

There is a sub-group of the Herpetologically Ignorant known as CYLINDRICAL BIGOTS. These are people who absolutely despise all tubular life forms. It is not so much a fear as a hatred. They're the people who tell me stories of shooting snakes deep in the woods,, or swerving their car to flatten a snake on the road, of beating a snake with a log, a hoe, a rake or some other creative implement of destruction. I am not saying that a poisonous snake in your yard doesn't need to be dealt with, but going out of your way to kill them is so unnecessary. Just learn about snakes and your hatred may turn to interest! Some examples: Of the 37 species of snakes inhabiting the coastal plain, only 6 are poisonous! More people die each year of bee stings than snake bites! Snakes are important for keeping rodent populations in check and in turn are food for birds of prey. Take your pick, snakes or rats!

This is a great time of year to visit the Beidler Forest, but not a great time of year to see our wonderful snakes. The temperatures are cooling, the leaves are changing and fall migratory birds are arriving. Please come see us soon. We would be happy to start you on the road to SNAKE ENLIGHTENMENT using one of our gentle pets, at your request only!

If you have questions, please write Michael Dawson, The Snake-Vapored Swamp Genius, Francis Beidler Forest, 336 Sanctuary Road, Harleyville, SC 29448 or call 462-2150, or visit 9-5 Tues - Sun.

PRC

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minds now and decided that development in the parks -- waterslides, golf courses and other amusements -- are a better use for the money than what they promised.

They spent around \$8 million on land, and say they have finished buying parkland. There is \$9 million remaining in the acquisition fund. Plans now are to take over all of Charleston County's

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boat landings and spend money sprucing them up. You may be charged a fee eventually for use of the landings. Instead of getting new access, you will be getting the same old access and charged a fee for it. PRC has no idea how much money the boat landings will cost, but has budgeted the remaining acquisition money on it nonetheless.

Please contact your County Council representative, or your member of the Legislative Delegation if you believe PRC should spend 52% of the bond money on purchasing land as they told us they would. PRC's brochure advertised: "We are planning for your future. We are also planning for the future of your children and grandchildren. We must preserve land now for generations of families just like yours." It is doubtful that voters would have given PRC \$34 million if it had advertised instead, "We intend to spend the bulk of the bond money, not on purchasing land for future generations, but on water slides and golf courses."

Former CNHS President Runs for Office

Former CNHS President, Morgan McClure, will run for commissioner of the Charleston Soil and Water Conservation District in the upcoming November general election. This often uncontested elected position, is a non-partisan, non-paid position with the Conservation District, which is a governmental subunit of the State's Land Resource Division of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. Although there is often little known about the Conservation District, its actions are frequently seen by county residents to include the Adopt A Dune Program on Sullivan's Island and Folly Beach, shoreline protection at Drayton Hall, the many outdoor learning centers at area schools as well as many other technical assistance services provided to the county in the areas of conservation resource management and environmental education.

Morgan, after leaving the CNHS Executive Board to pursue a second graduate masters degree at Clemson University came back to Charleston and

has remained active in the conservation arena. Currently he is active on a number of committees and task forces of the Charleston Harbor Project, The Coastal Pesticide Advisory Committee, Conservation League's Land Use Advisory Committee, Clemson Extension's County Advisory Committee, the Conservation Committee of the North American Benthological Society, and just stepped down as being the Chair of the Society of Wetland Scientist South Atlantic Chapter which covered the East Coast from Maryland to Florida and the Caribbean.

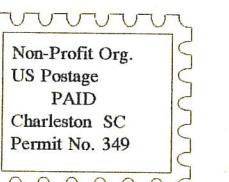
With little known about the Conservation Districts in each county, Morgan urges CNHS members to call not only the Charleston District for which he is running for, but Dorchester and Berkeley which will also have candidates for election to find out more about who is running and what Conservation Districts do. In the Charleston election the voters will select two of three candidates. These are Morgan McClure, and the two incumbents William Kennerty and Billy Geraty. Even though this is a nonpartisan election, CNHS feel it's new worthy to comment on the former CNHS President. This does not serve as an endorsement to any one candidate, but CNHS encourages its members to learn more about each of the candidates so that one may exercise their democratic rights responsibly.

OBSERVATIONS By DON WATTS

Judy Edwards of the Fort Lamar area, James Island, reported Woodstorks on Seaside Creek, August 18th.

Charlie Walters reports Nashville Warblers, and many other species of warblers, at Patriot's Point, August 20th.

Record your observations or questions with Don Watts at 797-6783, or on the chapter voice mail at 577-7100, or E mail on internet to DONWATTS@AOL.COM



THE LESSER SQUAWK

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHARLESTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY CHAPTER, NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

POPULAR PATRIOT'S POINT BIRDING SITE UNDER DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

As you read this, plans are being made for the development of Patriot's Point. While we have no details yet, it is safe to say that the development will be extensive. Patriot's Point has the potential to be a remarkably beautiful development if done right.

Audubon members know and love the winding road to the Patriot's Point Golf Course. It is one of the greatest birding spots in Charleston. Ornithologist Will Post tells us it is a critical location for migrating birds to rest and fatten up before the next long leg of their journey. The micro-geography of Patriot's Point is very similar to another famous birding spot-- Cape May, New Jersey. In both cases, thousands of warblers, tanagers, vireos, thrushes and other birds funnel down the coast and congregate at these spots that lie between the mouth of the river and harbor.

It is important to write letters to our elected officials and other people who will be responsible for developing Patriot's Point. We must let them know that the dense trees and shrubs bordering the main roadway are critical habitat and must be preserved. It is possible for full-scale development to happen in conjunction with a beautifully preserved buffer.

As we are all aware, neo-tropical migrants are in trouble. Their habitat is being destroyed both in South and Central America, where they overwinter, and here in the United States, where they nest. Staging and resting areas during migration are critical for them to survive the perilous journey twice a year. Undeveloped natural area along the coast are increasingly rare and must be protected.

While we have the altruistic motive of wanting to protect habitat for birds, it doesn't hurt to dwell on the positive economic impact of the "birding industry" Birders could be one of many tourist types, conventioneers, gamblers (or whatever) who come to visit Patriot's Point. For example, the 100,000 birders who visit Cape May each year spend in excess of \$10 million dollars. We're starting to talk about real money there. Active birders spend between \$1,850 and \$2,700 on birding each year, and they spend the most on travel. Counting the birdseed, binoculars, and bird books we buy, and the trips we take to see birds, experts have calculated that birding is a \$20 billion industry per year in North America.

Because there are so many of us (estimates range from 6 million to 60 million birders), our economic potential (a lot of us are wealthy) and our educational background (we are all very bright), we are said to have "the potential to be one of the strongest forces in North American conservation."

Let's meet that potential. Write one letter on behalf of the birds and address it to: Admiral James T. Flatley, Chairman Patriot's Point Commission 40 Patriot's Point Road Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

Then send copies to:

Senator Lawrence E. Richter Representative Harry M. Hallman
640 Pitt Street & 1275 Vagabond Lane
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464 Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

Tell them that you understand Patriot's Point will be developed but you want it to be done in a way that accommodates both humans and birds. Surely there's room for us both.

GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS ON CHARLESTON COUNTY PRC

The Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission has decided to remove a proposed golf course from the master plan for the new North Area park. The Commission, to their credit, responded positively when the Charleston Natural History Society, S.C. Coastal Conservation League, Sierra Club and others spoke against the golf course at a public hearing. The point was made that golf courses are not bad, but that Charleston County residents don't want their parks to be golf courses.

That's the good news. The bad news is that the Commission states firmly there will be a golf course in one of their parks eventually. It might be the new John's Island land they purchased, or the Edisto Park, or Palmetto Islands. They haven't decided yet, and presumably they'll let us know when they do.

More bad news is that PRC has budgeted 75% of the \$34 million bond money for park development and only 25% on land acquisition. In their published brochure advertising the bond referendum in 1992, PRC pledged to spend 52% of the bond money on land acquisition (\$17 million!), saying it was "critical to protect land now while it is available and affordable." They've changed their

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