

Old dump site to be saved as protected green space

SUBMITTED BY KAREN COSTE FOR THE SULLIVAN'S ISLANDERS

Miller Creek may not have been that specific creek described by Poe, but it certainly could have been. Located at the marsh end of Station 19, this creek banks onto a small tract of land known to many as The Landfill. Many islanders, however, affectionately know it as "The Dump" because it was the location of the town's incinerator and trash burnings. Originally, Station 19 was called Wharf Street because it was there that lumber was barged in for John McNerny's lumber business. Today it is a beautiful tract of land approximately 3.5 acres in size. This land is surrounded on two sides by coves of trees, and the third side is situated right on the marsh. Many islanders use The Dump every day for play, dog walking, bird and otter watching. In years past, marsh hen hunting was a favorite sport at this spot.

Crab, shrimp, fish, and marsh hen from this creek provided many a meal for local families. Before there were swimming pools on the island, kids learned to swim by jumping into "Alligator Hole". Now many people crab there, catch minnows for bait, and use it as a launching point for their canoes and kayaks.

The Sullivan's Islanders, an organization dedicated to island conservation and historic preservation, hosted a gathering of concerned residents last March when they became aware that The Dump had been excluded from the green space segment of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Residents feared development. Town Council members Mike Perkis and Pat O'Neil met with the group and were more than willing to initiate appropriate steps to protect this area.

Too small to be protected by The

Lowcountry Open Land Trust, The Dump needed another watchdog organization to step in and work with the Town to place this area in protective conservation.

Councilman Pat O'Neil discovered a small foundation that was willing to meet with the Town. The Mount Pleasant Land Conservancy was established by the Town of Mount Pleasant in 2002 to protect small, precious tracts of land east of the Cooper. This non-profit organization was eager to consider placing The Dump site into protection. Their mission is to enhance the quality of life for all East Cooper residents through education and preservation of open space by promoting protection, acquisition, and stewardship of land resources. To date they have protected 137 acres of undeveloped land in Mount Pleasant, including a conservation easement protecting

Oakland Plantation and a portion of Shem Creek.

At September's Council meeting, Councilman O'Neil got the green light from Council for the Town to begin the process of placing The Dump and another parcel (the island end of the former Pitt Street Bridge) under the protection of the Conservancy. No commitments will be made by either party until all details are known. Happily, The Dump will be, now and forever, protected from development.

If you have not experienced The Dump and all that it has to offer, grab your canoe or kayak, your fishing pole or crab net, or just plan an evening visit to watch a beautiful sunset slipping behind the Ravenel Bridge. This place belongs to all of us.