully,

*Grace*

Grace Lynch Gasper  
Executive Director



*Dedicated to preserving the ecosystems and wildlife of the South Carolina coast for future generations; we support our national forest and wildlife refuges through our education programs, advocacy work and engaging citizens in stewardship of these critical resources.*

### Staff

**Executive Director** Grace Lynch Gasper

**Education Coordinator** Emily Scott

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[sccoastalfriends.org](http://sccoastalfriends.org)

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Cover photos (great and snowy egrets)  
Courtesy of Andy Day.

Our thanks to AccuPrint of  
Mount Pleasant for their  
support with production of  
this newsletter.



# When you give... great things happen!



Merrill Irvin

You mentor the next generation of conservationists by providing 14,000 one of a kind learning experiences a year for kids along the South Carolina coast.



You help ensure threatened and endangered species, like loggerhead sea turtles, will be here for generations to come. In 2013 your support helped 111,803 more loggerhead sea turtle hatchlings make it to the sea.

You help us make our collective voice heard on important conservation issues like funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

You preserve the irreplaceable biodiversity of our national forest and wildlife refuges when you join us in the fight against invasive species.

## Here are some easy ways to support...

### *Give Music and Oysters for Christmas!*

#### *Music and Oysters for Wildlife 10th Anniversary Celebration*

Give the gift of tickets or celebrate the 10th anniversary of this event with a sponsorship. Personal and small business sponsorships begin at \$250.00.

Contact us at [sewee.association@earthlink.net](mailto:sewee.association@earthlink.net) or 834.697.7535 for sponsorship information



**Saturday January 10, 2015**  
**Sewee Outpost, Awendaw SC**  
**2 pm to 6 pm**

**Tickets are available now on**  
**Etix .com**

**Just enter Sewee Outpost in**  
**the Etix site search box or use**  
**our link at [sccoastalfriends.org](http://sccoastalfriends.org)**

## Give the Gift of Conservation for the Holidays

Make a donation to Friends of Coastal South Carolina in honor of someone special to you or give a gift membership. Your gift makes a lasting impact and we will send our latest newsletter and a car decal with our new logo to the recipient when we acknowledge your thoughtful gift.

### Do your holiday shopping on **AmazonSmile!**

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), it's just like shopping on Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to us.

Simply go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and on your first visit select SEWEE Association as your charitable organization (this one is still under the old name). Then let your friends and family know about this great way to support us.

### A very special thank you to **Boeing employees!**

In October we had the privilege of accepting a \$10,000.00 gift from the Employees' Community Fund of Boeing South Carolina in support of our environmental education work. We are exceptionally grateful for the Boeing employees' commitment to conservation.





## Outdoor Science Education



Charleston Collegiate students find a ray on Bulls Island in Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge.

### Updates: "Earth Stewards 2.0"

In last year's newsletter we discussed "where we are going" and shared with you our plan for the future of our programs. This year we began implementing those plans in "Earth Stewards 2.0".

We adapted and upgraded many of our programs to include new technologies and ways of thinking, added new Earth Steward schools, began a new service learning project, and celebrated wilderness by hosting a teacher workshop on Wambaw Creek in the Francis Marion National Forest (page 6). Through the course of the year we had over 14,000 interactions with kids along the South Carolina coast.

As you know our Earth Stewards program is a ten week curriculum for fifth graders designed to engage students in real, outdoor scientific investigations and teach students about the value of our local ecosystems. Earth Stewards 2.0 stays true to those origins but tries to incorporate new teaching trends, including **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) learning, and technology that gets kids excited about learning. Here is one of our favorite examples of those new programs:

This year one of our "Earth Stewards 2.0" additions was the use of digital cameras to allow students to document their own investigations. Modeling the flow of energy through the food web is a huge part of the fifth grade life science standards.



Kensington Elementary students working on their food webs during our wrap-up class: Salt water (left) and fresh water (right)

We thought what better way to do this than to look first hand at the producers and consumers in our coastal ecosystems. Cameras were handed out to a couple of students each day they were in the field and they were in charge of photographing every organism we saw and discussed.

Though we learned that we should probably start with a photography lesson, the students had fun with it. At the end of the year we printed out all of the pictures they had taken (along with some substitutes for the really blurry ones). Then, the class worked together to develop a big mural of our two food webs (freshwater wetland/pine forest and salt marsh/maritime forest).

### Giving Back:

We continue to believe the lesson of stewardship is as important as any science lesson we teach. Here are a couple of our favorite projects from the past year:

Cape Romain Environmental Education Charter School (CREECS) began a soon to be annual project of constructing a living shoreline at the boat landing in McClellanville on the edge of Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge. By deploying recycled oyster shell with the help of SCDNR's SCORE crew, the fourth, fifth and sixth graders provided 200 square feet of potential new oyster habitat by placing recycled oyster shells along a barren area of marsh.

## Giving Back continued...



Cape Romain Environmental Education Charter School students place recycled oyster shells in the marsh to stimulate formation of a new oyster reef.

Oyster larvae (that are floating around in the water during the summer) are looking for a place to live and they prefer to settle on oyster shells. Once an oyster lands it attaches for life and will grow there providing water filtration, erosion control, and habitat for over 85 commercially, recreationally, and ecologically important species.

## Welcome Emily Scott!

In July education coordinator Allie Kreutzer left us to accept a teaching position at the Cape Romain Environmental Education Charter School. Allie's energy and creativity made a lasting impact on our programs and our organization. We are delighted that Allie will not be too far away as the CREECS kids will continue to participate in Earth Stewards and many of our other programs.

I know you will join us in wishing Allie all the best and also join us in welcoming the newest member of our team, Emily Scott. Emily joined us as environmental education programs coordinator in August and brings a wealth of experience to our program. Emily holds a bachelor's degree in marine biology from Roger Williams University and a master's degree in marine affairs from the University of Rhode Island. Emily's graduate work focused on coastal conservation and management. In addition she has tremendous experience in environmental and science education in settings including national parks, a hands-on marine science center, public schools and college classrooms. Although a self-described "true New Englander" Emily has had close ties to the Lowcountry for a number of years and has chosen to make coastal South Carolina her home. In her spare time, Emily loves to kayak, paddleboard, garden, and learn how to cook "new and exciting" foods.



Waccamaw Intermediate students tend to seeds that will be planted in their butterfly garden.

Waccamaw Intermediate in Georgetown has a fantastic habitat garden so we took advantage and learned about the amazing migration of monarch butterflies. Then students enhanced the garden with a monarch butterfly "Waystation". The "Waystation" will provide nourishment for monarchs on their annual migration, as well as for other butterflies.

*"I strongly believe that passion and stewardship for the environment start with education. I am excited to be a part of this organization and share my interests with students, and the wider coastal community in South Carolina. I plan to continue exploring and teaching about the natural world for the rest of my life!"*



Emily Scott getting to know our resident American alligator at Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge.





August teacher workshop in the Wambaw Creek Wilderness within the Francis Marion National Forest. Many thanks to Kathie Livingston (front right) and Nature Adventures Outfitters.

## Celebrating Wilderness

September 4th marked the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. This law, which ensures places untouched by man will be available for future generations to enjoy, took eight years, 66 revisions, and much work by many dedicated people who would not give up before President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Act into law in 1964. The Act begins:

***"In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas of the United States...leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition..."***

The fact that the US population has increased almost 40% since those words were signed into law only emphasizes the importance of the Act as a conservation tool. Today 110 million acres of land are protected under the Wilderness Act. As our population continues to grow these places become even more critical, not only for the respite they provide us from our increasingly urban lives, but also for the contribution they make to protecting our physical health through protecting our water resources and air quality. We

are very lucky to have multiple areas protected as wilderness here in the Lowcountry. The two most accessible of these areas are the 33,000 acres of Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge designated as wilderness, and the Wambaw Creek Wilderness area within the Francis Marion National Forest.

Thanks to funding from the US Forest Service we were able to incorporate new wilderness lessons into our outdoors education programs this year, and also conduct an outdoor education workshop for teachers from Charleston and Georgetown Counties. The teacher workshop, which began with a paddle to explore the Wambaw Creek Wilderness Area, focused on giving teachers a chance to explore and learn about wilderness and new ecosystems, and provided tools to help them to bring outdoor education into their classrooms on a daily basis. Sincere thanks to Nature Adventures Outfitters for a great paddle and outstanding interpretation of this beautiful area. Our partnership with Coastal Expeditions also allowed 250 of our Earth Stewards students to compare and contrast the wilderness of Cape Romain to the developed coast as they traveled through Cape Romain to Bulls Island.



## Wilderness continued...

Our educational efforts, and the contributions of our partners, were recognized this fall when Forest Service Recreation Programs Manager Jannah Dupre accepted the Forest Service **Wilderness Legacy Award** "For dedication and contribution to Wilderness Stewardship".

We owe a great debt to those who worked so tirelessly to make the Wilderness Act a reality. For our part in continuing this important legacy we are committed to continue teaching children and adults about the importance of wilderness and our responsibility in the ongoing protection of these places that define our quality of life in the Lowcountry.

## Battling Invasive Species: Phragmites in the ACE Basin

When we consider the greatest threats to our public lands today the impact of the federal budget sequester on management capabilities is on the top of the list. Also on the threat list, along with climate change and encroaching development, is the less talked about threat of invasive species. Invasive species are recognized as one of the leading threats to biodiversity and impose enormous costs to agriculture, forestry and fisheries. We have partnered with our national forest and wildlife refuges on many projects to eradicate invasive species through the years and we continue to do so. We are currently in the second year of a project partnering with Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge to control feral hog populations on the refuge. This year we began working with ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge on a project to eradicate an invasive reed called phragmites (*Phragmites australis*) from the Basin.



**Have you seen this plant?**

Although there is a native species of phragmites (*Phragmites australis* subsp. *americanus*) European forms of phragmites were probably introduced accidentally to North America in ballast material sometime during the late 1700s or early 1800s. Introduced phragmites is a vigorous plant that, once established, rapidly takes over, creating dense patches that consume available growing space and push out other plants, including the native subspecies. It also alters wetland hydrology, increases the potential for fire, and may reduce and degrade wetland wildlife habitat due, in part, to its dense and rapid growth. One of the primary concerns in the ACE Basin is the damage phragmites could do to native plant species that waterfowl depend on for food. The wetlands of the ACE Basin are critical wintering habitat for approximately 50,000 ducks, geese and swans each year including as many as 25 different species.

Below ground, introduced phragmites forms a dense network of roots and rhizomes which can extend downward several feet. It spreads horizontally by sending out rhizome runners which can grow 10 or more feet in a single season.

Along rivers and coastal shorelines, fragments of rhizomes transported from infested sites far away settle in new spots and become rooted. Rhizome fragments may also be moved by heavy machinery in dredging operations.

In the ACE Basin the presence of phragmites is still at a level that makes eradication possible. The ACE Basin Task Force has established a special "Invasive Species Strike Team" that is organizing and consolidating invasive species education, control measures and funding sources among its many partners. We are pleased to be supporting this important effort. Plant locations are currently being mapped and assessed for appropriate types and application methods of herbicides, with some treatment measures already commenced.

Citizen participation in the mapping effort is critical. To report locations of phragmites in the ACE Basin contact: Jason Ayers at [jason\\_ayers@fws.gov](mailto:jason_ayers@fws.gov), 843-300-0421

## Advocating for Land and Water Conservation Funding

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a law passed almost 50 years ago and it is one of our nation's most powerful conservation tools. The fund was intended to work by reinvesting a small portion of the proceeds from offshore oil and gas drilling into the conservation of our nation's natural, recreational and cultural resources. Despite the fact that the fund does not use any tax payer money (the revenue from the depletion of one natural resource is dedicated to protecting another) the full funding intended for LWCF has only **once** been appropriated by Congress during the program's 50 year history. The fact that five South Carolina wildlife refuges and the Francis Marion National Forest all have current pending land acquisition projects dependent on full funding of LWCF illustrates the importance of this funding to South Carolinians.



Photo courtesy of Sammy Fretwell/  
The State paper

Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell (middle) looks at graphic representations of the predicted impacts of sea level rise in Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge with refuge manager Sarah Dawsey (right) on a trip to Bulls Island.

The importance of LWCF was further illustrated by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell's visit to Cape Romain last October. We can be quite proud of the fact that Secretary Jewell chose coastal South Carolina as her backdrop to talk about the importance of the LWCF program. The Secretary chose this venue because of our region's strong track record of public-private collaboration to promote conservation. Our staff and board members participated in a public forum with the Secretary and over 50 local stakeholders. We also had the privilege of accompanying the Secretary on a tour of Bulls Island with refuge staff. The visit allowed ample opportunity for us all to share the on the ground realities of the budget sequester with the Secretary. Although once on Bulls Island the conversation quickly turned to the stark realities of climate change, we did have the opportunity to share details of our environmental education work with the Secretary. We were delighted to hear her say she wished every school child in Charleston could visit and learn about Bulls Island.

The Secretary shared many messages during her visit, including the reality of climate change, the importance of

collaboration to promote conservation, particularly of longleaf pine, and the urgency that Congress support the nation's Land and Water Conservation Fund. Most importantly she reminded us that "We do live in a democracy. It responds to local input. Make sure your voices are heard."

We took the Secretary's message to heart and have continued to advocate for full funding of the LWCF. This spring we brought together a coalition of partners to urge Senator Lindsay Graham to support full funding for LWCF. In addition to our 1,500 members the effort was formally supported by numerous others, including Charleston County Councilman Dickie Schweers, The City of Conway, Bulls Bay Historic Passage Chamber of Commerce (representing over 100 businesses in the Bulls Bay Region), and the Town of McClellanville. We offer our sincere thanks to these partners for adding their voices to this effort. We will continue to ask you to voice your support for this and other funding for our national forest and wildlife refuges. You can now keep up with current advocacy issues on our new website.



## We welcome George Geer and Alys Campaigne to our board



**Alyssondra (Alys) Campaigne** is a founding principal at Engage Strategies, a policy and strategic consulting firm based in Mount Pleasant, SC. Alys holds degrees with honors from Wesleyan

University and New York University. She has been actively engaged in federal and state policy debates on conservation, energy, environment, public health, and transportation for over two decades. Alys moved to the Lowcountry after spending a decade in Washington, DC helping create and lead the External Affairs department of the Center for American Progress, a nationally influential think tank, working as Legislative Director for the Natural Resources Defense Council, and as a Legislative Aide in the U.S. House and Senate. She has also worked with the National Audubon Society and reviewed and recommended environmental grants at the Nathan Cummings Foundation. At Engage Strategies, Alys leads assessments for prominent foundations, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to guide major federal and state-level investments to achieve policy change in diverse fields such as environmental protection, juvenile justice, asset inequality and state procurement. She enjoys kayaking by her home on Shem Creek and serves as a volunteer Guardian *ad Litem*.

*"Our public lands are some of our most vital national treasures. Public stewardship is essential and this organization is the first line of protection and education. I hope to help extend opportunities for people to deepen their connection to wildlife and experience first-hand the majesty of our spectacular, local wild places."*



**George Geer** is a native South Carolinian. He is a graduate of Kingstree High School, Wofford College, and University of South Carolina Law School. He served in the United States Army for two years. George was President of Andrews Bank and Trust Company until its merger with Citizens and Southern National Bank, he then practiced law with Hinds, Cowan, Strange and Geer in Georgetown, SC.

George brings with him a wealth of experience in education and the nonprofit world. He has served as chairman of the board of the Georgetown School District, chairman of the Belle W. Baruch Foundation, president of Georgetown County United Way, chairman of Black River District of Boy Scouts of America, on the executive committee of AMI Kids and on the Georgetown County Development Commission. While serving on the Coastal Community Foundation Board George became impressed by the SEWEE Association and its programs. Later as a board member of the Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation he became more informed about the work of the SEWEE Association and its expansion to serve Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge. George is an avid cyclist and he and his wife Betsey enjoy living on the edge of Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge in McClellanville SC.

*"The greatest risk to humanity today is our exploitation and abuse of earth and its fauna and flora. Exposing young people to the natural world and all its wonders; and developing in them an understanding of the necessity of conservation is essential to the survival of humanity."*

## Sincere thanks to Eddie White for many years of dedicated service

It is rare to find board members who make as great an impact on an organization as Eddie White has made on this one. Eddie has served as a director since March of 2004 and has been a motivating force since day one. Growing up on Sullivan's Island, Eddie graduated from Wando High School before leaving the Lowcountry to attend Furman University. He returned to complete his dentistry degree at MUSC and is currently the owner of Sewee Dental Care in Mt. Pleasant, and the founder of the ever-popular Awendaw Green. Eddie has used his love of the Lowcountry, his extensive connections with community members and his passion for showcasing local South Carolina musicians to bring the SEWEE Association to the next level of growth and recognition in the community.

In 2006 his vision to create a fundraising event with local musicians providing the entertainment and featuring one of our wonderful natural resources, Bulls Bay oysters, led to one of the premier events in our area, ***Music and Oysters for Wildlife***. In 2015 we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of this event which has raised over \$186,000.00 for our education programs since 2006.

Although Eddie rotated off our board this past March he is not going far, and will continue to be the driving force behind ***Music and Oysters for Wildlife***. It is truly impossible to say an adequate thanks to Eddie for all he has contributed through the years.



# Thank You!

## Foundations

The Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation  
Boeing Employees' Community Fund of SC  
Funds of the Coastal Community Foundation  
of South Carolina:

Bakker Family Fund

Lothmann Family Fund

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The Joanna Foundation

Lowcountry RC&D

National Environmental Education Foundation

Kinder Morgan Foundation

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## Sponsors

### \$1,000+

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### \$500

Loggerhead Apparel

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Sewee Outpost

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### \$1,000+

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Alyssandra Campaigne

### Equipment/maintenance Sponsors

Ann Cox

Sarah R Hartman





# Music and Oysters for Wildlife

A sincere thanks to all who joined us for another great year despite the January thunderstorms. The storms temporarily stopped the music, but couldn't dampen your enthusiasm. We owe a special thanks to our silent auction Contributors. The auction alone raised over \$10,000 this year!

Abideawhile  
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Anytime Fitness, Mt Pleasant  
Atelier Gallery  
The Backpacker  
Backyard Retreat  
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Andy Day

## Food and beverage provided by

Lowcountry Doors & Hardware, Inc., Ben Moise,  
Palmetto Brewing Company, Southern Wine and Spirits,  
A Southern Bartender, Carolina Seafood

## Hosted by

Sewee Outpost

## Music by

Awendaw Green and Stage Presence

## Musicians

Blue Dogs, Ed Hunnicutt, Red Dog Ramblers, Mark Bryan and  
Occasional Milkshake, Doug Jones, Charles Hedgepath, Tim  
White, Donnie Blackwell, Danielle Howle and Firework Show.



Our appreciation to Indigo Creek for their generous support of  
the red wolf captive breeding program at Cape Romain  
National Wildlife Refuge.



**Friends of Coastal South Carolina**  
**PO Box 1131**  
**Mt. Pleasant, SC 29465-1131**



**Supporting our National Forest and  
Wildlife Refuges**

**Founded 1996 as the SEWEE Association**

**Join the conversation at**  
**[sccoastalfriends.org](http://sccoastalfriends.org)**

