



COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY
BEAUFORT COUNTY PLANNING DIVISION
Multi-Government Center • 100 Ribaut Road, Room 115
Post Office Drawer 1228, Beaufort SC 29901-1228
Phone: (843) 255-2140 • FAX: (843) 255-9432

SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, October 13, 2015

5:30 p.m.

Executive Conference Room, Administration Building
100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, South Carolina

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d), as amended, all local media was duly notified of the time, date, place and agenda of this meeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER – 5:30 P.M.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. REVIEW OF MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 15, 2015 ([backup](#))
4. REVIEW OF REVISED CHAPTER 6: CULTURAL RESOURCES ([backup](#))
5. OTHER BUSINESS
 - A. Next Meeting – Tuesday, November 10, 2015, at 5:30 p.m.
6. ADJOURNMENT





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The special meeting of the Beaufort County Planning Commission (hereinafter “Commission”) was held on Tuesday, September 15, 2015, in Executive Conference Room 170, the Beaufort County Administration Building at 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, South Carolina.

Members Present:

Mr. Robert Semmler, Chairman
Mr. George Johnston

Mr. Charles Brown
Mr. Edward Riley III

Mr. Marque Fireall
Mr. Randolph Stewart

Members Absent: Ms. Diane Chmelik, Ms. Carolyn Davis, and Mr. Eric Walsnovich

Staff Present:

Mr. Anthony J. Criscitiello, Planning Director
Ms. Delores Frazier, Assistant Planning Director
Mr. Robert Merchant, Long-range Planner
Ms. Barbara Childs, Administrative Assistant to the Planning Director
Ms. Allison Coppage, Staff Attorney

Other Attendees: Reed Armstrong, Coastal Conservation League

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Robert Semmler called the meeting to order at approximately 5:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mr. Semmler led those assembled in the Executive Conference Room with the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

REVIEW OF REVISED CHAPTER 4: LAND USE

Mr. Robert Merchant briefed the Commissioners regarding the staff changes to the chapter, as recommended by the Commission:

- Page 4-4: Changed the 11% uncommitted lands in Southern Beaufort County to 9.4% due to the purchases made by the Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program (RCLPP) and new planned unit developments (PUDs).
- Figures 4-1 and 4-2 show updated calculations.
- Changed all references of Zoning Development Standards Ordinance (ZDSO) to Community Development Code (CDC).
- Page 4:12: Updated the Greenprint process and changed the Rural & Critical Land Preservation Program (RCLPP) consultant/administrator to Beaufort County Open Land Trust (*Commission discussion included the maintenance of RCLPP properties, and turning the land purchases into revenue returns so that the program can pay for itself*).
- Pg. 4-23: Future Land Use Plan: Hilton Head Island uses its zoning map as their future land use map because of its mature developed community.
- Page 4-30: Added wording “local and traditional” and “avoid commercial fishing activities that are detrimental to the water quality and the environment.” (*Discussion by Commissioners included the aquifer recharge, encouraging stormwater into the soil*)

rather than the river, addressing the issue in the Comprehensive Plan, recommending an additional comment regarding concern with setbacks, the critical concern of our water quality /staff noting that coastal waters were addressed in Chapter 5, that the southern part of Hilton Head uses water from the aquifer, that it was hard to tie ground water hard to a land use policy, that most public water is from the Savannah River, concern that the Savannah River supply will be reduced by piping water to Atlanta, addressing future threats should a large industry require water, the future port in Jasper County, and attaching a memo addressing the major concerns of the Commission to County Council.)

- Page 4-36 thru 4-45: *Staff explained the changes and rationale of the Recommendations.*
- Page 4-42: *Commission asked for clarification on who does the review in Recommendation 4-10.*
- Page 4-43: *Added Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in Recommendation 4-2. (Discussion included the City of Ridgeland annexation that was not shown on the map. Ms. Allison Coppage, the Staff Attorney, will research the annexation and report back to the Commission.)*
- *Commission discussion included the abandonment of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) and the effects thereof; noting that gated communities do not have to be PUDs, i.e. Spring Island and Heyward Point (Altamaha); and that gated communities are still permitted, but harder to obtain.*

REVIEW OF MINUTES: The Commission reviewed the August 11, 2015, meeting minutes. Discussion by the Commission included concern for the 8-foot porch requirement. **Motion:** Mr. Randolph Stewart made a motion, and Mr. George Johnston seconded the motion, **to approve the August 11, 2015, meeting minutes as written.** The motion **carried** (FOR: Brown, Fireall, Johnston, Riley, Semmler, and Stewart; ABSENT: Chmelik, Davis, Walsnovich).

Additional discussion by Commissioners included:

- Adding tourism to Goal 7/page 4-2 (*staff stated it was under the economic development chapter*).
- The chapter looking excellent, in principal.
- Page 4-42: Correcting the name “Southern Beaufort County Corridor Beautification Board.”
- The Sea Level Rise Study that the Staff is awaiting its completion.
- Adding off-shore drilling and testing in the memo to County Council; adding the topic in the Comprehensive Plan that it threatens water quality; concern with redevelopment of beach front property; the Comprehensive Plan being the responsibility of the Planning Commission; the County’s role / rights regarding such polities; the Staff’s role regarding recommending such policies; noting the state’s position on this policy; the Federal mandate on this policy; and an example where the citizens stopped off shore drilling rigs in Bluffton.

OTHER BUSINESS: Mr. Semmler noted that the next special Planning Commission meeting would occur on September 15th, and not the 8th as indicated on the agenda. The regular Planning Commission meeting will be on September 3rd. Mr. Semmler wants to receive the revised

chapters at the special meeting, and he does not want a page by page review at the regular meeting. He wants the special meetings to be one-hour long.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Semmler adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:31 p.m. with no objections from the Commissioners.

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Barbara Childs, Admin. Assistant to the Planning Director

Robert Semmler, Beaufort County Planning Commission Chairman

APPROVED: **October 13, 2015, as written** (no video recording occurred)

6

Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan Cultural Resources – Summary of Revisions

This document accompanies the Chapter 6: Cultural Resources of the Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan as revised as part of the 5 year review. In the accompanying document all proposed changes are highlighted. Additions are indicated as underlined; deletions are indicated as ~~struckthrough~~.

Introduction – No revisions.

Historic and Archaeological Resources

RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION – The footnote in the first paragraph was revised to recognize that the City of Beaufort has made available the Above Ground Historic Resources Survey.

EXISTING REGULATORY FRAMEWORK – Language under the Historic Preservation District Ordinance heading was revised to recognize the incorporation of these standards in the Community Development Code; clarification that these standards only apply to the unincorporated County; and that a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued for projects that meet the ordinance.

OTHER PLANNING AND PRESERVATION EFFORTS – Language was added to recognize preservation efforts in private gated communities such as Dataw Island, Spring Island, and Haig Point.

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE – No revisions.

CONCLUSIONS – No revisions.

Scenic Highways and Byways

EXISTING PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT EFFORTS – The language was revised to recognize new architectural, landscaping and lighting standards in the Community Development Code and the replacement of the Corridor Review Boards with the Design Review Board. A paragraph was added to address the Canopy Roads Brochure. A paragraph was added to address the Southern Beaufort County Corridor Beautification Board.

CONCLUSIONS – The conclusion was revised to recognize changes in ordinances.

Maritime Heritage – The sidebar was updated to the most recent figures available from the National Marine Fisheries Service.

LOCAL SEAFOOD INDUSTRY – Information was updated on Port Royal Seafood to reflect current situation.

RECREATIONAL FISHING AND BOATING – Boat registration information and projections were updated. A revision was made to recognize that the City of Beaufort owned and maintained the Pigeon Point Boat Ramp.

OTHER WATER ACCESS ISSUES – The number of fishing piers was revised.

CONCLUSIONS – No revisions.

Agricultural Heritage – No revisions.

HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE IN BEAUFORT COUNTY – No revisions.

EXISTING CONDITIONS– Information on the total acreage of farmland and number of individual farms was updated to reflect the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture. Table 6-1 was revised as well.

LOCAL MARKETING INITIATIVES – The wording was simplified to recognize that specific information about farmers markets change year to year. References to the Small Farmer Wholesale Auction Market were removed since this program is no longer in effect.

CONCLUSIONS – A small revision was made recognizing that the wholesale auction market was not currently in operation.

Military Heritage – The Broad River was revised to Port Royal Sound to be more historically and geographically accurate.

MILITARY HISTORY – No revisions.

RECENT MILITARY ACTIVITY – A small revision was made to recognize the F35B Joint Strike Fighter and the change in mission at MCAS Beaufort.

CONCLUSIONS – No revisions.

Gullah Culture – No revisions.

ISSUES AFFECTING GULLAH CULTURE IN BEAUFORT COUNTY – No revisions.

LOCAL INITIATIVES TO PRESERVE GULLAH HERITAGE – A revision was made to the Corners Area Community Preservation District to recognize the more recent work of the CP Committee and the new zoning districts adopted as part of the Community Development Code.

GULLAH/GEECHEE CULTURAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR – The language was updated to recognize the completion of the Management Plan.

CONCLUSIONS – No revisions.

Visual and Performing Arts – Revise if more current data is available.

PERFORMANCE VENUES – An update was made to recognize the performance space within the ARTworks Community Art Center in Beaufort.

MUSEUMS – The Heyward House, Port Royal Sound Foundation Maritime Center, and upcoming Santa Elena Foundation Interpretive Center were added. The paragraph was revised in bullet format for ease in reading.

EDUCATION AND SUPPORT – The language was revised to reflect current information on the Arts Council of Beaufort County. On the sidebar, Art Works Magazine was removed since it is no longer published. A photograph was added showing the Black Box Theater at the ARTworks Community Arts Center in Beaufort.

CONCLUSIONS – No revisions.

Recommendations

Recommendation 6-1: Archaeological and Historic Resources – No revisions.

Recommendation 6-2: Archaeological and Historic Resources – Public Outreach – No revisions.

Recommendation 6-3: Rural Vernacular Architecture – No Revisions.

Recommendation 6-4: Scenic Highways and Byways – The first bullet point was revised to recognize the Southern Beaufort County Corridor Beautification Board. The second bullet was revised to remove reference to the Corridor Overlay District. A fifth bullet was added calling for better coordination with SCDOT and utility companies on tree trimming activities.

Recommendation 6-5: Maritime Heritage – Working Waterfronts – No revisions.

Recommendation 6-6: Maritime Heritage – Recreational Boating and Fishing – The fourth bullet was removed since it has been implemented.

Recommendation 6-7: Maritime Heritage – On-Shore Fishing - No revisions.

Recommendation 6-8: Maritime Heritage – Small Watercraft – No revisions.

Recommendation 6-9: Maritime Heritage – Funding – No revisions.

Recommendation 6-10: Agricultural Heritage – Regulatory Framework – No revisions.

Recommendation 6-11: Agricultural Heritage – Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Program – A third bullet was added calling for coordination with USDA on agricultural preservation.

Recommendation 6-12: Agricultural Heritage – Markets – The recommendation was simplified to remove dated information.

Recommendation 6-13: Agricultural Heritage – Local Foods – A fourth bullet point was added calling for community gardens and farms in urban areas.

Recommendation 6-14: Military Heritage – The third bullet was revised to reflect the new name for the overlay district. A fifth bullet was added calling for the implementation of the JLUS.

Recommendation 6-15: Gullah Culture – The eighth bullet was revised to recognize the adoption of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan.

Recommendation 6-16: Visual and Performing Arts – The third bullet was revised to simply call for more venues, classrooms and galleries to support local artists and performers.



***Beaufort County Comprehensive
Plan***
Cultural Resources

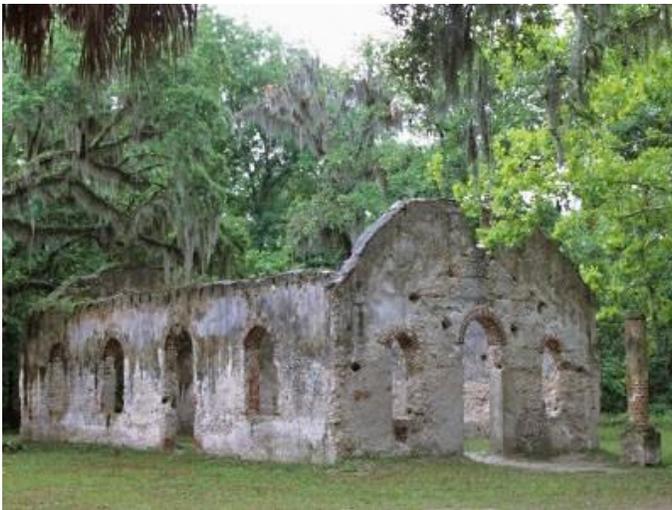


Table of Contents

Introduction.....	6-1
Historic and Archaeological Resources.....	6-2
Resource Identification.....	6-2
Existing Regulatory Framework.....	6-3
Other Planning and Preservation Efforts.....	6-4
Vernacular Architecture.....	6-4
Conclusions.....	6-5
Scenic Highways and Byways.....	6-6
Existing Preservation and Enhancement Efforts.....	6-6
Conclusions.....	6-7
Maritime Heritage.....	6-8
Local Seafood Industry.....	6-8
Recreational Fishing and Boating.....	6-10
Other Water Access Issues.....	6-10
Conclusions.....	6-10
Agricultural Heritage.....	6-11
History of Agriculture in Beaufort County.....	6-11
Existing Conditions.....	6-12
Local Marketing Initiatives.....	6-13
Conclusions.....	6-13
Military Heritage.....	6-15
Military History.....	6-15
Recent Military Activity.....	6-17
Conclusions.....	6-17
Gullah Culture.....	6-18
Issues Affecting Gullah Culture in Beaufort County.....	6-18
Local Initiatives to Preserve Gullah Heritage.....	6-19
Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.....	6-19
Conclusions.....	6-20
Visual and Performing Arts.....	6-21
Performance Venues.....	6-21
Museums.....	6-22
Education and Support.....	6-22
Conclusions.....	6-22
Recommendations.....	6-24



Introduction

Beaufort County is one of America's historic and cultural treasures, a place where history and tradition are reflected in a vibrant landscape that provides a tangible link between past, present and future generations. Beaufort's attractiveness as a place to live and work, as a destination for visitors, and consequently its economic well being, are directly related to its historic character and unique quality of life.

Beaufort County's popularity and high growth rate has brought both recognition of the County's more visible historic assets and an influx of financial support for the rehabilitation of historic structures. As a result, Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal, the Town of Bluffton and the Town of Hilton Head Island each have adopted ordinances that protect historic and archaeological resources.

Given the County's rapid population growth over the last 20 years, however, it is vital to analyze the region's less tangible, but more inherent cultural resources, which make up the Lowcountry way of life. These resources include the County resident's relationship to the water as a source of food, recreation and transportation; the County's rich agricultural heritage; the County's military heritage; the County's scenic highways and byways; Gullah culture; and the active visual and performing arts community. Each of these components are vital to the region's identity. They add to the quality of life for residents; they make this region attractive to visitors and future residents; they drive the local tourism economy; and they ideally make this region an attractive site to relocate or create new businesses.



Historic and Archaeological Resources

Beaufort County is blessed with a wealth of important historic buildings and sites as well as numerous pre-historic and historic archaeological sites. The County and its municipalities have devoted much time and effort to both inventorying these sites and creating the necessary regulatory framework to protect these sites from the potential adverse impacts of new development, redevelopment, rehabilitation, and neglect.

Resource Identification



The Church of the Cross, located in Bluffton's historic district, was constructed in 1854

Beaufort County Above Ground Historic Resources Survey: In 1997, Beaufort County completed a survey of historic buildings and other above ground historic resources that covered the unincorporated areas of Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort, and the Town of Port Royal. The Town of Bluffton was surveyed in 1995. The County survey identified over 1,500 historic sites and buildings; provided an historic overview of Beaufort County; an architectural analysis by building type, material and style; provided recommendations for National Register of Historic Places eligibility; and gave recommendations for future preservation actions. The survey is used by the County and municipalities in staff project development review, and by property owners, realtors, developers, historians, and other researchers as well as by the public. Because the survey primarily included only those properties that could be seen from public roads or those surveyed on private property with owner permission, the County continues to work with property owners to identify sites missed by the survey. For example, County staff and the Historic Beaufort Foundation have worked with local citizens to locate and survey rural cemeteries, the majority of which are African-American. The survey can be accessed on Beaufort County's website¹.

¹ Presently only the unincorporated County, the City of Beaufort, and the Town of Port Royal are available on the website. Bluffton will be added soon. The City of Beaufort plans to include the city survey in its website.



Historic cemetery on Daufuskie Island

The Historic Preservation Review Board and staff have worked with the following private owners and organizations to protect important historic sites and buildings.

- Rose Hill Plantation
- Darrah Hall at Penn Center
- Brick Church
- Coffin Point Plantation House
- Old Sheldon Church Ruins
- Lobeco School
- First African Baptist Church (Daufuskie Island)
- Mt. Carmel Church (Daufuskie Island)
- Tombee Plantation

Archaeological Sites: Beaufort County has nearly 2,000 identified archaeological sites both underground and underwater. A majority of these sites are identified by surveys done when development projects are undertaken. In addition, archaeologists using grants from federal and state sources perform data recovery work on important sites such as the Santa Elena/Charlesfort site on Parris Island. On occasion, groups of local citizens commission archaeologists to identify and protect sites on private property. Projects of this type have been done on Dataw Island, Callawassie Island, and the Mitchelville area on Hilton Head Island. County staff has also worked with the Underwater Division of the SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology on a project to survey underwater archaeological sites in the Port Royal Sound.

Existing Regulatory Framework

The regulatory framework for protecting the County historic resources includes federal and state requirements along with County and municipal regulations. Generally, County and municipal regulations are meant to attend to gaps not addressed by state and federal regulations.

Federal and State Requirements: There are several mechanisms at the federal and state level, by which impacts on archaeological and historic sites are required to be identified and mitigated. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires consideration of historic properties when the federal government is involved in financing, licensing, or permitting a project. Section 106 requires federal agencies to consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), assess potential adverse affects of a project on historic resources and to address and mitigate those affects. Various state laws, such as the SC Coastal Zone Management Act of 1979 have similar provisions.

Historic Preservation Overlay District Ordinance: Beaufort County has adopted as part of the Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance-Community Development Code, a section that provides protection of the County's historic and archaeological resources. This ordinance requires that all work done on the exterior of designated historic buildings in the unincorporated County to be reviewed and approved either by the Historic Preservation Review Board or by staff acting on behalf of the Board. Once a project is approved, a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued, which is required before a building permit can be received.

Archaeological and Historic Impact Assessment Ordinance: This ordinance requires developers to provide information regarding the development site. After conducting document searches, consultations with compliance archaeologists and other research, the Planning Director and Historic Preservationist determine whether a survey of the property will be required. Reports, maps or other

information resulting from any survey are reviewed by the County, who works with the developer to devise a mitigation plan for the treatment of any identified archaeological resources. The plan would then be included in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to be signed by the developer and the County.

Municipal Ordinances: The City of Beaufort, Town of Port Royal, Town of Bluffton and the Town of Hilton Head Island all have ordinances that provide some degree of protection of historic and archaeological resources. In the past, Beaufort County staff has provided professional assistance to the municipalities to identify and protect historic resources.

Other Planning and Preservation Efforts

Over the last 10 years, Beaufort County has undertaken a number of projects to preserve important County owned historic properties and to acquire and preserve other important historic sites through its Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Program.

- **Lobeco Library:** Listed in the National Register of Historic Places and owned by the Beaufort County Board of Education, this school building was renovated in 2003 into the Lobeco branch of the Beaufort County Library.
- **Barker Field Tabby Ruins:** Beaufort County financed the restoration of tabby ruins located in Barker Field County Park on Hilton Head Island.
- **Ford Shell Ring:** Beaufort County in conjunction with the Town of Hilton Head Island purchased a 6.8-acre parcel that contains Native American Shell Rings believed to have ceremonial importance. The site is also home to the remains of a freedman's cottage.
- **Altamaha Town:** Beaufort County purchased a 100-acre site located on Old Baileys Road in 2004 that includes Altamaha, a Yamasee Indian town that is being developed as a passive park and historic site.
- **Fort Fremont:** Beaufort County purchased 14 acres on St. Helena Island that contains the ruins of a historic Spanish-American War fort that was completed in 1898.

The Town of Hilton Head Island has also been active in the preservation of historic and archaeological sites. Town preservation efforts include Greens Shell Ring, Honey Horn Plantation, Jenkins Island Shell Pit, Jenkins Island Cemetery, and the Fish Haul Creek Site. In addition to public sector preservation efforts, private residential communities, such as Dataw Island, Spring Island and Haig Point have preserved tabby ruins and other above ground features.



The Lobeco Library is located in the restored Lobeco School that was constructed in 1937.



Fort Fremont dates back to 1898 when it was constructed for the Spanish-American War.



Vernacular architecture on Daufuskie Island.

Vernacular Architecture

Beaufort County has a rich inventory of vernacular architecture, much of which is being lost to redevelopment and neglect. Protection of these older structures, many of which are located in the rural and less affluent parts of the County, is vital both to preserving an important component of the County's historic built environment and as a source of affordable housing. Many of these structures are modest homes built largely by African-Americans. The best examples can be found on St. Helena Island, Daufuskie Island and in the Northwest Quadrant in the City of Beaufort. Non-residential vernacular structures include rural roadside markets and truck farming packing houses.



Albany Groceries, located in Dale, is a good example of commercial vernacular architecture.

Conclusions

Beaufort County and its municipalities have devoted many resources to both inventory and protect historic structures and archaeological sites. These preservation efforts need to be continued and enhanced in the future. Special emphasis should be placed on identifying and preserving the County's most endangered structures and sites through proactive means (adaptive reuse, grant funded rehabilitation, etc.).



Scenic Highways and Byways

Beaufort County's highways are the County's primary and most visible public realm. It is where the manmade environment intersects with the natural environment. Therefore, scenic highways and byways are included as a cultural resource. It is the most frequent way that people enjoy the scenic beauty of the County.

Fifty years ago, Beaufort County's transportation network was made up of 2-lane highways, many of which were completely shaded under a canopy of oaks. Population growth accompanied by development has rendered this a vanishing feature of the Lowcountry landscape. Most of the County's principal and minor arterials and its major collectors have been or are slated to be widened to four or six lanes.

Existing Preservation and Enhancement Efforts

In the past 15 years, Beaufort County has recognized the importance of preserving the scenic qualities of its highways. These efforts include the adoption of the Corridor Overlay District; the designation of Old Sheldon Church Road as a state scenic highway; and preserving trees and creating context sensitive features when roads are widened.

Development Standards Corridor Overlay District Ordinance:

In 1992, Beaufort County adopted the Highway Corridor Overlay District to apply to U.S. 278, the primary corridor leading onto Hilton Head Island. The Corridor Overlay District ~~has since been~~ ~~was then~~ expanded to include all major highways in Beaufort County. The district ~~provides~~ ~~provided~~ standards for architecture, landscaping (including tree preservation), signage, and lighting for new development along the County's major highways. ~~The Community Development Code then~~ ~~expanded these standards to apply to all development with the~~ ~~exception of single-family and two-family residential.~~ While the ~~corridor overlay district has~~ ~~these development standards have~~ helped to limit the potential adverse visual impact of commercial growth along these highways, ~~the standards do not apply to improvements within the~~ ~~highway right-of-way.~~ ~~there are several limitations of the district that~~ ~~could be improved upon:~~

- The corridor overlay district standards are modeled after similar standards adopted on Hilton Head Island. Some of these standards are not as well suited to the more rural parts of the County.
- The standards do not apply to improvements within the highway right-of-way. Therefore, road widening, median landscaping, SCDOT maintenance, turning lanes, and other road alterations fall outside the district requirements and the purview of the Corridor Review Boards.
- The standards do not apply to many of the County's major and minor collector roads. Many of these roads still have significant scenic resources.



Old Sheldon Church Road was designated a State Scenic Byway in 2003.

Southern Beaufort County Corridor Beautification Board:

Since development standards only apply to development on individual parcels, additional oversight was needed for road improvements within the highway right-of-way. In 2013, County Council authorized the creation of the Southern Beaufort County Corridor Beautification Board. County Council created the Board to assist Council in the design, implementation, fundraising and promotion of median beautification and other aesthetic improvements along highways in Southern Beaufort County.

State Scenic Byway (Old Sheldon Church Road): The State designated Old Sheldon Church Road a Scenic Byway in 2003. Old Sheldon Church Road is one of the County's most scenic highways. A trip on Old Sheldon Church Road offers glimpses into the past through the remains of the Sheldon Church ruins, the entrances to several historic plantations, and views of former rice fields. In addition to its historic importance, the road is one of the few remaining canopy roads in Beaufort County. In recent years, the road has become a short cut between I-95 and Beaufort for both cars and trucks. Accompanying state scenic byway designation, Beaufort County adopted a management plan to protect the highway's scenic qualities. This management plan includes called for extending the corridor overlay district to apply to Old Sheldon Church Road; working with the state to reduce speed limits and to limit truck traffic; and working with SCDOT and the utility companies to utilize best management practices when trees are pruned for maintenance.

Canopy Roads Brochure: In 2009, the Beaufort County Planning Department produced a brochure titled *The Canopy Roads of Beaufort County*. The purpose of the brochure was to provide greater awareness of the County's remaining canopy roads and highlight them as a unique feature of the region's history, culture and natural environment.



Conclusions

Beaufort County has taken important steps to protect the scenic qualities of its highways and byways. ~~The Architectural, landscaping, signage and lighting standards have corridor overlay district~~ has been a key component in these preservation efforts and should be ~~continually implemented enhanced and expanded~~ to provide more protection to the County's remaining rural scenic highways. The designation of Old Sheldon Church Road as a state scenic byway and the accompanying management plan represent the next step in moving the protection of scenic corridors beyond the regulatory environment to include public outreach and partnerships with SCDOT and utility companies. The County should seek this designation on other highways with similar qualities. Finally, the County has many rural scenic highways that ~~do not fall under the jurisdiction of the corridor overlay district and~~ are not likely to be eligible for state scenic designation. The County should take steps to ~~inventory these highways and~~ develop a management plan to protect and promote the scenic qualities of these roads.



Maritime Heritage

Beaufort County consists roughly of half land and half water. Throughout its history, the County's waterways have been a source of food, industry, trade, transportation and recreation. The County's culture and identity has been as closely tied to its waterways as it has been tied to its land. Seafood, fish, shrimp, crabs and oysters have been a staple of the Lowcountry diet since the days of the Native American inhabitants. Historically many of Beaufort County's islands lacked direct access to the mainland and therefore water was vital to transportation. Today, recreational boating and fishing are an important facet both to the Lowcountry way of life and to the local economy as an increasing number of visitors are interested in chartering fishing boats and in ecotourism. Although there is an abundance of rivers, bays and marshes in Beaufort County, the rapid pace of growth and rising land values have challenged the traditional uses of the County's waterways.

- Growth has brought with it concerns about declining water quality, excessive stormwater runoff and increased pollutants into the local marshes and waterways.
- Waterfront access facilities, such as boat landings and fishing piers, have not kept pace with population growth.
- Rising land values have put a premium on waterfront property and made it very expensive to purchase new land for waterfront access.
- Rising land values have also brought about pressure on commercial waterfronts to sell to the highest bidder.
- Increased residential development on marshfront and waterfront property has brought about conflicts between property owners and those harvesting crabs and oysters.

Summary of 2006-2013 South Carolina Shellfish Catches

- Blue Crab – 4.32-5.13 million lbs. - \$3.4-6.4 million
- Shrimp (Brown, White & Other) – 2.2-1.99 million lbs. - \$5.6-5.8 million
- Eastern Oysters – 81,548 bushels 0.37 million - \$1.2-2.3 million

Source: NOAA – National Marine Fisheries Service

Local Seafood Industry

Fishing as a commercial venture dates back to the colonial times when street peddlers and small merchants sold fish and shellfish for local consumption. In the late 1800's, canning became a major part of the seafood business, allowing local seafood to be sold to other parts of the world. Freezing became popular in the late 1940s and is still used for a majority of today's seafood catch, especially when shipped elsewhere. Today the industry is in decline; nevertheless, the demand for fresh

*Issues Facing the Local
Seafood Industry*

- Low-priced imported shrimp and crabs
- Rising fuel costs
- Rising labor costs
- Increased land values affecting waterfront access
- Loss of processing facilities
- Age of fleet
- Loss of maintenance facilities



A commercial crabber on the Combahee River.

seafood from Beaufort County's waters is still high. Many of the hardships facing the local seafood industry are international in scale – flat market prices, competition from Asia and Latin America, and rising fuel costs. This plan focuses on local issues and possible solutions to protect the viability of the industry.

Working Waterfronts: The local seafood industry relies on the availability of ice, fuel, grading and processing, freezers, access to markets, and places to moor fishing boats. Beaufort County has nine remaining working waterfronts (Map 1) that provide these services to the industry. The long-term viability of these waterfronts is in question as owners face both the declining profitability of the industry and rising land costs that make it attractive to sell.

Other Commercial Fishing Concerns: The local seafood industry is affected by other aspects of rapid population growth. Increased development has led to the closure of shellfish beds, reducing the availability of oysters and clams. Stormwater runoff also affects the salinity levels in localized areas, which has led to declining crab populations. The proliferation of private docks on small tidal creeks and an increasing number of no wake zones have made it more difficult and time consuming to harvest crab pots and to reach oyster beds. Finally, most crabbers and oystermen utilize the County's boat landings and must compete with an increasing number of recreational boaters for a limited number of landings.

Local Initiatives: Beaufort County and its municipalities have taken several steps to protect the viability of the local seafood industry.

- **Commercial Fishing Village Overlay District (CFVOD):** In 2000, Beaufort County Council adopted the CFVOD. The process involved inventorying the County's existing working waterfronts and interviewing those involved in the seafood industry to determine the existing and future needs of the commercial fishing operations. The purpose of the district was to remove regulatory barriers that could threaten the operation and expansion of the existing active uses.
- **Bluffton Oyster Company:** In 2002, Beaufort County purchased 5 acres at the site of the Bluffton Oyster Company, the last oyster shucking facility in Beaufort County. The Bluffton Oyster Company continues to operate under a long-term lease arrangement with Beaufort County.
- **Benny Hudson Seafood Company:** In 2003, the Town of Hilton Head Island purchased the development rights of this active seafood operation which allows for the continued operation of the company, provides tax breaks to the property owner, and protects the property from redevelopment.
- **Port Royal Seafood:** The Town of Port Royal has taken took over the management and operation of this facility to keep it viable as the



Recreational cast netting for shrimp.

Port of Port Royal property is sold and redeveloped. **However, with the July 2015 fire and pending sale of the Port property, the future of this operation is uncertain.**

Recreational Fishing and Boating

Recreational fishing and boating is a traditional local pastime as well as a draw for visitors. In 2007, Field and Stream magazine named Beaufort a top 20 fishing town. Local coastal waters offer sheepshead, mullet, croaker, sea trout, and whiting, along with crabs, shrimp and oysters. Cobia season brings many visitors to the Broad River in May. The popularity of recreational fishing and boating also supports fishing charters and ecotourism which are a component of the local economy. According to SCDNR, in **2007 2014**, there were **12,225-15,131** boats registered in Beaufort County. Assuming that boat registration keeps pace with projected population growth, Beaufort County can expect **20,789 18,278** boats in **2025 2030**. This growth will place further stress on the County's 26 public boat landings.



The Hunting Island Fishing Pier extends 1,120 feet into Fripp Inlet.

The Beaufort County Public Works Department maintains and manages **26 25** public boat ramps **and the City of Beaufort owns the Pigeon Point boat ramp**. In 2007, SCDHEC/OCRM published the *South Carolina Five Coastal County Boat Ramp Study*. This study provided a detailed assessment of the County's existing boat landings and provided the following general findings and recommendations

- There is a major need for more parking at existing boat ramps;
- Existing boat landings need to be upgraded and repaired with new restrooms, more trash disposal, and better lighting;
- Certain accesses should be designated for non-motorized uses such as fishing, crabbing, kayaking, canoeing, and viewing; and
- Passenger cars should not park in car/trailer parking spaces.

Other Water Access Issues

The demand for shore-based fishing is already evident in the number of people fishing from bridges and in undesignated areas in proximity to roads and bridges. Changing demographics have the potential to change the desires of the public with respect to water access needs. As the population ages there may be increasing demands for shore-based fishing facilities. Beaufort County has **eight ten** fishing piers. In addition to shore based fishing, canoes and kayaks compete with motorized boats for the same limited number of water access facilities.



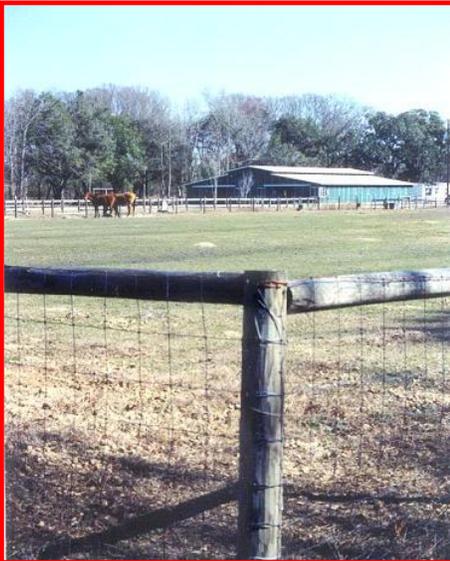
A shrimp boat on the May River.

Conclusions

Because of growth and rising land prices, the traditional relationship between County residents and the water is being challenged. To address these challenges, Beaufort County will need to take a more



active role in preserving traditional water dependent uses and providing improved access to the water for all County residents.



Agricultural Heritage

Historically and culturally, Beaufort County's identity has been closely tied to its soil. For much of the County's history, agriculture has been the mainstay of the local economy. Agriculture has also played an important role in sustaining its population through periods of isolation and hard economic times. From the period immediately following the Civil War through the first half of the 20th century when employment and capital were scarce, vegetables, melons, poultry and livestock provided the County's many small property owners, many of them freed slaves, the means to survive and remain independent in spite of poverty and isolation. While the County's recent population growth has brought increased economic opportunities, the importance of farming and the skills related to farming are in decline. Preserving and enhancing agriculture as a way of life in Beaufort County is vital to maintaining the County's economic and demographic diversity, providing economic opportunities to rural residents and landowners, reducing the pressures of sprawl, providing a source of local fresh produce, and retaining the traditions and characteristics that make this region unique.



Dempsey Farms on St. Helena Island.

History of Agriculture in Beaufort County

Beaufort County is endowed with 250 frost-free days and good agricultural soils. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) designates 25% of the County acreage as unique, 3% as prime, and 25% of the total County acreage as additional farmland of state importance. The unique category was assigned due to soil characteristics and a location that is favored by warm moist air from the nearby ocean and tidal streams. The USDA stipulates that when the soils are well managed, they are among the most productive in the region.

The early colonists found Beaufort County almost completely wooded and densely populated with many species of wildlife. Lumber for shipbuilding and the use of other forest products became a major industry of the early settlers. In 1680, rice was introduced into the region. By 1719, the colonists, merchants, traders and farmers had built up great wealth from rice production from the abundant resources available. Indigo was introduced in the early to mid-1700s, and remained profitable until after the Revolutionary War when the English



Marshview Community Organic Farm is a local example of Community Sustainable Agriculture.

government removed their bounty on it. Sea Island long-staple cotton, known for its long, smooth fibers, was introduced in 1785 and soon became the next major cash crop. While Sea Island cotton nearly disappeared from production during the Civil War, it made a modest comeback in the 1880s, only to fall victim to the boll weevil in the 1920s. Following the Civil War, the agricultural economy of Beaufort plummeted. Although a number of crops were grown, including corn, tobacco, rice, potatoes, truck crops and livestock, none reached the prominence of the rice, indigo, or Sea Island long-staple cotton of previous years. In the early 1900's, the USDA encouraged truck farming in the Southeast, due to its long growing season. Truck crops were a large and profitable industry in Beaufort County during the early to mid-1900s, and much of today's agricultural production is based upon this agricultural sector.

Existing Conditions

According to the ~~2002~~ 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture, there were ~~44,373~~ 42,177 acres of land classified as farmland in Beaufort County that ~~produced crops with a total value of \$9.8 million~~ with 137 individual farms. Table 6-1 depicts that although Beaufort County lost about ~~10,000~~ 12,000 acres of farmland between the years of 1987 and ~~2002~~ 2012, with a modest increase in the corresponding number of farms ~~has not decreased by the same percentage~~. Farms with greater acreage are subject to greater pressure from development and face the continuing need to truck their products longer distances. Large-scale truck farms are still active on St. Helena Island and north of the Whale Branch River. Typically, tomatoes are grown and harvested during the month of June to be shipped to markets in the Northeast.

Table 6-1: Number of Farms and Farmland in Beaufort County

Year	Number of Farms	Land in Farms (acres)
1987	125	54,152
1992	120	44,800
2002	116	44,373
<u>2007</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>49,401</u>
<u>2012</u>	<u>137</u>	<u>42,177</u>

Source: ~~1987, 1992, and 2002~~ 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture

On a smaller scale many other types of crops, including collards, cabbage, turnips, carrots, beans, watermelon, cantaloupe, corn, yellow squash, okra, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and pumpkins are grown locally on small farms and gardens to be marketed at the State Farmers Market in Columbia or at local farmers markets.



The Bluffton Farmers Market.

Local Marketing Initiatives

Increasing energy costs for transportation and recent public demand for locally grown foods have created opportunities for smaller scale farmers. While there is ample production potential, local products must be matched by marketing prospects to promote expansion of small-scale farming geared toward local and regional consumption. Local marketing programs, such as farmers markets, are being initiated and/or expanded on, that are designed to provide visibility of the small farmer to a larger marketplace. The following two local initiatives are designed to increase the profitability of small-scale farming by lining up local growers with consumers.

■ **Farmers Market:** The local Farmer's Market has been in operation since 1987 and currently consists of about 25 participating vendors. In the past, the market was administered by a committee that included representatives from Clemson Extension, farmers, Department of Social Services, and Department of Health and Environmental Control. The administration is in the process of being transferred to the Town of Port Royal with the committee remaining as an advisory group. Currently the Market locates at three sites. On Tuesday afternoons and Saturday mornings the market is located at Heritage Park beside the Naval Hospital in Port Royal; on Thursday mornings at the Shelter Cove Mall on Hilton Head Island; and on Thursday afternoons in Bluffton at the Oyster Factory.



Locally grown turnips at the Bluffton Farmers Market.

■ **Small Farmer Wholesale Auction Market:** The purpose of the wholesale auction market is to provide an outlet for small local farmers to market their products to a broader audience. This will allow the local growers to expand their customer base beyond their traditional audience, which is mainly local roadside stand consumers and to provide small farmers with more opportunities to sell their products and remain competitive in the marketplace, thus maintaining their livelihood and lifestyle. The wholesale auction market, which serves farmers in Beaufort, Charleston, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper Counties, opened in May 2008 in the Town of Ridgeland in Jasper County. A coalition of partners, including the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service, Penn Center, SC State 1890 Research and Extension service and local farmers initiated this project.

Conclusions

While agriculture has been experiencing a slow and steady decline in Beaufort County, there are opportunities arising that may reverse this trend. Rising food and fuel prices along with concerns about the safety and quality of mass-produced food products has led to a worldwide

interest in consuming locally grown and produced food. This global movement has the potential to benefit local small and medium sized growers. In order to facilitate this opportunity, there are three general sets of policies that Beaufort County should pursue.

- Beaufort County should ensure through land use policies and other programs that the potential supply of available land for agriculture is maximized and maintained.
- Beaufort County should support programs aimed at creating marketing opportunities for local growers such as ~~the wholesale auction market and~~ the local farmers markets or the creation of a wholesale auction market.
- Beaufort County should provide information to the public on where locally grown and produced food products can be purchased.



Military Heritage

Beaufort County's military heritage is nearly 500 years old and has influenced virtually every aspect of the local culture. The County is centered around **Port Royal Sound** ~~the Broad River~~ which is the deepest natural harbor in the southeastern United States. This location played a key role in the original settlement of the County; the strategic role the County played in many conflicts over the years; and influenced the location of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island; the Marine Corps Air Station, Beaufort; and the Naval Hospital. The presence of the military today is a major driver of the local economy directly and indirectly providing over \$700 million in sales at local businesses and supporting a total of 17,500 jobs and over \$600 million in personal income each year. The presence of the military has influenced development patterns, the building of roads and other infrastructure and has attracted retirees and tourists.

Military History

From the first European to arrive in what is now Beaufort County to the present the military has played an important role in the life of the area. In 1526 Spanish explorers named the area Santa Elena (St. Helena). The following year the Spanish attempted to place a colony in the Port Royal area. The colony was a failure and the surviving settlers left. The French were the next to come to the region placing a colony on Parris Island in 1562 as they attempted to gain a foothold in southeastern America. They named their fort Charlesfort. This settlement also failed. The Spanish returned and established a colony known as Santa Elena in 1566. They remained until 1587. In 1684 Scottish Presbyterians established Stuart Town believed to be at the present site known as Spanish Point. The colony only lasted for two years after Spanish and Indian forces attacked and destroyed the colony. The survivors fled to Charleston.

Once Beaufort was established in 1711, the SC Legislature approved a series of forts to protect the entrance to the City of Beaufort and Port Royal. In the 1730's Fort Prince Frederick, a tabby fort, was constructed on the site of the present day Naval Hospital. Ruins of the fort remain. In 1755, Fort Lyttelton was built on Spanish Point and in 1811 Fort

Marion was constructed on the same site. Extensive archaeological remains of these forts still exist.

There was considerable activity in the Beaufort area during the Revolutionary War. There were a number of defenses, fortifications and camps in Beaufort County. The most important engagement was the Battle of Port Royal that took place in Gray's Hill. During the American Revolution and the War of 1812, Beaufort was protected by earthworks. These defenses were occupied by the Confederates at the start of the Civil War. Later, the Confederates built works to protect the Charleston to Savannah Railroad. Some of these fortifications were built under the supervision of General Robert E. Lee whose headquarters were at Coosawatchie. Other fortifications were built on Hilton Head and Bay Point Islands to protect Port Royal Sound.

When the Union Army occupied the Beaufort area, several fortifications were built on Hilton Head and Port Royal Islands. A series of earthworks and forts were built between Battery Creek and the Beaufort River. A few of these earthworks remain whole or in part. A partial earthwork named Battery Saxton remains on US 21 near the entrance to the City of Beaufort.

Camp Saxton, located on the site of the present day Naval Hospital, was a camp for the 1st South Carolina Volunteers, the first black regiment in the Union Army. On January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation was read to the troops and freed slaves. The event is celebrated each year on New Year's Day.

On Hilton Head Island, the Confederates built several fortifications including Fort Walker and Fort Beaufort. The Union Army enlarged Fort Walker and renamed it Fort Welles. Other Union fortifications included Fort Howell, Fort Sherman and Fort Mitchel. These last three forts are in a good state of preservation. Mitchelville, a community built for freed slaves in the area became a thriving community during and after the War. Efforts to preserve Mitchelville continue today.

Fort Fremont, named after General John C. Fremont, which included two concrete sea coast batteries, was built on St. Helena Island in 1898 as part of a coastal defense system for the Eastern and Gulf coasts of the United States. The fort consisted of all support needed for the batteries including barracks, officers quarters, a mess hall, bakery, carpenter shop, administration building, a hospital and other buildings. The fort was decommissioned in 1921. Only the batteries, named Jesup and Fornance, and the hospital remain today. The batteries are now owned by Beaufort County and are part of a public passive park. The hospital building is privately owned.



The "Iron Mike" monument to the U.S. Marines stands in front of the Parris Island Headquarters and Service Battalion Barracks

Recent Military Activity

The US Navy and Marine Corps have played an important role in the cultural and economic life of Beaufort for over 100 years. The Navy acquired a portion of Parris Island in the 1890's and built a coaling station and later a dry-dock on the island. The Marine Corps took over the base in the early 20th century and at the end of World War I, acquired the entire island. During WWII, Page Field, a naval air station was located on Parris Island. Today, the island is the site of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, the East Coast training area for Marines.

The establishment of the Marine Corps Air Station dates back to 1941 when 1,300 acres in Beaufort were purchased by the Civil Aeronautics Authority for an auxiliary air station that supported advanced training for anti-submarine patrol squadrons. During the Korean War the Navy decided to establish a Marine Corps air station in Beaufort and the land was purchased by the Federal government. It was activated on January 1, 1955 as Merritt Field, named after Major General Lewie Merritt. In 1959, the Navy built Laurel Bay, a housing complex for Marine and Navy personnel. Today the entire installation includes 6,900 acres at the air station, 1,076 acres at Laurel Bay and an additional 5,182 acres at the Townsend Bombing Range in Georgia, the weapons training installation for the air station. MCAS is currently transitioning from the F18 to the F35B Joint Strike Fighter and a new mission to house three squadrons and to operate a Pilot Training Center.

Conclusions

Today, the Navy and Marine Corps continue to have in an important role in Beaufort and in our nation's defense. Military and civilian personnel contribute significantly to the economy of Beaufort both in money they spend and as part of the non-military workforce. Military personnel also participate in community cultural and charitable organizations. We are reminded of the important role they play as we hear jets flying to and from the Air Station and small arms fire from Parris Island where tomorrows Marines are being trained.



Gullah Culture

The Gullah/Geechee are a community of African-Americans who live along the Atlantic coast on the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia. Generally, the term “Gullah” is used in South Carolina and “Geechee” is used in Georgia. Comprised of descendants of slaves brought from West Africa, Gullah/Geechee communities continue to thrive on the Sea Islands today. The historic isolation of the Sea Islands was crucial to the survival of this culture. Within their rural communities, Gullah/Geechee people were able to maintain language, arts, crafts, religious beliefs, rituals, and foods that are distinctly connected to their West and Central African roots. Today there exists a strong movement to preserve and maintain Beaufort County’s Gullah culture, language and customs.

Issues Affecting Gullah Culture in Beaufort County

As in other parts of the Southeast, Gullah culture is under extreme stress from rapid coastal development, population growth, lack of recognition, and the lack of significant financial resources. Rapid population growth has the potential to substantially alter the traditional social and cultural character of Beaufort County’s Gullah community, as new residents represent different values and customs. The gentrification of St. Helena Island, which represents the County’s largest Gullah community, would result in a greater demand for urban services and eventually to urbanization and higher property values, which would make it more difficult and costly to maintain the traditional rural lifestyle on the Island.



Historic Praise House on St. Helena Island.

Beaufort County’s Gullah communities face other unique challenges brought on by increased development pressure. When Beaufort County was largely rural, large tracts of agricultural and forested land, regardless of their private ownership, provided the Gullah community with traditional access to waterways, oyster beds, hunting grounds and other amenities of the natural environment that were the lifelines for the community. Rising land values, especially along marshes and waterways, have often led to property owners limiting access through



The Gullah Grub, located in the Corner Community on St. Helena Island served traditional Gullah cuisine. It operates under the South Carolina Coastal Community Development Organization.

their properties. In addition, many of the older cemeteries, which play an important role for the Gullah community, are located within the original plantations and are now on private property and difficult to access.

Local Initiatives to Preserve Gullah Heritage

In the past 10 years, Beaufort County, working closely with community groups, has taken several initiatives aimed at strengthening the Gullah community.

Corners Area Community Preservation District: The Corners Community is located around the intersection of Sea Island Parkway (US 21) and Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and is the cultural and commercial heart of St. Helena Island. The 1997 Comprehensive Plan designated this area as a Community Preservation District, which led to a community-based plan that was completed and adopted in 2003. The plan was formulated by the 12-member Corners Area Community Preservation Committee, which conducted 140 meetings over a period of 2 ½ years. The plan outlines policies that encourage the district to be pedestrian friendly, promotes the preservation of historic structures and calls for context sensitive design for the widening of US 21 through the heart of the community. In 2014, based on input from the Community Preservation Committee and island residents, the County adopted transect zones for the Corners Community to further promote the objectives of the plan.

Cultural Protection Overlay District: In order to protect the Gullah cultural heritage of St. Helena Island, the County developed the Cultural Protection Overlay to prevent rural gentrification and displacement of residents in these cultural communities. The intent of this overlay is to protect this area from encroaching development pressures. Currently the district restricts the development of gated communities, golf courses, and resorts. It also prohibits development features that restrict access to water and other culturally significant locations, and franchise design.

Family Compound Option: The family compound option allows longtime rural residents to protect a rural way of life, especially prevalent in the Gullah community, where family members cluster development on family owned or heir's property. The family compound option allows property owners a density bonus for family dwelling units, which can be built either on the applicant's property without being subdivided, or on property subdivided and conveyed to the family members.

Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (National Park Service)



The Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission.

With the passage of the National Heritage Areas Act of 2006 (S. 203), the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor was designated by the National Park Service along the coast from Wilmington, North Carolina to Jacksonville, Florida. The purpose of this heritage corridor is the following:

- To recognize the important contributions made to American history and culture by the Gullah/Geechee.
- To assist federal, state and local governments, grassroots organizations and public and private entities in interpreting the story of the Gullah/Geechee culture and preserving Gullah/Geechee folklore, arts, crafts, and music.
- To assist in identifying and preserving sites, historical data, artifacts, and objects associated with the Gullah/Geechee culture for the benefit and education of the public.

In 2007, the National Park Service appointed a 15 member Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission that is charged with developing and implementing a management plan for the Heritage Corridor. In 2012, the Commission approved the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan for public distribution and submitted the plan to the Department of Interior who approved the plan in 2013.

Conclusions

Beaufort County's Gullah community continues to make it clear that its cultural resources are not only the historic sites, waterways, sacred grounds, farmlands, open spaces, hunting grounds, and the areas in which traditional events have occurred. The major cultural resource is the people themselves. The primary threat to the long-term viability of Beaufort County's Gullah communities is population growth and development. Responsible land use policies that concentrate new growth in urban areas and protect rural areas from high-density development are the most important policy that can be enacted at the County level. The Cultural Protection Overlay District is a good start in protecting Beaufort County's largest Gullah community on St. Helena Island. It is necessary to continue to evaluate what defines St. Helena Island as a significant traditional cultural landscape, as well as to assess the contribution of the Gullah culture, in order to develop more specific provisions within the overlay district that will result in effective long-term protection for the culturally significant aspects of the island.



Visual and Performing Arts

Beaufort County has a thriving, nationally recognized arts community. The City of Beaufort and the Town of Hilton Head Island were listed in the book *100 Best Small Art Towns in America*². Beaufort County is home to a variety of arts organizations, galleries, theater groups, dance groups, orchestras, jazz ensembles, and vocal groups. While the visual and performing arts are a key component of the region's culture and quality of life, they also contribute to the local economy.

In 1999, a study was conducted to measure the economic impact of visual and performing arts on Beaufort County. At that time, it was determined that direct expenditures of the industry totaled more than \$10 million annually³. In addition, the study indicated that for every \$1 of financial support to the arts by local governments, \$6 is returned to the local economy. While this information is dated, it provides some indication of the economic importance of this industry.

Performance Venues

Beaufort County has a number of performing arts facilities that provide venues for both professional performers and grass roots theater groups and musicians. The Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, on Hilton Head Island, includes a 350-seat main theater and two smaller venues for youth and experimental theater. They also have a gallery for the visual arts that provides space for national exhibits, statewide exchanges, and local artists. The May River Theater, located in Bluffton Town Hall, provides a 200 seat venue for plays and other shows.

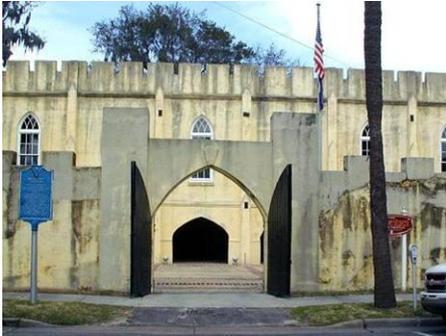


The Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra.

In northern Beaufort County, the Arts Council of Beaufort County has a 120 seat performance space in its ARTworks Community Art Center in Beaufort. The USCB Performing Arts Center is a 474 seat venue that is used for both local performers and touring professionals. Beaufort Performing Arts, Inc. was established in 2003 by a joint effort between

² *100 Best Small Art Towns in America*, edited by John Villani and Burk Willes (1996, John Muir Publications).

³ *Economic Impact of the Arts on Beaufort County, SC* by Ginnie Kozak, Ivy Lea Consultants, 1999.



The Beaufort Museum is located in the Beaufort Arsenal, which was constructed in 1852.

USCB, the City of Beaufort, and several local arts supporters to bring high quality professional entertainment to Beaufort. Other venues in northern Beaufort County include the Frisell Community House at Penn Center, which seats 100, and the Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, which offers an open air, covered stage for outdoor concerts. The Beaufort County School District has several auditoriums in its high schools and middle schools that serve as venues for local and sometimes national performances. The availability of a suitable and affordable venue is a key factor in whether local performing arts groups can remain active.

Museums

There are a number of seven museums in Beaufort County that interpret the region's historic, cultural and natural heritage:

- Verdier House: The Verdier House (ca. 1790), maintained by the non-profit Historic Beaufort Foundation, is restored and furnished with artifacts appropriate to the Federal era.
- Beaufort Museum: The Beaufort Museum, also owned and maintained by the Historic Beaufort Foundation, is located in the Beaufort Arsenal, the County's oldest civic structure. The building's main elements were constructed in 1852 atop a 1798 tabby first floor. The exhibits include an eclectic conglomeration of materials, both local and foreign, collected during the museum's earlier years.
- Parris Island Museum: The Parris Island Museum, in the War memorial building at the Parris Island Marine Corps Recruit Training Depot exhibits Marine Corps heritage, Sea Island military history, and the establishment of French and Spanish forts on Parris Island.
- York W. Bailey Museum: Located at Penn Center, this museum focuses on the story of the African American residents of the Sea Island.
- Coastal Discovery Museum: Located on Hilton Head Island, this is the County's only natural history museum, although occasional forays into the historical and cultural arena are common.
- Historic Port Royal Foundation Museum: The Historic Port Royal Foundation operates a small museum in the 130-year-old Union Church, which features artifacts and memorabilia from the Town's history.
- Heyward House: The Heyward House was constructed as a summer home for a plantation owner in 1841. Today it is a house-museum operated by the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society and acts as the official Welcome Center for the Town of Bluffton.
- Port Royal Sound Foundation Maritime Center: In 2014, the Port Royal Sound Foundation opened its Maritime Center at the location of the former Lemon Island marina, which features exhibits, classrooms, and interactive learning focused on the unique environment of Port Royal Sound.

- Santa Elena Foundation Interpretive Center: The Santa Elena Foundation is scheduled to open an interpretive center in the former Federal Courthouse in Beaufort in 2016. The Foundation is focused on research, preservation, and promotion of the “Lost Century”, the 16th Century la Florida settlement that became the colonial Spanish capital in present-day United States.

In the City of Beaufort, the Verdier House (ca. 1790), maintained by the non-profit Historic Beaufort Foundation, is restored and furnished with artifacts appropriate to the Federal era. The Beaufort Museum, also owned and maintained by the Historic Beaufort Foundation, is located in the Beaufort Arsenal, the County's oldest civic structure. The building's main elements were constructed in 1852 atop a 1798 tabby first floor. The exhibits include an eclectic conglomeration of materials, both local and foreign, collected during the museum's earlier years. The Parris Island Museum, in the War memorial building at the Parris Island Marine Corps Recruit Training Depot exhibits Marine Corps heritage, Sea Island military history, and the establishment of French and Spanish forts on Parris Island. The story of the African American residents of the Sea Island is the focus of Penn Center's York W. Bailey Museum. The Hilton Head Island's Coastal Discovery Museum is the County's only natural history museum, although occasional forays into the historical and cultural arena are common. The Historic Port Royal Foundation operates a small museum in the 130-year-old Union Church, which features artifacts and memorabilia from the Town's history. The Lowcountry Estuarium, also located in Port Royal, is a learning center designed to provide hands-on learning about the coastal environments.

Education and Support



Black Box Theater at the ARTworks Community Arts Center in Beaufort.

The Arts Council of Beaufort County is a countywide non-profit that provides support to the visual and performing arts community through the distribution of grant funds from the South Carolina Arts Commission. The Council advocates for the art community by providing classroom space, gallery and retail space, and a performance venue at their ARTworks Community Arts Center in Beaufort, and by advocating for the arts community. The Arts Council distributes approximately \$20,000 annually to artists, arts organizations, and art teachers through its Community Arts Grant Fund. Half of those funds are from the SC Arts Commission. The local match is provided by the City of Beaufort. The Arts Council also publishes the magazine, ArtNews three times a year which promotes the activities of local artists and performers.

Conclusions

Beaufort County has an active visual and performing arts community. Studies have determined the economic importance of this community and the value in providing financial support for local artists and arts



organizations. An important component to an active and creative visual and performing arts community is the availability of accessible, low-cost space available for performance, studios, and galleries. A thorough and systematic inventory and assessment of the County's arts community could be a valuable tool in determining the overall health of this industry and how the County and its municipalities can be better positioned to attract new artists and performers.



Recommendations

Recommendation 6-1: Archaeological and Historic Resources

Beaufort County should continue to emphasize the protection of historic and archaeological resources through a combination of planning, data gathering, land use regulations, and land acquisition. The following strategies are offered to implement this recommendation:

- Continue to review development plans to determine the location of archaeological and historic resources and the potential impact of development on these resources.
- Continue to coordinate with the South Carolina Department of Archives and History on projects that trigger state and federal permits.
- Continue to pursue the acquisition of significant archaeological and historic sites via the Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Program.
- Continue to update the Beaufort County Above Ground Historic Resources Survey.

Recommendation 6-2: Archaeological and Historic Resources – Public Outreach

Beaufort County should work to increase public awareness for local archaeological and historic resources by making presentations to local organizations, civic clubs, and schools; utilizing space in county buildings to exhibit archaeological and historic displays; and utilizing the County's web site to promote local archaeological and historic resources for educational and outreach purposes.

Recommendation 6-3: Rural Vernacular Architecture.

Beaufort County should target the preservation of historic rural vernacular architecture by pursuing grants, such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership Program funds, to rehabilitate older residential structures.



Vernacular residential architecture on Coosaw Island built circa 1935.

Recommendation 6-4: Scenic Highways and Byways

Beaufort County should preserve and enhance the scenic qualities of its highways and byways by pursuing the following strategies:



The Town of Bluffton seeks Federal Scenic Highway designation for May River Road (SC 46).

- ~~Expand the application of the corridor overlay district standards and the purview of the Corridor Review Boards to apply to road~~ Utilize the Southern Beaufort County Corridor Beautification Board to provide oversight for road widenings, median landscaping, and other alterations within the highway right-of-way that impact the aesthetic qualities of the highway.
- Modify ~~corridor overlay district~~ architectural, landscaping and tree preservation standards to better protect and enhance rural scenic qualities.
- Pursue state scenic byway designation for River Road, Martin Luther King Jr. Drive/Lands End Road, and other roads that qualify for this designation.
- Work with the Town of Bluffton's efforts to preserve and enhance the scenic qualities of May River Road (SC 46).
- Provide better coordination with SCDOT and utility companies to ensure that tree trimming and maintenance activities minimize adverse impacts to the aesthetic qualities of the county's scenic highways and byways.
- Create a local scenic highway designation to preserve minor collectors and local roads with tree canopies and other scenic qualities.
 - Inventory the County's remaining canopy roads.
 - Create a management plan for local scenic highways that includes design and tree protection standards along with cooperation with SCDOT and utility companies.
 - Promote public awareness and outreach by creating an interpretive brochure that maps and describes state and local scenic highways.

Recommendation 6-5: Maritime Heritage – Working Waterfronts

Beaufort County should protect and enhance the local seafood industry by proactively working to preserve existing working waterfronts and allowing for the expansion of commercial fishing operations where appropriate.

- Beaufort County should work with OCRM and SCDHEC to form a Commercial Seafood Advisory Committee made up of representatives of the local seafood industry, dock owners, seafood distributors, along with representatives of local governments and SC Sea Grant to continually monitor the status of Beaufort County's local seafood industry.

- Consider the use of the Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program to protect working waterfronts from development pressures by purchasing development rights; or, where deemed appropriate, consider the acquisition of working waterfronts with a long-term lease arrangement to continue active private operation of the waterfront.
- Explore the feasibility of using County waterfront property to support the seafood industry by allowing the location of private seafood processing facilities and other supporting facilities. This should only be considered where sufficient land is available and where such activities would not interfere with public access to the water.
- Consider future expansions of the Commercial Fishing Village Overlay District to accommodate any new commercial fishing operations and supporting facilities.

Recommendation 6-6: Maritime Heritage – Recreational Boating and Fishing

Beaufort County should enhance its boat landings to serve the diverse needs of recreational boaters and fishermen and commercial fishermen.

- Beaufort County staff should conduct in-depth surveys to determine who uses the boat landings; which landings are receiving the greatest use; when are the peak demands for boat landing usage; and what are the landings being used for.
- Where sufficient land is available, County staff should make it a priority to enlarge and enhance existing boat landings before considering the creation of new boat landings.
- County staff should promote increased security at boat landings by installing better lighting and exploring the feasibility of installing security cameras.
- ~~County staff and the Trust for Public Lands should work with the US Naval Hospital and surrounding property owners to secure permanent unrestricted access to the Fort Frederick Boat Landing.~~



On-shore fishing on the Broad River Fishing Pier.

Recommendation 6-7: Maritime Heritage – On-shore Fishing

Beaufort County should increase opportunities for on-shore fishing on marshfront and waterfront properties owned by the County or other public entities.

- Where sufficient land is available, Beaufort County should provide fishing piers, crabbing docks, and sea-walls at County boat landings and on other properties with water access potential (Lemon Island, Camp St Mary's, Altamaha, Fort Fremont, etc.).

- Adequate separation of shore-based fishing facilities and boat ramps should be maintained to avoid potential conflicts between users.

Recommendation 6-8: Maritime Heritage – Small Watercraft

Beaufort County should provide more launch areas for small non-motorized (kayaks and canoes) in locations consistent with the *Beaufort County Trails and Blueway Master Plan*.

Recommendation 6-9: Maritime Heritage - Funding

Beaufort County should pursue alternative funding sources for water access facilities.

- The County should seek state and federal funding sources such as OCRM Coastal Access Grants and the DNR Water Recreational Resource Fund.
- Beaufort County should explore the feasibility of a user fee at County boat landings to fund new water access facilities.



Farmland on Pinckney Colony Road preserved by conservation easement by the Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Program.

Recommendation 6-10: Agricultural Heritage – Regulatory Framework

Beaufort County should continually assess its regulatory framework. Beaufort County should encourage the clustering of residential subdivisions in rural areas to preserve and promote agricultural and forestry uses on set-aside open spaces.

Recommendation 6-11: Agricultural Heritage – Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Program

Beaufort County should continue to use the Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Program to promote active agriculture and the preservation of agricultural lands:

- Continue to target the purchase of development rights on active agricultural lands.
- Where suitable, consider the lease of County owned properties to those who are interested and actively farming the land.
 - Target family farms and small growers.
 - Promote sustainable agricultural practices (crop diversity, low use of pesticides, protection of soil quality, cover crops, etc.).
 - Make active agriculture a condition of the lease.
- Continue to partner with the USDA and other agencies and organizations to match local funds for the preservation of farmland.

Recommendation 6-12: Agricultural Heritage – Markets

Beaufort County should support local marketing initiatives designed to increase the profitability of small-scale farming by lining up local growers with consumers. These include the following:

- Encourage, support and monitor the success of the Small Farmer Wholesale Auction Market.
- Work with the municipalities to provide support for a market manager for the local farmers market.



Ribbon cutting ceremony for the Small Farmer Wholesale Auction Market in Ridgeland, SC.

Recommendation 6-13: Agricultural Heritage – Local Foods

Beaufort County should encourage the use of locally grown produce by adopting a local food purchasing program.

- Enact a policy that requires, where feasible, the County purchase and serve local produce (grown and processed within 100 miles of Beaufort County) at the detention center and other County facilities where food is served.
- Beaufort County staff should work with Clemson Extension to research and create a web site with information on locally grown produce and retail establishments and restaurants serving locally grown produce. The web site should promote organizations that advocate local foods such as Lowcountry Local First and Fresh on the Menu.
- Create a coalition consisting of Beaufort County, the Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Program, Penn Center, the Coastal Conservation League and local growers to advocate for local agriculture and identify policies, programs and actions to further local agriculture. Issues to be addressed by the coalition include:
 - Encouraging the Beaufort County School District to serve locally grown produce at its cafeterias.
 - Working with local farmers to make available grade 2 and 3 produce to the food bank.
- Encourage community gardens and farms in urban and suburban areas by removing regulatory barriers.

Recommendation 6-14: Military Heritage

Beaufort County should recognize that the presence of the military is a vital component to the County's history, culture, and economy. The following actions are recommended:

- Continue to enforce standards within the AICUZ contours that discourage development that would adversely affect the mission of the US Marine Corps Air Station.

- Continue to partner with the US Marine Corps to preserve open space around MCAS to protect the facility from undesirable encroachment. This partnering expands the County's efforts to preserve rural and critical land while ensuring the ability of the MCAS to remain militarily viable and vital to the national defense.
- Adopt a transfer of development rights (TDR) program to compensate affected property owners within the MCAS Airport Overlay District (AOD) (MCAS-AO) and continue encroachment partnering acquisition efforts in the vicinity of the Air Station.
- Support the Greater Beaufort Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee's efforts to promote and lobby for the retention and expansion of the military installations in Beaufort County
- Work cooperatively with the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal to implement the recommendations of the 2015 Lowcountry Joint Land Use Study (JLUS).

Recommendation 6-15: Gullah Culture

Beaufort County should recognize the importance of its local Gullah Community by adopting policies that preserve and promote this unique cultural heritage. The following actions are recommended:

- Continue to recognize the importance of land use policies such as low-density rural zoning and family compounds in preserving and enhancing the traditional land use patterns associated with the Gullah community.
- Conduct an assessment of buildings, archaeological sites, traditionally used roads, waterways, water access points, fishing areas, burial sites, and sacred grounds associated with the Gullah community. This would involve working with community members in order to access the historical and cultural resources that need protection, restoration, and/or maintenance; and seeking funding to preserve these resources in a way that allows the community to be stakeholders in the process. Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Program is a possible vehicle to preserve some of these sites.
- Promote educational outreach to the public in order to foster better stewardship of Beaufort County's cultural and environmental resources.
- Promote a safe pedestrian environment in the Corners Community and other gathering places on St. Helena Island that serve the Gullah community.
- Promote alternative means of transportation, such as transit, pathways, and ferry service to make jobs and services more accessible to the Gullah community.
- County Planning staff should continue to enforce the Cultural Preservation Overlay on St. Helena Island. Determine if additional policies and regulations are needed for the overlay to better implement its purpose.

- Support existing organizations that promote cultural resource protection such as the South Carolina Coastal Community Development Corporation, the Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition, the Cultural Protection Overlay District Committee, the Lowcountry Alliance, and Penn Center.
- Support the National Park Service and the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission in ~~their developing and implementing a~~ the implementation of their-management plan for the Heritage Corridor.
- County and Zoning staff should develop a brochure designed to assist small rural landowners understand how to subdivide and transfer land. Explain family compound, policies for small rural landowners, home occupation and home business provisions, cottage industry provisions, etc. Consider the designation or creation of a County liaison position to assist rural property owners.

Recommendation 6-16: Visual and Performing Arts

Beaufort County should recognize the importance of its unique visual and performing arts community as both a key component of the County's quality of life and source of economic development by doing the following:

- Provide support for the creation of a Cultural Assessment of Beaufort County that provides a comprehensive identification and analysis of the community's cultural resources and needs. This assessment should evaluate the work of other communities, such as Paducah, KY, Chattanooga, TN, and Cumberland, MD who have successfully implemented packages of incentives to encourage the relocation of artists into their communities.
- Provide local matching funds to the Community Arts Grant Fund to support individual artists, art education programs and local arts organizations.
- ~~Support the creation of a County-wide Community Arts Center that provides community performance space, arts classroom space, and a space for an art gallery~~ Continue to support the creation of venues, classrooms and galleries to showcase new and emerging local artists.
- Continue to provide space in libraries and other County buildings to display the work of local artists.

Chapter
6
Cultural
Resources

Map 6-1:
Working
Waterfronts

- Working Waterfront
- Commercial Fishing Village Overlay



2010 Beaufort County
Comprehensive Plan

