

The Lesser Squawk

Newsletter of the
Charleston Audubon &
Natural History Society



WWW.CHARLESTONAUDUBON.ORG

May, 2008

President's Note

Conservation on Folly Beach

I'd like to lead off this final message of the year with news on two items of local conservation interest. First of all, on March 12 Charleston County Parks and Recreation (CCPRC) unveiled conceptual plan options for its North Folly Beach property (the Old Coast Guard Station) and Cummings Point on Morris Island (still privately owned). Each of the three draft options for North Folly Beach included construction of parking areas and some type of structures (ranging from simple kiosks to a large interpretive center) near the grassy field area around the old building foundations.

CCPRC is required by the SC DNR draft management plan to locate these facilities in disturbed areas, but even the plan with the smallest footprint will likely impact the success of breeding populations of bird species such as Painted Buntings and Common Ground Doves.

Please visit the CCPRC "news flash" web page (<http://www.ccprc.com/index.asp?nid=1029>) to review these plans, and then send comments on the form available there. You may also want to contact Mr. Sean Taylor, who is the SC DNR staff person assigned to the North Folly Beach property (proposed as the Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve), at taylor@sc.dnr.gov with comments about the potential threat to wildlife posed by these plans.

Wal-Mart Plan Threatens Wetlands

Next, most of you have probably heard by now that Wal-Mart would like to build a Supercenter on a site adjacent to its current James Island store on Folly Road. In order to build this store Wal-Mart will have to destroy three acres of wetlands and cut more than 30 grand trees. However, when the original store was built in 1995, these wetlands were supposed to be protected as a trade-off. The only thing the Supercenter will offer that is not available in the current store is a grocery section, and there are already four grocery stores within a few miles of the current store. We don't need a Wal-Mart Supercenter on James Island! A group of citizens calling itself Islanders for Responsible Expansion has

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Dogwood Alliance Leads Effort To Safeguard S.E. Coastal Forests

Southern activists formed Dogwood Alliance in November 1996. Originally, the group focused on stopping the expansion of chip mills – facilities that grind whole logs into wood chips for making paper and chipboard – across the South. Recognizing that environmental groups were successfully using market campaigns to compel companies to protect forests, Dogwood Alliance adopted the strategy and launched the first market campaign focused on retail suppliers of office copy paper. And in 2002, Staples, the largest office supply superstore in the world, announced a new environmental paper policy in a joint press conference with Dogwood. And now the work continues...

Last year Dogwood Alliance launched the *Packaging Campaign* which is focused on securing long term protection for the forests of the Southern coast and wetlands. The Dogwood Alliance's Paper Campaign convinced office supply giants Staples, Office Depot and Office Max to agree to strong forest protection commitments for the Cumberland Plateau and Southern Appalachian region. Those commitments have created pressure on the powerful paper companies and led to significant protections.

Now the *Packaging Campaign* is set to bring national attention to the Southern coastal forests. On **Wednesday, May 14**, Michelle Smith, Development Director of Dogwood Alliance, will talk about this high-profile campaign to protect Southern coastal and wetlands forests and how Charleston Audubon Society can participate.

For a great preview, check out the short video at

» <http://www.dogwoodalliance.org/content/view/186/135/> .

» We meet in the 2nd floor auditorium of the main branch of the Charleston County Library, 68 Calhoun St. in Charleston. Lectures are free, and open to Audubon members, guests and the general public. We gather at 6:30 p.m. for a reception and speakers will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Refreshments for Reception

Please bring food for our receptions! Lately donations have dropped off, and we have had pretty meager fare at some recent meetings. Bring anything: Cheese and crackers, fruit, chips and dips, nuts, cookies, cakes, whatever. We supply the drinks and ice but depend on our members to provide the spread!

Thank You,

Cornelia Carrier, PROGRAMS CHAIR

April & May Events

Details in this issue

April 9 – Audubon in Alaska
April 12 – Bonneau Ferry WMA
April 18-20 – Sewee Festival
April 26 – Wine + Warblers

April 26-27 – Silver Bluff Trip
April 29 – Conservation Lobby Day
May 4 – Birdathon + Spring Count
May 13 – SC Audubon Lobby Day

Audubon Members Invited to Columbia to Speak to Legislators

All members and friends are invited to join SC Audubon and other conservation voters at the State House to speak with legislators about important conservation issues. Volunteers are NOT expected to be experts on all these issues. We review the top legislative issues with you beforehand, and conservation lobbyists are available to answer any questions you may have. Your presence makes a dramatic impact on how legislators vote.

Its Easy to Get Involved — Events 4/29 and 5/13

There are several ways you can participate: For the Annual Conservation Lobby Day on April 29th, and for the special Audubon South Carolina Lobby Day on May 13th, you may contact Jeff Mollenhauer, Director of Bird Conservation with Audubon South Carolina (843-462-2150 or via email: jmollenhauer@audubon.org). Jeff will be attending both days and can offer rides to a few folks, and will coordinate car-pooling efforts if there are more interested in attending.

Regular Events by CVSC Each Tuesday

The Conservation Voters of South Carolina (CVSC) organize weekly lobbying opportunities each Tuesday. Weekly "Lobby Teams" meet each Tuesday at the Nickelodeon Theatre at 11:00 am, prior to convening at the State House. Lobby Teams typically last until 3:00 pm. The Nickelodeon Theatre is located at 937 Main Street, Columbia, SC, on the corner of South Main and Pendleton streets behind the State House. Parking is available on the street at green two-hour meters, or in one of two parking garages located at Lady and Assembly streets or Gervais and Sumter streets.

If you are interested in participating in a regular Tuesday session, RSVP to Debbie Parker at dparker@scvoters.org or (803) 799-0716.

CVSC Supports Audubon Objectives

CVSC identifies and tracks state legislation introduced in SC's General Assembly that will impact natural resources. State legislators are notified about these bills through the periodic "Hotlist," emailed weekly during the session. After each two-year session, CVSC produces a Conservation Scorecard which holds grades legislators on their overall votes. Appointments, state agencies and the Executive Branch are also monitored.

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formed to oppose this plan, and they have been circulating a petition against it – an online version of the petition is available at www.isrex.org. In order to move forward on its plans, Wal-Mart will have to get approval from Charleston City Council to purchase the three adjacent acres and permits from the Army Corps of Engineers to fill the wetlands. Council Members Tim Mallard and Kathleen Wilson already oppose the plan, but please contact other Members (contact information available at <http://www.charlestoncity.info/dept/content.aspx?nid=661>) and let them know how you feel!

Birdathon + Spring Count, May 4th

Our Charleston Spring Bird Count will be held on Sunday, May 4. We are combining the Count again this year with a fund-raising Birdathon – contributions will be used to help fund our Pitt Street Bridge kiosk project (a series of informative displays about bird species that can be seen from the bridge).

You don't have to be an expert birder to participate – in fact, it's a great way to learn birds! Beginners will be paired with experienced birders and assigned to cover territories within the 15-mile diameter count circle. We achieved a total of 140 species on last year's count, but if conditions favor us we could easily reach 160 or more! Last year we raised over \$1,700 with the Birdathon, and we hope to do even better this year. Please consider sponsoring this event with a pledge (or flat donation,) even if you won't be able to join us birding!

See the insert for more details. Extra Birdathon forms are available online.

Chapter Supports Local School's Outdoor Classroom

This has been a busy year for us at CNHS. One area in which we need to do more is education, but we did recently contribute \$1,000 to the James Island Elementary School Outdoor Classroom Project (most of these funds coming from our Coastal Community Foundation Children's Education Fund). This very worthwhile project, involving plantings and teaching areas surrounding a 2.5-acre pond, will help children connect with nature and improve habitat for wildlife – project plans can be viewed at the school website: <http://jies.ccsdschools.com/home.aspx>.

April 3 was the dedication day for the project.

Volunteers Service Makes It All Possible

Finally, at our May 14 membership meeting we will be holding elections for officers on the CNHS Board for next year. Candidates include:

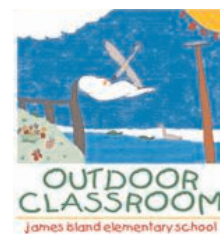
for President, Andy Harrison;	for Vice-President, Steve Bleezarde;
for Treasurer, Tom Snowden;	and for Secretary, Cathy Miller.

I'd like to thank all of our officers and the other board members for their hard work and many accomplishments this past year. Many others have also volunteered time and effort to CNHS activities (contributing refreshments or raffle prizes at our meetings, leading groups on the Christmas or Spring Counts, etc). We would not exist without help from you.

And we need more help! Think about writing an article for the Squawk, for example – on a birding experience, a conservation issue, or some other topic. We could use some "fresh blood" on the board, too. If you are interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities at CNHS, please contact me at 795-6934 or parula23@aol.com.

Thanks – see you soon!

Andy Harrison, CHAPTER PRESIDENT
843-795-6934, parula23@aol.com





Mark Your Calendars

FIELDTRIPS, LECTURES & LOWCOUNTRY EVENTS

May Events T.B.A.

» May Fieldtrips to Be Scheduled

Visit www.CharlestonAudubon.org, for updates about May field trips -- plans couldn't be finalized before the newsletter was to be printed.

Challenge & Chance in Alaska Charleston Audubon Lecture

- » Wednesday, April 9, 6:30 p.m.
- » Taldi Walter, Nat'l Audubon

National Audubon Society Public Policy Officer and Alaska Outreach Coordinator Taldi Walter presents "From Black Gold to the Black Oystercatcher: Challenges and Opportunities in Alaska." A discussion of the remarkable abundance of wildlife and critical habitat in Alaska.

Wine & Warblers Beidler Forest Event

- » Saturday, April 26, 5 p.m.

Join expert birdwatchers for an evening on the boardwalk and explore the wide variety of songbirds that travel to Beidler Forest each Spring. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres and wine tastings as you explore this ancient swamp forest. Proceeds benefit Audubon South Carolina.

Reservations and advance payment are required. \$35 per person. Walks begin at 5 p.m. Please make reservations for your time slot by calling (843) 462-2150.

Fieldtrip — Bonneau Ferry W.M.A.

- » Saturday, April 12, 7 a.m.

Last year's trip to Bonneau Ferry in March may have been a little early for many of the spring migrants; still, we saw 57 species. This year's trip should afford us the opportunity to spot lots of warblers, vireos, thrushes and the elusive Red-cocked Woodpecker. There should not be much walking involved on this outing; for those of you who might have concerns. The site includes longleaf pine and mixed-hardwood forests, fresh water swamps and agricultural fields. For you history buffs who might have missed last

year's outing, the ruins of the Comingtee plantation house and rice mill are easily accessible by car, and worth the visit.

We will meet in the parking lot next to the First Citizens Bank, in front of the Summerville Wal-Mart; near the intersection of I-26 and I-7-A, and car pool from there. It is about an hour drive to Bonneau Ferry. Bring a lunch, binoculars, scopes, field guide and yes, bug spray.

If you plan to attend please contact Don Jones before April 12th. 572-8232 or Birdfrogdjlj@aol.com.

Overnight Fieldtrip — Silver Bluff Audubon Center

- » Sat.-Sun. April 26-27

On April 26-27 we'll visit Silver Bluff Audubon Center near North Augusta SC. We plan to leave Charleston midmorning on Saturday the 26th, bird for several hours in the afternoon, check into our motel and have dinner. We'll get up early Sunday, bird until midday and then start home. It's about a three and a half hour drive counting pit stops and wrong turns. Anyone interested should contact Don Jones (572-8232 or Birdfrogdjlj@aol.com) as soon as possible so we can make car pool arrangements etc. Don will also have motel information.

The center has fresh water impoundments, walking trails, mixed-hardwood/pine forest and some frontage on the Savannah River. Late April is prime time for migrating shore birds.

Working to Save Coastal Forests Charleston Audubon Lecture

- » Wednesday, May 14, 6:30 p.m.
- » Michelle Smith,
Dogwood Alliance

The Dogwood Alliance's *Packaging Campaign* will bring national attention to Southern coastal forests. On **Wednesday, May 14**, Michelle Smith, Development Director of Dogwood Alliance, will talk about this high-profile campaign to protect Southern coastal and wetlands forests and how Charleston Audubon Society can participate.

Packaging symbolizes the disposable society we have become: In 2004, more than half of all the paper produced in the United States was used in paper packaging. Learn about the negative environmental impacts on Southern forests caused by "business as usual" packaging – in everything from groceries and fast food to consumer electronics – and what Dogwood Alliance is going to do about it.



Fri., Sat. & Sun., April 18-20

Experience the birding wonders of the Santee region in central South Carolina! With a variety of places to see and explore, there will be plenty for all to enjoy. Whether you are coming to sharpen your birding skills or just enjoy some wonderful Spring weather, consider joining the first Santee Birding and Nature Festival.

In addition to birding trips, there will be guided canoe and kayak trips in the Upper and Lower Santee Swamp and the Audubon Center at Francis Beidler Forest, butterfly walks, wildlife photography workshops, behind-the-scenes tours of Santee National Wildlife Refuge, conservation exhibits, music, food, and more.

A full schedule of fieldtrips, workshops and events is available online:

- » <http://www.fws.gov/santee/>

Note: Most field trips will be limited to the first 25 participants.

The Santee Cultural Arts Center will be the center of activity for those not venturing out into the field. They will have exhibitors from various conservation organizations, as well as children's activities, music, food, and fun! So, if you are not scheduled for any trips, come have an exciting time at the Santee Cultural Arts Center, conveniently located on Brooks Boulevard off of Highway 15 in Santee.

Questions? (803) 478-2217 or
kay_mccutcheon@fws.gov

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Charleston Audubon – serving Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties, founded as the Charleston Natural History Society in 1905, and a chapter of the National Audubon Society since 1970 – is a nonprofit environmental organization that actively promotes awareness, appreciation and conservation of the natural environment through educational programs, field trips, conservation projects, sponsored research and social activities.

Learn more at WWW.CHARLESTONAUDUBON.ORG.

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Each year, CVSC researches and interviews political candidates for state and local office and endorses individuals who have demonstrated leadership and who desire to make conservation a high legislative priority. The CVSC Political Action Committee contributes to candidate campaigns and conducts “Independent Expenditure Campaigns” in particularly close, significant races.

CVSC works to get more conservation-minded citizens involved in the political process by providing the tools and information they need to make informed choices at election time. CVSC aims to build a bi-partisan, pro-environmental working majority in the state House and Senate by 2010.

“All politics is local.” CVSC mentors local groups who wish to hold locally elected officials accountable, encourages partnerships and helps the conservation community build strategic coalitions.

Editor’s Note: The CVSC website offers some valuable materials: You may subscribe to receive the weekly Hot List email which will keep you informed about the status of legislation in the state house. The “Resources” section has links to SC Audubon and many of the other organizations, state-wide, working to preserve the environment, protect wildlife and education the public. Check it out! » <http://conservationvotersofsc.org>

CONSERVATION VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA (CVSC)

is the political arm of the conservation community in South Carolina. CVSC is a non-partisan, statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting South Carolina’s environment by making it a priority for our elected leaders. As a legislative watchdog, CVSC works in concert with South Carolina’s conservation community to identify and highlight important bills impacting our air, water, wildlife, natural areas and our health.

The CVSC Political Action Committee also supports pro-conservation candidates for political office at election time and holds state legislators accountable for their votes in a bi-annual Conservation Scorecard.

» Learn more: <http://www.conservationvotersofsc.org/>



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