



the island eye news

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Sullivan's Island • Isle of Palms • Goat Island • Dewees Island

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Op-Ed

The best is yet to come

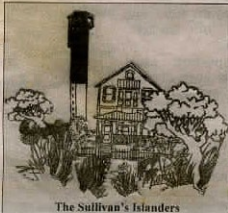
PROVIDED BY THE SULLIVAN'S ISLANDERS

What if we could protect our homes from storm and hurricane damage, protect property values island-wide, implement a healthy and sustainable land management practice that doesn't require an enormous capital expenditure AND find a way for residents to enjoy beach views?

We'd all say yes, wouldn't we? I honestly believe that we are much closer to coming up with this kind of a plan for the accreted land than we realize and I'll tell you why.

The Sullivan's Islanders, a conservation group on the island, has for some time been identifying other barrier islands on the east coast with sound, sustainable barrier island management practices. We are particularly interested in finding islands where the property values are high and the plan promotes strong conservation standards. One of the most exciting and rewarding things we have done is contact barrier island

communities similar to Sullivan's Island and set up dates to meet with them to learn more about their land management plans. We will be writing more about



these meetings in the near future.

Here are some of the encouraging things that we have learned from our research and might help to address some of the concerns brought up by residents at the August 4, meeting with Coastal

Engineering Consultants:

First of all, as everyone has said, we are lucky to have such a great "problem" on our hands. Very few, if any barrier islands are dealing with accreted land issues. Having said that, don't be lulled into thinking that our beach will always accrete. It won't. In the world of barrier islands, nothing is forever except change and the threat of storms and hurricanes.

Second, there was much time spent on the following concerns at the meeting but we should be able to get past the rat-snake-

see Accreted land on page 2



Beach pathway through the maritime forest.

PHOTO BY PETER COLEMAN

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PHOTOS BY PETER CECILIAN

Accreted land from front page

mosquito-fire and personal safety concerns pretty easily. As for the pests, the bad news is that we live on a barrier island in the heart of the Lowcountry and we will always have them. Charleston County has rat and mosquito control web pages that are very helpful to show homeowners what do in your own yard to control pests. We are very lucky to not have alligators, bobcats or deer.

Concerning the fire risk, we think the consultant spelled it out pretty clearly. The chance of fire being a problem on the accreted land is very, very low and our research backs that up. Firebreaks, for instance are not part of the management plan at Kiawah.

Personal safety and the risk of assault are always of utmost concern. However, based on the crime statistics available we have not found anything to support the claim that crime or assaults occur at a significantly higher frequency in the accreted lands than any other place on Sullivan's Island. We think it only right to point out that by far,

the vast majority of people who walk through the accreted land do so unharmed. While we live in one of the most violent states in the country, Sullivan's Island remains an incredibly safe place to live.

Third, Sullivan's Island is among the few barrier islands to have a vital, healthy maritime forest remaining. Research says that maritime forests stabilize islands, are the safest place to live and therefore often the first site that is destroyed by over-development. This is great news for all residents of Sullivan's Island and this fall we will have a speaker discussing the importance of interrelated habitats on barrier islands.

Fourth, there are very good management plans already in place that we can learn from. Coastal land management has come a long, long way in the last 10 years and we believe that there are some excellent models of successful, LOW IMPACT, affordable land management practices.

And finally, we've found residential communities who have staked their high property values on promoting the conservation of their natural habitats. Best

of all, it's working. This bears repeating. We can conserve our habitat and protect our property values. The two goals are not mutually exclusive, but in fact mutually compatible.

This is an important and exciting time to be part of the Sullivan's Island community and we encourage you to join us in the coming months in a continuing dialog about improving the natural habitat of Sullivan's Island as we host a series of speakers.

The more you learn about the

possibilities, the better you will understand our high hopes for the future of our island. Stay tuned!

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Please send comments/
responses to this op-ed article
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Above pictures are examples of the accreted land area on Sullivan's Island.