



Port Royal Sound Foundation
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Representative Weston Newton

Via email

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Weston:

The following is a brief listing of the various programs that we offer at the Port Royal Sound Foundation. They are oriented towards the education of residents in the Port Royal Sound region about the waters and natural systems of the Sound, and we have recently started drawing school groups from other parts of South Carolina. Children's and young adult programs are a large part of what our three naturalists do every day, but increasingly we have adults participating in experiential learning opportunities, including camps, kayak trips and citizen science activities. The completion of our new 10,000 sqft Educational Pavilion in March 2023 will greatly increase our capacity and flexibility to offer more frequent and varied programming for the community. Our naturalists are in demand for presentations at various organizations, private communities, and festivals throughout the area.

The Sharon and Dick Stewart Maritime Center is an incredibly popular and FREE museum, welcoming nearly 180,000 visitors since opening in 2014. It attracts both residents and tourists to the Port Royal Sound region. The Maritime Center has the largest aquariums and most diverse live animal displays in all of Beaufort County, including alligators, terrapins, snakes, blue crabs, a variety of saltwater fish, and more. Visitors of all ages enjoy learning from our beautiful and informative exhibits highlighting the ecology, culture, history, art, and recreation of the Lowcountry, including our 3000-gallon aquarium that is under constant video display on Beaufort County's 'County Channel'; the extraordinary history wall exhibit that Dr. Larry Rowland helped curate; the new Gullah Geechee exhibit that Victoria Smalls of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor and other local Gullah artists, chefs, storytellers, and musicians helped create; and of course, the fabulous, detailed 9' x 16' map of the entire Port Royal Sound region. We have now become a significant first stop for visitors to the Lowcountry. With the support of only 7 full- and 2 part-time staff and over 100 volunteers, we are able to guide them to important and interesting places in Beaufort County. The Salty Dog folks from HHI have now permanently established a tour boat (63' catamaran) at our dock and will be running adult sunset cruises in this part of Port Royal Sound. That boat will also be available to us (with their staff) for field trips and eco-tours led by our naturalists.

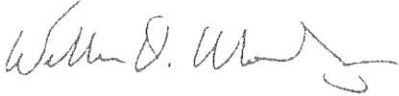
Research is an increasing part of our mission focus. We have strong relationships with USC Beaufort and with SCDNR and have supported, thanks to generous donors, research on dolphins and saltmarsh and, with USCB, the first piece of a permanent, satellite connected water quality monitoring network in the Sound. We are partnering with DHEC in the leadership of the SC Adopt a Stream program that trains residents in taking water quality samples across the entire region. Over 100 individuals have been trained by our naturalists so far and are providing regular data to DHEC. We are beginning this year to

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create a Master Plan for all the research needed in the Port Royal Sound. In 2022 we held a widely viewed Research Symposium that, with SCDNR's leadership, laid out what we understand today about the condition of the natural systems in the Port Royal Sound. In January, we held our 2nd Symposium to present our first formal "State of the Sound Report". Further, we offer a regular Speaker Series, featuring scientists and other interesting people that talk about small yet critical aspects of the natural, historic and economic conditions of the Port Royal Sound area.

In summary, the Port Royal Sound Foundation is a growing and increasingly vital player in the effort to protect the fragile environment of the Port Royal Sound region and to educate the community and visitors about its vulnerability, history, and importance. The following are just a few details of the programs we have mentioned above. The total budgeted cost of these programs and their associated administrative support is over \$800,000.00. I have notated requests next to each major item, but any assistance you can provide to us will be greatly appreciated.

Regards,



Dean Moss

Maritime Center - Museum & Aquarium: request \$245,000

- FREE to the public
- 180,000+ visitors since opening
- Home to the Port Royal Sound Foundation's wide variety of educational programming, festivals and family activities
- 30+ beautiful, educational exhibits highlighting ecology, history, culture, art, and recreation
- Live animal displays including saltwater fish, crabs, turtles, snakes, alligators – the largest aquariums in Beaufort County
- Located on the Port Royal Sound – accessible by car and boat; includes 2 docks
- Supported by ~100 volunteers who enhance visitors' understanding of exhibits and offer local knowledge
- Salty Dog (of HHI) Boat onsite, offering sunset cruises, field trips, and public eco-boat tours
- Host SCDNR Law Enforcement boats free of charge on our dock to reduce their response time
- Attached classroom hosts a variety of educational events and community meetings

Educational Programming: request \$135,000**Naturalist-led STEAM Programs (science, technology, engineering, art, math)**

- Fishing, crabbing and cast netting
- Kayaking
- Nature hikes
- Bird hikes
- Fish print bag making
- Reptile programs
- Squid dissections
- Story time
- Dock fouling microscope activity
- Microplastics activity
- Insect classes

Programs for Children and Young Adults

- Field Trips - include above activities and more opportunities for experiential learning
 - Over 3,000 K-12 and college students a year
 - Beaufort and Jasper County schools, private and charter schools, USCB, and more
 - Hands-on learning activities and curricula that meets SC teaching standards
- Summer Camps
 - 3 weeks of Pluff Mudder Camp for 5th-7th grade
 - 3 weeks of Junior Pluff Mudder Camp for 1st-4th grade
- Junior Naturalist Programs
 - All-day program for 4th-7th graders
 - Participants learn about their environment and develop skills to be certified as Junior Naturalists
- STEAM Festival
 - FREE annual event for families
 - 20+ vendors showcase the excitement and innovation of STEAM careers through interactive learning activities

Programs for Adults

- Adult camps
 - 4-day camp for adults who are local or new to the area
 - Participants learn about our unique local environment by exploring the marsh, spending time on the water, and connecting with local experts
- SC Adopt-A-Stream
 - Citizen Science water monitoring program
 - 100+ people trained in over 1.5 years

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- **Speaker Series**
 - In-person (Tuesday Talks) and virtual (Sound Vision Webinars)
 - Local experts present on a variety of fascinating topics related to the Lowcountry
- **Highway Litter Pickups**
 - Volunteers help clean stretch of highway and area around PRSF campus
 - Average 100 pounds of trash gathered each time

Arts Programs

- **Annual Recycled Art Contest**
 - 100+ artists ranging from children to professionals create artwork from trash or recycled materials to be displayed in the Maritime Center
 - Jury decides winners in multiple categories to be awarded cash prize
- **Collaboration with Local Artists**
 - Featured Artist of the Year
 - Highlighting local artists in our rotating exhibit room
 - Commissioning South Carolina-based artists for murals and art prints
 - Showcasing Gullah art, including sweetgrass baskets, Amiri Ferris prints, and more
 - Providing classes and experiences with featured artists
- **Maritime Marketplace**
 - Annual winter holiday event for local artists and vendors to showcase and sell their work

Community Partnerships: request \$20,000

Community Partnerships

- Programs and presentations with public libraries, Osher Lifelong Learning, clubs and leadership groups, private communities, and more
- Providing our space to many partners, including SCDNR, NOAA, SC Sea Grant, USC Beaufort, and Beaufort County, for private and public meetings
- Host SCDNR Law Enforcement boats free of charge on our dock to reduce their response time
- Collaborate with other like-minded organizations like SCDNR, USCB, Open Land Trust, Nature Conservancy, Coastal Conservation League, Outside Foundation, and SC Sea Grant for the good of the Port Royal Sound