



BHI CONSERVANCY'S
CONSERVATOR

A Sneak Peek at the 2011 Summer Interns

By Maureen Dewire, Director of Education/
 Senior Naturalist

It's hard to believe, but the summer interns will be descending on the island in just a few short weeks. They will undergo an intense 2-week training period where they will be immersed in island history, wildlife, habitats, education programs, community relations and their specific summer responsibilities. Once they have the basics down, they will shadow the staff on all of the programs and ease their way into a leadership role. It is a steep learning curve yet these students always manage to impress us with their intelligence, drive and charm. Here is a quick overview of our 12 interns for the upcoming season:

- The 4 education interns all either hail from or attend school in North Carolina; Meghan Stuart is from Charlotte and attends the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee where she will be graduating with her Bachelor of Science in Geology; Terri Schell is from Conover, North Carolina and attends UNC Wilmington where she is majoring in Environmental Studies; Kendyll Goeman, originally from Ohio, also attends UNC Wilmington and will be graduating with

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Save the Date!

Former White House Chef Roland Mesnier
 Coming to Bald Head Island!

Former White House Pastry Chef Roland Mesnier will be visiting Bald Head Island to host three separate fund raising events for the Bald Head Island Conservancy during the weekend of July 15-16, 2011. Details of the events are still in the planning stages however there will be something for everyone. You don't want to miss the opportunity to meet Chef Roland and hear stories from his experiences at the White House and sample some of his famous recipes.

Hired in 1979 by first lady Rosalyn Carter, Roland Mesnier began his career as White House Executive Pastry Chef and went on to become the longest tenured chef ever to serve there.

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Barrier Island Study Center



2nd Floor Trusses

Construction of the Barrier Island Study Center began in October 2010 and is well underway. The first floor walls are up and the floor for the second story has been completed. The second story walls and roof are going up this month. Construction of the Center is scheduled to be completed spring of 2012, which means that construction will be ongoing throughout the summer season here on the BHI Conservancy campus. Construction however, will not impact the quality or quantity of our summer programs. Construction activity is limited to the area designated for the Center and will not effect the Fleming Environmental Center, which hosts Conservancy Camp, Camp Pollywog, turtle walks, discovery series and more.

Once the building is completed, space will provide opportunities for expanded educational programming. The BHI Conservancy will continue to offer the community quality programs and bring new and exciting opportunities to Bald Head Island.



Pilings

The Barrier Island Study Center is the first community-based barrier island research and education facility in the nation. This 5,000

square foot facility will host research specific to Bald Head Island and relevant to all barrier islands and provide scientists, student and researchers with the labs, library and

facilities needed to conduct high-level research. The Center will allow the BHI Conservancy to expand educational opportunities to the public and provide the BHI community with the information needed to make informed decisions regarding sustainable living on BHI. Visit www.barrierislandstudycenter.org to learn more about this unique Center or to view updated photos of construction.



1st Floor installation



2nd Story Walls

This \$2.4-million project is a testimony to the generosity and determination of the BHI community as no state or federal dollars have touched it. \$260,000 remains to fully complete the campaign. Visit the www.BHIC.org to learn how you can be a part of community-based conservation.



Front of new building



Conservancy: Summer Fun

Everyone at the Conservancy is looking forward to the upcoming summer season, and the many new opportunities it will bring. Not only will we be hosting 12 new interns for the summer, but Alyssa Taylor, an outstanding former intern, will take a new role as our Sea Turtle Program Coordinator. We will watch with excitement as construction continues on the Barrier Island Study Center. Accompanying these changes around our campus, there will be a lengthy list of new education programs being offered weekly. We hope you enjoy this brief introduction to our new education programs and consider signing up for some summertime fun!

Our Staff members have been amazed and sometimes overwhelmed with the numerous offers of help from teens on the island. In response to these offers, we have created the **C Patrol** program. This exciting hands-on experience will be offered for teens ages 11-14, and will focus on the many ongoing conservation and education projects of the Conservancy. C Patrol will be offered from 9AM to Noon the weeks of June 13th-17th, June 27th-June 30th, July 11th- 15th, July 25th-29th, and August 8th-12th.

We will continue to offer our fun and informative afternoon Discovery Series, and will include the ever popular Fishing Lectures,

Shed Your Fears, and the Sea Turtle Protection Program. Joining these strong holds will be two new programs. The first, called **Mythbusters: Bald Head Edition**, delves into the common misconceptions and *wives tales* of the island. Topics will include jellyfish, venomous snakes, sharks, and many other commonly misunderstood features of our island's ecosystems. The second new addition to the Discovery Series is titled **Sharks, Skates, and Rays**, and will include information on the many species of cartilaginous fish that live in the waters surrounding the island. As always, the programs in the Discovery Series are offered free of charge, however donations are gratefully accepted.

Islanders can join in a worldwide treasure hunt by signing up for **Geocaching and Letterboxing**. With the use of GPS and thought provoking clues, you will search for boxes planted amongst the island's many natural wonders, and see what treasures await you. There are many additional geocaches and letterboxes hidden around the island by members of the public, offering your family the chance to continue the search even after the program ends!

Evenings will bring simply incredible views of the night sky on Bald Head Island, with little light pollution to obscure the stars and constellations. As part of our new **Stargazing program**, Conservancy staff will take you on a tour of the night sky where you will learn about constellations, planets, the moon, and of course their ac-



companied myths and legends. Both of these programs will be offered every Wednesday through the summer season.

This summer is set to be full of excitement as we welcome new interns and new programs to our schedule. Alongside these new programs, we will continue to offer favorites from summers past. These will include Kayaking the Creeks, Turtle Walks, Birding, Crabbing and Cast Netting, Beachcombing, Bald Head After Dark, and of course Camp Pollywog and Conservancy Camp. The Conservancy staff offers a unique, professionally trained perspective on all of our nature programs, providing your family with the most in-depth educational opportunity on the island. We love sharing new information and experiences with visitors and residents and welcome you to join us on one or all of our programs this summer!



Conservation Updates

Environmental Monitoring and Research



Photo by Doug Ledgett

Dune monitoring helps the island understand the strength of its first line of defense as well as the impact of dredging on our southwest point.

Dune erosion measurements were collected in early December along with vegetation data. In January 2011, we completed GPS measurements to describe the shape and profile of the dunes. Analysis will show if dunes have physically changed since the last profile analysis in September 2010. In addition to “non-natural” erosion the measurements help determine what impact the hurricane season and winter storms had on area beaches. The next set of GPS measurements (and profile creation) will occur in late spring.

The Bald Head Creek is nestled in the largest continuous salt marsh system in Southeastern North Carolina. The marsh is home to many birds and provides nursery habitat to 90% of commercially harvested marine species. To protect this important resource the BHI Conservancy monitors both water quality and the oyster population. Julie Ruth and Brent Dober, UNCW environmental studies students, have monitored three sites in Bald Head Creek.

Protecting Bald Head’s freshwater resources provides for a happy and

healthy human population and feeds the trees and wildlife. Our natural resources, in turn protect human infrastructure. The quarterly aquifer monitoring continues for depth-to-water, pH, conductivity, salinity, temperature and total dissolved solids. Currently conservancy staff are analyzing a year’s worth of data.



© Marie Read

Tree swallows are very important in controlling insect populations. Researchers Mark Stanback of Davidson College, and Valentina Ferretti of UNCW installed several bird boxes on Middle Island in the fall of 2010, and plan to return this April to determine if they have been inhabited by tree swallows (the researchers subject of interest) and if so, study the behaviors of the tree swallows living on BHI.

A new geological study has been initiated by graduate student Hawkins Gagnon of UNCW; He is taking cores of the soil on Bald Head Island to determine the geological history and morphology of the island. His equipment incorporates vibrations and harmonic waves transmitted through a piece of aluminum cylinder. This drives the cylinder down into the sandy or muddy soil on the island, allowing for a core to be taken up to a 30 foot depth; this vibration digging technique allows for less disturbance of the soil profile when extracted. To date, Hawkins has con-

ducted two digs and currently planning more coring days during this Spring and throughout the rest of spring 2011.

Coordination is underway with other researchers interested in beginning new research on BHI. Some noteworthy research topics currently under discussion include:

- Plant vegetation survivability study involving an experimental design looking at success rates of several different native plants when planted on BHI dunes, as well as each plant’s specific capacity to retain sand.
- Continuation of beach-berm profile monitoring, as part of the Conservancy’s long-term ecological monitoring system, in relation to sea turtle nesting areas.
- Bald Head Island wave and/or tidal alternative energy feasibility study, to gauge island’s potential for aquatic alternative energy sources

Many thanks and a fond farewell to

Patrick Amico,
Interim Director of
Conservation.

Patrick worked tirelessly to keep our Conservation efforts up and running after Tom Hancock’s departure last fall.

We wish him the best in his new endeavors!

Tom Hancock will return this June as Director of Conservation

Adopt-a Program HERO OF THE MONTH

I Wish, Wish, Wish, Wish List



Matthew from Tacoma, Washington

To the BHI Conservancy,
This is the 3rd year our Matthew, helped the sea turtles. Instead of gifts for his 6th birthday he asked for donations. He was able to raise enough to adopt another nest this year. He also opened minds/hearts of other 6 year old Tacoma Kids!
The family has been affiliated with the island since 1996.

We can't offer you to Adopt-an-Intern, but you can make their summer more enjoyable. We need a grill, preferably propane. DVD Player for dorm and gently used bicycles.



Turtle Central Shop: *Green Gifts and Gear!*

Come in and see what new spring merchandize we have at the shop.

We have several new lines of apparel and gifts, toys and books, with a green eco-friendly focus, from hand bags and book bags made from recycled plastic bottles to clothing made from recycled Indian Saris and renewable resources. Open Daily 10-5.



Search: BHI Conservancy



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her Biological Environmental Studies degree in May. Ian Dudley rounds out our education interns as our Kayak Guide and is a Vermont native. He attends NC State and will be graduating with his Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences degree in May.

- The Wildlife Interns are Eric Johnson and James “Matt” Van Kleunen. Eric is from Pennsylvania and attends Penn State, where he is working towards his Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences degree. Matt is studying Biochemistry at Elon College here in North Carolina and is originally from the Sunshine state.

- Our six sea turtle interns come from all corners of the country. Laura Stein is from Maryland and attends UNC Wilmington, majoring in Environmental Science with a focus on Conservation. Jaelee Vanidestine is one of our most northern interns, coming all the way from Oronington, Maine. She is studying Marine Science at Maine Maritime Academy. Joe Lemeris is also a New Englander, originally from Connecticut and studying Biology at Boston University. Matthew Ramirez is from Alabama and attends Auburn University where he will graduate in May with a degree in Zoology. Colleen Cunningham is from the Big Apple State and attends James Madison University where she will be graduating in May with a degree in Biology. Aviv Karasov-Olson attends the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she is studying Wildlife Ecology and is from Minnesota.

The impressive group of students will be led by Maureen Dewire (Director of Education/Senior Naturalist), Andy Gould (Environmental Educator/Outreach Coordinator) and Alyssa Taylor (Sea Turtle Program Coordinator). We are excited to welcome them to the island and the Conservancy family!

Save the Date

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Never content to sit still, on Roland’s days off from the White House he developed and taught the first professional Pastry Arts Program at L’Academie de Cuisine in Bethesda, MD – currently ranked in the top 10 Culinary schools in the U.S.

Chef Mesnier has won 18 gold medals, 4 silver and 3 bronze for his pastry creations in competitions around the world. He is a member of the Academie Culinaire de France and the recipient of many awards and accolades which include: the French Legion of Honor in 2005 – the highest honor bestowed on a French citizen; that same year he was inducted into the Chocolate and Pastry Hall of Fame in New York. He was awarded a Doctorate of Culinary Arts from the prestigious Johnson & Wales University in South Carolina. He is the author of three books, Desert University, Basic to Beautiful Cakes and All the Presidents Pastries: Twenty Five Years at the White House, A Memoir.