

2016 Summary & Accomplishments

Revealing the Voices & Mystery of Ossabaw Island

Education

The Ossabaw Island Foundation (TOIF) provided coordination and facilitation for 160 program days and 141 nights on Ossabaw Island. Of the 91 groups who visited Ossabaw Island, 12 groups were first-timers. Groups included 32 cultural study trips, 14 student/teacher trips (totaling 128 students and teachers), and 8 science-related trips. In 2016 TOIF hosted 2,000 learners.

Symposium:

More than 400 people turned out for the *Coastal Nature, Coastal Culture* symposium held February 18-20, 2016 in Savannah, hosted by the Ossabaw Island Education Alliance and Ossabaw Island Foundation. Eleven nationally renowned scholars in the fields of anthropology, history, literature, and environmentalism presented original research. The presentations discussed 5,000 years of coastal history and why the Georgia coast matters. Papers presented at the symposium will be compiled into a book published by UGA Press in 2018. In addition to the lectures, five field trips were coordinated to related sites in and around Savannah. To see and hear the presentations visit: www.gacoast2016.org/podcasts-videos/.



Photo by: Elizabeth DuBose

Science

UGA Archaeological Field School:

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and University of Georgia's Department of Anthropology hosted the third year of a multi-year archaeological excavation and field school on Ossabaw. This year's excavation focused on the pre-history near the Buckhead Plantation site on the south end of Ossabaw Island. An archaeology day trip for the public was offered by TOIF and DNR, providing participants the opportunity to dig, sift, wash, and sort artifacts alongside university students and archaeology professionals. In 2017 the field school will work in Athens, Georgia to process and catalog the artifacts discovered so far on Ossabaw Island.



Photo by: Robert S. Cooper

Sea Turtle Nesting:

TOIF hosted two turtle-hatching weekend trips, with participants assisting the Georgia DNR's Sea Turtle Conservation program interns in documenting some of the 426 turtle nests occurring on Ossabaw Island's beaches in 2016. A total of 23,524 turtle eggs hatched from Ossabaw's nests.

History and Culture



Photo by: Elizabeth DuBose

The Art of Indigo Dyeing:

TOIF hosted two indigo-dyeing workshops in 2016, taught by Donna Hardy of Sea Island Indigo. Participants created a fresh leaf indigo vat by using the naturalized indigo plants growing on Ossabaw's North End for the past 270 years. The workshop walks through the chemical process used during colonial production of indigo dye. By the end of the day, the process creates beautiful Ossabaw indigo blue to use as dye. In October TOIF hosted a field trip to Ossabaw Island to process Ossabaw indigo for the Textile Society of America's International Conference held in Savannah.

Hurricane History:

In November, TOIF hosted four Hurricane History Tour & Picnic events on the island. Part history tour, part Pig Roast, these trips focused on the recorded history of hurricanes on Georgia's coast beginning in the 16th century, with emphasis on storms affecting Ossabaw Island in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Ossabaw Island Writers' Retreat:

For the sixth year, this five-day retreat, hosted by Dr. Tony Morris of Armstrong State University, brought writers from around the country to Ossabaw for in-depth workshop/instruction from critically acclaimed writers in fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry. In addition to the weeklong spring workshop, Ossabaw Island Writers' Retreat expanded to include a shorter two-night experience in the fall for the second year.

Cultural opportunities:

TOIF-hosted culture trips included the sixth New Year's Eve Wild Night on Ossabaw and an Artist/Creativity Day Trip. A history tour of Ossabaw Island was offered by The Learning Center of Senior Citizens, Inc. as part of a Moon River District course for lifelong learners. In total, 32 cultural study trips brought 962 learners to Ossabaw in 2016.

Governance

Friends of Ossabaw:

69% of our friends are from the Georgia coast and Carolina lowcountry. 14% are from the non-coastal regions of Georgia, especially the Atlanta area, Athens, and south-central Georgia. 17% of our supporters come from outside Georgia and represent a national constituency.

Stewardship and Fundraising:

FY 2015/2016. Gross revenue at the end of the TOIF fiscal year (July 31, 2016) was \$425,000, including donations, grants, and fees for the environmental history symposium. TOIF expenses for the year were \$388,000 including costs related to the symposium. For the thirteenth consecutive year, we conducted an audit of financial statements. Operating grants received included The Beehive Foundation, The Courtney Knight Gaines Foundation, Sweetgrass Foundation, The Ecology Wildlife Foundation, and International Paper Foundation.

Volunteer Opportunities:

For the fifth year, Ossabaw hosted over 60 volunteers from our partner, the Georgia Conservancy, for a fall service weekend. It takes a village – over 120 volunteers contributed time, energy, and expertise to events throughout the year.



Photo by: Fran Lapolla

Partnerships:

Collaboration and support throughout the year are provided by the Department of Natural Resources, the Board of Regents of the State of Georgia, and Georgia Southern University's Coastal Georgia Center in Savannah. Other partnerships in 2016 included University of Georgia's Department of Anthropology, Moon River District, Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, Georgia Historical Society, University of Georgia's Marine Extension Center & Aquarium, Georgia Conservancy, The Learning Center of Senior Citizens, Inc., Sea Island Indigo, and the Wormsloe Institute for Environmental History.