Nature and Community in Balance

Fall 2008 ■ Volume 19 No.3

Coastal Conservation League

photo by Tom Blagden

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A Campaign for the 21st Century

Next year, the Conservation League will mark its 20th birthday. We should, and will, celebrate our accomplishments for the last two decades.

Among those have been victories over factory hog farms, rogue interstates and sewer lines, all of which threatened our most treasured landscapes. Other victories include the creation of the Conservation Bank, the protection of critical properties like Sandy Island, and the passage of progressive comprehensive plans and zoning codes that protect hundreds of thousands of acres from sprawl.

But this birthday is also an occasion to look ahead and ask an uncomfortable question: Given the trends and threats that we now face in the Lowcountry, are we doing enough? If we continue along our present path, will we preserve the ecological resources, the beauty and the quality of life that we now enjoy?

More than one year ago, our board and staff confronted that question. We agreed that the answer was no. Given the pace and magnitude of change, we resolved that we would have to work harder, faster, and in more arenas than ever before. We built a new campaign around that belief and contacted some of our core supporters. When we asked Hugh Lane, Jr. to help, he responded: "Yes. I've been thinking about this and I believe we've got about five years to save the coast." Hugh's message resonated with our board members, staff and early donors and inspired the name that has been given to the campaign – *The Time is Now*.

Then we went about the task of identifying the five program areas in which we would intensify our work: Land and Community; Energy and Climate; Air, Water and Public Health; Sustainable Agriculture, and Public Education and Activism. We calculated that the financial resources necessary to rise to the challenges we face in these areas would total $10 million over five years.

The response to date has been extraordinary. Virtually everyone we've spoken to has reacted with the same enthusiasm Hugh did. To date, we've received pledges of more than $8.6 million. The last increments of a campaign are always the most challenging, but we are confident that our members and supporters will understand the urgency.

I am personally grateful to Roy Richards and Laura Gates, who have led the campaign and kept the Conservation League fires burning. It is a privilege and an honor to work with them.

As Roy puts it, the campaign is about accelerating our work. It is about pushing the efforts we might otherwise have undertaken in the future directly to the present. It is about compressing time around actions that, taken today, will yield great results. In Shakespeare's words, "There is a tide in the affairs of men [and women, he might have said] when taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat, and we must take the current when it serves, or lose our ventures."

Four hundred years later another Englishman, Winston Churchill, urged a recalcitrant United States to intervene in a war against European tyranny. Churchill explained that the British were resolved to win, but that the need was great. America, he argued, must step into the breach. "We shall not fail or falter. We shall not weaken or tire. Give us the tools and we will finish the job."

Thank you for giving us the tools to secure a bright future for the South Carolina coast.

Dana Beach

COASTAL CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Fall 2008 Vol.19 No. 3

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Columbia — Christie McGregor, Patty Pierce, Heather Spires

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Newsletter Editor — Virginia Beach

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Cover photograph by Tom Blagden

The Vision

Tom Blagden

*

Since its founding in 1989, the Coastal Conservation League has proven that it has the talent, the track record and the relationships with partner organizations (including state and local governments) to promote effective stewardship of the South Carolina coast. The Conservation League has also had the unique advantage of being the only conservation group with a full-time staff drafting conservation legislation and promoting its passage in the State House.

Too often, we encounter people who claim that growth is inevitable, or that conservation and economic development are mutually exclusive, or that one more highway or strip mall is "a done deal." Our response is that a certain amount of growth may be inevitable, but how we grow is up to us. We don't have to repeat the mistakes that so many other regions in our nation have made. We can do it right and choose to make the South Carolina coast a model of preservation, conservation, and livable growth as well as a leader in addressing the causes and implications of climate change.

Composed of an energetic and expert 30-member staff, more than 4,000 members, and a dynamic, engaged board of directors, the Conservation League envisions a bright future for the Palmetto State, leading the country in:

- *Protected Wildlife Habitat, Farms and Wetlands;*
- *Functional and Inspiring Cities and Towns;*
- *Clean Air and Water;*
- *Energy Efficiency and Climate Responsibility, and*
- *Engaged and Informed Citizens.*

The strategies that the League will employ to bring this vision to reality are as follows:

Land and Community: We will substantially increase our efforts in regional planning and rural land conservation; we will provide critical technical planning support to rapidly growing counties and municipalities, and we will work at the state level on key legislative initiatives like annexation reform.

Energy and Climate: We will work at the local, state, and federal level to reduce carbon emissions and promote energy efficiency, and ensure that Lowcountry communities take reasonable measures to minimize the impacts of sea level rise.

Air, Water and Public Health: We will work to protect regional air quality by reducing air emissions from power plants, port operations, and industrial facilities; we will work to restore natural flows to rivers altered by major dams, and we will promote a water withdrawal permitting system to protect the state's river systems.

Sustainable Agriculture: We will work with farmers at the local and state level to promote local and sustainable agricultural practices as well as local and regional markets.

Public Education and Activism: We will develop a public education campaign designed to expand the base of citizens who are aware of and engaged in political decisions that affect the environment.

* *Campaign logo by Gil Shuler Graphic Design*

Securing a Bright Future

Campaign Cabinet

Roy Richards, Chair

Laura Gates

Chip Coffee

Will Cleveland

Hugh Lane, Jr.

Honorary Committee

Charlotte Caldwell, Chair

Stephen Colbert

Ambassador Robin Duke

Dorothea Benton Frank

Parker Gilbert

A Brief History

In the spring of 1999, the Coastal Conservation League launched its first major fundraising campaign with a goal of raising $6 million. The overall mission of the campaign was to provide for the expansion of programmatic work, enhanced use of technology, and increased financial stability through an enlarged endowment and the establishment of an emergency reserve fund. Thanks to our board members and our supporters up and down the South Carolina coast, we not only met that goal; we exceeded it.

In 2009, the Conservation League will celebrate its 20th anniversary. During this time, the League has grown into the most influential conservation organization in South Carolina and is widely recognized as one of the most effective regional environmental groups in the country. With a staff of 30 full-time individuals, the Conservation League works with citizens and opinion leaders to influence local and state decision-making regarding issues that will impact South Carolina's coastal environment for generations to come. Staff members of the Coastal Conservation League are experts in issues related to land use, air and water quality, wildlife habitat, and climate and energy – our broad programmatic work areas.

Thanks to the previous campaign, the League now has offices in three coastal locations (Beaufort, Charleston and Georgetown), as well as a legislative office in the state capital of Columbia. One of the hallmarks of the League's success for nearly two decades is its lasting partnerships – forging key relationships and active collaborations whenever possible with individual citizens, leaders and communities across the state.

The Time is Now

The Conservation League now finds itself ready to take the next step to meet the ever-increasing challenges that face our region. We have begun a new campaign, entitled *The Time is Now*, with an ambitious goal of $10 million. Already, we have commitments totaling $8.6 million. The early success of the "silent phase" of the campaign is a testament to our board, our campaign cabinet and leadership committee, and our donors.

Our supporters understand the urgent need to increase the League's capacity if we are to protect the environment and quality of life along this unique coast. Here are some of the most critical issues we must address:

Threats and Opportunities

- Unprecedented population growth coupled with inadequate planning continues to threaten Lowcountry farms, forests and traditional communities and to degrade our environment and quality of life. Without responsible transportation planning, for example, many major roads in the Lowcountry will reach failing levels of service by 2025.
- Harmful "takings" legislation would make it prohibitive for state and local governments to protect our environment and quality of life because vast amounts of money would have to be paid to litigate alleged losses due to zoning changes and permit denials.
- The sale of hundreds of thousands of acres of timber land along the coast by timber companies has destabilized our rural land base and opened the door for massive land speculation and subdivision.
- Unchecked, rogue annexations of large parcels of land into neighboring townships by land speculators will result in the over-development of remaining rural land and the destruction of irreplaceable habitats.
- The construction of a mammoth coal-fired power plant is proposed along the rare limestone bluffs of the Great Pee Dee River. This plant, along with 150 additional new coal power plants throughout the nation, would add to the mercury pollution that is presently compromising all of the major rivers and streams in the coastal plain and increase CO2 levels that are already dangerously high.

photos by Tom Blagden

The Campaign

Campaign Goals

The purpose of this comprehensive campaign is to ensure that our efforts to address critical issues are broad, permanent and effective. The forces bearing down on the Lowcountry require the Coastal Conservation League to take on more challenges, in more places, with more frequency. This will require enlarging and enhancing the Conservation League's programs and increasing our endowment. The campaign will increase both our revenues from individual donors as well as our foundation grants, especially in the arena of energy and climate change.

Campaign goals for the League's programs and endowment are as follows:

Land and Community $3,800,000
Energy and Climate.....$1,600,000
Air, Water and Public Health $800,000
Sustainable Agriculture $500,000
Public Education and Activism.....$700,000
Endowment.....$2,600,000

Strong Support During "Silent Phase"

Many Conservation League friends and supporters (whose names are listed on pages 6 and 7) have already responded generously during the "silent phase" of the campaign. Now we look forward to your enthusiastic response. We know that our campaign goal is an ambitious one – to raise $10 million over five years, but we are at a critical crossroads in the race to save our coast. The work we do in the next few years will have enormous impact for generations to come.

You, our members, have made the great successes of the Conservation League possible over the past two decades. You have always answered our call for support with extraordinary generosity. Shortly, you will be receiving a personal letter (with a pledge form) asking you to consider making a gift to this important campaign in addition to your annual giving. Both gifts are critical to our on-going work. Your campaign gift may be a one-time gift or a gift you wish to make over the five years of the campaign. Whichever you prefer, we extend our sincere thanks to you and we pledge to continue to protect this unique coastal plain for all of us.

"I decided to accelerate my giving to the Conservation League because it will be too late in five years. I want to help save this place for my children and grandchildren and I have to do it now."

Roy Richards, Campaign Chair

Laura Gates, Board Chair of the Coastal Conservation League

"Our region is a diverse economy encompassing virtually every business sector from health care to tourism to manufacturing. It is set in an environment of unparalleled beauty. Our economic future depends on protecting all these assets."

League Awarded 4-Star Rating

The Coastal Conservation League has once again earned Charity Navigator's highest 4-star rating for sound fiscal management. Charity Navigator, the largest charity evaluator in America, evaluates nonprofits across the country for how they allocate and grow their finances. Less than a quarter of the charities rated have received Charity Navigator's highest rating.

"The Coastal Conservation League outperforms the majority of nonprofits in America with respect to fiscal responsibility," states Charity Navigator. "This 'exceptional' designation from Charity Navigator differentiates the Coastal Conservation League from its peers and demonstrates to the public it is worthy of their trust." To visit the Conservation League's rating page go to www.charitynavigator.org.

Tom Blagden

THANK YOU
to Our Campaign Supporters
(throughout the "silent phase")

"The Time is Now" Campaign Donors as of September 30th, 2008

$1,000,000 and Up
Anonymous (1)
Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust
Mr. Hank Holliday

$500,000 - $999,999
Anthony and Linda Bakker
Butler Conservation Fund, Inc.
Mr. Vincent G. Graham
Gary and Mary Beth Thornhill

$250,000 - $499,999
Laura and Steve Gates
Mr. Charles G. Lane
Mr. Hugh C. Lane, Jr.
Mills Bee Lane Foundation
Post and Courier Foundation
Mrs. Anne Rivers Siddons and
Mr. Heyward L. Siddons

$100,000 - $249,999
Charlotte Caldwell and Jeffrey Schutz
Ceres Foundation, Inc.
Charles and Kay Chitty
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Graham
Mr. John T. Lupton
Gillian and Peter Roy
Jeffrey Schutz and Charlotte Caldwell
Mr. and Mrs. James C. Vardell III and Family

$75,000 - $99,999
Mr. and Mrs. S. Parker Gilbert
Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation
Joe and Terry Williams

$50,000 - $74,999
Anonymous (1)
Penny and Bill Agnew
Mr. and Mrs. William C. Cleveland
Chip and Betty Coffee

Family Campaign	Total Amount Raised
Current Board	$3,458,500
Past Board	$272,000
Staff/Former Staff	$63,610
Total Family Campaign	$3,794,110
Family Campaign Goal	$3,000,000
Percent of Goal	126%

Other Donors	Total Amount Raised
Individuals	$2,383,177
Foundations	$2,460,000
Total Other Donors	$4,843,177

Total Campaign Contributions	$8,637,287
Goal	$10,000,000
Percent of Goal	86%

Mr. Ted Dintersmith and Ms. Elizabeth Hazard
Mr. and Mrs. J. Henry Fair, Jr.
James L. Ferguson
Mr. and Mrs. Richard T. Hale
Hillsdale Fund, Inc.
Mary and Dennis Kennemur
Mr. T. Cartter Lupton II
Lyndhurst Foundation
Mrs. Alexander Moore
Ms. Dorothy D. Smith
Libby Smith
Turner Foundation, Inc.

$25,000 - $49,999
Anonymous (1)
Virginia and Dana Beach
Henry M. Blackmer Foundation, Inc.
Mrs. Margaret N. Blackmer
Ms. Margaret P. Blackmer
Ms. Frances A. Close
Mr. and Mrs. Richard E. Coen
P. Steven and Wendy M. Dopp
Robin Chandler Duke
Nancy and Larry Fuller

Campaign Update

Dr. and Mrs. Richard C. Hagerty
Holly H. Hook and Dennis A. Glaves
Billie and Alan Houghton
Joanna Foundation
Linda Ketner, Ketner Fund of the Coastal Community Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Kimball
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Laco
Lasca and Richard Lilly
Mr. and Mrs. W. Wallace McDowell, Jr.
Mr. Guy Paschal
Rockefeller Family Fund, Inc.

$10,000 - $24,999
Anonymous (3)
Mr. John R. Hunting
Mr. and Mrs. Michael G. McShane
Mr. and Mrs. Klaus Said
Susan Hull Walker and G. Trenholm Walker
Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Wyrick, Jr.

$5,000 - $9,999
Anonymous (1)
The William Bingham Foundation
Nancy and Billy Cave
The Colbert Family Fund of the Coastal Community Foundation
Ms. Margaret M. Davis
Michael and Megan Desrosiers
Tish Lynn
Leslie Hubbard Pelzer, M.D.
Charles and Jo Summerall
Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan G. Verity

$1,000 - $4,999
Anonymous (2)
Mr. and Mrs. Blaine Ewing III
Ms. Catherine H. Forrester
Alison and Arthur Geer
Dr. and Mrs. Gene W. Grace
Mr. and Mrs. John A. Hill
Mr. and Mrs. George P. Johnston
Nora Kravec and Charles Cyr
Ms. Christie McGregor
Mr. and Mrs. Bryan A. Pack
Ms. Patricia A. Pierce
Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Stoothoff
Ms. Nancy E. Vinson
Mr. and Mrs. John Waters

Up to $999
Mr. and Mrs. Philip J. Bergan
Angela M. Chvarak
Nancy and Steve Cregg
Mr. Jim Cumberland
Mrs. Valerie Dove
Mrs. Lisa Jones-Turansky
Miss Gretta Kruesi
Ms. Jane E. Lareau
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Lincoln
Andrea Malloy
Robert Malone
Tara McGrath and Doug Hatch
Ben Moore
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Moore
Mr. and Mrs. M. Lane Morrison
Lindsey Peterson
Mr. and Mrs. William E. Pitts III
Robert and Rachel Prioleau
Dr. and Mrs. John H. Rashford
Ms. Heather Spires
Ms. Tonnia K. Switzer
Mr. Art von Lehe
Billy Want and Sharon Bennett
Mr. Alex Webel
Oscar and Amy Weinmeister and Family

Only $1.4 Million To Go!

With the overwhelming success of the "silent phase" of The Time is Now campaign, we have already begun to expand our existing work and initiate new programs. Now we welcome everyone to join this ambitious effort. Please look for our campaign letter in the mail and know how much every gift matters. You have made it possible for the League to succeed. You will make it possible for our success to continue.

Tom Blagden

NEW AND ENHANCED PROGRAMS

New and Enhanced Partnerships

"The Conservation League is working at a whole new level in terms of technical expertise, community activism and regional planning. Integral to our success are the new partnerships we are building in the areas of health, business, agriculture and energy."

– Megan Desrosiers, Director of Conservation Programs for the Coastal Conservation League

Save Energy, Save Time

A new state energy policy should incorporate better transportation and land use planning so people and goods can move more efficiently.

Blueprint for a State Energy Policy

"We're not talking about lowering the standard of living in South Carolina; we're talking about improving it."

– Ben Moore, Director of Energy and Climate Program

For the last year-and-a-half, the Coastal Conservation League's Executive Director Dana Beach has served on Governor Mark Sanford's Climate, Energy and Commerce Advisory Committee (CECAC). Representing a wide range of business, energy and environmental interests in South Carolina, the committee has submitted to Governor Sanford an action plan of 51 recommendations aimed at a 35% drop in the state's greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

South Carolina's plan, released in August, is one of the first in the South to establish a statewide emissions reduction target. Furthermore, CECAC's recommendations, if adopted by the Legislature and the Governor, will significantly reduce South Carolina's contribution to global warming at a relatively low cost.

The committee's final report includes breakdowns of the costs and benefits of implementing each recommendation, including smart land use planning, "green" fuels, tougher building codes and consumer energy efficiency programs. The report estimates the overall cost of implementing the plan to be $5 for every ton of carbon dioxide reduced.

The Conservation League and its partners have participated at every level of the CECAC process, from technical working groups to the advisory committee itself. None of this would be possible without the resources and manpower that comprise the League's new Energy and Climate Program, directed by Ben Moore and established with funds from *The Time is Now* campaign.

Reaching a consensus and developing these 51 recommendations in such a short time is a remarkable achievement on the part of CECAC and its participants. With the completion of the planning and analytical phase, the challenge now lies in prioritizing recommendations and building support for their implementation. The Conservation League's Energy and Climate Program will continue to play a leading role in establishing a state energy policy for South Carolina in this first decade of the 21st century.

New Coalitions for a Clean and Prosperous Port

"My vision for livable communities in Charleston, Jasper, and Beaufort Counties is a vision of cleaner air, which is good for our health and good for our economy."

– Nancy Vinson, Director of Air, Water and Public Health Program

Our Children Deserve Better

Charleston is ranked the 14th worst metropolitan area in the nation for year-round particle pollution. The biggest source of this pollution is the Port of Charleston.

Similar to the health hazards of inhaling tobacco smoke, breathing diesel exhaust from ships and trucks also causes cancer, heart disease, stroke and premature death, as well as chronic asthma. Just as people couldn't see how such a popular ritual as tobacco could be harmful, we have grown up breathing diesel's invisible toxic particles, not believing that such tiny matter suspended in the air could really hurt us.

In both 2007 and 2008, the American Lung Association awarded Charleston an "F" in air quality due to the amount of hazardous particle pollution in its air. The same report rates Charleston 14th worst in the nation for year-round particle pollution, ahead of larger cities like the Washington, D.C./Baltimore area, San Diego, and Seattle. And what is the primary source of this harmful particulate matter? Emissions from ships and trucks calling on the Port of Charleston. These emissions appear to be the largest unregulated source of air pollution in the state. Furthermore, the proposed new expansion of the Port of Charleston is expected to double its cargo volume and could cause the Charleston region to exceed federal clean air standards for fine particulate pollution.

In response, the Coastal Conservation League has developed relationships with the Charleston County Medical Society and the S.C. Medical Association, along with other health and smoke-free partners and neighborhood and civic groups to call for maximum reduction of air pollution from new and existing ports in South Carolina and increased air monitoring around port facilities. In addition, the Conservation League, represented by the Southern Environmental Law Center, is challenging the Port of Charleston expansion permits before the Administrative Law Court.

"It has made all the difference to have the most respected voices in the medical community making the connection between environmental health and public health," comments Nancy Vinson, Director of the League's Air, Water and Public Health Program. These new partnerships and alliances with healthcare professionals and community leaders are made possible by *The Time is Now* campaign. With increased capacity in the Air, Water and Public Health program, Nancy and her staff can foster these nontraditional partnerships to help effect real policy change on vital health issues facing South Carolina.

Clean Air Everywhere Coalition

Members of the "Clean Air Everywhere" coalition meet to discuss strategies for increased air monitoring of Port of Charleston operations.

Cooperation and Collaboration in Regional Planning

"We can now go from case study to implementation, translating sound ideas into reality."

– Hamilton Davis, Land and Community Project Manager

Funding from *The Time is Now* campaign has enabled the Coastal Conservation League to not only double its Land and Community program staff, but has also made it possible for the League to provide paid consultants and technical expertise to land planning efforts up and down our coast.

The Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments' (BCD COG) development of a regional plan for the Tri-County area is a prime example of the Conservation League's enhanced influence in the complex arena of land planning. The regional plan is bringing together stakeholders and leaders from various municipalities and counties to engage in a substantive planning process that ideally will guide transportation and land use policy for decades to come.

League Conservation Programs Director Megan Desrosiers serves on the Regional Land Use Committee and

(continued on page 10)

Project Manager Hamilton Davis sits on the Regional Land Use Technical Committee. The first public input session for the regional plan was a huge success. With nearly 300 participants and more than 1700 survey responses, the overwhelming majority of respondents favored the construction of multi-modal, mixed use communities and the preservation of rural lands.

The Conservation League will continue to work to ensure that the plan embodies the most efficient and sustainable transportation and land use policies. The League will also work to ensure that such a plan can be practically adopted and implemented by individual local governments.

Farther south – at the intersection of northern Beaufort County, Jasper County and Hampton County – the Conservation League has funded a planning initiative to coordinate growth and conservation centered around the Town of Yemassee. More than a year ago, the League hired Keane & Co., a regional planning firm, to work with Yemassee town officials and surrounding landowners. The product they have developed includes a revitalization blueprint for downtown Yemassee, as well as the designation of tens of thousands of acres of undeveloped lands to remain in their present rural state.

The League's operating principle is that a clear vision for the future of communities like Yemassee is essential in order to avoid random and misdirected growth. We are working on a similar effort in the Ridgeland area of northern Jasper County.

There's good news on the transportation front as well. For the first time in history, Charleston County and the City of Charleston are collaborating on a solution to traffic congestion that will positively impact the future development of a rural sea island. In response to an initial proposal by Charleston County transportation consultants for a 5-lane Maybank Highway on John's Island, the Conservation League partnered with the county and city to bring in Hall Planning & Engineering to develop a transportation solution for the Maybank corridor that would relieve traffic congestion without eroding the rural landscape of John's Island.

Reinvigorating the Local Farming Economy

"Our goal is to forge direct and lasting connections between local food producers and their communities."

- Cathy Forrester, League Administration Director and Coordinator of the Sustainable Agriculture Program

Local Bounty – *A plate of freshly cooked vegetables from Marshview Community Organic Farm of St. Helena Island.*

Covered extensively in the League's summer newsletter, the Coastal Conservation League has launched a new Sustainable Agriculture Program with funding from *The Time is Now* campaign. Specifically, campaign support has funded work to promote local sustainable agriculture and to facilitate a "farm to table" approach.

Through a grant by the Conservation League, the nonprofit Lowcountry Local First, a chapter of the national Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, established a new position of Director of Sustainable Agriculture. Alan Moore has been hired as the program's first director and is working closely with League Administration Director and Sustainable Agriculture Coordinator Cathy Forrester.

In its first year, the program has assisted in launching four Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) cooperatives in the Charleston and Beaufort areas and has collaborated with the S.C. Department of Agriculture to recruit nearly 100 restaurants to the new *Fresh on the Menu* program, which is part of the Agriculture Department's statewide *Certified South Carolina Grown* campaign.

Ongoing initiatives of the program also include:

- Expanding *Fresh on the Menu* to the Beaufort and Georgetown areas;
- Expanding the CSA program to include shares in locally grown meats;
- Recruiting new growers and landowners to increase local, sustainable food production in South Carolina;
- Partnering with Clemson University to develop an online marketing program for local producers and consumers, and
- Developing a community urban garden program.

In Memoriam
Strachan Donnelley
1942-2008

"The whole is not merely greater than the sum of the parts, but different."

The statement above, from Land Institute founder and director Wes Jackson, was given as a definition of the late Strachan Donnelley's theory of "orchestral causation," especially as it relates to the natural world. The definition may also serve to define Strachan himself, who died of gastric cancer on July 12th.

Described by his family as "a passionate conservationist, philosopher, fly-fisherman, husband, father, grandfather, brother, friend, and lover of all things natural," Strachan lived a full and unconventional life. Fortunately for South Carolina, the fullness and originality of his life spilled over from his native Illinois and long-time home of New York City into the Lowcountry, where the Donnelley family has been a steward of the land for three generations.

Early on, Strachan's parents, Dorothy and Gaylord Donnelley of Chicago, became leaders in South Carolina's modern conservation movement, donating three coastal islands to The Nature Conservancy and one to Ducks Unlimited, and placing conservation easements on their beloved Ashepoo Plantation and two other islands. These donations provided the catalyst for one of the most successful private/public conservation partnerships in the history of the United States – the ACE Basin initiative, which to date has protected more than 60% of the 300,000-acre watershed of the Ashepoo, Combahee and Edisto Rivers.

As chair emeritus of the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Strachan – together with his sister, Laura, and brother, Elliott, who both survive him – carried on his parents' legacy of stewardship and innovation, both at Ashepoo and beyond, generously supporting meaningful and bold initiatives in both conservation and education throughout the South Carolina Lowcountry.

Armed with a Doctorate in Philosophy, Strachan thought deeply about man's relationship to the earth and applied his theories to the real world.

In 2002, he founded the Center for Humans and Nature, establishing offices in Illinois, New York and South Carolina. Its mission: To explore and promote moral and civic responsibilities to human communities and to natural ecosystems and landscapes.

The Center is but the latest expression of Strachan and his family's unwavering commitment to the betterment of man and society in harmony with the environment. South Carolina is a better place for their vision.

Berry Edwards Joins Board

We welcome Berryman "Berry" Edwards of Hilton Head Island to the Board of Directors of the Coastal Conservation League. An avid sportsman, bird hunter and fisherman, Berry founded The Greenery Inc. in 1973, which began as a small landscape nursery and today has 525 employees. Berry has served his community of Hilton Head for some 35 years, as a member of the original planning commission, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, and Board Chair of Volunteers in Medicine.

Ruthie and Berry Edwards in Costa Rica.

An active member of the SOLO (Southern Lowcountry Focus Area) Task Force, Berry has placed a conservation easement on 800 acres of hunting lands in the Savannah River basin and is working to persuade neighboring landowners to do the same. Other boards on which he currently serves include: The Savannah Bancorp, Harbourside Community Bank and the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry.

SCGreen.org

Conservation League Board Member Libby Smith and conservation activist Charlie Sneed have founded a new nonprofit called SCGreen, which is creating an important new Web-based resource for South Carolinians called SCGreen.org. SCGreen.org is a dynamic statewide network of people, news, and green and sustainable resources.

If you're interested in clean air and water, healthy local food, efficient and clean mass transit, safe bicycling and walking pathways, clean and renewable energy, parks and open spaces, and other green and sustainable tools, go to www.SCGreen.org now and take their survey. Networking resources will be available by year's end.

You Made the Difference!

The 2008 Legislative Session was filled with numerous successes that bode well for the long-term health of South Carolina's communities, natural environment and quality of life. As always, the Coastal Conservation League's accomplishments at the State House would not have been possible without the tireless and enthusiastic grassroots efforts on the part of our members and friends in making phone calls, sending letters and emails, and traveling to Columbia to speak with representatives on key issues at critical junctures in the legislative session.

The direct grassroots communication and lobbying kept our priorities front and center during the 2008 General Assembly and spurred media coverage of conservation issues statewide. The weekly Lobby Team Tuesdays drew more participants than ever from all corners of the Palmetto State and our 5th Annual Conservation Lobby Day celebrated record-breaking attendance. Bolstered by the success of *The Time is Now* campaign, we will apply additional resources to enhance our presence at the State House and keep our members engaged. Stay tuned as we implement an even more interactive Activist Network for 2009.

(l-r) Heather Spires, Christie McGregor and Patty Pierce – Legislative Liaisons for the Coastal Conservation League.

Report from the State House

Energizing Our Future

©iStockPhoto.com/Gord Horne

This year, the Conservation League partnered with the S.C. Electric Cooperatives, Progress Energy, Duke, SCANA and Santee Cooper, which led to the passage of a number of energy efficiency bills that will go a long way toward improving South Carolina's efforts to reduce energy consumption and to support renewable energy. For more details, go to our Web site at www.CoastalConservationLeague.org.

SCDOT Reforms Implemented

To follow up on the Conservation League's hard-fought efforts to reform the S.C. Department of Transportation (SCDOT) in 2007, the League advocated for the adoption of R.3165, the SCDOT prioritization regulations. Last fall, the League worked closely with SCDOT staff to ensure that the regulations provided detailed explanations of how alternative transportation solutions, environmental impacts, economic development, and consistency with local land use plans could be interpreted by SCDOT's staff and commissioners as they prioritize transportation projects. Language was also included in the regulation to limit when the SCDOT Commission could deviate from the prioritized list of projects.

Annexation Reform on Track for 2009

Inappropriate and harmful annexations continue to place an undue burden on taxpayers – undermining local and regional planning efforts, and threatening the quality of life that we have come to enjoy in South Carolina. The Conservation League therefore continues to advocate strongly for reform of our state's outdated annexation laws.

This year, annexation reform stakeholders met numerous times under the leadership of Representative Ben Hagood (R-Charleston), but all parties could not agree on all aspects of a reform package. Thankfully, a great deal of interest remains in continuing to work towards a solution. Stakeholders will meet through the fall to reach agreements on key sticking points in the hope of developing a reasonable, comprehensive and meaningful annexation reform bill for 2009.

Safeguarding Our Special Places

For the last four years, the Conservation Bank has been the most important source of public funding for conservation of our natural and historic properties, having permanently protected approximately 134,000 acres of land across South Carolina. In the wake of nearly 200 acres of rural acreage converted daily to urban and suburban uses, the Conservation League continues to advocate for increased funding for purchase of significant lands.

In 2008, our hard work paid off. For the first time in the history of the bank, the House agreed to allocate an additional $1 million in its version of the FY 2008-2009 Budget.

However, alarmingly low fiscal projections by the Board of Economic Advisors forced the Senate to cut this additional funding. Once that occurred, the Conservation Bank's base funding was in jeopardy of being diverted to other state needs, but thanks to your calls and emails, we were successful in maintaining at least base funding for the coming year.

Nancy Cregg

Citizen Activists – *(l-r) Holly Hook, Carol Ervin, Dana Beach, Robert Barber and Anne Timberlake at Lobby Day 2008 in Columbia.*

S.C. Department of Natural Resources

Protect Our Water Supply – *The current drought has heightened concern over the lack of safeguards for South Carolina's fresh water supply.*

Protection of State Water Supply

Conservationists and business interests agree that South Carolina needs a surface water withdrawal permitting program to protect existing industry, to foster long-term economic development, to promote healthy riverine ecosystems and their recreational use, and to maintain an abundance of water for new economic development opportunities. Water withdrawal legislation is also necessary to ensure a level playing field to negotiate with neighboring states over our shared water resources.

This year, a few special interests opposed the protective minimum flow standards recommended by state scientists, insisting instead on adopting flow standards that would have left many rivers and streams at or below the lowest recorded water levels in decades, and jeopardized the interests of current businesses as well as fish and wildlife resources.

As a result, the Conservation League and its conservation partners opposed S. 428 in its current form, stopping passage of this harmful bill. The League will continue its work in the coming year to ensure passage of a sound water withdrawal bill.

A Developer's Dream – A Resident's Nightmare

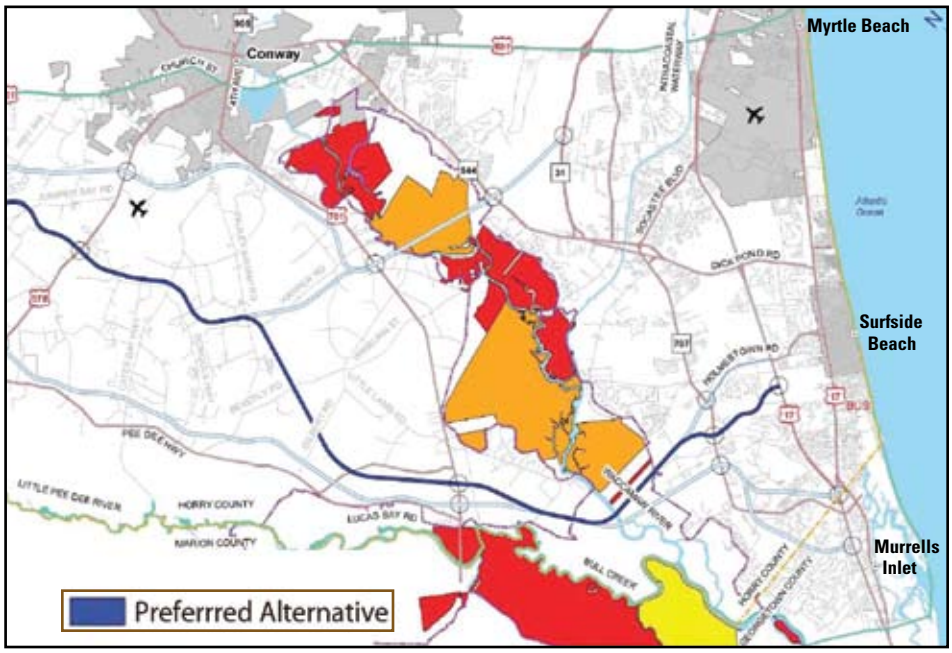
"More roads are not the answer to effective and efficient hurricane evacuation. Better mapping of our coast to determine who needs to leave and how far west people should travel, more shelters, mass transit, and better land use are the answer."

– Nancy Cave, League North Coast Office Director

Prescription for Sprawl

This summer, the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a decades-old proposal to connect Highway 17 and Highway 701 was finally released. While there's no money left to complete the EIS, much less to build the new road, proponents have reinvented the 701 Connector as a hurricane evacuation route, in hopes of resuscitating this needless and potentially harmful interstate-standard highway.

As expected, the preferred route for the renamed "Southern Evacuation Life Line" (SELL) would create a loop around the Grand Strand and open up vast areas of western Horry and Georgetown Counties to development. Specifically, SELL would begin at the intersection of S.C. 22 and U.S. 501 and end at the U.S. 17-Bypass, just south of Holmestown Road.



The $700-million, 28-mile highway known as SELL would open up vast areas of western Horry and Georgetown Counties to development.

A Hard SELL

The $700 million, 28-mile highway would destroy 334 acres of wetlands and force 114 families and businesses to relocate. Moreover, it would bring thousands more cars onto Highway 17 and into Murrells Inlet and Pawleys Island, and would degrade the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge and the Waccamaw River – source of drinking water for the region.

The S.C. Department of Transportation held four public hearings over the summer and the citizens opposing the road project so outnumbered those in favor that local politicians seemed to be the only ones left advocating in its favor. In fact, both *The Georgetown Times* and *The Coastal Observer* have gone on record as opposing SELL. Politicians would do well to listen to their constituents and let this boondoggle die a natural death.

Nancy Cave

Citizens Reject SELL

In four public hearings held this summer, citizens overwhelmingly opposed a "Southern Evacuation Life Line" (SELL).

Public Utility to be Held Accountable

Medical professionals challenge Santee Cooper's latest claims about mercury contamination, while energy experts question key assumptions that have led to Santee Cooper's proposal to build a coal plant.

Independent Analysis Needed

In response to a multi-million-dollar public relations campaign launched this summer by Santee Cooper, experts are weighing in to objectively evaluate claims by the state-owned utility that a new coal fired power plant is needed along the Great Pee Dee River, and that its mercury emissions are nothing to worry about.

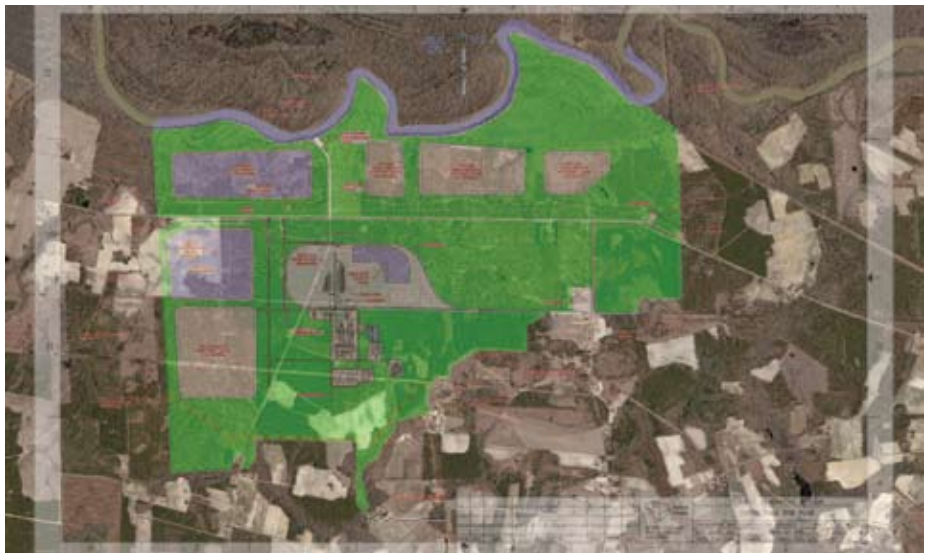
Earlier this year, the Conservation League engaged Santee Cooper in a review of the utility's most recent generation plan and both have agreed to work with Synapse Energy, an independent consulting firm with extensive expertise in utility planning, to examine such factors as demand forecast, efficiency and natural gas potential, and other alternatives to coal. The Conservation League feels compelled to conduct the study because, under South Carolina law, no outside independent group formally scrutinizes Santee Cooper's claims when it wants to build a new power plant.

Experts Refute Claims

In July, Lonnie Carter, President and CEO of Santee Cooper, submitted an op-ed to the *Post and Courier* dismissing health concerns over the 114 pounds of mercury that the new plant would emit into the atmosphere each year. Physicians in Florence and Columbia, joined with Michael McCally, M.D., executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Physicians for Social Responsibility, to refute those claims, stating:

"We as trained medical professionals were stunned that this prominent state employee would publicly make reckless and misleading claims about a serious and proven health hazard. His remarks deserve immediate correction . . . Minimizing these risks recalls what the cigarette makers said about tar . . .

". . . Make no mistake, mercury is a known toxin that can cause serious health effects in babies and children. That is why EPA has set fish consumption limits for expectant and nursing mothers . . ."



Coal Plant Must Be Stopped – *Santee Cooper's proposed coal plant will have a 1,245-acre footprint (shown above in green) along the Great Pee Dee River and will emit 3,500 tons of ozone-forming nitrous oxide, 7,500 tons of soot-forming sulfur dioxide, 900 tons of lung-damaging particulate matter, and 114 pounds of toxic mercury into our atmosphere every year.*

South Carolina Deserves Better

This fall, James Hansen, Director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and Columbia University's Department of Earth Science, also responded in a letter published in *The State* and *Post and Courier* newspapers. In addition to addressing the health risks of the proposed coal plant, Hansen warned of the exacerbation of global warming that would result if the new plant is built:

"In short, Santee Cooper is proposing to dramatically increase its carbon output, just when we need all our utilities to begin ratcheting down their emissions.

"Other utilities have gotten the message. Citing the unsuitability of geologic conditions in South Carolina for carbon sequestration, Duke Energy has declared it will no longer build any coal plants in South Carolina. Progress Energy has declared a moratorium on new coal plant construction until it realizes savings of 2,000 megawatts of electricity through efficiency measures. [Santee Cooper's proposed plant would produce 1300 megawatts.] And South Carolina-based SCANA has said it has taken coal off the table . . .

"Santee Cooper has a responsibility to pursue the public interest, and that interest is ill-served by outmoded energy decisions that exacerbate, rather than help solve, what has been described as the greatest problem to face modern humanity."

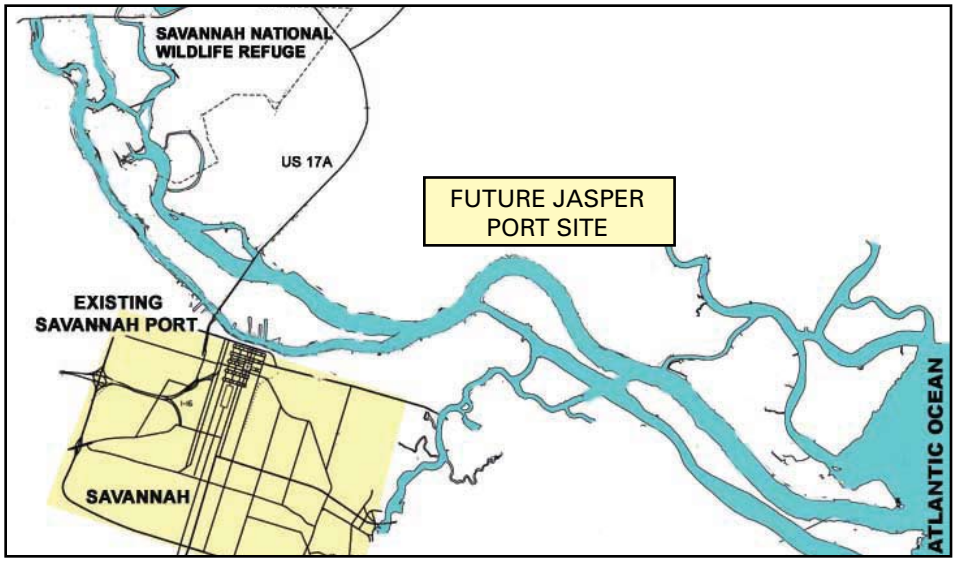
Land Deal Finalized for Jasper Port

"Deepening only to the Jasper Port will save millions of tax dollars, protect drinking water supplies, and provide expanded port capacity for both states."
– Patrick Moore, League South Coast Office Director

In an important step for the future of shipping in the region, the South Carolina and Georgia Ports Authorities have purchased a 1,518-acre dredge spoil site on the north shore of the Savannah River in Jasper County for a new bi-state, mega-ship port facility. The newly purchased Jasper Port site is about 13 miles from the Atlantic Ocean and will accommodate the deeper-draft container ships that will pass through the Panama Canal once expansion of the Canal is completed in 2014.

Not only does the construction of a bi-state port facility on this site achieve substantial port capacity expansion for both South Carolina and Georgia, it also reduces the length and scope needed for dredging and deepening the Savannah River. In contrast to the Jasper Port Site, Savannah's existing Garden City terminal – at 26 miles inland – is twice as far from the ocean and necessitates far more dredging to accommodate the mega-ships. Such dredging could cause harmful saltwater intrusion to degrade both the water supplies of the Upper Floridan Aquifer and the vital wildlife habitat in the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge.

Now with the port site secured, the reality of a Jasper Port stands to bring economic expansion at a far lower environmental price to South Carolina.



Andrea Malloy

Jasper Port Becoming a Reality

South Carolina and Georgia recently purchased a 1,518-acre site along the Savannah River for a new bi-state, mega-ship port facility.

Virginia Beach

Where's a Big Box Retailer to Go?

"Large Retail Establishment Ordinance" aims to avoid surprise projects that would overwhelm infrastructure

Giving Direction to Big Box Development

The threat of a Wal-Mart super store on Lady's Island prompted Beaufort County and its municipalities to be proactive.

State Agency Facilitates Dock Proliferation

DHEC and its Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) side with developers to eviscerate Beaufort County's dock ordinance

County Law Ignored

In May 2000, Beaufort County enacted a dock ordinance restricting the length of docks in small tidal creeks to 300 feet in order to protect water quality and the proliferation of long docks in these highly sensitive waters. The county ordinance takes precedence over state regulations, which allow for docks of 1,000 feet.

Prior to passage of the county ordinance, developers successfully secured a slate of dock permits for Bull Point Plantation, a 704-acre development along Huspah Creek. Then in 2004, developers went back to OCRM to amend one of the dock permits while eliminating another, combining two private docks into one joint-use dock of greater length.

The amendment application requested that a 595-foot dock be lengthened to 720 feet, while eliminating a 225-foot dock altogether. They asserted that the new amendment to lengthen a dock did not fall under the jurisdiction of the prevailing county ordinance since it applied to an old permit that was issued prior to the ordinance's passage. OCRM concurred with the developers and approved the request.

A Bad Precedent

When construction of the 720-foot dock began earlier this year, Beaufort County zoning administrator Hillary Austin issued a stop-work order saying the amendment to the original dock permit was so drastic as to constitute a new permit, which should be subject to the county's dock ordinance. She argued that the lengthening of the dock and the change in use from private to joint-use essentially made it a new dock that OCRM should have processed as a new permit instead of an amendment to an old one.

This summer, Beaufort County's Zoning Board of Appeals sided with OCRM's original approval of the longer dock and overturned the stop-work order to allow construction of the dock to resume.

The Zoning Board's decision affirming OCRM's approval sets a bad precedent, according to League staffer Reed Armstrong. "Anyone who is on one of these small tidal creeks and has a dock permit could apply for an amendment for a longer dock and that dock could be built, regardless of whether it meets or exceeds the county's standards. As a result, Beaufort County's dock ordinance becomes meaningless.

"The process should have started over," Armstrong continues. "OCRM should not be able to amend a permit that is nearly a decade old that flies in the face of prevailing county law." Beaufort County Council is appealing the Zoning Board of Appeals ruling.

Tom Blagden

In response to a threat from Wal-Mart last winter to construct one of its super stores in a low-lying area on Lady's Island, the City of Beaufort has developed an ordinance to confine mega-retail development to S.C. 170 and S.C. 280. The "Large Retail Establishment Ordinance" would apply to all retail stores larger than 70,000 square feet, which is a size larger than most normal grocery stores.

The "Big Box" ordinance, as it is nicknamed, is supported by the Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan, which is a blueprint crafted by local governments for land use through 2025. In light of the threats posed by Wal-Mart's proposed super store for Lady's Island, the ordinance aims to avoid allowing big box development where it will overwhelm existing infrastructure, such as roads and sewer, or where it is inappropriate for a particular location due to low elevation or incompatibility with existing land uses.

Patrick Moore, League South Coast Office Director, praises the proposed ordinance for recognizing that big-box retail stores are not appropriate for every site. "This ordinance represents sound planning by locating large commercial activity where infrastructure exists and away from marshes and historic areas," Moore states. "Using zoning as a tool to guide regional growth can encourage economic expansion, protect existing businesses, and prevent sprawl." The ordinance has passed first reading and will be a temporary measure until Beaufort County and its municipalities decide where large retail is appropriate through the ongoing Comprehensive Planning process.

Staff News

Meet Amanda Watson!

The Conservation League welcomes its newest staff member, Amanda Watson, who serves as the Development and Finance Assistant to Development Director Tish Lynn and Finance Director Ashley Waters. Amanda grew up on John's Island and earned a B.S. in Psychology at the College of Charleston. She enjoys traveling, cooking, reading and knitting.

Welcome to our Youngest Members!

Addie Parsons Geer (top) was born to League Development Associate Alison Geer and her husband Arthur on August 6th, weighing in at 8 pounds, one ounce and measuring 20 inches long.

Piper Linley Turansky (bottom) was born to League Project Manager Lisa Jones-Turansky and her husband Mark on September 3rd, weighing in at 6 pounds, 15 ounces and measuring 19 inches long. (Sister Sophie is keeping an eye on baby Piper.)

"Wednesdays at the Waterfront" Makes Charleston's 10 Best List

This summer, an alliance that included the Conservation League, the City Gallery at Waterfront Park, and about 100 artists challenged audiences to ponder more deeply their relationship to the planet. They created a compelling Piccolo Spoleto exhibit entitled "Vanishing Landscapes" and from there, sponsored a popular lecture series called "Wednesdays at the Waterfront." The exhibition and the speakers prompted discussion among scores of viewers on topics ranging from global warming to water pollution.

Nancy Gregg

(above) Artist Carol McGill speaks to viewers about her artwork and about the inspiration for her award-winning painting "Scorched Earth."

Nancy Gregg

Nancy Gregg

(above) Artist Lynne Riding and League supporter Katie Huger in front of Lynne's painting "Pritchard's Island Series – 57."

(left) Artist Carol McGill and Ben Moore, Director of the League's Energy and Climate Program, explore with participants the issue of global warming and what South Carolina can do to address it.

A Day at the Marshview Community Organic Farm

Just off Eddings Point Road on St. Helena Island, nearly 30 friends of the Conservation League gathered to celebrate and partake of the bounty of Marshview Community Organic Farm. At Marshview, landowner and teacher Sara Reynolds is educating young people and passing down the knowledge of traditional farming and self-sufficiency. Together with other interested residents and coop members, the youth are growing valuable crops, learning management skills and healthy eating habits, and practicing good stewardship of the land.

Steve Cregg

League members and friends dine "al fresco" on the bounty of Marshview Farm, beautifully prepared by Bateaux Restaurant owner and chef, Richard Wilson.

Steve Cregg

(l-r) Sara Reynolds, farmer and owner of Marshview Farm with her aunt, Ruth Reynolds.

Green Build

(l-r) League Membership Director Nancy Cregg and Development Associate Alison Geer help build a Sea Island Habitat for Humanity "Green Build" home on John's Island.

Gretta Kruesi

Thank You Interns!

The Conservation League thanks our 2008 interns (pictured above), who have generously contributed their time, energy and talent to the cause of conservation: (l-r) Amber Willis, Emily Long, Ross Appel, Allie Cryns, Daniel Kappler, Erika Schneider, Rusty Hamrick, Robin Olejniczak and Nick Said.

Thank You!

LIVE OAK SOCIETY

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photos by Tom Blagden

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photos by Tom Blagden

Final Thoughts

At the heart of the Conservation League's *The Time is Now* campaign lies the question: "What is our vision for this coast – for ourselves and for our children and grandchildren?" The answer is found in our mission (stated below) and in Tom Blagden's inspiring photographs, featured here and throughout this newsletter issue.

Tom Blagden

Spring Island
Rhythms of Nature

This photo is from **Tom Blagden's** latest book, *Spring Island: Rhythms of Nature*, to be released this fall. Its portfolio of 130 stunning images, with passages by Christopher Marsh, delves deeper into the dynamic habitats and wildlife of a unique island community. Tom has been a professional nature photographer for more than thirty years and has published numerous portfolio books, especially on South Carolina and Maine. His images have appeared on the cover of *Smithsonian* and in *Outdoor Photographer*, as well as in numerous other magazines, calendars and publications. Tom's work is devoted to creating a unique sense of place as a celebration of and catalyst for land protection and conservation. His fine art prints are represented by the Martin Gallery of Charleston and his stock photographs by Larry Ulrich Stock of California.

The mission of the Coastal Conservation League is to protect the natural environment of the South Carolina coastal plain and to enhance the quality of life of our communities by working with individuals, businesses and government to ensure balanced solutions.

Calendar of Events

November 1: Creation Care – Join us at Springbank Retreat in Williamsburg County for a presentation by Dr. Rusty Pritchard, National Director of Outreach for the Evangelical Environmental Network.

November 16: Walking Old Woodlands – Tour Woodlands Plantation near Columbia with Amanda McNulty of "Making It Grow" and the Hampton family.

January 13: 5th Annual Conversations with Conservationists – Come join state senators and citizens at the State House for this annual public forum on conservation issues.

For more information, contact Nancy Cregg, League Director of Membership, at 723-9895 or at nancycregg@scccl.org.

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