



BEAUFORT COUNTY Open Land Trust

Fall 2020 Newsletter

Photo credits: Miles Sanders

Bay Point Island

Bay Point Island dodged another bullet on September 24th when Beaufort County's Zoning Board of Appeals denied the request for a special use permit that would allow for a luxury resort to be built on the island. This is the second failed attempt by developers after an annexation request to Hilton Head Island was denied in 2016.

Bay Point is one of the last uninhabited barrier islands that provides the necessary refuge for a variety of wildlife, many of which are either federally or state protected. Wildlife on the low-lying island is already at risk from rising sea levels, storm surge and erosion. Recent aerial photos show the tree line and existing caretaker's home underwater during a high tide.

The developers promoted the project as an eco-sensitive resort, which Beaufort County's Community Development Department agreed with, giving initial approval for the project. The OLT was one of many organizations to publicly oppose the project along with political opposition from Governor McMaster, Senator Chip Campsen, Representative Shannon Erickson and Congressman Joe Cunningham. In addition to the political leadership and other

organizations, over 30,000 individuals signed the petition started by the Gullah/Geechee Nation and hundreds more wrote letters and made phone calls to their local representatives.

The ZBOA meeting on September 24th was held in person in order to allow for public input and the ZBOA members stayed until midnight to ensure everyone was heard. Although it is possible that the developers will appeal the Board's decision, we are grateful to the ZBOA for the amount of time they spent listening to the public's concerns as well as their time spent reviewing the proposal

as it relates to the special use requirements, Beaufort County Community Development Code and the Comprehensive Plan. We are fortunate to live in a place where community involvement is an integral part of the process and where leaders recognize the value of our natural and cultural resources.

For the past 50 years the Open Land Trust has worked to protect those special places that are tied to our area's sense of place and natural beauty. Bay Point Island is one of those significant ecological and cultural places that warrant protection.



Stakeholder Notification/Public Notice for LTA Re-Accreditation Application

The Land Trust Alliance accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands in perpetuity. The Open Land Trust is pleased to announce it is applying for accreditation renewal. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs. The value and status of having LTA Accreditation in a strong land conservation state like South Carolina is significant. OLT has experienced heightened credibility with its federal, regional, state, county and local partners since achieving accreditation in 2016. The importance of LTA Accreditation was recently recognized by Beaufort County's Ordinance 2019/48, the Rural and Critical Land Program Ordinance, which defines "land trust" (Section 26-29) as "a nonprofit land conservation organization accredited by the Land Trust Alliance which meets the requirements of Internal Revenue Code

Section 170 and is active in conservation efforts in the county or state."

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how the Open Land Trust complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices>.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org, or email your comment to info@landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on the Open Land Trust's application will be most useful by Sunday, January 3, 2021.



Photo credits: Nurnberg Photography

Green Drinks Event at Widgeon Point

On Tuesday October 6th, Caylor Romines, Director of Stewardship presented at the first in-person Green Drinks event since March. The event was held at Widgeon Point, which will soon be open to the public as a passive park. Widgeon Point was purchased through the joint efforts of OLT and Beaufort County.

Widgeon Point is Beaufort County's newest passive park located conveniently in central Beaufort County and has a birding blind, picnicking facilities, bathrooms as well as numerous walking paths to explore the natural beauty of the Lowcountry. The back portion of the property, known as the Widgeon Point Preserve, will remain in its natural state with a loop trail around the island.

Green Drinks is a self-organized network that meets the first Tuesday of every month from 5:30 PM-7:00 PM at different locations around Beaufort. There is typically about 45 minutes of socializing and a 10-15 minute presentation on relevant topics. Green Drinks gatherings are held in over 300 cities worldwide and typically the Beaufort Green Drinks has anywhere from 50-90 people. The group, which is organized by a steering committee hopes to continue in-person gatherings in a safe way. If you are interested in learning more you can follow them on Facebook or join their monthly mailing list by sending an email to greendrinksbeaufort@gmail.com.

Planned Giving in a Pandemic

In uncertain times like these, we are grateful for any silver linings and the charitable contribution changes in the CARES Act are an example of something positive that has come out of this year.

Below are some of the highlights from the CARES Act that we think are helpful as you think of ways to give during the pandemic:

- For 2020, there is no income limit on the deduction of cash gifts to eligible charities.
- If you are in a position to make generous gifts, you could potentially offset ALL of your taxable income for 2020.
- Qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) are still allowed for anyone age 70 ½ or older from a Traditional and Inherited IRA.
- Stock gifts allow you to avoid taxation on the stock's appreciation and provide a tax benefit if you itemize your deductions. Deductions for stock gifts are limited to 30% of adjusted gross income when making charitable contributions.

*Please contact your tax, legal or accounting advisor for more information.

Getting to Know Your South Carolina

By: Dr. Al Segars, OLT Board Member

Need a break from pandemics, zoom meetings and social media? A great antidote is right in our midst!

The Altamaha Town Heritage Preserve is a 100 acre natural area co-owned by South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Beaufort County. Rich with both natural beauty and historical significance, this property is a great place to take a gentle respite from everyday challenges.

A walking trail will take you through hardwood forest into maritime forest eventually leading to the banks of the Colleton River. At completion of the 0.9 mile trail there are benches and a picnic table to

rest and enjoy the view.

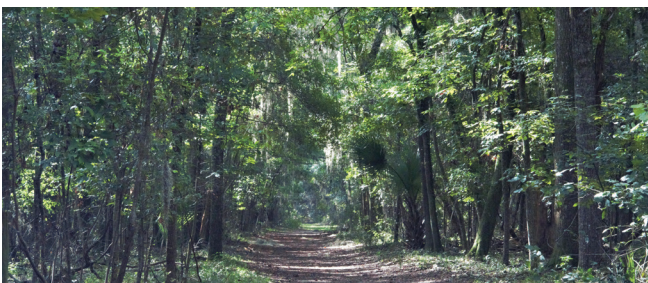
There is a great kiosk at the entrance highlighting the amazing history of this site. Great trip for home schooling!

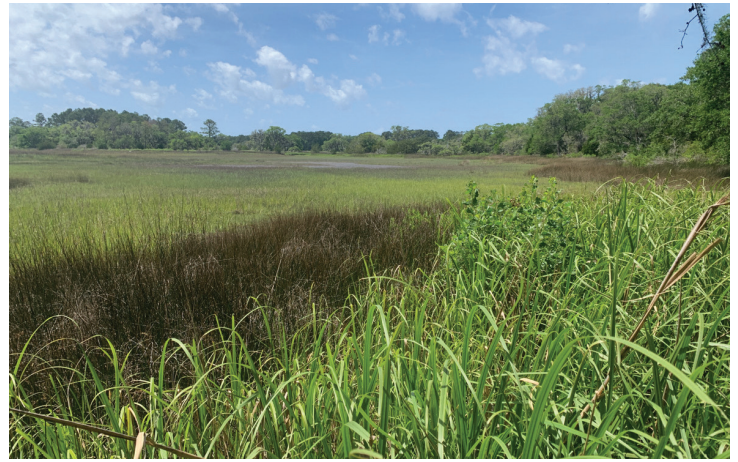
Block off a window of time and visit this beautiful property. Close your eyes and go back in time. As you travel the trail quietly, listen to the sounds of Pileated woodpeckers, warblers...lots of birds! You'll be glad you did!

Located on Old Baileys Road just off of Hwy 170 near BJWSA
(directions on link below)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdahnRMAjGA>

<https://www2.dnr.sc.gov/ManagedLands/ManagedLand/ManagedLand/25>





Rural & Critical Program

Longwood, St. Helena Island - A Century of Ownership

How long has your family continually owned a particular piece of property? Three years? Ten? Fifty? The Open Land Trust is honored to have the opportunity to hold a conservation easement on Longwood, which has been in the same family ownership for approximately 100 years. Through wars, economic and political transitions, hurricanes and tropical storms, Longwood remains an undeveloped haven on southern St. Helena Island providing significant habitat and migration corridors for wildlife. While this area of St. Helena Island has remained rural, it faces constant development pressure including the recent attempt to

develop Bay Point Island into an exclusive resort.

Beaufort County's Rural & Critical Land Program has purchased a conservation easement on 227-acre Longwood that substantially reduces the amount of residential construction permitted (from 66 residential structures to 6) and limits the majority of human impact to three small defined areas on the property.

Spanning from Seaside Road to Lands End Road, Longwood contains mixed upland forest, evergreen upland forest and forested and non-forested wetlands. Although some

timbering historically took place, the oak trees have remained untouched. A defining feature of Longwood can be seen from Seaside Road, expansive views of 44 acres of intertidal salt marsh. The saltmarsh habitat of Tombee Creek's headwaters, a major tributary of Station Creek draining into Port Royal Sound, forms 7,155 feet of conservation easement boundary and is a component of the hummocks located off Seaside Road. With this conservation easement, Longwood's natural landscape will be preserved to the greatest extent possible as both an aesthetic and ecological contribution to the island and region.

LANDOWNER SPOTLIGHT

Remembering my Dad at “Over Home”



By: Roberta Sanders

The place is affectionally called Over Home for many reasons. As a little girl, and through my adult life until my father's illness, I remembered my Dad having a small farm and planting a garden there. My Dad loved fishing and was an outdoorsman through and through. He was

skilled as a carpenter, plumber and mechanic. He made all of us laugh but was firm when necessary. He was a courageous and very resourceful man.

One of my fondest memories of Over Home was planting and harvesting a variety of fruit and vegetables. We ate freshly picked strawberries, cucumbers, tomatoes and a variety of melons. We always had such an abundance to consume. Over Home became a special place in my heart because I rode on the tractor with Daddy every time we were there.

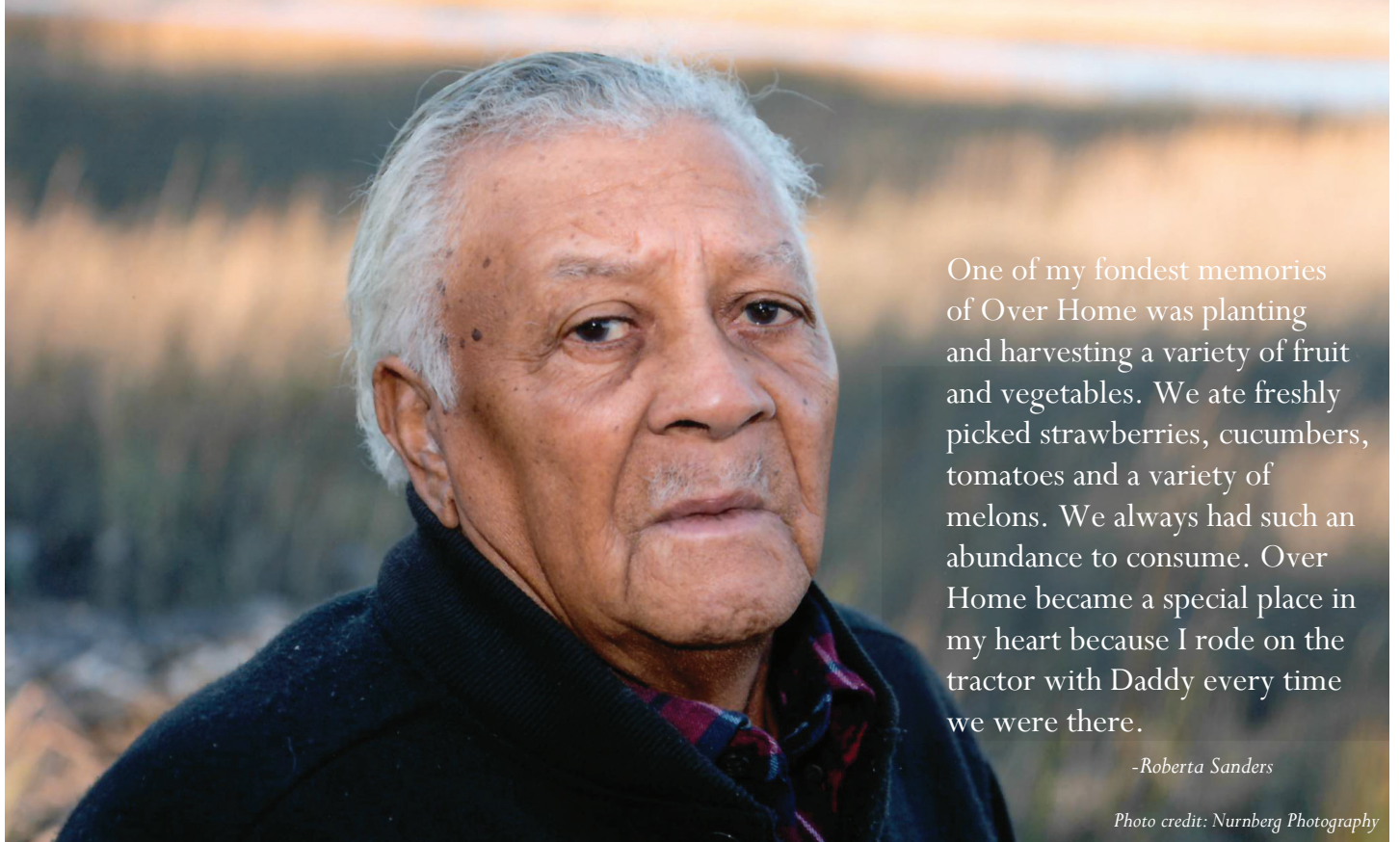
After planting, pulling weeds or fertilizing the soil, then it was finally time to have fun. Amongst other games, my siblings, cousins and I would play hide and seek, duck-duck-goose and skip rocks on the river.

My Dad spoke of his father daily and I often find myself doing the same. He told me of his childhood with heavy emphasis on the many

things that was instilled in him at a young age. Shown in the photo is my grandfather's silo that he helped construct many years ago which exemplified the work ethic he has instilled in all of us.

I will always cherish Over Home and the conservation ethic of my father. He wanted to preserve the open space and protect the natural habitat of Over Home. He decided to protect Over Home in perpetuity through a conservation easement with the Open Land Trust to keep it the same for his descendants. I hope that one day I can accomplish half of my Dad's footsteps.

Daddy, I will always be your “tom boy”. I often miss your voice, your laughter and your many words of wisdom. My mind still talks with you and I often listen to your favorite artist, watch your favorite shows as well as cook for favorite meals. My soul knows that you are constantly with me. Thank you, Daddy. I love you.



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-Roberta Sanders

Photo credit: Nurnberg Photography



Photo credits: Brown Land + Plantation Advisors

Oak Island

On April 13th, Oak Island was protected through collaboration between the Open Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy and the Dataw Island Owners' Association.

Situated between Dataw and Warsaw Islands and surrounded by tidally-influenced salt marsh, Oak Island's 33.4 acres of relatively undisturbed maritime forest surrounded by tidal marsh are now protected in perpetuity. Oak Island was originally included as part of the master plan for Dataw Island, a private development established in the 1980's and was once slated for up to 18 developable single-family homes to be known as Oak Island Estates. Waterfront condominiums were also considered. Thankfully, the owner of the

property abandoned development plans in 2016 and donated ownership of Oak Island in its undeveloped natural condition to The Nature Conservancy.

The Nature Conservancy, committed to maintaining the ecological integrity of Oak Island, looked for an appropriate successor owner. A group of anonymous donors from Dataw Island entered purchase negotiations with The Nature Conservancy, who agreed to sell the property with the condition that it was protected by a conservation easement granted to the Open Land Trust. This spring, the purchase was completed and the purchaser immediately donated ownership of Oak Island to the Dataw Island Owners' Association

for use as a passive nature preserve. Plans include nature trail maintenance, the addition of benches, and a low-impact dog exercise enclosure.

Oak Island is located on Jenkins Creek, a major tributary of the Morgan River draining directly into the St. Helena Sound, recognized as one of the most pristine estuaries on the eastern seaboard. Public benefits provided by the protection of Oak Island include its relatively natural habitat and biological diversity, open space value and enhancement of downstream water quality. This hummock island's natural habitat and picturesque beauty as seen from Warsaw Island and Jenkins Creek can now remain as is – forever.



An Evening under *The Mother Tree* at Whitehall Park

On the evening of October 1st, 2020, the Open Land Trust hosted Mr. Michael Murphy for an evening under the Mother Tree to discuss Conservation Arboriculture and Live Oak longevity. Roughly 50 participants sported their favorite face covering to hear the Master Arborist talk about new methods and techniques to take care of our cherished live oaks to empower them to essentially live forever.

Michael taught attendees of the “Four Rs” that make up Conservation Arboriculture, which consists of Regenerative Pruning, Retrenchment, Reiteration and Restoration. The Four Rs are connected to the maintenance processes that need to be in place for tree longevity. Regenerative pruning is the primary process for mature trees as reduction pruning of limb ends will reduce overall weight of the tree and increase overall stability. Retrenchment is the natural process that trees undergo as they age and they begin to shed inner and upper limbs which introduces the

tree into its ancient stage. Reiteration is the tree's ability to push new growth from storm damage points or pruning. The fourth R stands for Restoration which is selective pruning of the reiterated sprouts after they have been able to mature for a few years.

Michael also spoke about the age of the trees in this area and explained that many are not quite as old as once believed. The Mother Tree at Whitehall Park is estimated to be 175-225 years old which dates back to the end of a period when live oak was one of the most sought-after types of wood for the construction of ships. During that time most of the accessible mature live oaks were harvested. Although they are not quite as old as we may have thought, we also now know that they can become as old as we ever dreamed.

Through the help of proper regenerative pruning practices, our beloved live oaks can have an open-

ended lifespan. In addition to planting trees for legacy, we now know that pruning trees for legacy can be just as fruitful. This will be the new paradigm on how we need to manage specimen live oaks; manage them as if they could live forever. That is what Conservation Arboriculture and its processes, the Four Rs, are all about. If you would like to watch the recording of Michael Murphy's presentation, please visit the Open Land Trust Facebook page.



Bridging our Past with our Future

Celebrating 50 Years of Land Protection

In 1971, the Open Land Trust was founded so that citizens who cared about preserving the spectacular scenic vistas that define Beaufort County would have a non-profit organization dedicated to raising funds to protect key parcels of land from development. In the early days members of the Trust did everything they could think of to raise money, including selling potholders on Bay Street and hosting luncheons for tour groups in private historic homes. The luncheons featured the Hot Chicken Salad that is in the Open Land Trust cookbook, *Sea Island Seasons*. Unlike today's popular cranberry chicken salad, the Open Land Trust chicken salad featured crushed potato chips! An army of faithful volunteers made sure that the luncheons happened every Spring and Fall for over 25 years. The funds raised helped protect Bay Street Bluff, Bellamy Curve and Lemon Island.

The concept was simple and the fundraising effort was extremely successful! As we celebrate 50 years, we are bringing back this successful tradition of Open Land Trust Luncheons. There is no better way to raise awareness and fundraise, than (safely) with friends at your home.



DATE: You select! Any Tuesday or Thursday, January - June, 2021

TIME: 11:30 am - 1:30 pm

HOSTESS ROLE: As a host, you will prepare a boxed or plated chicken salad lunch for 12. We leave all of the details to you. We simply need a hospitable hostess(es), seating to dine al fresco and food and beverage.



COVID: During the challenging days of COVID-19, we are approaching this with a new spin. A safe way to fundraise, outdoors, in the places we work so hard to protect. We are limiting attendance to 12 and ask you to host outside in a garden, waterside or on a porch.

Please let us know if you are interested in being a part of this 50 year tradition by calling us at 843-521-2175 or send us an email at info@openlandtrust.com.



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Truck Donation Needed

OLT staff members travel a lot! With our commitment to protect 140 properties in perpetuity, we remain engaged and in communication with each landowner. With almost 25,000 acres in six counties, travel is an integral part of the job.

The donation of a truck appropriate for OLT travel and field use would improve our ability to carry out our mission. Generally, the donation of a vehicle to OLT can be considered a tax-deductible donation.

Please contact Kristin Williams at kristin@openlandtrust.com or 843-521-2175.



A Gentle Reminder-Envelope Inside

Perhaps our membership letter went astray. We know you believe in our mission because you have supported us in the past. Your annual membership is critical to the success of our organization. **PLEASE JOIN OR RENEW TODAY AT WWW.OPENLANDTRUST.ORG.**

EMAIL REMINDER

Please provide us with your most current contact information including email address. Send to: info@openlandtrust.com

