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GREEN WOOD

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Dataw Island Conservancy



Fall 2018

Dataw Conservancy Joins SCDNR on Oyster Reef Replenishment Project . . . GEORGE CARTLEDGE

On June 25, Dataw Island members joined representatives from the SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) to build an oyster reef on the north end of Dataw. Forming an old-fashioned “bucket brigade” style line, the members moved well over 10,000 pounds of bagged shells to build a 65-foot reef. “This is a labor-intensive project,” said Michael Hodges, the SCDNR coordinator. “We can’t do this with just our staff.”

George Cartledge, the onsite coordinator who is a board member of the Dataw Island Conservancy, was grateful to all the helping hands who came out on one of the hottest days of the year. “Even on a very hot and humid day, Dataw volunteers answered my request for ‘free labor’ and made this project possible. Thank you, volunteers!”

The Dataw Conservancy partnered with SCDNR as part of the SC Oyster Restoration and Enhancement program (SCORE), a community-based habitat restoration and monitoring program. Nearly 20 years ago the first of five reef replenishment projects took place on Dataw. It, too, was along the coast of the 14th hole of the Morgan River golf course (a little further up the coast) and it helped stabilize the area near the ruins of the Lewis Reeve Sam’s house, which were threatened to be lost to erosion.

In order to increase oyster habitat at the minimum cost to taxpayers, SCDNR initiated the SCORE program to encourage oyster shell recycling and conduct and oversee community-based restoration projects. “Our waters are rich with larval oysters, but we are substrate limited,” explained Hodges. “Our goal is to offer a firm foundation to give larval oysters a good place to land.” He noted that some areas have the opposite problem (they have habitat but need to farm and introduce live oysters) which is a costlier problem to solve.

Regardless of your culinary preference for mollusks such as oysters, their environmental impact is undeniable — the beds they form are very important to maintaining a healthy marine habitat and reducing erosion. Oysters filter as much as 2.5 gallons of water an hour, removing silt and controlling phytoplankton, making the water cleaner and clearer. The shells placed on Dataw are enough to support approximately 158,400 oysters who together will filter up to 396,000 gallons of water per hour. The oyster beds also act as ‘breakwaters,’ protecting the shoreline by reducing wave energy, which in turn reduces erosion and helps increase the marsh footprint.

What can you do to help?

Consumers are encouraged to deposit clean shells (i.e., no trash) at the recycling centers, which are periodically emptied by SCDNR. The shell generated in this fashion is used for restoration and enhancement of shellfish resources, reducing the costs of these activities. Community groups and youth organizations may want to recycle shells as a community service project. There are a lot of shells out there (restaurants, caterers, resorts), so it is important to make the effort to recapture it before it goes to the landfill!



(Photos above and below) Working together, tossing over 10,000 pounds of bagged shells, to form the finished 65-foot reef. A dirty, sweaty and satisfying job!



Dataw Island Conservancy Board member George Cartledge, who coordinated the project with the SCDNR, pauses to survey the job.



Tallow Tree Removal Program Update . . . GUY APICELLA

The tallow tree or Chinese popcorn tree is an invasive tree that displaces native trees such as the Live Oak, and threatens to disrupt Dataw Island's natural ecology. As the Conservancy's **Tallow Tree Removal Program** marks its fifth year, the number of seed-bearing tallow trees on the island has decreased substantially. We estimate that there were approximately 2,000 seed-bearing tallow trees in 2014 when we began the program, and that there are approximately 300 seed-bearing tallows at this time. The exact numbers are difficult to estimate because the tallow tree population is constantly in a state of flux as seeds germinate into saplings, which then bear seeds in three years.

Tallow tree saplings have sprung up in groves since Hurricane Matthew struck two years ago. Large trees were toppled by the storm and cut down. In addition, undeveloped lots were bush-hogged. Both of these occurrences allowed sunlight to reach the ground where tallow tree seeds were exposed to sunlight. Germination of the seeds resulted in tallow tree saplings taking over large areas, such as the space between Gleasons Landing Drive and Hillfield Pond, as well as the area adjacent to Island Circle West opposite Malilly Pond. In addition to these Common Ground infestations, tallow tree saplings are scattered throughout private properties, developed and undeveloped. If these saplings are not removed at this stage, they will mature into seed-bearing trees and reverse the downward trend that the Tallow Tree Removal Program has worked hard to accomplish.

The group of volunteers known as the *Tallow Tree Terminators* (TTT) are spearheading the program by surveying private property areas to identify and mark tallow trees. The TTT have surveyed more than 90% of the private property on Dataw Island and hope to survey the remainder by the end of the year. However, many properties that were free of tallow trees a couple of years ago, probably now have tallow tree saplings, which have sprouted where tallow, and other trees have been cut down.

Therefore, it is important for property owners to be able to identify the tallow tree (*see photo below*) by themselves, and take the appropriate steps to remove any of these trees that exist on their land. This means pulling small saplings out by the root, or snipping bigger saplings with snippers or loppers. In both instances, an herbicide containing the active ingredient, triclopyr, such as Bayer's Brush Killer (*sold at retail stores such as Lowes*) should be sprayed on the remaining stem or stump to prevent re-growth.

Between May–October of this year, the TTT hacked and sprayed (herbicide) 140 seed-bearing tallow trees and cut down or pulled out and sprayed 4,000 tallow saplings. In addition, Christi Henry, Director of the Landscaping Department, contracted with Southern Tree Company, which cut down, removed and sprayed the stumps of 33 tallow trees from Common Ground areas mainly along Gleasons Landing Drive in October. ***A concerted effort by residents, Landscaping, Golf Maintenance and the Conservancy is the key to ridding the island of this invasive tree.***



Young tallow tree; note leaf shape and color for identification.

Oak Trees of the Southeast: A Primer . . . DAVID DOLAN

While there are some 60 kinds of oak trees in North America, in our area we can eliminate about half of the species if we exclude scrub oaks which are oaks that are of very modest height and foliage and usually found in areas of poor soil. Of the others, the Lowcountry is home to five dominant oaks: live oaks, Southern red oaks, willow oaks, water oaks and laurel oaks.

The Southern red oak can achieve a considerable height (60-80 feet) and has a pinnate leaf that is deciduous. We have only a few on Dataw, one of which is just behind CD #1 green. As Mathew proved, they are somewhat brittle and prone to losing small and large limbs in high winds. It is still a majestic and beautiful tree.

The live oak is the signature oak tree in this area, with a distinct shape and configuration, a somewhat short trunk and a wide-spreading crown. It can grow to 40-50 feet and is distinguished by the graceful bend of its trunk and limbs. A sturdy and not prone to damage tree, it can get to be hundreds of years old. Its wood was highly prized for ship building when ships were made from wood. It retains its old leaves until the new ones emerge which happens more in the spring. Its leaves are evergreen, elliptical and have smooth margins and are somewhat thick. We have some very fine specimens on Dataw including the Sam's oak at the Sam's cemetery and the *wedding tree* on CD 9. A variant of the live oak is the angel oak which differs in that its lower limbs sweep down to near the ground. Dataw has no angel oaks, but there are some good examples on Lady's Island, Savannah and Charleston.

The water oak has deciduous leaves that are variable in shape but tend to be broader at the top than the base. It can grow to 60-70 feet. It tends to hold its leaves well into winter months. There are a few water oaks in the Malilly Road area

The willow oak and the laurel oak are very close in appearance and behavior. With narrow pointed leaves that tend to stay on the tree until new growth emerges in the spring, they do shed constantly. The laurel oak leaves can be irregular on their edges. They both can grow to 80-100 feet. Both are normally straight trunked and straight limbed which distinguishes them from the live oaks. They usually live about 40-50 years. Dataw has thousands of them. It is difficult telling them apart from afar. Both these oaks tend to develop hollow spots in their trunks which make them susceptible to trunk breakage as they age. When they develop hollow spots, it is often possible to detect them visually by noting seepage and stains on their trunks. If they are near your house, you want to evaluate them in terms of possible damage if they break off.

Oak trees grow acorns to reproduce. The acorns are produced in varying amounts, depending on conditions, especially during the time they blossom in the spring. Late frosts or cold weather seems to be the greatest factor resulting in poor years for the acorn crop. Last year was a poor year and this year seems to be normal.

The trees on Dataw are often cited as one of our prime sources of beauty. While most developers clear-cut trees on land to be built on, Alcoa went to great lengths to spare the trees. The Conservancy and the Golf Course Maintenance are trying to develop a program to grow live oaks from acorns and then plant them on the island in appropriate spots to replace lost trees and to remediate for trees removed for any necessary reason. We also support the enforcement of Dataw's rules and regulations for preserving our native trees.

10 Years! LowCountry Audubon Christmas Bird Count . . . CHARLES HOLBROOK

In 2009, I was approached by Lady's Island ornithologist Ken Scott about having Dataw participate with Lady's, Harbor, Hunting and Fripp Islands in the National Audubon Christmas Count. Sunday, December 16, 2018 will mark the tenth anniversary of Dataw partnering with the Christmas Count of the Lowcountry.



Dataw residents often ask what is the history of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count? The answer goes back to the year 1900. During the late 19th century, many bird species were threatened by excessive hunting, especially for plumes, lack of protection and destruction of habitat. There was a holiday tradition in many parts of the US which was known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." According to the Audubon website, hunters would engage in a contest by choosing sides and then going out in the field to kill as many birds as they could find. The team that garnered the highest total was the victor. As pointed out by the Audubon website, conservation in the US was in its infancy in those days and there was growing concern about the declining numbers of many bird species. Ornithologist, Frank M. Chapman, an officer in the newly established Audubon Society, proposed an alternative to the Christmas "Side Hunt." Chapman pushed for a "Christmas Bird Census" that would focus on counting birds rather than hunting them. This was the impetus for the National Christmas Bird Count. Initially there were 27 birders and 25 Christmas Bird Counts in various parts of the United States. As a result, about 90 different species were reported nationwide. (For more information, see audubon.org)

Since the initial count, the CBC has grown exponentially particularly as a consequence of the popularity of the *Roger Tory Peterson Field Guide to Bird Identification* in 1934. Peterson encouraged birders to identify birds by field marks rather than hunting specimens. Peterson's method revolutionized birding in America. Whereas, in the early 20th Century, birding was dominated by ornithologists who had the time and money to devote to their hobby, suddenly birding became one of the most popular pastimes in America. All one needed was a pair of field glasses and a Peterson Guide and you were in business. Today, thousands of Americans every December take part in the CBC. The CBC provides information about bird populations and how changing environmental factors are affecting them. Right here on Dataw we have witnessed in the past 10 years the growth of our Wood Stork population and at the same time, as a result of expanded development on the island, a decline in our Chuck-will's-widow population. I encourage our Dataw residents to participate in this one-day event on December 16. You do not have to be an expert, all you need is an interest and a little bit of time. You can concentrate on your feeder or walk with us on a tour of Dataw which starts at the Community Center at 6:45 AM. Either way, you will be participating in a national event that has been in existence for 118 years. The Dataw Island Conservancy is proud to carry on this important tradition.

Keep up with the Conservancy! Our website is located on the Dataw website, under the "Clubs & Organizations" tab (located under SPORTS & REC). You will find past newsletters and information about the Tallow Tree Removal Project, a key area being worked on by the Conservancy.

The President's Corner . . . GUY APICELLA



This issue of *Green Wood* covers a broad array of topics and issues that the Dataw Island Conservancy has accomplished and is currently pursuing. We collaborated with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) to build the substrate or foundation for an oyster reef along the Morgan River where the shoreline was eroding. (See article on page 1.)

Thanks to the many Dataw volunteers and the SCDNR personnel who passed bags of oyster shells along a "bucket brigade" line in the scorching sun to stabilize the river bank. Tallow Tree Terminators continue to search and remove the invasive tallow tree, which shows a remarkable resilience by growing in almost any available space. Our supporters celebrated Oktoberfest with delicious German fare, wine and draft beer on October 14. Holly Dolan donated a beautiful, reef-inspired, batik quilt, which brought in lots of money from raffle ticket buyers, and was won by Kathy Shields.

The upcoming Christmas Bird Count marks the tenth anniversary of Dataw's participation in this National Audubon event, which was launched to be a conservation measure. You may also cultivate a deeper appreciation for the magnificent oak trees of the Southeast! (See related article above.)

Take note of the next electronics collection on **Saturday, December 8**, to recycle your used TVs, computers, mobile phones etc. The Conservancy volunteers will transport these items to Beaufort County's recycling facility. (See blurb above for more information.) You may also be pleased to know that Dr. Jeanette Wyneken of Florida Atlantic University will be the presenter at our Fifth Annual Dinner and Environmental Presentation on Thursday, May 2, 2019. She will talk about her studies of sea turtles.

Lastly, I would like to inform you that Deb Staub resigned from the Board of Directors so that she can devote her full energy to educating students at Beaufort Academy. We thank her for her work on developing the foundation of a Wildlife Protection Plan and Ecology Guide during her brief tenure. We are seeking a qualified candidate to fill the vacated board position. Please contact a board member if you are interested.

So who says that the Conservancy only does tallow trees?

Dataw Electronics Recycling Day!



The DI Conservancy will hold their fourth **ELECTRONICS RECYCLING DAY** on **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2018.**

We will once again provide transport of electronics to the Beaufort County facility on Shanklin Road.

The Conservancy hopes to have several "volunteer pick-up trucks" available. We will accept items from **8:30-10:00 AM**. The trucks will be in the parking lot near the Gazebo.

Any personal computers, laptops, CRT monitors, LCD monitors, CRT televisions, printers, hard drives and miscellaneous electronics (microwaves, lamps, cell phones, radios, fax machines, typewriters, etc.) will be accepted.

If you want, you can drop your electronics off yourself at the Beaufort County Public Works, 140 Shanklin Road, Beaufort, from **9:00 AM-3:00 PM**.

For more information, contact **George Cartledge** at george.cartledge@gmail.com.

OKTOBERFEST a BIG success . . . HERB STACKHOUSE

On a beautiful autumn evening the members and supporters of the Dataw Island Conservancy gathered at the gazebo for the 5th annual Oktoberfest. 150 people came to enjoy the wine, German beer, and delicious food prepared by caterer Harold Merrill.

The lucky winner of the raffle for the lovely quilt made and donated by Holly Dolan was Kathy Shields. \$2,300.00 in raffle tickets were sold with all proceeds going to fund the Dataw Island Conservancy projects.



Eating, drinking and talking at the Oktoberfest!



St. Helena Library Environmental Library

The DI Conservancy helped Beaufort County establish an Environmental Library at the St. Helena Branch Library in 2017 to honor past Board member Earl Dietz. Earl, in addition to being one of the original Conservancy Board members, was an active supporter of the Beaufort County library system.

Funding from the Conservancy sponsored Master Naturalist training for one St. Helena Library staff member, nature kits for checkout by the public and 250 nature-related books for the St. Helena Library (the Library matched the number of books purchased for a total of 500). The Master Naturalist trained staff member has conducted six nature-related programs for the public; nature kits (microscopes/binoculars, etc.) have been checked out by the public 1,211 times; nature-related books purchased by the Conservancy have been checked out 3,250 times in the past 12 months.

Ray McBride, Director of the Beaufort County library System, stated "The Conservancy has had a very positive impact on our library system and the community."

Purple Martin Report . . . BILL KREBS

This year was not as successful as last year. Possibly the weather may have created some havoc in the early nesting. January was an exceptionally warm month for Dataw. Consequently, the birds came early in mid-February. After their arrival the weather turned quite cold and the Martins left for three weeks. They reappeared in mid-March during a warm spell but quickly disappeared again, returning around April 20. There were nests in all 14 cells at each of our three primary nest sites by May 1, which was about two weeks later than last year. The first eggs started appearing on May 8. By May 21, every nest but two had eggs. Nest #5 on Cotton Dike 13 had ten eggs, which is most unusual as I have not read where a nest has ever had more than seven eggs. Unfortunately, only five of the ten eggs hatched. The very hot weather that we experienced in May and June may have accounted for 51 eggs not hatching and for eight fledglings dying. Consequently, the total number of birds that lived to fly away was down from last year's count.

Summary of new Fledgling for each year beginning in 2007

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| CD 13 | 38 | 25 | 55 | 56 | 50 | 37 | 36 | 43 | 16 | 47 | 55 | 61 |
| CD 7 | 15 | 49 | 55 | 66 | 52 | 45 | 48 | 31 | 38 | 73 | 65 | 45 |
| CD 6 | | | | | | | | | | | 56 | 46 |
| Totals | 53 | 74 | 110 | 122 | 102 | 82 | 84 | 74 | 54 | 80 | 176 | 152 |
| Note estimate for Cotton Dike 16 & Morgan 16 (unable to open cells) | | | | | | | | | | | 40 | 40 |
| Total new fledgling on Dataw | | | | | | | | | | | 216 | 192 |

By July 29 all the fledgling at CD 13 had departed (about 10 days later than the other 2 sites).



Actual eggs/nestlings/fledgling for all three sites:

| | Eggs | Nestlings/pct eggs hatched | Mortalities | Fledgling |
|--------|------|----------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| CD 13 | 80 | 64 (80%) | 3 | 61 |
| CD 7 | 76 | 47 (70%) | 2 | 45 |
| CD 6 | 61 | 49 (80%) | 3 | 46 |
| Totals | 207 | 160 | 8 | 152 |



Green Wood
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 Green Wood is a publication of the Dataw Island Conservancy, Dataw Island, South Carolina
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Please support the Dataw Island Conservancy and our efforts to make our beautiful island even more beautiful!

The Conservancy's mission is to assist in the preservation of Dataw Island's environmental character by attempting to permanently conserve, maintain and manage the natural areas and habitats of the Island and its surrounds; and encourage an appreciation of, and interest in, the Island's natural resources by the residents of Dataw Island.

If you are a 2018 supporter, we thank you. Your support allows our band of volunteers to expand programs to enhance this special place we call home.

Not a supporter? Why don't you join us and become a supporter?

YES, I would like to support your efforts and become a supporter! Enclosed is a check for \$50 (made out to the Dataw Island Conservancy). **ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.**

Want to help us more? Check below and we will call you to talk!

YES, I am interested in joining you. Call me and we can talk about possible ways I can help.

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS _____ E-MAIL _____

Drop Membership form off to George Cartledge's message box at 1048 Curisha Point South.