



Natural System Benefits Community

First in a series on Noisette Creek Preserve



By Jim Augustin

Imagine a natural area with 135 acres of waterway, salt marsh and uplands to benefit you. Imagine places to fish and crab, or just slow down, observe nature in a quiet place, and think. Imagine local students testing the water quality, and participating in tidal wetlands restoration; all to maintain the health of the very marsh their community loves.

All this exists now, thanks to your Mayor Keith Summey and City Council who dedicated specific City-owned or controlled parcels as part of the Noisette Creek Preserve.

Marshes are some of the most productive ecosystems on the planet and are far more than just great scenery. Marshes are home to the Lowcountry animal life we value. Typical animals include fish, blue crabs, fiddler crabs, otters, turtles, wading birds, eagles, ospreys, least terns, great blue herons, and American egrets. Marshes are also important stopping-places for other migrating birds.

The plants in a marsh are also of great significance. Salt marsh

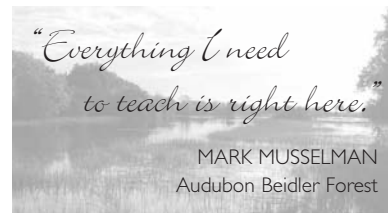
grasses produce nutrients that are carried out by the tides. These nutrients feed an ever-growing number of organisms until all forms of aquatic life in the estuary have benefited. Small nutrient particles feed small fish, plankton, oysters, shrimp, clams, and crabs. The marsh also serves as a nursery ground for young fish, shellfish, and crustaceans which in turn support larger fish and the cycle continues. All this is why the size of commercial catches of many popular offshore fish and shrimp depends on the amount of healthy marshland. Marsh production of food energy has been shown to be almost beyond comprehension, producing nearly twenty tons per acre. That's four times the yield of the best cornfield acre.

So, what other natural system benefits are there for you? First, it's a wonderful area for kids to learn about the environment. Mark Musselman from Audubon Beidler Forest said of the area, "Everything I need to teach is right here." Second, marshes help improve storm water drainage and water quality. This benefits you because the marsh acts as a sponge

in hurricanes, which prevents excess water from flooding adjacent properties. Third, it's just a great place to walk and observe the varying natural habitat.

Still, threats linger. Underground petroleum leaks, erosion, and improperly disposed car oil have threatened the Creek habitat in the past. This past year a sewage main was replaced along Spruill Avenue. The deteriorated metal pipe had leaked into the Creek marsh for a long period. These challenges have been met because concerned residents made them known.

Today, encouraging things are happening. Neighbors have started cleaning up debris and looked at how to keep contaminants out of the Creek. Also to try and



monitor the Creek's health, Academic Magnet High School students have measured water quality and studied habitat restoration with the help of Lowcountry Earth Force, Audubon South Carolina, and the NOAA Coastal Services Center. Ashley Pennington, President of the Noisette Foundation, concludes, "With the preserve, we have the historic opportunity to reverse the neglect of past generations by returning the Creek to its natural glory."

The Noisette Creek Preserve is your connection to nature. It makes this area special, it benefits you. ■

Four North Charleston Schools Honored

In early October, The Noisette Company, LLC, unveiled its first-ever "Examples of Excellence Awards" for public schools in North Charleston.

The Noisette honors were part of the Charleston School District 4's High Achieving Public School Teacher Recognition Ceremony, held at the main campus of Trident Technical College.

The four recipients for 2006 included:

■ **Academic Magnet High School**, which was honored by Newsweek magazine as the nation's 10th leading high school this past spring, and



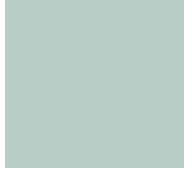
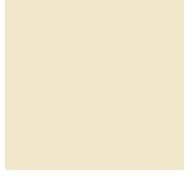
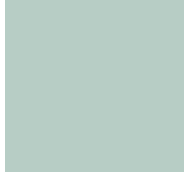
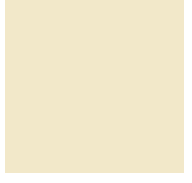
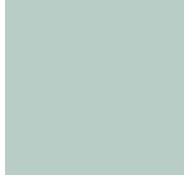
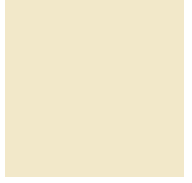
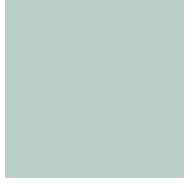
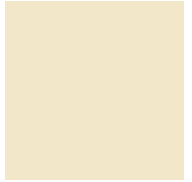
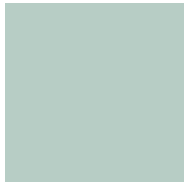
also received the state's Palmetto Gold Award;

- **Chicora Elementary School**, for earning the National School Change Award from the Fordham University Graduate School, Pearson Education and the American Association of School Administration;
- **The Child and Youth Development Center** of the Charleston County School District, which won the national accreditation

of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAYEC);

- **North Charleston Elementary School**, for being the first elementary school in South Carolina to register with the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Efficiency Design (LEED) program.

"This recognition reflects an impressive commitment to public schools in District 4," observes Noisette Foundation President Ashley Pennington. "It dramatically demonstrates that a complete turnaround of regional schools is possible, if the community has the willpower." In addition to a cash reward of \$300, each school received a plaque commemorating the award. ■





Noisette[®]

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Upcoming Events

- HUB Academy
Spring 2007 Semester for Lowcountry HUB (Historically Underutilized Businesses) Contractor Business Academy: 1/16 – 4/17. For more information, or an application, call Rochelle Johnson at 843-745-1722, or go to www.noisettefoundation.org.

Memories of Dewey Hill

In the first half of the last century, the Dewey Hill neighborhood of North Charleston was a vibrant African-American community. Dewey Hill served as worker housing for the General Asbestos and Rubber Company, or GARCO.

This neighborhood played a pivotal role in the city's early history, but was ultimately vacated and demolished. Today, the site of Dewey Hill is located largely beneath Interstate 526, west of Virginia Avenue. Residents of Dewey Hill relocated to Liberty Hill, and other neighborhoods throughout the Lowcountry, "We would like to help chronicle the memories of former Dewey Hill residents for posterity, for future generations," observes Noisette co-founder Jim Augustin. "First, do you have any stories about life at Dewey Hill; and, second, do you have family photos depicting life in this unique neighborhood.

"If you do, please contact us at the Noisette Neighbor," adds Augustin. "We will put together a full feature in a future issue, part of our collective effort to connect the people of North Charleston to their rich history."

Please send information to publicaffairs@noisettesc.com, or by calling 843-302-2104. ■

Noisette in the News

- **Noisette construction of the boardwalk and seawall at the North Charleston Riverfront Park** is making progress, and will be ready for the spring season in 2007. Work is being accomplished by Cape Romain Contractors. Because of permitting delays, the North Charleston City Council approved a 90-day extension of the project completion to March 31, 2007.
- **Oak Terrace Preserve, the 55-acre site of the old Century Oaks complex, is abuzz with new construction.** This City of North Charleston project is managed by the Noisette Company. Homes at OTP are being built to the EarthCraft standards of the Southface Energy Institute of Atlanta, Georgia. Up to 40 homes are slated for completion by summer 2007.



- **Recently, community activist Ida Taylor received the 2006 Sustainability Community Award** from the Sustainability Institute of South Carolina. A leader in the Union Heights neighborhood, Taylor has been a driving force behind the Gethsemane Community Center and has an Honorary Doctorate from MUSC.
- **Historic Designation – The Navy Yard Naval Shipyard District** at Noisette was recently granted a listing on the National Register of Historic Places, part of the prestigious National Park Service and State Historic Preservation Office program. The designation will allow private developers to obtain up to 30 % in tax credits for renovating and restoring historic structures on the former base.
- In January, **Southeast Biodiesel** is cranking up its new \$5 million processing facility at the Navy Yard. The company hopes to process up to 6 million gallons of environmentally-friendly biodiesel from agricultural waste and by-products next year, which can be used in conventional diesel engines. The fuel could increase gas mileage by 40%, extend the life of a vehicle up to 500,000 miles, and reduce emissions by 78%.
- **The Building Arts and Design Center at 10 Storehouse Row** is open to public events, at the Navy Yard at Noisette. The facility has hosted a City of North Charleston Cultural Arts Department event, ART 21, which incorporated citizen contributions to a site-specific visual arts program, called "Places". For more information, contact Jenny Wiedower at jwiedower@navyyardsc.com. ■

GreenSense

Building a green home saves money, as the estimated overall cost of a sustainable house is \$226,850 – exactly \$2,644 less than that of a traditional home. Additional savings come from energy efficient and water conservation systems, along with federal tax credits. ■

Source: National Association of Homebuilders, December 2006.