



SEWEE VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



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Edited by Bill Denig

Teaching Children about Nature Takes All of Us

Thanks to all of our great volunteers that help teach Environmental Education programs, we had a great school year for 2007-2008 with over 5,000 children coming through our doors for programs. We also had a busy summer with over 1,000 children visiting us. This year, we were able to attend more weekend events and hold weekend programs due to the help of volunteers. Our volunteers that perform other duties are instrumental in our education programs as well by helping Sewee staff prepare for programs or freeing us



up to teach them. Our front "desk" get to answer the continual question, "Is that squirrel real?" from every little mouth that walks in here!

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Francis Marion Forest – The Year in Review

Officially designated in 1936, the Francis Marion National Forest encompasses almost 259,000 acres throughout Berkeley & Charleston counties. Forest lands are managed by the USDA Forest Service for multiple uses including watershed protection, timber production, habitat for wildlife and fish (including threatened and endangered species), wilderness area management, minerals leasing, and recreation.

The Francis Marion Forest manages 190,000 acres for timber production, pulpwood, and biomass. Biomass refers to pine saplings that are too small for timber or pulpwood production. Since Hurricane Hugo, biomass makes up thousands of forest acres that are now being thinned

and used to fuel power plants. This year 757 acres of young pine stands have had biomass treatment, thus improving wildlife habitat and reducing the danger of catastrophic wildfire, while providing a local renewable energy source. Also this year, first thinnings were conducted on 783 acres.

An open longleaf pine forest is where the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker lives. Longleaf requires prescribed burning (controlled fires) to eliminate competition and maintain this rare habitat. The forest service burned 39,249 acres on longleaf pine habitat this year, and increase of close to 5000 acres burned in 2007.

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(Teaching Children About Nature, Continued from page 1)

Teaching our children to enjoy and protect our public lands is vital to its survival. By allowing them to explore our diverse habitats and learn that our plants and animals are interesting and exciting, they will work to conserve them in the future. It takes lots of people and time to give these children an experience that they will remember and you all enhance the programs with your expertise and personalities.

Thanks again for your dedication, hard work, and passion for our local environment.

Submitted by Julie Binz



Setting Up Track Casts

Saving Sea Turtles at Cape Romain — Successes and Setbacks for the Loggerhead

As the summer season wanes, we reflect on the successes and setbacks of the 2008 nesting season for threatened loggerhead sea turtles. As one of the most significant nesting areas for the northern sub-population of loggerhead sea turtles north of Amelia Island, Florida, Cape Romain NWR numbers about 1000 nests each summer.

Loggerheads made good use of approximately 15 miles of beach on three refuge islands, Cape, Lighthouse, and Bulls Island. They laid 1,431 nests along the beaches and the hatch success rate was average, until tropical storms Fay and Hannah blew through the area in mid September. The storms caused severe erosion on Cape Island where more than 20 feet of beach was lost. As a result, 90 nests were lost, and many others were washed over so severely that hatch rates were reduced by nearly 90%. Despite the storms, however, loggerheads had a remarkable summer thanks to the unwavering dedication and diligence of staff and volunteers for Cape Romain NWR. Highlights of the season also included the discovery of two leatherback nests, one on Cape and the other on Bulls Island.

Refuge and Charleston Ecological Services Field Office employees, along with scores of volunteers

soldiered throughout the summer to protect the nests of the much-loved turtles. This summer 81 volunteers contributed 4,637 hours to protect the loggerhead sea turtles nesting on refuge beaches. Volunteers include hard-working folks of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, South Carolina Aquarium, the SEWEE Association, and the Deweese Island Homeowner's Association.

The nest protection program was first implemented in 1979 and has been growing for the past

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Allan Dawson holds Leatherback egg

(Francis Marion Forest, Continued from page 1)

Habitat is being improved throughout the forest for rare and endangered plants such as the pondberry and American chaffseed. Rare plant inventories were completed on 4000 acres on the forest and 150 miles of roads and trails were surveyed for the invasive non-native cogon grass. This year a one-acre hotspot of cogon grass was eradicated from the forest. If you see any please contact the Extension Office at Clemson University at 864-656-2479, any South Carolina Department of Forestry office or the Department of Plan Industry at 864-646-2130.

Wildlife surveys are an important part of ecosystem management practiced by the forest service. This year biologists surveyed over 5,962 acres for Proposed Endangered Threatened & Sensitive Plants (PETS). 725 acres of permanent wildlife openings have managed to provide food and brood areas for songbirds, turkey and quail. The forest service conducted surveys to establish annual population trends of resident birds, furbearers, frogs, flatwood salamanders, Red-cockaded woodpecker and migratory birds. 150 acres of waterfowl impoundments were managed to provide winter habitat for over 800 migrating ducks and spring habitat for migrating shorebirds.

Communities are expanding along the edges of national forest lands all across the country. These areas, known as the "wildland-urban interface" or WUI, have been targeted in a recent national campaign known as FIREWISE, a fire prevention education program promoting ways to protect your home from wildfire. Smokey Bear, South Carolina Forestry Commission, and the Francis Marion National Forest have been instrumental in progres-



FIREWISE

sively involving the public with its fire prevention campaign. The team visits local schools and libraries, spreading the word about fire. A newly acquired FIREWISE Exhibit is an effective tool in promoting fire prevention at schools, fairs, and other public events. For more information about FIREWISE contact Robin Blakely at 843-336-3248.

The forest provides the American people with a diverse set of outdoor recreation opportunities. Whether you enjoy hiking or riding trails, paddling, fishing, hunting, camping, birding or simply relaxing at one of our picnic areas, the Francis Marion National Forest has something special waiting for you. This year, the Sewee Shell Ring Interpretive trail, damaged during the 2005 hurricane season, was reopened after 5 months of construction of improvements including a parking area for cars and buses, a rebuilt boardwalk around the shell ring, a new section of trail edging the forest along the marsh, one large information board and interpretation panel at the trailhead and 4 new interpretive signs highlighting the natural and cultural history of this ancient Sewee Indian settlement.



Heading to Native American Shell Mound

This year, the Francis Marion National Forest hosted two youth deer hunts and two mobility impaired deer hunts. Over 400 anglers of all ages enjoyed the three fishing rodeos held at the Nebo and Sewee ponds.

Volunteers constantly help out on the Forest. In FY 2008 volunteers maintained trails, built foot bridges, removed illegal OHV trails and removed litter and trash dumps forest-wide. The Forest in

(Continued on page 4)

(Francis Marion Forest, Continued from page 3)

partnership with Palmetto Pride and 106 multi-county volunteers teamed up to collect over 4000 pounds of trash during the Francis Marion National Forest cleanup held on February 2, 2008. Three boats and entire households of furniture and appliances contributed to the debris collected at illegal dumpsites throughout the forest. Due to the success of the cleanup, Palmetto Pride and the USDA Forest Service have decided to make this cleanup an annual event that will occur the first Saturday of February.

The Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests officially ended its year-long National Use Visitor Monitoring program this September 30th. Inter-

viewers conducted surveys across the country to find out about Forest visitors' experiences when they come to their national forests. The surveys, which are voluntary and confidential, help with forest planning and help local communities with tourism. The Sewee Visitor Center was one of the many sites on the Francis Marion where these surveys were conducted, participating in over 25 on-site surveys for this national program. Local, state and national forest planners, as well as the U.S. Congress, will use the information collected in this study to help the Forest Service meet the public's needs and desires.

Submitted by Jannah Dupre

Our Volunteers Keep Giving and Giving...

13,053 hours!! This fiscal year (October 2007 – September 2008) 144 volunteers for Cape Romain Refuge and Sewee Center gave their valuable time, skills and knowledge in support of our Service missions. What did our volunteers do for us this past year that logged **13, 053** hours?

At the Sewee Center, 43 volunteers gave 6,648 hours to the Refuge and Francis Marion Forest. Volunteers are the interface with refuge and forest visitors, and have warmly welcomed folks, offered information about recreation activities and resource programs and, encouraged them to explore and enjoy their public lands. They have traveled to offsite events, staffing our exhibits, showing our reptiles and promoting our conservation missions. They have helped special needs children and mobility impaired adults at our fishing rodeos and, assisted parents and kids with canoes and fishing on Family Day. Volunteers have interacted with thousands of children, and have provoked a child's awe and excitement as they taught environmental lessons. If not teaching, they put together lesson packets and materials and assisted others with the education programs.

Volunteers have been a wonderful source of support with office tasks such as inventory, filing and data entry. Thousands of slides were cataloged and scanned into a computerized library, a task improbable without the assistance of folks with great organizational skills and a lot of patience.

And, we have those adept with excel, publisher and graphic programs who have created and maintained data spreadsheets, published our newsletter and created graphic designs for interpretive panels.

Volunteers have assisted with the red wolves in various ways: feeding, cleaning and clearing their enclosure, repairing shelters, catching them for vet checks and transporting them when necessary. The wolves surely appreciate you too!

Volunteers that worked on the Refuge contributed 6,405 hours to our resource management and maintenance programs. During the summer months, 81 volunteers worked with the turtle nest relocation project and experienced first-hand one of our busiest seasons with a total of 1,431 nests. The turtle crew worked through high heat indexes, braved black flies and mosquitoes and even had the company of a cottonmouth who was hanging out with the poles. They also experienced the serenity of early morning boat rides, watched the little "fruits of their labor" head for the ocean and, if lucky enough during night work, witnessed a laboring female drop her precious eggs in her nest. Volunteers gave thousands of Loggerhead hatchlings a chance for survival.

Volunteers pitched in to eradicate invasive species and were out on Bulls Island "hacking and squirt-

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(Our Volunteers Keep Giving, Continued from page 4)

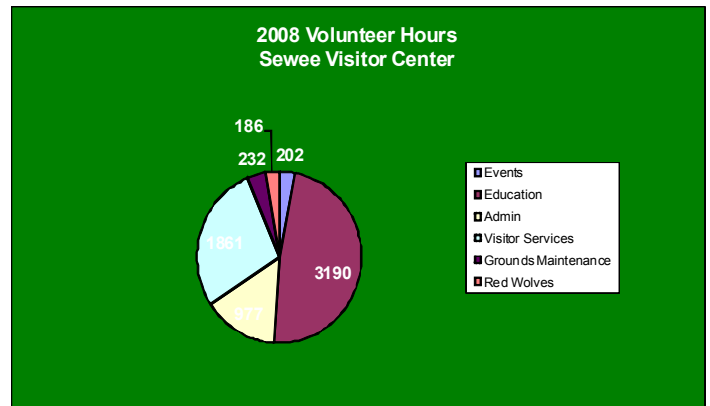
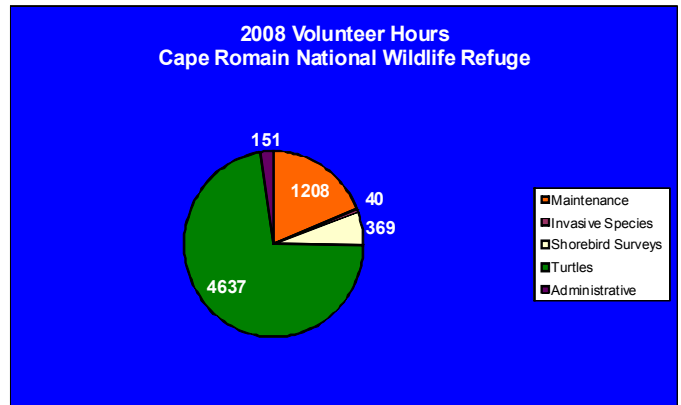
ing” the invasive Chinese tallow tree and spraying phragmites. Also, refuge shorebird population surveys were conducted by volunteers.

Lastly, we have our volunteer support team (20 volunteers) that has made all other refuge projects and programs even possible. These folks have kept our boats, motors, vehicles and ATVs in operating condition. They have made repairs to our facilities and cleared our trails and roads. When there have been construction projects, volunteers have provided input into project designs and helped build the structures.

By Service accounts, the amount of support given by our volunteers this year was equal to 6 full-time employee positions, with a monetary value of \$254,664.00. For the Refuge and Sewee Center, the value of our volunteers is priceless.

From the staff - Thank you!

Submitted by Tricia Lynch



A Day for Volunteers — Raptors and Recognition

Cape Romain Refuge and Sewee Visitor Center set aside Saturday, February 9th as a day to say “thank you” to volunteers for their dedication and hard work in the support of our missions and conservation programs throughout 2007. Planned for the day was a tour and flying demonstration at the newly constructed Center for Birds of Prey site and an awards pot-luck luncheon.

In acknowledgement of the volunteers, the CBP welcomed us to their new facility. Stephen Scha-

bel, Educator, talked about the Center’s plans and progress, then gave a very detailed and insightful presentation about the raptors housed at the facility as he walked with us through the bird aviaries. From the aviaries, we accompanied Steve to the flying field where we sat in awe and admiration of the beauty, agility and intelligence of the birds of prey. Stephen, Susan Bogart and Jess Clafin showed incredible skill as they handled and directed an Asian Brown Wood Owl, Red-tailed

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Stephen Demonstrates with Eurasian Kestrel



At the Bird Aviaries



Susan Bogart Shows Asian Owl

Cape Romain Welcomes Kevin Godsea and Raye Nilius

Kevin comes from J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge where he served as the Supervisory Park Ranger for the past 6 years. Upon being selected as refuge manager, Kevin said, "It is truly a blessing to have the opportunity to live and work in the most beautiful places in our country, and I certainly regard Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge and the SC Lowcountry as one of the most spectacular places."

Kevin's initial exposure to the Service was as a volunteer at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge while he attended school at Georgia Southern University. In 1999, Kevin entered the Student Career Experience Program at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in Titusville, Florida. After graduating in the summer of 1999, with a degree in Natural and Cultural Recreation Management, he continued to work as an Interpretive Park Ranger at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. In 2000, he took a position as an Environmental Education Specialist at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge in Sanibel, Florida. As an EE Specialist he worked with exhibit designers to fabricate the exhibits for the new education center, and developed educational curriculum for school groups. In 2002, Kevin became the Supervisory Park



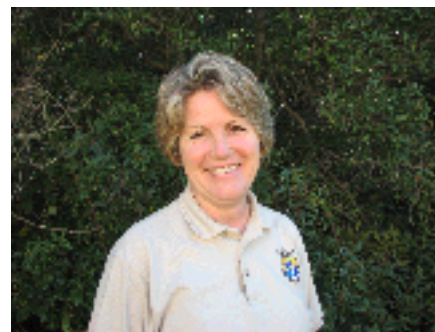
Ranger of the J. N. "Ding" Darling NWR complex.

Prior to joining the Service in 1999, Kevin studied Natural and Cultural

Recreation Management at Georgia Southern University and worked at the Georgia Southern Raptor Center conducting educational programs and served as an animal caretaker. Kevin grew up in the metro Atlanta area. Outdoor recreational activities and sports were a large part of his childhood and continue in his adult life. Kevin's hobbies are boating, fishing, and spending time outside with his family. Kevin is married to Anna Godsea and is the father of a 4 year old daughter Laura.

In September, 2008, Raye Nilius reported to Cape Romain NWR as the new Project Leader of the South Carolina Lowcountry Refuge Complex. Raye is a ten-year veteran with the Service, having started her career in 1998 as a Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program biologist in the Arkansas Ecological Services Field Office. Raye's work in Arkansas included partnerships with private landowners in the Ozark Plateau for rare and unique cave species. The partnerships she established with scientists, universities, and government agencies launched the ES Office's endangered species listing and recovery program.

In 2001 Raye took a position in the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program's Washington Office.



She devoted much of her time to legislation pending before Congress, including the 2002 Farm Bill. When an opportunity arose in the Refuge System's Wildlife Resources Branch, Raye joined the Refuge System team as National Coordinator for refuge-based international conservation. In this role Raye worked closely with the Service's Divisions of International Conservation and Migratory Birds to plan and implement conservation activities for species shared with Mexico, South America, and Canada.

In 2003 Raye returned to the field, first as Deputy Project Leader at the Theodore Roosevelt NWR Complex in Mississippi, then in 2005 as Deputy Project Leader at the Tennessee NWR Complex in Tennessee.

Raye is looking forward to working with staff, volunteers, and the Friends groups of South Carolina Lowcountry Refuge Complex.

Submitted by Kevin Godsea and Raye Nilius

A Girl Scout Gold Award

When Christina May was asked by the Girl Scout Council to support her selection of Cape Romain NWR as her Gold Award project site, she wrote: "I believe that most people don't realize how poorly we as humans are treating our planet. Since there are places schools can take their students to view for themselves how important nature is to us, such as this National Wildlife Refuge, children can be taught the importance of a balanced ecosystem and endangered species can be protected."

Christina then met with Tricia Lynch and developed plans for the project which would include the Sewee Center and Bulls Island. Project work began on December 1, 2007, when Christina brought Lisa May, troop leader, and 7 team members to the Center. Working with Volunteer Jeff Smith, the team put a waterproof sealant on the boardwalk, dismantled center benches and began brushing and painting the wood slats and iron framework. Before day's end, the iron framework at the wolf enclosure had also been scraped and painted. The Sewee project was wrapped up in March when benches around the pond and at the butterfly garden were painted.

Bulls Island projects were the culmination of Christina's Gold Award. Volunteers Neil White, Dennis Hanson and Tim Alston oversaw the various projects that were tackled on a very hot, humid and buggy day in late July. Benches were built and placed along trail intersections and at Old Fort, and old sign posts were removed from the Middens Trail. The weather shelter got a much needed "facelift" in spite of swarming dirt dobbers and oppressive heat and humidity! Scouts donned mosquito nets and set about building benches and cleaning the shelter inside and out.

After cleanup, lunch and a tour of the Dominick house, Tricia took the team on a jaunt around the island, then on to Boneyard Beach to walk and look for shells. Due to threatening thunderstorms, Coastal Expeditions graciously transported the scouts back to the mainland on the *Island Cat* ferry.

Needless to say, the scout team did a stellar job. What did they enjoy most? Using the drill! For the scouts putting benches together on Bulls, it was their first experience with the tool and one of the highlights of the project.

Christina's project goals were to contribute to the enhancement of the refuge's resources and improve the attractiveness of public use areas. Christina and her team met those goals with flying colors! Hats off to the Scouts!

Submitted by Tricia Lynch



Christina May tackles the iron framework



Putting in a bench



The drill is fun



Artistic Expression



Applying sealant to boardwalk



Prepared for mosquitoes and wasps

Volunteer Tours During the Past Year

An Outing to Lighthouse Island

That's us (see photo) – tramping through the pluff mud, cord grass and water to get to the high ground on Lighthouse Island. Our tour of the Cape Romain lights, led by 20-year veteran volunteer Tommy Graham, was on a beautiful crisp November day. Tommy met everyone at the Sewee Center and gave a great slide presentation on the island's history, sharing his knowledge and personal experiences, old photographs and nautical charts with us. We then went to the McClellanville boat landing and boarded the *Island Cat* ferry with Captain Chris Crolley and his staff to head to the island. To our dismay, when we reached the lighthouses, we found that the 1857 light had been vandalized, with the ground level door knocked off and first level door mangled so badly that we could not enter. However, we did not let the vandals dampen our day! The 1827 lighthouse is open and, with Tommy as our guide, we went inside to see the inner structure. Tommy also pointed out a fresh water cistern and foundation remains of the light keeper's house. It was truly a day to delve into the rich cultural history of the refuge as well as enjoy the camaraderie of fellow volunteers. We appreciate Coastal Expeditions who generously provided the transportation to make the volunteer Lighthouse Island tour possible.



Tramping Through the Pluff Mud and Water

Bulls Island Trip

On March 20th, Sewee volunteers who work with our visitors traveled to Bulls Island with Tricia Lynch to see first-hand the island's incredible natural beauty and become more knowledgeable about its cultural history. Tricia took everyone through the

Dominick House and shared what she knew about the Dominick family and the concessionaires that lived on the island from 1940 – 1969. Afterwards, everyone rode to the south end and checked out the rice trunk that regulates water levels in the Summerhouse impoundments, walked to the David Clough viewing platform, and went over the dunes at the south end to see Capers and Little Bulls islands. Following lunch at the house the group headed north, stopping at the Old Fort remains and riding through Alligator Alley to take pictures of huge gators sunning on the dike.

The day was complete with shelling on Boneyard Beach. The trip was a great way to become better acquainted while enjoying the beauty of such a pristine treasure.



Heading Over to the South Beach



Shelling on the Beach

Sewee Visitor Center Volunteers Tour the Forest

On Friday, September 19, a cadre of volunteers departed Sewee Visitor Center for a tour of the Francis Marion National Forest, to enhance their knowledge of Forest opportunities and thus impart that knowledge to the Center's visitors. Nine "front liners", volunteers who traditionally give information and conduct visitor services, left Sewee Visitor Center traveling in two vans. Tricia Lynch, Volunteer Coordinator for Cape Romain

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(Saving Sea Turtles, Continued from page 2)

30 years. Recovery activities includes constructing protective hatcheries, locating nests and false crawls, relocating nests threatened by washover and erosion into hatcheries, caging nests for predator control, monitoring nests, and conducting inventories at season's end.

The Loggerhead sea turtle was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1978. Factors attributed to their decline include loss of nesting habitat, artificial lighting,

pollution, incidental capture in fisheries and dredging, and boat strikes. It is estimated that only one of every 1000 hatchlings reach sexual maturity.

As the summer season wanes, the last of the turtle hatchlings emerges from the sand and departs. We hope to see her again in 25 years.

Submitted by Tricia Lynch, Sarah Dawsey, Kevin Godsea



Jerry Tupacz probes to locate turtle nest



Albino Loggerhead hatchling

In Memory — Volunteer William “Billy” Warren July 15, 1943 – March 23, 2008

Billy Warren began volunteering at Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge as a member of the loggerhead sea turtle crew in 2003. Throughout the past five years, Billy accrued over 1,100 volunteer hours on the Refuge, assisting with the sea turtle nesting project, invasive species control, shorebird surveys, and posting and maintaining seabird nesting areas. Early in 2008, he enthusiastically attended boat operation training classes to enhance his ability to assist with Refuge programs. Billy's dedication and enthusiasm were crucial to continuing the sea turtle nesting surveys on Lighthouse Island as well as initiating a new sea turtle program on Bull's Island.

For almost ten years, Billy also volunteered at the South Carolina Aquarium, giving over 4,500 hours. His work at the Aquarium began in 1998 with Billy presenting turtle talks and conducting outreach. He then worked at an offsite quarantine facility that housed animals while the Aquarium was being built. When that facility closed, Billy moved to the Aquarium to assist with offshore reef exhibits, care for the

bird collection, and helped rehabilitate sick and injured sea turtles in the Sea Turtle Rescue Program.

Billy's presence and involvement with all of Cape Romain's biological programs and his commitment to the South Carolina Aquarium was nothing short of amazing. Billy will remain an inspiration to all of us who knew and worked with him and will be greatly missed.

Submitted by Sarah Dawsey and Kelly Thorvalson



Billy Warren sprays to control invasive phragmites on Bulls Island

(Volunteer Tours, Continued from page 8)

National Wildlife Refuge and Becky Ashley, Information Assistant, Francis Marion National Forest acted as drivers/guides.

First stop was to walk the recently re-dedicated Sewee Shell Ring Trail. The walk began at the new parking area by the interpretative kiosk and ended at the new board walk along the shell ring at Awendaw Creek.

Other stops for the day included Buck Hall Recreation area, North Tibwin Plantation, the early church of the rice plantations- St. James-Santee Church, the bluff above Santee River at McConnell's landing, a drive through a picturesque, wildflower filled forested area to Eckles Church Road and on to lunch at Huger Park Picnic Area. A wonderful lunch was provided by the SEWEE Association and the Sewee staff. Volunteer Coni Dudley brought a homemade cake.

After lunch, Harry Scott, Timber Staff Officer (USFS), greeted the volunteers and gave an interesting talk on what his job entails, what the Timber shop accomplishes and how this work helps to keep the Francis Marion in line with the Healthy Forest Initiative. Harry also spoke on and identified the management practices of Bio Mass and First

thinning, both significant treatments along the Highway 17 corridor and other major roadways. Harry concluded with a question and answer period, answering many questions and explaining timber harvesting procedures for the volunteers. District Ranger Orlando Sutton (USFS) greeted the volunteers and added his compliments and thanks for the fine assistance that the volunteers give to the Sewee Visitor Center and also to the entire Francis Marion Forest.

Leaving Huger Park, the tour visited the flowing well at Huger Creek, drove by Witherbee office complex, and traveled back to Sewee Visitor Center, via Guerin Bridge Road. Volunteers mingled with one another, some meeting for the first time, and had an informative day that was enjoyed by all.

This was the third Forest tour for the volunteers, the others being half-day trips with smaller groups. There is a plan to return to the north east part of the forest and walk the trail to Battery Warren on the Santee River and visit Blue Springs. (A motor grader was scraping the gravel road to the Battery on the day of this tour, preventing access.)

Submitted by Becky Ashley



Sewee Shell Mound



Buck Hall Fishing Pier

Volunteer Appreciation Day on Saturday, January 31, 2009

Save the date and mark your calendars! On Saturday, January 31st, Volunteers and Sewee Center, Refuge, Coastal Expeditions and Nature Adventures staff will head to Bulls Island for a day of fellowship, fun and food in recognition of the outstanding work that volunteers have generously given over the past year. We will depart Garris Landing on the *Island Cat* ferry at 9 AM. Naturalist Chris Crolley will lead an island tour from 10 – 12

and, following the tour, we will have a Pot-Luck lunch at the Dominick House. Cape Romain Refuge will supply the main dish and, with each of us bringing a side, we will have a feast! Bring your fishing gear, binoculars, and cameras because after lunch you can go fishing, birding, shelling, and hiking and take great photographs throughout the day. We will head back to the mainland at 4 PM.

SEWEE Association Works for our Refuges and Forest

The SEWEE Association continues to work for Cape Romain, EFH ACE Basin and Waccamaw Refuges and the Francis Marion National Forest through volunteer efforts and funding of special projects. Each year gets more exciting and 2008 has not been disappointing.

The Association manages much of the educational efforts of our partners through the leadership of our educator, Julie Binz. Julie continues to bring new programs and upgrade our existing ones to stay relevant to the needs of teachers during the school year and camps during the summer. This year she has wonderful assistance from our college interns – Josha McBee, Bryana Libby, and Helen Jowers – and from our Wando High School intern, Jay Norton. Without the help of these volunteers, we would not be able to work with over 8000 students annually and create opportunities for these students to experience our incredible natural resources of the coastal plain. This year we also reached out to SC middle and high school teachers and provided a graduate level course called “Reclaiming the Low-country”. This course brought information about invasive species to these teachers and they have taken that information and created exceptional lessons for their students.

We also are working with the refuges on several biological projects. We provided 4 turtle interns this year to the Cape Romain Loggerhead Turtle Nest Protection project. We helped with the eradication of invasive species (raccoon and mink) on Cape Island and Chinese Tallow and phragmites on Bulls Island and in ACE Basin. We have used special funding to sponsor a monthly shorebird survey throughout Cape Romain NWR for the past year. We sponsored a day in October with 15 volunteers from the College of Charleston, local teachers and students, and others on Bulls Island to collect seeds from Red Bay trees for a seed bank to repopulate areas that have been decimated by Laurel Wilt disease.

ACE Basin and Waccamaw have new public use facilities with the help of the Association. Through a Friend’s Grant, there is a new place for visitors to

hike and enjoy in the Combahee Unit of ACE. Waccamaw is in the midst of major visitor services development and the Association is helping with trail enhancements at Cox Ferry Lake Recreation Area and the new visitor/EE Center at Yauhannah Bluff in Georgetown County.

All of this is possible through the dedication of the SEWEE Association Board of Directors and our 2 staff members. We will, however, be looking for more volunteers to help us so that we can do more for our partners.

Our major fund-raising event is Music and Oysters for Wildlife on Saturday, January 17, 2009. We need help with the organizing prior to that day and with the tasks of the day that weekend! If you love music and oysters or believe in the work that we are doing and want to help, please contact Karen Beshears at 843-884-7539 or sewee.association@earthlink.net.

Submitted by Karen Beshears



Sandie Nichols, Andy Hill, and Samantha Hernandez collecting Red Bay seeds

Rebecca Reflects upon the Turtle Season

A funny thing I think of is when Jerry, Allan and I were out and Jerry and I had decided to move a nest and we needed a pole. As we were working in a group, we “called out” and motioned to Allan that we needed a pole. Allan came running across the sand and just as he reached us he fell flat on the ground. Jerry and I both started going to Allan and yelling “Are you ok?” As we did, Allan positions the pole as a rifle and started shooting us! We all cracked up laughing. You had to be there to get the humor.

Also, Mary Catherine used to always tell me the birds and stuff. Allan also takes the time to tell me about the birds, butterflies, the sharks etc. One reason I do this is because I love the ocean and its life and I appreciate any knowledge passed along. Allan is patient and likes to talk about all species of animals that we see on the Island, just like Mary Catherine. I think I learned like multiple semesters of college from Mary Catherine and Allan has the same mindset, to share what he knows.

And a personal note...my son was murdered at the beginning of the season and, for anyone who is thinking about volunteering I say, and trapper Billy will confirm, there is nothing more therapeutic

than volunteering to work turtles. It is so soul soothing...being at the ocean and also helping the habitat. I told Sarah, when she was surprised that I was coming back as soon as I did, that the turtles do not need me but I need the turtles. And Trapper Billy said the island is the best place to grieve.

I thank all of you for allowing me to continue to participate as a volunteer in this project. We get more than we give, in one volunteer’s opinion and, once again, thank you for allowing me this privilege.

Submitted by Rebecca Gallagher



Nightwork

Cape Romain and The Village: New Kiosk at McClellanville

If you haven’t been to the McClellanville boat landing this year, you haven’t seen our new interpretive kiosk and it’s a “must see” for you. The panels provide visitors with interesting and useful information about the Cape Romain Refuge and its historic lighthouses as well as a wonderful history of the village of McClellanville. Our sincere gratitude goes to volunteer Eric Shea who took our text and photographs and designed the interpretive panels. Eric, you did outstanding work! We especially thank Bud Hill, curator of the Village Museum, who provided historical information and pictures and assisted with the final editing of the text. We also thank volunteer Tommy Graham (who heads our lighthouse restoration efforts), Henry Wichmann and Ila Mae Cumbee for sharing their old photo-

graphs and stories of Lighthouse Island and the McClellanville oyster factories.

Submitted by Tricia Lynch



Volunteer Eric Shea

Recipients of *America The Beautiful* Pass

Congratulations to Coni Dudley and John Kiesling! Coni and John were awarded the federal America The Beautiful Volunteer Pass for their significant volunteer service. The Pass is given to a volunteer who has accumulated 500 hours of service. The Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Reclamation honor the Pass at public recreation sites where entrance fees are charged. The Pass allows free entry for the volunteer and three adults (children under 16 are always free).

January 1, 2007 was the date set for volunteers to begin to accumulate hours for the Pass and there is no time frame in which the 500 hours must be accrued. The Pass is valid for 12 months from the date it is issued. Once issued, the hours "clock" is reset to zero and the count begins again. So! Everyone is working towards the Volunteer Pass.

Coni and John – enjoy your public lands!

Submitted by Tricia Lynch

(A Day for Volunteers, Continued from page 5)

Hawk, Harris's Hawk, Bald Eagle and Eurasian Kestrel in their flights. When the staff asked for assistance with the Harris's Hawk, Pat McCormack didn't hesitate. Pat ran across the field, pulling a stuffed rabbit with meat attached to coax the hawk to pick it off the rabbit – which it did, flying straight towards her!

Hungry volunteers left the Birds of Prey Center and headed to the Sewee Center for the awards luncheon. As it was a pot-luck, foods filled two tables – vegetable and fruit dishes, pasta, dips with chips and, homemade desserts. The Fish and Wildlife Service provided the main dish – a cast iron kettle full of chicken, sausage and rice perloo. The luncheon was great food, friends and fellowship.

It was a day to come together and recognize committed volunteers who gave hours of their time and hard work to the refuge and visitor center. Volunteers at the Center worked with visitors, taught and assisted with education programs, pro-

vided computer support and assisted with interpretive signage. Volunteers working on the refuge conducted shorebird surveys, assisted with invasive species control, and worked with the Loggerhead sea turtle nest relocation project. Refuge volunteers also worked with an AmeriCorps Teen project on Bulls Island. Hours that individuals were able to contribute were as varied as the tasks and, all volunteers were recognized for his or her contributions. The America the Beautiful Pass, a pass that provides free entry to National Parks, Refuges, Forests and other public lands that charge admission fees, was given to four volunteers who surpassed 500 hours each in 2007 – Karen Beshears, Julie Binz, Jim Hawkins and Neil White.

In 2007, our volunteers donated 9,282 hours to the Refuge and Sewee Center. By Service estimates, the monetary value of the work so generously given by our volunteers in 2007 was \$176,358. Thank you for the great work that you do for us.

Submitted by Tricia Lynch



Stephen Trading with Eurasian Kestrel



Jess Claflin with Red-tailed Hawk

Sewee and Cape Romain Welcomes Resident Volunteers

This year we welcomed our first resident work campers at Garris Landing. Kathi Hurley of Lincoln, New Hampshire arrived in November and stayed with us until April. During that time, Kathi pitched in and helped with education programs, staffed the reception desk and offsite exhibits, cataloged slides and spent a day with the invasive species crew. Kathi noted that Bulls Island, the red wolves and just being in the Lowcountry were highlights of her volunteer experience.



Kathi Hurley

Ron and Kay Wingart of Cassopolis Michigan arrived in February and headed home the last week of March. Kay worked at the Center reception desk, assisted with education programs and provided a lot of support with office projects. Ron spent his volunteer time working with Wayne and Greg at the maintenance shop. Ron also helped get the ATV's ready for the turtle project. Kay's rewarding experiences were learning about the red wolves and sea turtles. For Ron, it was seeing the ducks at Bulls Island!



Kay and Ron Wingart

Doris and Tom Butler of Bayonet Point, Florida stayed in one of our trailers at Garris from late March until May. Though a short stay with us, Doris and Tom were a great help. Doris completed scanning and categorizing our slides, assisted Betty in the refuge office and helped prepare materials for the education programs. Tom, like Ron, worked on maintenance projects with Wayne and Greg and helped Center staff with mowing and weeding. Tom also helped mow and clear shrubbery in the wolf enclosure. Both Doris and Tom felt that visiting Bulls Island was a highlight of their volunteer experience. And, Doris really enjoyed going out to dinner with Betty!



Doris and Tom Butler

Submitted by Tricia Lynch