

FRIENDS OF HUNTING ISLAND

ANNUAL REPORT—2021

Despite 2021 being the second year of covid-19, Friends of Hunting Island accomplished a lot. Most meetings were again held as zoom meetings. Unfortunately, few Outreach opportunities were available until the summer, with the Water Festival, and the fall, and then Debra Klavohn and others, including Ted, Val, and Sherri, participated in all they could.

In January and February 2021, FOHI purchased two **billboards** advertising Hunting Island. One was on I-95 facing north between I-26 and the Beaufort exit, and the other was on 17 facing north halfway between Charleston and Beaufort. There is no exact way to determine the benefits of the billboards. Social media, the newsletter, and reduced covid cases may also have contributed to increased numbers at HISP.

We completed the **laundromat** at the campground under Richard Knieriem's supervision and the park staff's final work. The laundromat concept came from Rick and Lisa Wood, two regular campers at Hunting Island. In addition, Randal Brown and his construction crew completed the **playground** that was started in 2020 but that had been discussed and agreed upon years before.

The **virtual lighthouse** was designed and built in 2021 by Randal and crew, and the project was completed in November with A-Tax funding. In addition, FOHI assisted with the **virtual reality** in the Visitor Center by purchasing the headsets. Both the virtual lighthouse and the virtual reality will be promoted through the end of the year.

The **People's Park Project** was initiated in 2021 because 2020 was a washout for bringing children to the park. Even 2021 was not particularly a good year for classes and underserved students. The most successful aspect of the PPP was handing out invitations to people who needed them at various venues. But thanks to the PPP, we gained several **new board members**, including Mary Shriner as Events Director, Sandy Zerbinopoulos as Education Director, and Laura Veronie as Secretary. In addition, with the departure of Kate Hudson, we have recruited Jolie Winemiller as our newsletter editor, with assistance from several other members.

The **Sea Turtle Conservation Project** was again hampered by covid, although a few more volunteers were allowed on the beach. It was a successful season with 130 nests. We also continued the **Adopt-a-Nest** program with Linda and the Turtle Team working together on it. This raises money for us every year now.

The **Famous Tree**, which was placed near the lighthouse in 2020, continues to be of interest to guests, and Linda Miller keeps it decorated for each season. In addition, Linda promoted the **Equestrian Beach** and we saw many more horses out in December, January, and February.

The **lighthouse** climb was held to 6 people and reservations were required to reduce the impact and wear and tear on the structure. Ted Panayotoff and his team continued to offer tours at the times when covid was not a factor. Repair work on the lighthouse has been budgeted and will begin in the next year or so.

Carol Corbin undertook the Hunting Island **photo book** project, titled *Wild Island Nature*, with the help of over 30 photographers' submissions. The book is published by Lydia Inglett Publishing, it has been printed and will be received in early 2022—late due to supply chain slowdowns. Carol also took a **grant-writing course** to improve our chances of getting funding for projects.

FOHI funded the construction of 25 **rustic tent sites** in the campground in late 2020 and early 2021, and then FOHI funded the plants and materials to create visual barriers between each site. About 50 volunteers from FOHI and other organizations did the planting on October 29 and 30.

Beach sweeps were held after each major holiday, often with the assistance of the Marines or the Wade-Hampton ROTC students.

Linda Miller continues to represent FOHI and HISP on the Board of **BAHA** and has helped with numerous BAHA initiatives such as Healthcare Workers' passes, the Oyster Festival, etc.

FOHI paid for the printing of 30,000 park **brochures**, and we funded a replacement **pump** for the lake at the Visitor Center. In addition, we purchased 5,000 FOHI membership and 500 PPP brochures.

During the summer of 2021, FOHI won a **\$5000 seaturtle.org grant** to be used to promote reduction of refuse in the oceans. A 30-second PSA film is in the works to fulfill that grant obligation.

FOHI funded **Mobi-mats and beach wheelchairs** and had positive public feedback about both. **Trails** work continued with Tim Moore inspecting them regularly. Some discussion occurred regarding the Nature Interpretive Trail at the Nature Center and an upgrade of signage.

The board did some document housekeeping, **amending the by-laws** and adhering to some of the by-law expectations that we had not been instituting.

The bank account surpassed **\$100,000** for most of the year.

FOHI board, membership, and other miscellaneous volunteer groups contribute between 10,000 and 15,000 volunteer hours to the park every year, including 5-6,000 in the Sea Turtle Conservation Project alone.

Submitted by Carol Corbin, President, Friends of Hunting Island, November 14, 2021