

The Ossabaw Island Foundation and Education Alliance

2011 Summary and Accomplishments

Revealing the Voices and Mystery of Ossabaw Island



Education

Professor and Teacher Training Workshops: The Foundation partnered with five institutions to offer training for teachers at the elementary, high school, and college level: the Georgia Historical Society, the Sarasota Public School System, Stanford University, the Marine Education Center and Aquarium on Skidaway Island (UGA), and the Georgia Youth and Technology Center. For the third year, the Georgia Historical Society brought its Landmarks in American History program, “African American History & Culture in the Georgia Lowcountry,” to the island. For the ninth-year both the University of Georgia Marine Education Center and Georgia Youth Science and Technology Center brought teacher training workshops to Ossabaw Island this past summer.



Expanded Day and Overnight Trips: The Foundation has moved from general day trips to ones focusing on particular themes. For individuals and families, these included explorations of the tabby cabins, their occupants, and the Gullah-Geechee heritage; stargazing in the darkness of Horse Field under the tutelage of an astronomer; and turtle walks on the beach where participants looked for loggerheads nesting and hatchlings headed for the ocean. In 2012, overnight trips will include indigo dying, coastal foodways, and historical themes.

Program Days: The Foundation and Education Alliance provided coordination and facilitation for 170 program days on Ossabaw Island, close to an all-time high. Collaboration and support throughout the year is provided by the Department of Natural Resources and The Board of Regents of State of Georgia.



Science

Barrier Island Observatory (BIO): Skidaway Institute of Oceanography continues to provide leadership in designing a network of sensors and webcams in order to provide real-time environmental data through wireless connectivity to classrooms and the general public. Presentations were made to faculty at Georgia Southern and Armstrong. This past summer, researchers designed a tutorial available online for classroom instruction. Three years of archived environmental data are accessible, while two live cameras offer resources. The Observatory is available at ossabaw.skio.usg.edu.



Archaeological Field School: The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, and Georgia Southern University collaborated in a partnership that brought sixteen students and their professor, Dr. Nick Honerkamp, onto Ossabaw Island for four weeks. The field school devoted its work to establishing the archeological survey of the entire North End Plantation site. It will continue on Ossabaw in 2012.

Culture

Ossabaw Island Writer's Retreat: In February, Tony Morris, poet, creative writer and Armstrong faculty member, offered a workshop on writing that included three writers participating in the Savannah Book Festival and their students. The program offers five days of workshops, manuscript critiques, craft sessions, and faculty readings on Ossabaw Island. The annual February retreat is in partnership with Savannah Book Festival, Armstrong Atlantic State University, Poetry Society of Georgia, and the Southern Poetry Review.



Complimentary Visiting Artist Program 2002–2011: Over the past ten years, the Foundation hosted a complimentary program for over 400 artists that generated more than 50 Ossabaw art shows and exhibits around the country. Artists are an important part of the Ossabaw heritage. In the interest of being fiscally responsible, the Foundation will ask artists to pay all associated island visitation fees going forward.



Films on Ossabaw: The newly created Pin Point Heritage Museum produced a documentary on Pin Point, *At the Water's Edge*, much of which was filmed on Ossabaw Island over the course of 2011. Interviews with residents of Pin Point lie at the heart of the film. This documentary is featured at the Pin Point Heritage Museum as the introduction to the exhibits.

History

African American History Book: The book that came out of the 2008 symposium, *African Americans and the Georgia Lowcountry: The Atlantic World and the Gullah-Geechee*, has sold out its first printing. It has been reprinted as a paperback and is now available as an e-book.

The Foundation completed a \$40,000 planning grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, phase II of a three phase granting process. Our next step is to apply for an implementation grant from NEH to interpret the history and culture of Ossabaw Island.

Governance

Audience Research: This research report found that experienced Ossabaw visitors show, "a very high regard" for the Foundation and its programs and almost uniformly would like to repeat their experience. Our audience research gives us direction as we continue to develop island programs. 42% visitors are students and teachers, 13% are teachers who participate in training, 35% are adult interest groups and 3% are scientists.

Communication: In collaboration with Longwater & Co the Foundation and the Education Alliance created a new corporate identity for Ossabaw Island. We continue to expand our outreach with e-blasts and social networking in addition to our print material.

Special Events: The 10th Annual Pig Roast featured Sandy West joining the 350 strong on her lawn, an animated live auction, and a plein air painting, by Jannsen Robinson. This year's Pig Roast was in honor of Jim Bitler's (1955-2011) eight years of dedicated service to the Ossabaw Island Foundation.

Who are the Friends of Ossabaw?: 17% of Ossabaw's supporters come from outside the State of Georgia and represent a national constituency. 14% are from within the State of Georgia and hail from the mountains to the coast. 69% of our friends are from the Georgia and Carolina Lowcountry.

Establishment of an Ossabaw Endowment: Long Time Goal of the Trustees Realized: Thanks to a bequest from the Thrower Family of Atlanta, GA in memory of Margaret M. Thrower, TOIF has established an endowment fund for the Ossabaw Island Foundation's work on Ossabaw Island.

Financial Performance: During The past 13 years TOIF has raised over \$4.1 million for infrastructure improvements and exceptional educational, cultural and scientific programming. For the 9th consecutive year TOIF ended the fiscal year in the black. For the 7th consecutive year we conducted an audit of financial statements. In FY 2010-2011, total revenues were \$324,000, with total expenses of \$317,000.



Mission: The Ossabaw Island Foundtion, through a public-private partnership with the State of Georgia, 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 its resources.

For more information: www.ossabawisland.org