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Footnotes Issue #67: November 16, 2012

Jekyll Island Protection Update

This newsletter [reported in January 2011](#) about the Jekyll Island Master Plan being developed for management of one of Georgia's most treasured state lands. One of the key issues has been how to implement the state law requiring no more than 35% of the island to be developed.

Development interests have been pushing to include tidal salt marsh in the total land area, the idea being that the more marsh acres that are counted as "land," the larger the island and the greater the number of acres eligible for development. The other issue is and whether areas such as dirt roads in active use, bike trails, and a larger portion of the island's landfill should be considered "developed" or "undeveloped."



The group charged with deciding these issues, known as the "65/35 Committee," punted on the tidal salt marsh question, which will now be decided by the Jekyll Island Authority (JIA) Steering Committee. However, progress was made on an agreement to reclassify dirt roads, bike trails, a portion of the landfill, and 65 acres of man-made lakes on Jekyll's golf courses as "developed" land. If those areas remained classified as "undeveloped," the JIA would be about 55 acres short of reaching the 35 percent development limit. If the revised land use definitions are adopted, and if the JIA Steering Committee follows the law and the marsh-upland interface is based on the area defined by the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act, the 35 percent limit will have been surpassed by roughly 30 acres. This would not affect redevelopment projects or mean that any development would need to be torn down, but it would prevent future new development, consistent with the intent of Jekyll as state park for all Georgians to enjoy.

To stay informed on this issue [Initiative to Protect Jekyll Island](#) State Park will be publicizing the draft of the new Master Plan and will be contacting concerned organizations and individuals regarding when, where and how they can share their views with the JIA regarding the new Master Plan. If you appreciate Jekyll Island State Park and value our state's public lands, please take advantage of the opportunity to make your voice heard when the new Master Plan is up for public review.

Quick Links - Savannah Dredging Moving Forward?

In other coastal news, the [US Army Corps of Engineers issued its "Record of Decision"](#) on October 26th allowing the 30 miles of deepening of the Savannah River from 42 feet to 47 feet.

However, [the legal battle is still raging in South Carolina](#), where the Supreme Court ruled that the permit issued by South Carolina Department of Environmental Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) invalid because it is the Savannah River Maritime Commission, not DHEC, which has authority over river activities. Last week a judge ordered the parties to mediation, but as part of the submission to the Court it was learned that the US Army Corps [has written letters to Congress asking for an "exemption"](#) to override any objection that South Carolina may have.



Sierra Club Meetings

RAIL, Monday, November 26, 7:00 p.m.

David Emory - Chair, david.emory@gmail.com

Fundraising Committee, Wednesday, November 28, 7:00 p.m.

Clay Tucker - Chair, tuckerwf12@aol.com

Smart Energy Team Meeting, Monday, December 3, 7:00 p.m.

Seth Gunning - Staff, seth.gunning@sierraclub.org

Wildlands Committee Meeting, Tuesday, December 11, 7:00 p.m.

Mike Murdock - Chair, murdock1@mindspring.com

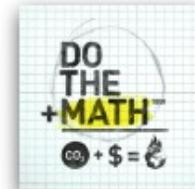
Atlanta Inner City Outings (ICO), Tuesday, December 18, 8:00 p.m.

Naomi Bock - Chair, atlantaico@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

November 20 - 350.org Do the Math Tour

[This won't be your typical lecture.](#) Each event will be a unique and interactive experience, unlike any talk you've been to before. It will pick up where Bill McKibben's landmark Rolling Stone article left off — and everyone who comes will be asked to join a growing movement that is strong enough to stand up to the fossil fuel industry. Together we'll mount an unprecedented campaign to cut off the industry's financial and political support by divesting our schools, churches and government from fossil fuels.



December 2 – Hike at Sweetwater Creek



Join the Sierra Club on a [hike in Sweetwater Creek State Park](#). We will begin on the 2-mile Blue Trail and explore the wildlife and plant communities of the park. We will then continue on the 1-mile Red Trail along Sweetwater Creek. This 3-mile, easy-moderate loop, is a beautiful hike just minutes outside of Atlanta. Parking is \$5 or check out a ParkPass from your local library to park for free. If interested, contact Jackie Pilcowitz. Phone: 248-320-4903 or E-mail: jpilcow@emory.edu.

December 4 - Stop Seismic Testing Rally!

Join coastal activists in Johnson Square in downtown Savannah on for a press-conference and [protest against the Department of Interior's plans to conduct seismic airgun testing all along the Southeast Coast](#), from Delaware to Florida. Part of the protest will be ear-splitting airgun blasts intended to simulate the underwater blasts – of course, we won't kill or injure anyone – so we can't really show what the testing will be like for whales and dolphins, along with all the other affected undersea critters



December 12 - Holiday Open House @ the Chapter

Join the Sierra Club for a Holiday Open House from 3-8pm. Stop by for holiday cheer, get your 2013 Sierra Club calendars and enjoy the company of staff, board members and environmental friends new and old! RSVP [here](#).

Help us keep Georgia's wild places wild.

Your donation can do so much to help us continue to protect Georgia's environment.



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