



NEWS

ST. SIMONS LAND TRUST

PRESERVING THE NATURAL AND SCENIC CHARACTER OF OUR ISLAND

SUMMER 2013

Education Pavilion to be the Centerpiece of Learning Experiences at Cannon's Point

Since the St. Simons Land Trust-led acquisition of Cannon's Point as a nature preserve last September, the work to thoughtfully prepare its 600 acres for public access has been intensive and continuous. Marshalling the work of Land Trust Task Forces, community partners and the talents of local experts in a host of fields, virtually every acre has been examined to ensure that the historical, cultural and ecological assets of Cannon's Point are preserved and presented to their fullest through educational, recreational and interpretive experiences.



Artist rendering of the Education Pavilion at Cannon's Point, designed by architect Nate Brock.

Design plans are nearing completion for construction of the Cannon's Point **Education Pavilion** along the eastern side of the tract near Lawrence Creek and the old Taylor's Fish Camp site.

The Pavilion, the centerpiece of the outdoor classroom concept at Cannon's Point, is made possible by a grant from the Georgia-Pacific Foundation. Since 1958, the Georgia-Pacific Foundation has partnered with thousands of community-based programs that have brought tremendous value to the places where GP employees live and work. "The Foundation invests our resources in four key areas that are essential to sustaining strong communities: Education, Environment, Community Enrichment, and Entrepreneurship," said Randal Morris, Senior Manager of Public Affairs for Georgia-Pacific. "The Education Pavilion at Cannon's Point is in perfect step with the Foundation's purpose and we are proud to play a part in helping to make Cannon's Point a nationwide model for preservation, conservation and nature-centered recreation and education."

The Land Trust has established relationships with local educational institutions to ensure that students of all ages and grade levels learn from the experiences that Cannon's Point has to offer. Field trips from local schools will begin their excursions at the Education Pavilion which will also serve as a base camp for advanced research expeditions by regional colleges and university science departments.

With more than 12,000 students under the age of 18 and over 5,000 elementary students in Glynn County, young people will benefit from broad access to Cannon's Point's educational strengths. Additionally, local and regional youth organizations such as 4-H, Boys & Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and YMCA will enjoy access to Cannon's Point

as an enhancement to their programming. And with over two million people visiting The Golden Isles annually, many of whom come with their families and young children to enjoy St. Simons' unique beauty and charm, Cannon's Point will have a lasting impact on these visitors by providing them with access to a captivating wilderness experience.

In addition, other educational groups such as the Audubon Society and other nature and conservation organizations could utilize Cannon's Point facilities for their specific outreach events, research and course

activities. The Education Pavilion will function as a starting point to orient the groups about the preserve.

Along with the many school children and visitors who will benefit from this project's success, the Land Trust is closely working with institutions of higher education. It is envisioned that University System of Georgia institutions will involve Cannon's Point in offering advanced degree research opportunities.

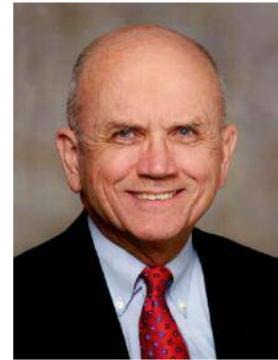
College of Coastal Georgia has been engaged in the planning and

execution of the project from the very beginning. The College's Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Phillip Mason, chaired the Land Trust Education Task Force and has committed to utilizing Cannon's Point unique and unspoiled environment as a living classroom for college-level studies and research work.

According to Dr. Timothy Goodale, Assistant Professor of Education at College of Coastal Georgia, the relationship between the institution's fields of study and Cannon's Point will be a close one. "The College will seek to utilize the site for its Coastal Ecology program offered through the School of Arts and Sciences," said Goodale. "In addition, we are planning to pilot an outdoor education experience with a local school teacher (within a science teaching methods class in the School of Education) in which future teachers will prepare lessons specific to Cannon's Point's ecology and history and pilot them with local school classes sometime in the 2013-2014 school year."



Local elementary students on a recent Pilot Program field trip at Cannon's Point. Feedback from teachers and students after these test programs are helping to refine future education offerings at Cannon's Point.



A MESSAGE FROM BEN SLADE

All of us were very excited last fall when we finally reached our \$25 million fundraising goal and closed on the purchase of Cannon's Point on September 28, 2012. The excitement continues to grow every day as we plan for opening this exceptional property to the public with programming for young and old alike.

Cannon's Point represents a huge leap toward the Land Trust's vision for a network of parks and nature areas, all connected by a safe, tree-lined system of pedestrian and cycling trails.

However, Cannon's Point is more than just the capstone of this vision. We continually discover the exceptional conservation and cultural values of this significant property and the numerous opportunities for education, research and enjoyment of the natural world made possible by its permanent protection. Hiking trails, the new Education Pavilion, the Living Shoreline and numerous other planned educational and recreational features reflect the Land Trust's goal to dramatically enrich the visitor experience at Cannon's Point.

One of the more significant opportunities ahead will be tapping into the outstanding pool of talented people who are eager to become involved with the Land Trust as volunteers. This includes members and others with an array of backgrounds and interests in ecology, ornithology and other skills crucial to the proper management of this complex opportunity. We are currently working with many of these volunteers on a series of pilot programs at Cannon's Point that will further define our way ahead. This fall, we will be launching a formal volunteer program online, spearheaded by our 'volunteer' volunteer coordinator, Shelley Renner, to organize and capitalize on all of the valuable expertise our community members have to offer. If you are interested in this program, please let us hear from you soon.

Such progress is made possible by the leadership of an engaged board of directors, business partners and the many loyal members and generous donors whose annual support gives us the financial ability to pursue our mission and vision. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Ben Slade, Executive Director
St. Simons Land Trust



From Vision to Reality. Plans for Cannon's Point Moving Ahead

Preparing Cannon's Point for public enjoyment is a project of significant magnitude. An array of land planners, architects and allied specialists are working to ensure that every facet of the project is thoughtfully conceived and executed in ways that both preserve and present the land and visitor experiences at their fullest. The above conceptual plan shows the locations of various educational and recreational components to be located near the southern end of Cannon's Point, including the Education Pavilion, kayak launch and dock, Living Shoreline and hiking trail.

Ground Truthing Precedes Construction

With Cannon's Point so rich in historical assets, a process called "ground truthing" (or shovel testing) is carefully undertaken at the locations of all proposed new construction to confirm that work on new facilities will not impact the archeological value of the sites.

Dr. Nicholas Honerkamp, Professor at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Geography, recently led ground truthing work at Cannon's Point at various locations around the old Taylor's Fish Camp site. Dr. Honerkamp led similar work last spring along the route of the Cannon's Point hiking trail prior to its construction.

Joined by archeologist Myrna Crook and eight students from the University, the team did shovel sampling, surveying and other assessments around the existing tabby cabin, at the location of the new Education Pavilion and at the proposed sites of the planned Observation Tower and Water Quality Research Station.

With the highest priority placed on preserving the historic and cultural value of Cannon's Point, the team's findings will help guide the Land Trust as preparations for public access to the wilderness preserve move forward.



A student doing survey work during the recent ground truthing at Cannon's Point.



Ecology Hikes Among Pilot Programs at Cannon's Point

A recent ecology hike at Cannon's Point was the latest in a series of pilot programs that are helping to structure the shape and scope of the educational activities offered once the preserve opens to the public.

Supporters of the Land Trust and Coastal Wildscapes took part in the hike which was led by Scott Coleman, Ecological Manager at Little St. Simons Island, and Eamonn Leonard, biologist with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Nongame Conservation Section. Scott and Eamonn both serve on the Board of Coastal Wildscapes as well as on the Cannon's Point Conservation Task Force of the Land Trust. Scott was also recently elected to the Land Trust Board of Directors.

This pilot hike followed part of the newly constructed trail along the eastern side of the preserve, then looped back around on some of the existing roads, making a stop at the newly stabilized Overseer's Chimney. Scott and Eamonn identified native plant and wildlife species and talked about how the historic uses of the property have affected the ecology of Cannon's Point today.

The Land Trust plans to offer these monthly pilot program hikes to the general public on a first come first serve basis. If you're interested in participating, follow the Land Trust on Facebook and at www.sslt.org for hike availability and announcements.

The Living Shoreline at Cannon's Point

Conservation, sustainability and education are the common threads linking all of the work by the Land Trust to prepare Cannon's Point for public access. An example of these principles is the plan to install a Living Shoreline, approximately 250 feet in length, along Lawrence Creek (at the old Taylor's Fish Camp site) near the location of the Education Pavilion and other planned facilities.



Pilings and bulkhead structures being removed to make way for the new Living Shoreline along Lawrence Creek at Cannon's Point.

Where rotting pilings, docks and a hoist once stood, the components of a naturally occurring shoreline system will be put into place. The Living Shoreline concept uses techniques that allow natural processes to stabilize shoreline areas while increasing and improving estuarine habitats.

For many years, bulkheads constructed of hardened, man-made materials were predominant along the coast. Yet these revetments merely redirect and intensify tidal forces, eventually collapse and are counterproductive in accelerating erosion and habitat loss.

The idea behind a Living Shoreline concept, like the one proposed for Cannon's Point, is to employ natural structures and processes in the service of habitat regeneration and stability. Installing sloped shorelines with native tidal plantings and bagged oyster shells will provide the shoreline with a foundation upon which oyster reefs can form to create a natural buffer to erosive tidal currents. Healthy oyster colonies have positive effects on the ecosystem as a whole by filtering and improving water quality and providing habitats for marine species, thus enhancing overall bio-diversity.

According to Susan Shipman, a Land Trust board member who has been intimately involved in the Living Shoreline at Cannon's Point, the benefits of the project are multi-pronged. "First, we are addressing erosion by stabilizing the shoreline in a longer-term, responsible and sustainable way," said Shipman. "Second, we are increasing coastal ecology research opportunities that examine how natural shorelines are established and thrive. And, more importantly, we are enhancing the educational dimensions of Cannon's Point as visitors can see first-hand the benefits and balance of a natural shoreline."

Partnering with the Land Trust on the Living Shoreline project are the University of Georgia Shellfish Laboratory, The Nature Conservancy, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and Little St. Simons Island. The Land Trust seeks a lead donor to fund this important project.

Did you know...

...that in 2005, the Land Trust wrote a master plan for an 'Island-Wide Trail System' for pedestrians and bikes? Today, in partnership with the PATH Foundation, Sea Island Acquisitions and Glynn County, we've built six miles of the proposed trail system. Soon, there will be an additional three to five miles of trails at Cannon's Point for biking and hiking.

...that berries from the wax myrtle (*morrella cerifera*), a common shrub species found at Cannon's Point, were once used in making candles? Colonists separated the fruit's wax by covering it in boiling water to make wax for fragrant-burning candles.



...that 4,500 years ago, Native Americans on St. Simons Island created features known as shell middens? They enjoyed abundant shellfish which was readily available and easily harvested. They would cast the shells into piles and over the years these mounds would get quite large. Middens were also used by Native Americans for burials. The shells create rich soils home to some of Georgia's rarest plants, such as the climbing buckthorn. These middens have become part of the landscape and are an archeological treasure.

...why the small ferns on the branches of live oaks are called resurrection ferns? It's because when the weather is dry, it turns brown and becomes almost invisible against the bark of the oak.

After a rain, this fern returns to beautiful, bright green life! Resurrection fern is an epiphyte (like Spanish Moss) and attaches to the tree limbs only for support.



...that there are 51 live oaks at the Old Stables Property at the corner of Frederica Road and Sea Island Road? Took a closer look next time you go by!



...that Cannon's Point is home to an abundant number of birds? According to preliminary studies by Gene Keferl, Professor Emeritus of Biology at Coastal Georgia Community College, over 72 species of birds, both resident and migratory, seek the maritime forests of Cannon's Point for food and habitats. Among that number are Bald Eagles, Osprey, Red-shouldered Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks and twelve different varieties of warblers, including the Northern Parula (shown above) and the Yellow-Throated warbler, both of which build their nests in the Spanish Moss that is so abundant at Cannon's Point.



Alva B. Lines

Saltwater in His Veins

The preservationist passions of Alva Lines

When Alva Burley Lines died on May 4 of this year at the age of 97, he left behind his wife Mildred of 73 years, five children, nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Yet the legacy of a man who often told others that 'he had saltwater in his veins' lives today in the countless millions of residents and visitors who enjoy the beaches and marshes that edge Georgia's eastern seaboard. His love of St. Simons Island was especially keen. In his obituary in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, his family asked that "contributions in memory of the great accomplishments that he made for all Georgians can be made to the St. Simons Island Land Trust to preserve St. Simons' natural and scenic character for the benefit of Georgians."

Alva Lines' connection to our area is a matter of historical record. He comes from a distinguished Georgia family and is a direct descendant of Isaac Lines who joined the military forces of General James Edward Oglethorpe at Fort Frederica, St. Simons Island, Georgia, to defeat the Spanish in the "Battle of Bloody Marsh" in 1742.

Alva Lines devoted his extraordinary life to serving his family, community, profession and country. A native of Savannah and a graduate of Emory University, Lines enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corp, earning the Bronze Medal for his service during World War II. After the war, he and his wife settled in Atlanta where he established Southeastern Films and became a pioneering and acclaimed producer of films and documentaries.

In the 1970s, developers sought to claim the land and encroach on the shoreline in front of the home that he had bought from Mrs. Fred L. Rand, his mother-in-law. The house was built in 1954 on Wood Avenue on St. Simons Island and at the time, high tide was less than 100 feet from the house. In response, Lines acted aggressively and passionately to ensure that our State's beaches and marshes belonged to the people of Georgia. He led the effort, and is considered most responsible for the 1976 Supreme Court of Georgia ruling that title to Georgia's beaches and marshlands belongs to the people of the State of Georgia. This historic decision (reaffirmed in the Supreme Court of The United States) not only gives all Georgians rights of access, but also means our marshes and beaches will be preserved and protected for future generations.

Alva Lines' love of St. Simons Island and the Georgia coast continued throughout his life and led him to become a member and supporter of the St. Simons Land Trust as did other members of his family.

"I spoke to him just a few weeks before his death," remembers his grandson Rand Lines of Athens, Georgia—a third generation member of the Land Trust. "As was so often the case, our conversation turned to St. Simons and his love for the peaceful, small-world sense of the Island and his belief in the value of preserving its character. Our family will continue to gather at the home on Wood Avenue as we remember and honor my grandfather's legacy and enjoy the natural beauty that he worked so hard to preserve for all of us."

Thanks to Alva Lines, we as citizens of Georgia are each owners of our State's protected marshlands and beaches.



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Land Trust Elects New Board Officers, Members

The 2013 Officers and Board of Directors (shown at left) assures that the St. Simons Land Trust will benefit from solid, skilled leaders as the organization moves through the opportunities and challenges of one of its most historic years. With Chairman Gordon Strother succeeding the outstanding service of Susan Shipman, the 2013 slate, along with the 2013 Advisory Council members, continues the Land Trust tradition of engaged leadership by those whose substantial talents and community stewardship bring life to the organization's vision and mission.

The Land Trust is pleased to welcome the following new members to its Board of Directors:

David W. Fox

David is the retired Chairman and CEO of Northern Trust Corporation and its principal subsidiary, The Northern Trust Corporation Company, Chicago. He joined Northern Trust in 1955 and retired in 1995 after 40 years of service. He is a past director of USG Corporation and Miami Corporation, past Chairman of the Chicago Stock Exchange and a past director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. In 1995, David received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, where he earned his MBA. David and his wife, Mary ("Mike"), have four children and maintain homes in Burr Ridge, IL and on Sea Island.

Jennifer Leavy

Jennifer was born in Americus, Georgia and graduated from Southland University. She earned her Doctor of Pharmacy from The University of Georgia College of Pharmacy and is a staff pharmacist at St. Simons Drug Company. Since moving to The Golden Isles in 1999, she has been an active volunteer with a variety of local non-profit organizations and events, including serving as Chair of Frederica Academy's Derby Day and the St. Simons Land Trust annual Oyster Roast. She and her husband, Buff, reside on St. Simons Island and have two children. She enjoys hiking the Appalachian Trail, attending UGA football games and being an active mother.

Scott Coleman

Scott grew up in Fort Gaines, Georgia and graduated from the University of Georgia in 2005 with a degree in Wildlife Biology. He began working on Little St. Simons Island in early 2006 as a naturalist. In 2007 he was named Ecological Manager for the Island, working to maintain, enhance and restore the natural ecological communities and wildlife populations on the 10,000-acre barrier island. He developed the 50-year conservation plan for Little St. Simons Island and is leading the transition of the Island into a model for conservation management. He has served on the Jekyll Island Authority's conservation committee and is involved with the effort to ensure the protection and conservation of Cannon's Point as a Conservation Task Force member. Scott, his wife Ann, and their son, Daniel, live on St. Simons Island.

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