

OSSABAW ORACLE

A Publication of the Ossabaw Island Foundation

December 2019



Photo by Fran Lapolla

“A World Of Marsh That Borders A World Of Sea” - Sidney Lanier Recognizing the 50th Anniversary of Georgia’s Coastal Marshland Protection Act

Fifty years ago, if you were a child enrolled in a Georgia school, chances are you memorized and recited Sidney Lanier’s poem “The Marshes of Glynn.” Georgia State Senator Ronald Adams from Brunswick did just that one morning in 1970 under Atlanta’s Gold Dome. Adams stated, “These marshes were beautiful for Sidney Lanier 100 years ago. They are beautiful for us now. Let us save it for our children and our children’s children.” His remarks motivated the Georgia state legislature to unanimously pass the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act, signed into law by Governor Lester Maddox on March 24, 1970. This landmark act placed most of the coastal marshes in Georgia “in trust for the public” and are held by the state. Georgia’s Coastal Marshland Protection Act (CMPA) is one of the most comprehensive marshland protection measures in the nation.

Christopher Manganiello and the late Mark Finlay tell a compelling story of the history of the passage of this monumental act in the chapter “Sunbelt Environmentalism and Coastal Protection” in the book *Coastal Nature, Coastal Culture*. Since the 1950s Georgia’s coast had been threatened with low level development, lack of sewage treatment plants and a proposed highway that would link all the barrier islands. But it was Kerr-McGee’s proposal for 70,000 marshland acres to be used for phosphate mining, and dryland development for housing and golf courses, that motivated a wide range of preservationists to work together to protect the marshes of Glynn and the other counties of Georgia’s coastline. The coalition included respected scientists, state agency staff, garden club women, a legislative champion, and ultimately the citizens of Georgia. Today we have that broad and unlikely coalition to thank who motivated the protection of Georgia’s marshland from sprawl and pollution.

Eugene P. Odum was a University of Georgia professor who is recognized as the father of modern ecology; he made frequent trips to Ossabaw Island as a Trustee of Eleanor “Sandy” West’s Ossabaw Foundation. He described the Georgia marsh as a “nutrient trap” making it “one of the world’s most productive nurseries for shrimp, crab, oysters, finfish, migratory birds and other aquatic and terrestrial creatures.”

Happy 50th Anniversary to the Coastal Marshland Protection Act on March 24, 2020.

(This article is excerpted from “The Gold Standard: Sunbelt Environmentalism and Coastal Protection” by Christopher Manganiello in *Coastal Nature, Coastal Culture: Environmental Histories of the Georgia Coast* (UGA Press).)

Revealing the Voices & Mystery of Ossabaw Island

Executive Director's Note



Photo by Robert Cooper

The Ossabaw Island Foundation and Education Alliance are settled into our new office space at the Armstrong Center on the Georgia Southern University campus on Savannah's southside.

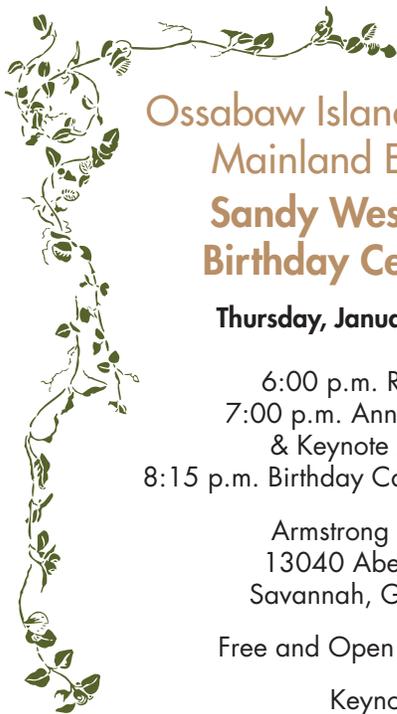
Since our *Coastal Nature, Coastal Culture* book launch at our January 2019 Mainland Event, we have been

on the road sharing the story of coastal Georgia's environmental history. In August at the AJC Decatur Book Festival over 300 people turned out to hear from co-editors Paul M. Pressly and Paul S. Sutter, and contributor Janisse Ray. One month later on St. Simons Island, 150 people listened to Pressly challenge the way we might interpret the human geography of the Georgia coast. In late October, Pressly traveled to Morrow, Georgia to accept the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council's 2019 Award for Advocacy for *Coastal Nature, Coastal Culture*.

While *Coastal Nature, Coastal Culture* is a look back across five millennia, I believe that Christopher Manganiello's chapter, "The Gold Standard: Sunbelt Environmentalism and Coastal Protection" (highlighting the roller coaster ride of the passage in 1970 of Georgia's Coastal Marshland Protection Act) is really about our coast's future. This landmark act protects what lies between and behind Georgia's inner and outer barrier islands--roughly 378,000 acres of tidal salt marsh. Our state is blessed with one-third of the East Coast's salt marsh, and 12% of the East Coast's freshwater tidal marsh. But, Manganiello reminds us that the marsh is just one part of Georgia's ecological puzzle. "What happens in the Blue Ridge Mountain, piedmont and coastal plain headwaters affects the coast." As coastal stewards, we really need to look upstream and become upland and river basin stewards as well. Happy 50th Birthday to the Coastal Marshland Protection Act! May the citizens of Georgia be ever vigilant.

Thank you!

Elizabeth DuBose
Executive Director
Ossabaw Island Foundation



Ossabaw Island Foundation Mainland Event and Sandy West's 107th Birthday Celebration

Thursday, January 23, 2020

6:00 p.m. Reception
7:00 p.m. Annual Meeting
& Keynote Address
8:15 p.m. Birthday Cake for Sandy West

Armstrong Center*
13040 Abercorn St.
Savannah, GA 31419

Free and Open to the Public

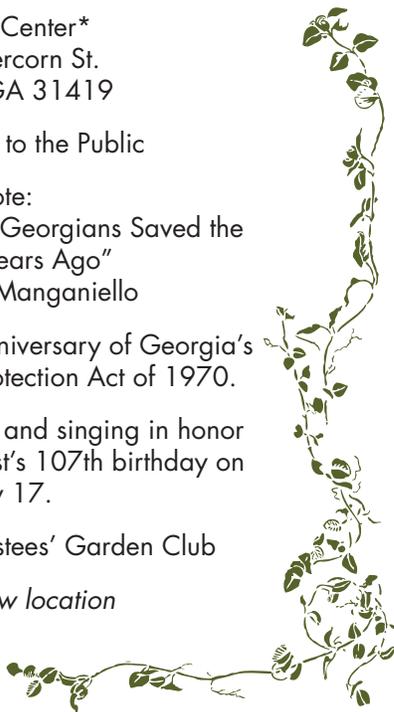
Keynote:
"Marshland Fight: How Georgians Saved the
Coast Fifty Years Ago"
Christopher J. Manganiello

Recognizing the 50th anniversary of Georgia's
Coastal Marshlands Protection Act of 1970.

Featuring birthday cake and singing in honor
of Eleanor "Sandy" West's 107th birthday on
January 17.

Sponsored by the Trustees' Garden Club

*This is a new location



About the Ossabaw Island Mainland Event: Keynote Address "Marshland Fight: How Georgians Saved the Coast Fifty Years Ago" Dr. Christopher J. Manganiello

In the late 1960s, Georgians learned about a looming threat to mine the state's famed coastal marshlands. In response, a broad coalition came together to protect the coast's signature landscape. Their efforts resulted in the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act, signed as Georgia state law by Governor Lester Maddox on March 27, 1970. Today, we are thankful for their hard work. What lessons can we learn from these 20th century activists that are relevant today?

Dr. Christopher J. Manganiello will review the history of this game-changing legislation, its impact on coastal Georgia, and its influence on 21st century policy and activism.

Manganiello is Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's Water Policy Director. Since 2010, he has provided strategic policy analysis and direction for the Georgia Water Coalition. He wrote "The Gold Standard: Sunbelt Environmentalism and Coastal Protection" for 2018's *Coastal Nature, Coastal Culture: Environmental Histories of the Georgia Coast* (UGA Press). He is the author of *Southern Water, Southern Power: How the Politics of Cheap Energy and Water Scarcity Shaped a Region* (UNC Press), and co-editor of *Environmental History and the American South: A Reader* (UGA Press). Manganiello has written for the Washington Post, the Saporta Report and other media outlets on natural resource topics including energy, water, agriculture, and wildlife.

Eleanor “Sandy” Torrey West’s Environmental Activism

In October 1968, environmentalists gathered in Sea Island, Georgia for the “Conference on the Future of the Marshlands and Islands of Georgia.” This conference led to the passage of the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act.

Eleanor “Sandy” Torrey West was a panelist. Her remarks are excerpted here.

Since we have owned half of Ossabaw, Clifford and I have felt a grave responsibility. Whatever happens to one of these large islands involves the other islands and, as a consequence, the entire coast of Georgia, and perhaps the eastern coast of the United States.

We have tried to share Ossabaw in a way that will not destroy that which is most precious to preserve.

We have shared the power and inspiration of something inescapably natural with top thinkers and doers, national and international.

Ossabaw is essential to this Project, but Ossabaw is also essential to shrimp and fish, to trees and plants, to migrations of birds and the life of wild animals, to Georgia history and to you and me. This too is part of our responsibility, and so for ten years we have tried, quite desperately, to figure out a way of keeping Ossabaw intact and unspoiled, as permanently as anything can be permanent these days.

We have for ten years studied, talked, and learned. Innumerable organizations have visited Ossabaw. We have listened to their offers and suggestions.

We have thoroughly discussed this problem with [half a dozen or more agencies and universities and environmental organizations.] We have instigated a series of meetings of Island Owners.

Here is the result of ten years of investigating. We simply have not been able to find any all-encompassing, all-thoughtful over-all plan that considers all assets and all resources and recognizes the importance of their interrelationship. Each of these islands and large and important pieces of land can easily go down, one after another, from the lack of knowing what to do.

We have decided that, if we cannot find a proper solution, we are not, like Procrustes, going to jam the island into a ready made bed that does not fit. We will make our own bed, our own solution.

Ossabaw is a large and rather unique ecological unit, and we would like to save, to interrelate and make use of all our assets.



Sandy West and President Jimmy Carter discuss the sale of Ossabaw Island.
Photo courtesy of Sandy West

Clifford and I think this is an exciting time in which to live. Changes are so rapid and so earthshaking that the mind reels. One can no longer depend upon the yardsticks that used to seem so sturdy.

This is terribly, terribly scary, but it is also challenging and get-at-able. For one thing is sure, and that is if yesterday’s solutions simply do not fit today’s problems, someone will jolly well have to think up some new ideas, and in this untouched field my guess is as good as yours.

We think it is really terrific to sit down and say, “I don’t know anything more.”

And so I am not going to keep on trying to make old ways fit into this new world, nor am I going to give up—I am just going to admit that I know nothing and I am going to start from scratch.

Questions such as these keep me pacing at night:

Why save Ossabaw?

Or the coast of Georgia?

Or the eastern coast of the United States?

Why save the birds, the turtles, the fish and the thinkers?

How can anyone or anything keep its head above the mindless stream of pollution, misguided urban planning, and the gobbling up of natural resources and overpopulation?

I don’t know the answer, but I do know that not one of these problems can be jammed into a Procrustian bed of antiquated solutions.

With the philosophy of... Let’s Start Thinking All Over Again, and with Ossabaw’s own sincere element and somehow reassuring quality, could this part of the Southeast become a nucleus for planning on an even more vital scale?



Photos by Robert Medders

The Boarding House Turns 100

When the Torrey family purchased Ossabaw Island in 1924, the newest structure on the island was the building we now call the Boarding House. Situated 100 yards west of the Club House, this Craftsman style duplex was completed in 1919, just five years before the Torreys' arrival.

In 1916 Ossabaw was acquired as a hunting retreat by several partners of the Strachan Shipping Company in Savannah, including George P. Walker, George W. Armstrong, Frank Duncan Macpherson Strachan, Harry Garden Strachan and Robert Walker Groves. In 1918 they commissioned the "Bachelor's House" (its original name) as housing for their island manager and kennel manager completing construction in 1919.

Island staff continued to live in the Bachelor's House through the Torrey-West years. The Torreys re-modeled the duplex into a triplex, adding four more dormers in the roof line to create the upstairs third living space. At some point a new moniker was given to the building, the Boarding House. By the mid-1980s the building was no longer in use and by the early 2000s was in disrepair.

In 2005 the Ossabaw Island Foundation began raising money to restore the Boarding House to use as housing for island visitors and TOIF staff. In 2010 the restoration was complete. The Boarding House restoration received Excellence in Restoration awards from both Historic Savannah Foundation and the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation.

This summer, historic preservation contractor Robert Medders and his crew from Waverly, Georgia painted the Boarding House, giving a fresh-yet-classic look to this 100-year-old Ossabaw Island jewel.



Photo courtesy of Georgia Archives

Sponsor a Club House Rocking Chair and Join the “Ossabaw Rock Group.”

Did you hear? The band is getting back together!

The Ossabaw Rock Group is our name for our generous friends who donate rocking chairs for the Club House and Boarding House porches.

At the 2019 Pig Roast, eight new rocking chairs were “auctioned” for the Boarding House porch. Thank you to those Rock Group members who sponsored chairs. Because we are “on a roll” (Yep--rock and roll!) we’re now seeking sponsors for 21 new chairs for the Club House.

The new chairs are made of Polywood® lumber. Polywood, made from recycled milk jugs, resembles wood but is resistant to harsh weather conditions and requires very little maintenance. These classic-styled rocking chairs feature comfortable curved seats with plenty of room.

In 2002 the original “Ossabaw Rock Group” was formed when 21 donors purchased new rocking chairs for the newly restored Club House, followed soon after with eight chairs for the Boarding House. Those first rocking chairs have endured up to 17 years of barrier island weather and are needing replacement.

Join the band of rockers by sponsoring a new rocking chair for the Club House porch. Each sponsored chair will be marked with a commemorative plaque bearing the donor’s name.

Sponsor a rocker before January 31, 2020, and receive one (1) complimentary ticket on an Ossabaw Island Foundation day trip in 2020.

Next time you visit Ossabaw, you can rock in “your” chair while you watch over the marsh, or gaze down the oak lined Main Road.

Chair sponsorships are \$375. Donors before January 31, 2020 receive one (1) day trip ticket, to be used on one of our day trips in 2020.

To join the Ossabaw Rock Group and sponsor a chair visit ossabawisland.org



John Crawford tests out the new rocking chair during the Pig Roast & Art Auction. Daniel Epting auctions off new chairs for the Boarding House.
Photo by Stacey Wells

A Record-Breaking Year For Ossabaw’s Nesting Loggerhead Turtles



Photo by Steve Tighe

In 2019, endangered loggerhead sea turtles produced a record-breaking number of nests and hatchlings on Ossabaw’s 13 miles of beaches, laying 647 nests resulting in 38,538 turtle hatchlings. This was a record for Ossabaw Island, since data collection began in 1981. (All of Georgia’s coast experienced record-breaking turtle nests in 2019, with over 3,900 nests on the barrier islands.)

Each May through mid-August, the 300-pound loggerhead turtles emerge from the ocean in darkness to lay 50-60 eggs per nest on beaches on Georgia’s coast. After about two months of incubation, hatchlings the size of sand dollars emerge at night and crawl to the water to begin their ocean journey.

Loggerheads were once nearly extinct, but conservation measures implemented over the last several decades are beginning to pay off in an increase in the turtle population.

Georgia’s Department of Natural Resources has coordinated a loggerhead turtle conservation program on Ossabaw Island since 1981. During nesting season, DNR scientists live on Ossabaw Island and monitor the beaches daily. They record the location of nests, and extract DNA from one egg in each nest for a turtle study at University of Georgia. Once the eggs hatch, scientists record data on each nest’s results: how many eggs in the nest, how many live hatchlings, and how many eggs or nests were destroyed by predators.

Because “Ossabaw Island’s beach habitat is relatively undisturbed with no permanent structures or lights” DNR considers Ossabaw to be a high-quality nesting beach. (Based on a GADNR statewide nesting habitat assessment)

The Ossabaw Island Foundation sponsors summer and fall turtle watching trips open to the public. Register now for our turtle weekends or day trips in 2020. (See page 7 for details.)

Visit Ossabaw Island in 2020!

Photo by Julian Buckmaster

How to Register: The following trips are open to the public. Fees vary; see relevant websites for details. To register for all Ossabaw Island Foundation-sponsored events, visit ossabawisland.org or 912-344-3900. Pre-registration required.



Photo by Julian Buckmaster

Wild Night on Ossabaw: New Year's Eve Overnight Trip

Tue. December 31, 2019 –Wed. January 1, 2020

Spend New Year's Eve on Ossabaw Island on an overnight trip, with music and tales of Ossabaw Island around the fire pit after dinner. Plus, a midnight champagne toast to welcome 2020.

Super Museum Sunday Fee-Free Day Trip

Sun. February 9

Visit Ossabaw Island as part of Georgia History Festival's statewide Super Museum Sunday event. This afternoon walking tour of Ossabaw's history is free-of-charge for island admission.

Fall in Love! (With Ossabaw Island): Valentine Overnight Trip

Fri. February 14 – Sat. February 15

A Valentine's Day overnight for those who love and long for Ossabaw Island. Island-themed dinner includes Nell Ford Torrey's Mystery Cake, an Ossabaw tradition. Warm your heart by the fire pit with island stories old and new. Sweethearts or singles, all are welcome.

Day Trip Tour of Ossabaw Island's North End

Sat. March 28

Travel by pontoon boat with Captain Mike Neal of Bull River Cruises to the island's North End for an interpretive tour that includes ecology and history.

Ossabaw Island Descendants Heritage Day

Sat. May 9

Did your parents, grandparents or other ancestors live, work or own land on Ossabaw Island from 1760 - 1980? Were they tenant farmers, enslaved people, Torrey Family employees, land owners, Freedmen, hunting guides, timbermen, or cattlemen? This springtime gathering brings Ossabaw's descendants together for a day of food, friendship, history, and remembrance.

Get Creative on Ossabaw: Day Trip

Sat. June 6

Paint, sketch, write, or take photos on Ossabaw Island. Let the island be your muse. After a brief history presentation, you'll have several hours to wander the North End on your own and make art; OR take a cell-phone photography workshop led by professional photographer Stephen B. Morton.

Ossabaw Island Archaeology Sites Tour: Day Trip

Date TBA

Visit four of Ossabaw Island's nearly 200 archaeology sites at seldom-seen historic island locations; learn about important recent discoveries. Led by Dr. Victor Thompson, archaeologist and Director of the University of Georgia's Laboratory of Archaeology.



Turtle Hatching Day Trips or Weekend Trips

Mon. July 20 Day Trip

Tue. July 21 Day Trip

Fri. July 24 – Sun. July 26. Weekend Two-Night Trip

Fri. September 11 – Sun. September 13. Weekend Two-Night Trip

Accompany Georgia DNR Sea Turtle Conservation Program interns as they inventory loggerhead turtle nests for eggs and live hatchlings on Ossabaw Island's South Beach. In 2019, a record-breaking 647 sea turtle nests were documented on Ossabaw. Weekend trips include an ecological tour of Ossabaw, led by coastal ecologist/naturalist John "Crawfish" Crawford.



Lift Every Voice: Ossabaw Island and Pin Point Fee-Free Day Trip

Sat. August 15

In partnership with the Smithsonian's Museum of African American History and Culture, this morning walking tour of the North End Plantation site provides an overview of Ossabaw's African-American and Gullah-Geechee culture and history; followed by an afternoon visit to the Pin Point Heritage Museum in the community established by formerly enslaved people from Ossabaw Island.

A Hands-On Indigo Dyeing Experience: Ossabaw Island Indigo Day Trips

Fri. September 18

Sat. September 19

Sun. September 20

Elizabeth DuBose shares the history of Ossabaw indigo. Indigo experts Donna Hardy and Heather Powers provide instruction on creating fresh leaf indigo dye vats and guide participants through the dyeing process.

To sign up for emails on the latest information on Ossabaw events, text OSSABAW to 22828 from your phone.



OSSABAW ISLAND

Foundation & Education Alliance

2019 by the Numbers



visitors to Ossabaw Island from **15** different countries, including **50** Ossabaw descendants from nine families spanning **300** years of the island's history for our first Descendants Heritage Day.



Fee-Free Trips: Super Museum Sunday in February, Lift Every Voice in August and Volunteer Hands on Ossabaw in September.



off-island events, including lectures on Ossabaw's indigo history, Ossabaw's African-American history, and *Coastal Nature*, *Coastal Culture* book events.



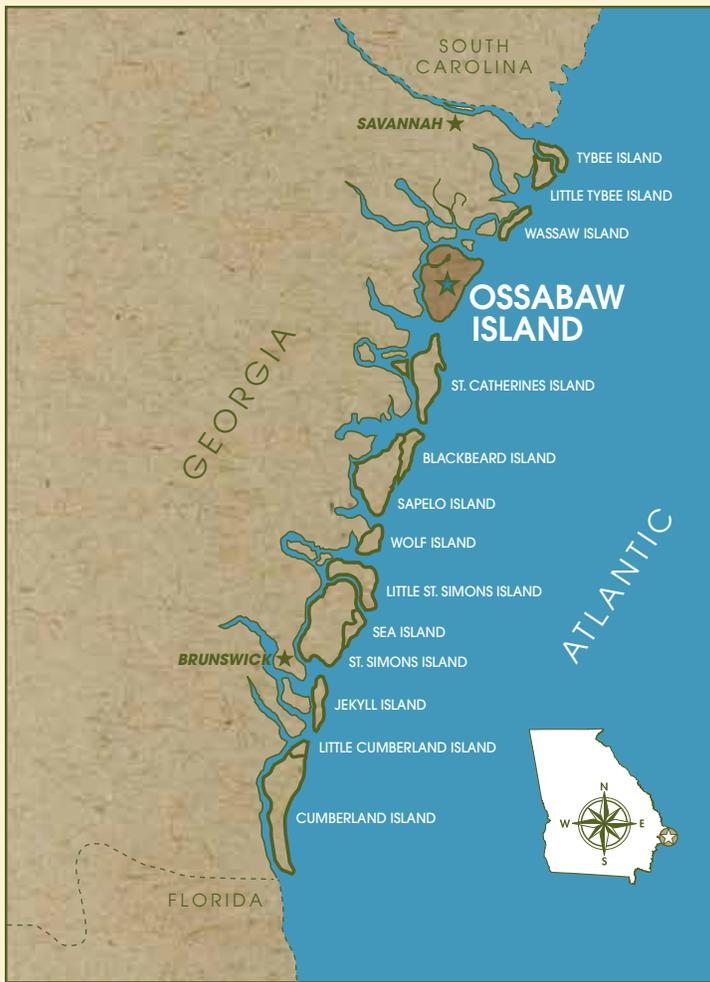
Ossabaw Indigo, a film showing the creation of dye using Ossabaw's 270-year-old naturalized *indigo suffruticosa* plants was produced and screened in St. Augustine, FL and Savannah, GA.



volunteers cleaned up from storm damage, maintained North End buildings, counted butterflies and helped with on-island and off-island events.



program days and nights on Ossabaw Island hosted by the Ossabaw Island Foundation



Ossabaw Island Foundation & Education Alliance Partners

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Historic Preservation Division
 Sea Turtle Conservation Program
 Wildlife Resources Division

Board of Regents of the State of Georgia

Georgia Southern University
 University of Georgia

Center for Archaeological Sciences
 Marine Extension Center and Aquarium
 Skidaway Institute of Oceanography
 UGA Press
 Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources

Savannah State University

Coastal Georgia Center
 Department of Marine & Environmental Sciences

Coastal Museums Association

Moon River District

Pin Point Heritage Museum

Georgia Conservancy

Ossabaw Island Writers' Retreat

The Landings Association

Wesley Gardens & Retreat Center

2018/2019 Financial Report

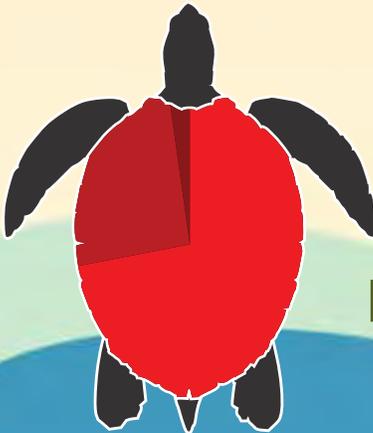
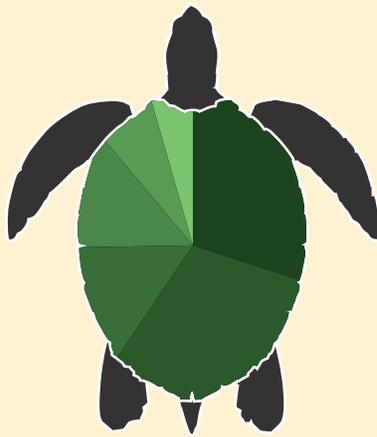
REVENUE • \$335,000

- \$101,000 Pig Roast
- \$99,000 On-Island Revenue
- \$50,500 Grants
- \$48,000 Donations
- \$22,000 2017/2018 Net Revenue & Interest
- \$14,500 Books & Swag Sales

EXPENSES • \$331,500

- \$241,500 On-Island Expenses
 - cleaning, maintenance & repairs of buildings & equipment
 - transportation to/from Ossabaw
 - on-island staffing
 - Pig Roast expenses
- \$85,000 General & Administration
 - staffing
 - printing & postage
 - Annual Meeting expenses
 - audit fees
- \$5,000 Use Agreement Fee
 - paid to the State of Georgia

NET REVENUE • \$3,500



The Marshes of Glynn

Sidney Lanier

Glooms of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided and woven
With intricate shades of the vines that myriad-cloven
 Clamber the forks of the multiform boughs,--
 Emerald twilights,--
 Virginal shy lights,
Wrought of the leaves to allure to the whisper of vows,
When lovers pace timidly down through the green colonnades
Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark woods,
 Of the heavenly woods and glades,
That run to the radiant marginal sand-beach within
 The wide sea-marshes of Glynn;--
Beautiful glooms, soft dusks in the noon-day fire,--
Wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire,
Chamber from chamber parted with wavering arras of leaves,--
Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer to the soul that grieves,
Pure with a sense of the passing of saints through the wood,
Cool for the dutiful weighing of ill with good;--
O braided dusks of the oak and woven shades of the vine,
While the riotous noon-day sun of the June-day long did shine
Ye held me fast in your heart and I held you fast in mine;
But now when the noon is no more, and riot is rest,
And the sun is a-wait at the ponderous gate of the West,
And the slant yellow beam down the wood-aisle doth seem
Like a lane into heaven that leads from a dream,--
Ay, now, when my soul all day hath drunken the soul of the oak,
And my heart is at ease from men, and the wearisome sound of the stroke
 Of the scythe of time and the trowel of trade is low,
 And belief overmasters doubt, and I know that I know,
 And my spirit is grown to a lordly great compass within,
That the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn
Will work me no fear like the fear they have wrought me of yore
When length was fatigue, and when breadth was but bitterness sore,
And when terror and shrinking and dreary unnamable pain
Drew over me out of the merciless miles of the plain,--
Oh, now, unafraid, I am fain to face
 The vast sweet visage of space.
To the edge of the wood I am drawn, I am drawn,
Where the gray beach glimmering runs, as a belt of the dawn,
 For a mete and a mark
 To the forest-dark:--
 So:
Affable live-oak, leaning low,--
Thus--with your favor--soft, with a reverent hand,
(Not lightly touching your person, Lord of the land!)
Bending your beauty aside, with a step I stand
On the firm-packed sand,
 Free
By a world of marsh that borders a world of sea.

 Sinuous southward and sinuous northward the shimmering band
 Of the sand-beach fastens the fringe of the marsh to the folds of the land.
Inward and outward to northward and southward the beach-lines linger and curl
As a silver-wrought garment that clings to and follows
 the firm sweet limbs of a girl.

Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving again into sight,
Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim gray looping of light.
And what if behind me to westward the wall of the woods stands high?
The world lies east: how ample, the marsh and the sea and the sky!

A league and a league of marsh-grass, waist-high, broad in the blade,
Green, and all of a height, and unflecked with a light or a shade,
Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,
To the terminal blue of the main.
Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the terminal sea?
Somehow my soul seems suddenly free
From the weighing of fate and the sad discussion of sin,
By the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn.

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain.
As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.
And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo, out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:
Look how the grace of the sea doth go
About and about through the intricate channels that flow

Here and there,

Everywhere,

Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,
That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.

Farewell, my lord Sun!

The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.
How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide is in his ecstasy.

The tide is at his highest height:

And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord will the waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep

Under the waters of sleep?

And I would I could know what swimmeth below when the tide comes in
On the length and the breadth of the marvellous marshes of Glynn.

Sidney Lanier (1842-1881) was a Georgia-born poet. He was inspired to write "The Marshes of Glynn" (1879) after a visit to Brunswick, Georgia in Glynn County. Source: poets.org. Photo by Diane Kirkland.



Photo by Elizabeth DuBose

Ossabaw Island Joins Coastal Georgia Butterfly Migration Survey

If a flying creature has wings and migrates south, it might not be a bird. Butterflies migrate from North America to warmer climes every late summer and early fall, passing through Ossabaw Island along their way.

Just how many butterflies visit coastal Georgia, where they rest, where they feed, and other butterfly migration data are the subjects of a five-year study that began last year, led by the Butterflies of the Atlantic Flyway Alliance (BAFA). In 2019, Ossabaw Island was added to the survey area and Ossabaw Island Foundation became a partner in BAFA. Ossabaw's participation in the study is a partnership with TOIF and the Department of Natural Resources, and is coordinated by volunteer Diane Petzold.

For 14 consecutive Mondays (and one Tuesday), citizen scientists (aka volunteers) trained in butterfly surveying visited 16 staked-out data

collection sites on Ossabaw Island to count the number of three different species of butterflies: Monarch, Gulf Fritillary and Cloudless Sulphur. Six volunteers are needed for each week's survey session.

The Ossabaw data, plus data from other islands and mainland sites in coastal Georgia, will be compiled and analyzed by a University of Georgia ecologist.

The 2019 survey wrapped up on November 11. More volunteers will be needed for the 2020 study, which will take place from mid-August through mid-November. Volunteers take a 90-minute training on data collection and butterfly species ID. It is not necessary to sign up for all 14 weeks of the survey. Each week, volunteers spend a full day on Ossabaw Island, departing from the mainland at 8:30am and returning by about 4:00 pm.

For information on volunteering in 2020, and on all Ossabaw events, join our email list. Text OSSABAW to 22828 from your phone, then follow the easy prompts.



Photo by Elizabeth DuBose

Jane Fishman, Citizen Scientist and Butterfly Survey Volunteer

For most of us liberal arts types, science was a headache, something we had to take to graduate college (or high school). In my freshman college microbiology class I struggled to stay awake.

I graduated (as an English major). Somehow I memorized enough to pass those required science classes. I knew I would not be a scientist.

But to be a citizen scientist? On Ossabaw Island? That's a different story.

When the call went out last August I raised my hand. I didn't know what it meant but I felt it had my name on it.

"It ain't real if it ain't published," said Christa Hayes at the initial meeting. Hayes is a volunteer for Coastal Wildscapes and a veteran of the Butterflies of the Atlantic Flyway Alliance (BAFA) count on the Georgia coast. This would be the first time Ossabaw Island joined the other coastal locations.

Every Monday, for 14 weeks, volunteers would go to Ossabaw to count monarchs, gulf fritillaries and yellow cloudless sulphurs.

"But how do you know if you count the same butterfly twice?" someone asked Hayes.

"You do your best," she answered. "Don't overthink it." That was good enough for me, a non-scientist.

Even if I "failed," the chance to be on beloved Ossabaw Island for the day would be worth it.

This was the drill: drivers – someone from the DNR or Ossabaw Island Foundation director Elizabeth DuBose – drove individual teams of two to five different locations on the island. For 10 minutes, clipboards in hand – like real scientists – we stood back-to-back facing two previously-designated posts stuck in the marsh (or the sand), some five meters apart, looking for our subjects, noting whether they were flying north to south or south to north.

For us city-dwellers the cheerful sulphurs would be easiest to identify. We see them all the time, especially around red flowers, such as azaleas, salvia and Mexican sage. Distinguishing between monarchs and gulf fritillaries would be more challenging. Monarchs, we learned, fly much higher than fritillaries, some days thousands of feet in the air. They glide.

The gulf fritillary is more frantic. These are the butterflies we might know best. They're the ones who feast on our passion vine, our lantana.

Here's the crazy thing I learned. It takes four generations of monarchs to make the trip from Canada to Mexico. One month after an adult starts the trip south she lights on a sympathetic plant, lays her eggs, says, "So long, the rest is up to you," and passes into butterfly heaven.

Additional instructions were simple. We were to note cloud cover, temperature, direction of the wind.

For the 10-minute observation period – dutifully timed by the alarm on our phones – we stood at mountain pose, starting straight ahead, standing still, looking into the marsh, the open field, the ocean. Sometimes we talked. Sometimes we listened to the wind or watched a pelican divebomb his dinner. Not a bad way to spend a day.

I am a lepidopterist. I am a citizen scientist.

Jane Fishman is a Savannah-based writer and a volunteer with the BAFA survey on Ossabaw Island.



Volunteers Ken and Kandy Duke. Photo by Elizabeth DuBose



Thank you!

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Photos by Stacey Wells Photography



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Ossabaw Island Foundation Annual Mainland Event and Sandy West's 107th Birthday Celebration

Thursday, January 23, 2020

6:00 p.m. Reception

7:00 p.m. Presentation and Keynote: *"Marshland Fight: How Georgians Saved the Coast Fifty Years Ago"* Christopher J. Manganiello

8:15 p.m. Birthday Cake for Sandy West

Armstrong Center
13040 Abercorn St.
Savannah, GA 31419

Free and Open to the Public

Sponsored by the Trustees' Garden Club

ABOUT OSSABAW ISLAND:

Ossabaw Island is a 26,000-acre undeveloped barrier island on the Atlantic Ocean, owned by the State of Georgia and located in Chatham County. Georgia's first Heritage Preserve, accessible only by boat, is undeveloped and set aside by an Executive Order for natural, scientific and cultural study, research and education; and for environmentally sound preservation, conservation and management of the island's ecosystem.

The Ossabaw Island Foundation (TOIF) is a non-profit 501 (c) 3. Through a partnership with the State of Georgia, TOIF inspires, promotes, and manages exceptional educational, cultural, and scientific programs that are designed to maximize the experience of Ossabaw Island, while minimizing the impact on the island's resources.

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