

2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT

REFLECTING. GROWING. INSPIRING.



CHARLESTONCOUNTYPARKS.COM



Message from the Executive Director

Dear Charleston County Residents:

I am happy to share the Annual Report for our 2018-2019 fiscal year. I hope as you read this report, you enjoy learning a little bit more about what your Charleston County Parks have accomplished this past year.

This was a year of growth at the parks. We opened our brand new Meggett County Park, a natural facility offering miles of trails for walking, running, horseback riding and biking. If you are looking for a place to truly escape the bustle of the city, I encourage you to visit this park.

We were also very pleased to partner with the Charleston County Parks Foundation to open our first community pool, the West County Aquatic Center in Hollywood, just in time for the summer swim season. The 6,000-square-foot Genesis Pool is named in honor of Genesis Holmes, a boy who tragically drowned. A large part of our mission with the pool is to provide swimming lessons to the surrounding community.

This year also saw us ramping up the excitement at Whirlin' Waters Adventure Waterpark with the addition of a new attraction. The Washout is now the tallest waterpark feature in the Charleston area and features two separate exhilarating rides. I've been down it a few times myself and can confirm it is thrilling.

There were also many smaller, but no less significant, accomplishments this year. Our summer camp program introduced hundreds of children to kayaking, field games and pond poking. Our interpretive staff identified birds and taught history. And many of you in our community created your own memory at a special event or just quietly walking through a park.

As we move into the coming year we have much to look forward to. We will be opening up our new Stono River County Park, a new dog park at Wannamaker County Park, and the Dunes House at Folly Beach County Park will be completed. We will also begin our replacement of the Folly Beach Pier. We understand this is a local landmark, and we are honored to be creating the next pier that will serve our community for generations to come.

Finally, I want to say thank you to you our patrons. We appreciate your support and passion for the parks. We look forward to providing you with another great year of programming, events and outdoor adventures.

Warmly,

David Bennett
Executive Director
Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission



David Bennett

Agency Overview

The large park system features over 11,000 acres of property and includes six regional parks, three beach parks, four seasonally-lifeguarded beach areas, three dog parks, two landmark fishing piers, three waterparks, 19 boat landings, a climbing wall, a challenge course, an interpretive center, an equestrian center, cottages, a campground, a marina, a historic site, skate park, as well as wedding, meeting, and event facilities. The park system also offers a wide variety of recreational services - festivals, camps, classes, programs and much more.

Mission Statement

The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission will improve the quality of life in Charleston County by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs and services.

Vision Statement

To be distinguished as a nationally accredited and financially sustainable park and recreation agency through our commitment to preserving our natural, historical and cultural resources, offering a clean, safe and exceptional visitor experience that is accessible to all.

Our Vision Statement was crafted in 2017 to guide us into the next 50 years of park and recreation excellence.

Core Values

Community Enrichment

Enriching lives through education and programs

Leadership

Providing professional staff development

Fun

Delivering fun to customers

Exceptional Customer Service

Always focusing on you

Health and Wellness

Providing and promoting healthy lifestyle opportunities

Quality

Striving for quality throughout the park system

Diversity and Inclusion

Creating a park system that reflects the diversity of our community

Safety

Ensuring safe and secure environments

Accessibility

Removing barriers to make programs and facilities accessible for all

Stewardship

Preserving and conserving cultural, natural, and historical resources

Building a Legacy

Maintaining a vision for the future while sustaining a healthy park system



CHARLESTON COUNTY PARK & RECREATION COMMISSIONERS



Andrew Thomas
Chair



Teddy Manos
Vice-Chair



Collin Bruner
Secretary-Treasurer



Lisa S. King



Mattese Lecque



Eduardo Curry

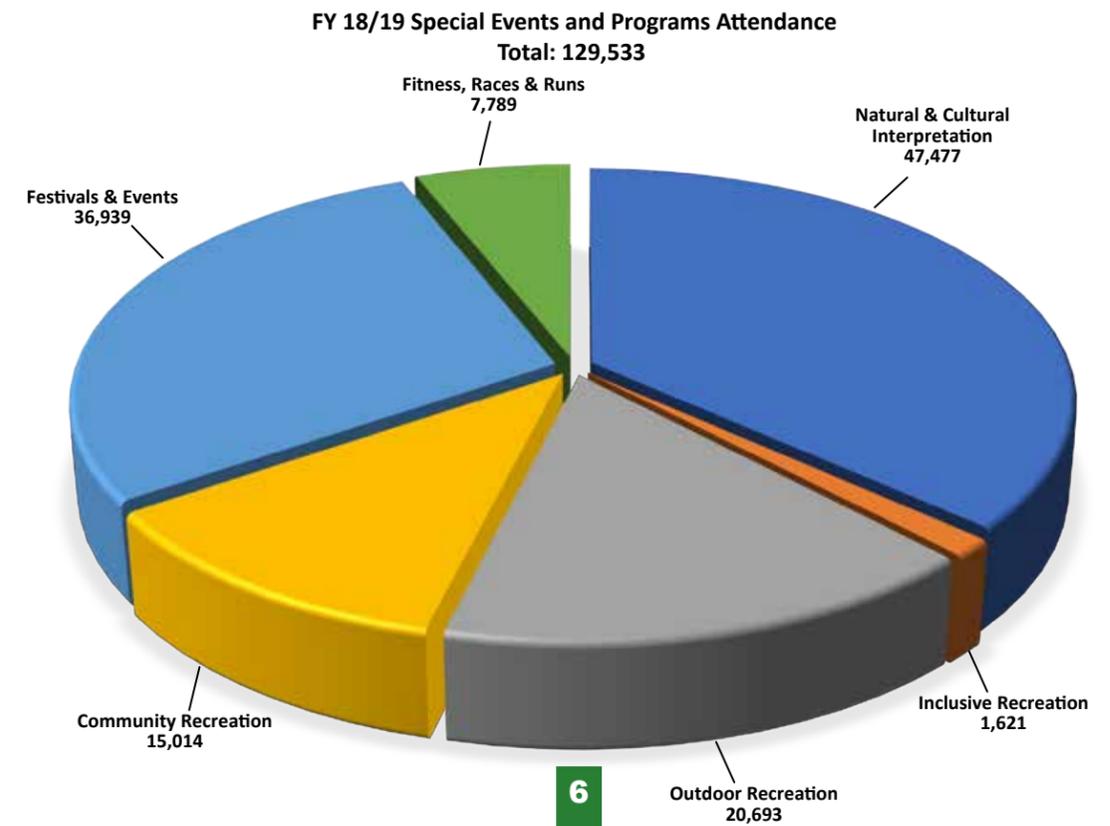
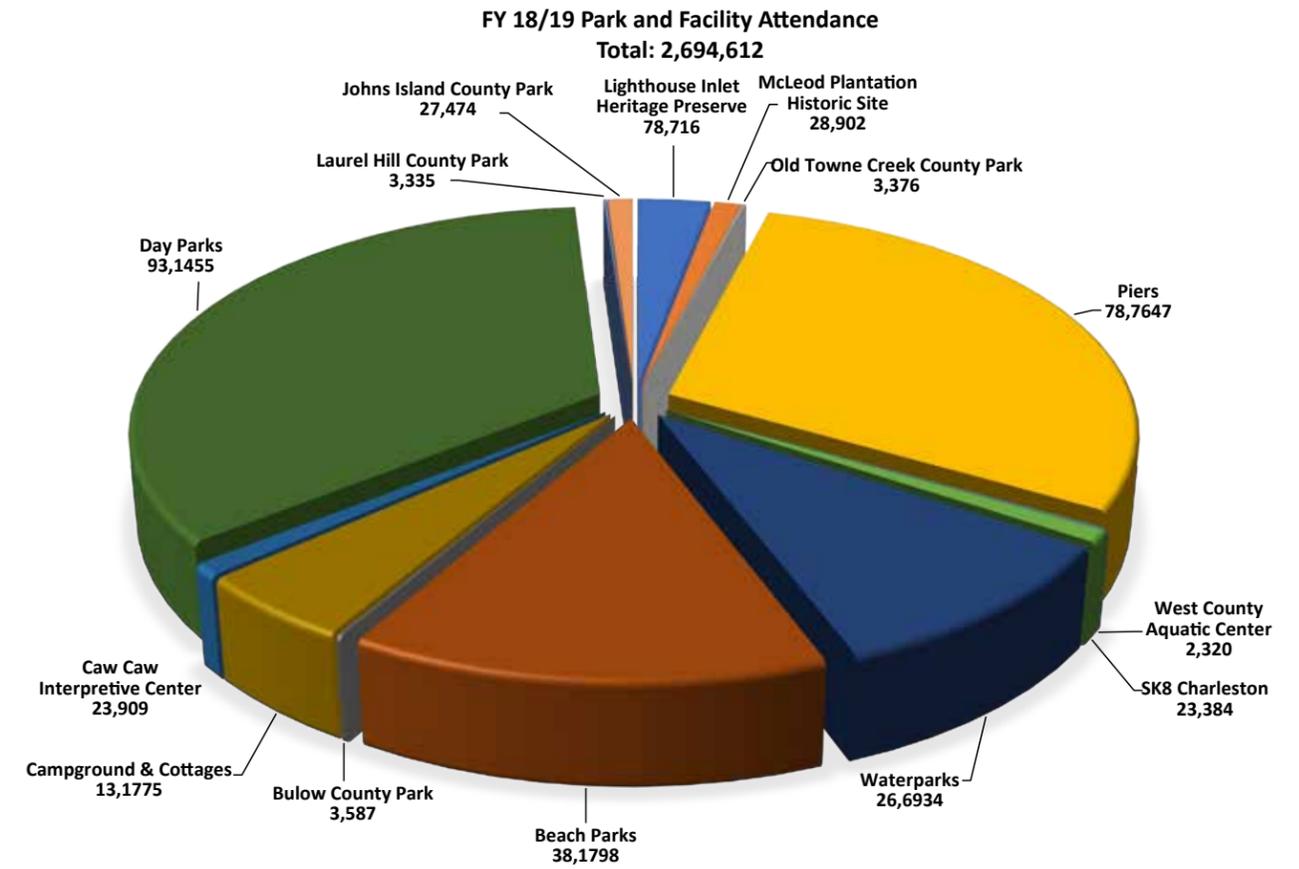


Dale Aren



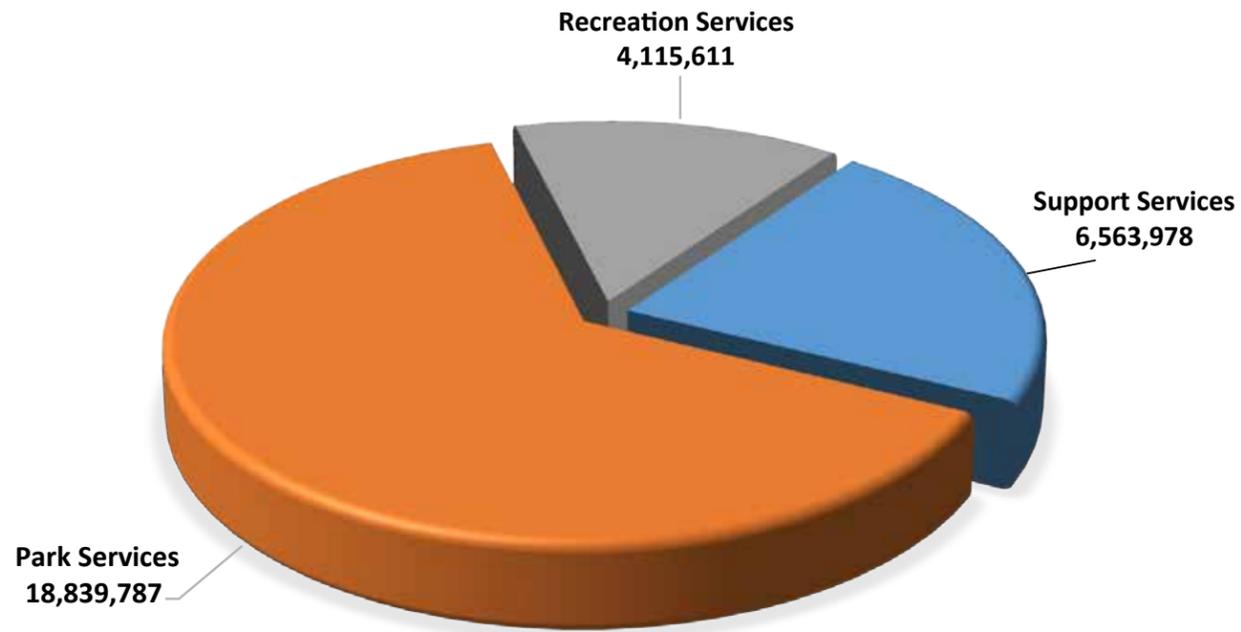
The Reckoning in the Park at James Island County Park

Patrons at Play

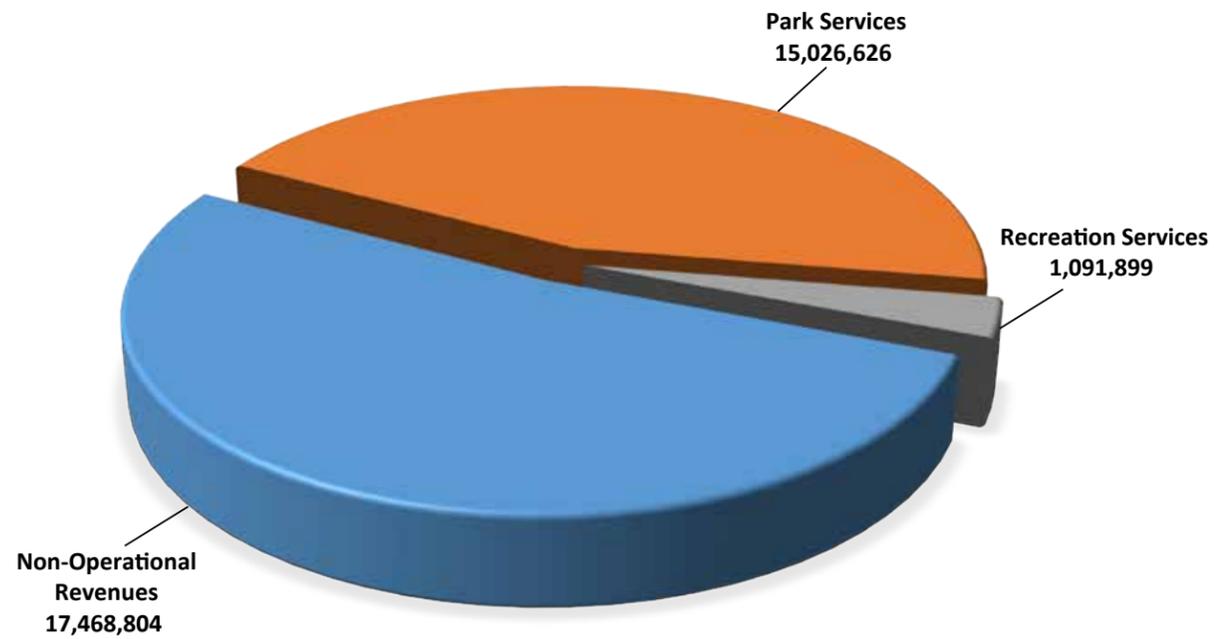


Your Dollars at Work

FY18/19 TOTAL EXPENDITURES
Total: 29,519,376



FY18/19 TOTAL REVENUES
TOTAL: 33,587,329



The Pedal Boats at James Island County Park



West County Aquatic Center

Growing

Opening the West County Aquatic Center and the Genesis Pool

Charleston County Parks proudly opened the first public pool in Hollywood on June 21, 2019. The West County Aquatic Center features the 6,000-square-foot Genesis Pool, named in honor of local 13-year-old drowning victim Genesis Holmes. The complex was funded by Charleston County Parks, with the Charleston County Parks Foundation raising funds to support programming at the site through its Genesis Project.

Programming at the West County Aquatic Center includes swimming lessons, water fitness and the eventual development of youth swim teams. It is expected to serve as many as 10,000 people each season in the Hollywood/Baptist Hill area and surrounding communities.

The facility represents significant progress toward supporting drowning prevention initiatives by offering swim safety and recreation programs to the community. Jennifer Holmes, Genesis's mother, is one of a staff of lifeguards at the pool, pioneering efforts to teach local children swimming skills.

Meggett County Park

Charleston County Parks opened the trails of Meggett County Park to the public this year. The beautiful new property is now open daily from sunrise to sunset for residents to run, walk, ride horses or bike the trails. Meggett County Park is home to dozens of grand live oak trees, plus a variety of wildlife including wading birds, songbirds and birds of prey. The 416-acre park, on Ethel Post Office Road, features an island, wetlands, five miles of trails and spectacular views of the marsh and surrounding landscape. Several tributaries of the Toogoodoo River flow adjacent to the property.

Growing (continued)

New Concerts in the Park

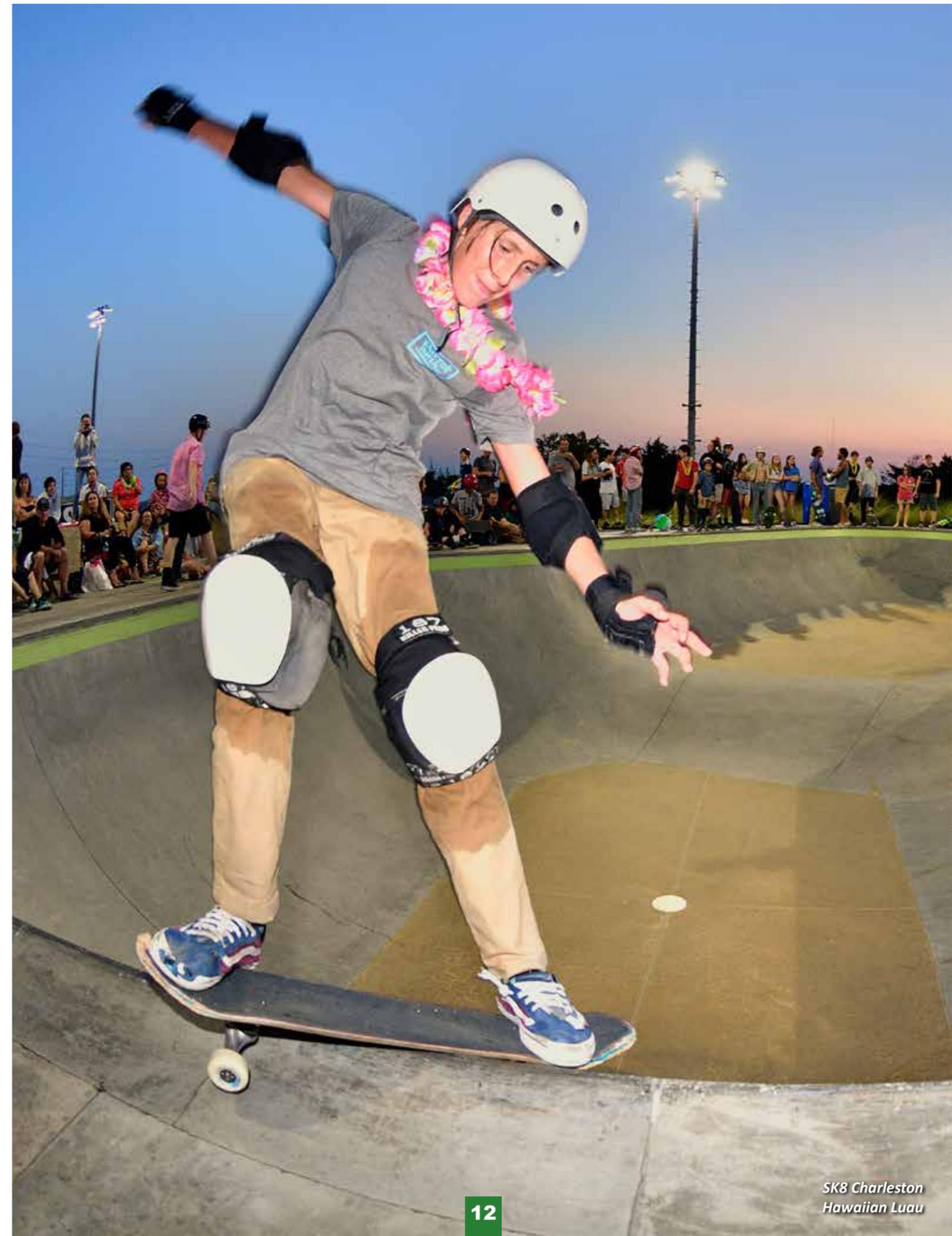
Two new popular live music event series debuted in Spring 2019: The Reckoning in the Park, a free concert featuring a Grateful Dead tribute band at James Island County Park; and Motown in the Moonlight, held on the Mount Pleasant Pier and featuring live Motown bands. Both family-friendly events succeeded in introducing new audiences to the park system.

SK8 Events

Charleston County Parks' state-of-the-art skate park, opened in 2017, launched several special events this year. After a successful Hawaiian Luau last spring, skate park staff introduced a monthly themed event series to draw skaters and the general public on typically less-attended weeknights for food and music. The park hosted a Halloween costume contest in October, a Christmas event in December, and a back-to-school bash in August, in addition to many others. All events included a live band, a food truck and skateboarding trick contests featuring prizes.

The Washout

In May, Whirlin' Waters Adventure Waterpark proudly unveiled its newest attraction: The Washout! The tallest waterpark attraction in the Charleston area, The Washout is a 60-foot-tall multi-person raft ride. The attraction offers two separate exhilarating experiences. The pink slide features a steep drop that takes riders up a near-vertical wall for a moment of weightlessness before they zoom back down into a splash pool. The turquoise slide is a combination of water features unique to Whirlin' Waters. Riders experience fast, near-vertical oscillations; high-speed twists and turns down an enclosed serpentine flume; and turns around 90 degree corners. The new attraction prompted many new people to visit Whirlin' Waters.





The Big Kahuna mural by artist Douglas Panzone

Enhancing

Beachwalker Renovations

After a brief closure, Kiawah Beachwalker Park reopened in May, just in time to greet thousands of summertime guests with a number of renovated amenities. Showers, changing rooms, the gatehouse and portions of the boardwalk were replaced. New accessible parking spaces and a paved access pathway to the boardwalk were added, and traffic improvements were made to the entry area of the park.

Local Artist Brings Big Kahuna to Life

The mural that serves as the backdrop to the Big Kahuna wave pool at Whirlin' Waters Adventure Waterpark received an update. Charleston County Parks worked with local artist Douglas Panzone to create the work of art. The new mural features a giant breaking wave set against a spectacular sunset reminiscent of those seen in the Lowcountry.

Picnic Spots at Isle of Palms County Park

Visitors packing a picnic to Isle of Palms County Park now have new spots to enjoy. Two new picnic shelters were constructed to provide larger eating areas and additional shade. The new shelters are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

New Entrance for Johns Island County Park

In February, construction was completed on the new and improved entrance to Johns Island County Park. In addition to a new sign and enhanced landscaping, the improvements allowed for an entry lane and exit lane to better serve park visitors attending large events.

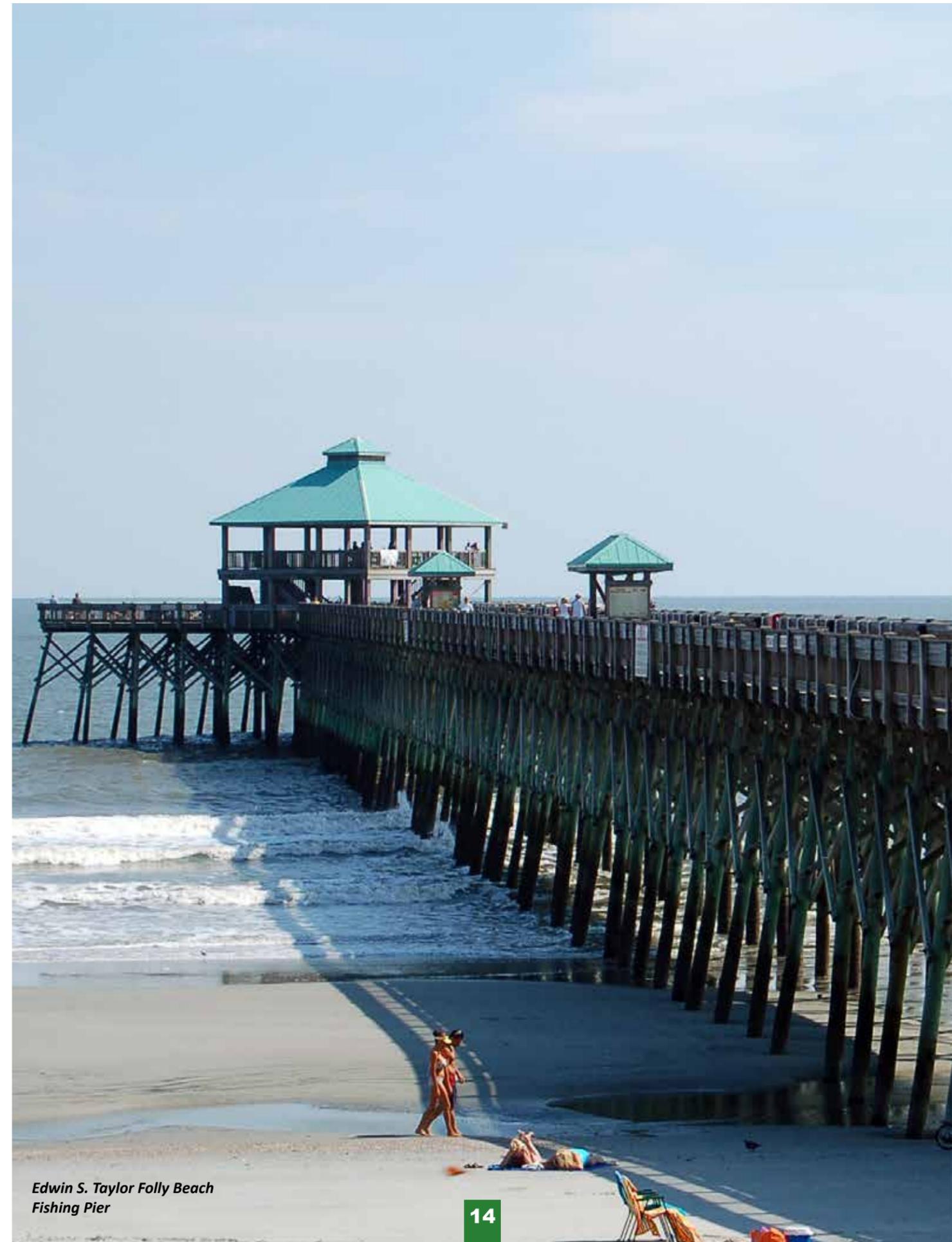
Enhancing (continued)

Replacing the Folly Beach Fishing Pier

In May, Charleston County Parks announced that a Lowcountry icon would be reconstructed. The Folly Beach Fishing Pier has been loved by thousands of locals and visitors who have fond memories of fishing, dancing or enjoying the views. The 1045-foot-long pier opened in 1995, and has reached the end of its useful life, and Charleston County Parks is honored to create the next Folly Beach Fishing Pier that will serve our community for generations to come. The new structure will still have all of the elements visitors love about the existing pier, including fishing stations, places to watch the sunset and the beloved Moonlight Mixer dance series. Construction on the pier is slated to begin in 2020.

Laurel Hill Forest Management

Laurel Hill County Park underwent forest management activities this year by the park's landowner, Wells Fargo, who has timber harvest rights to the property. Land management professionals identified areas in the park in need of thinning, an effort to reduce the volume of wood to healthier levels to benefit people and wildlife. Loggers for the landowner removed mostly loblolly pine, while remaining sensitive to the public and historic nature of the property. No-cut buffers were in place around certain areas such as the live oaks, and sensitive cultural and ecological areas were avoided. Additionally, pine trees around the living pecan trees were cleared, enabling the pecan trees to thrive.



Edwin S. Taylor Folly Beach Fishing Pier



The Campground at
James Island County Park

Enchancing (continued)

New Technologies to Improve Customer Experience

In October, Charleston County Parks rolled out ActiveNet, a cloud-based recreation management solution. Through ActiveNet, our customers can conveniently register for activities, reserve a facility, purchase park passes and manage their accounts anywhere, anytime.

Campground and cottage customers can now also create their reservation anywhere, anytime with ReserveAmerica, the largest provider of campsite reservations in North America. Launched in February, ReserveAmerica allows visitors to easily book and manage their stay online.

Charleston County Parks also upgraded our point-of-sale system to Agilisys, a leading provider of hospitality software and solutions. Agilisys provides more efficiencies for food and retail operations inventory management.

Honoring (continued)

Biodiscovery Project receives Bosch Community Fund Grant and Spirit of Cooperation Award

In 2018, an initiative was introduced to foster the exploration of aquatic biodiversity through a STEM-focused project. Called the Biodiscovery Project, the initiative was launched by Charleston County Parks in partnership with the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium (SCSGC) and other partners. The Charleston County Parks Foundation received a grant for the project through the Bosch Community Fund in November in an effort to promote STEM education and environmental stewardship in grades K-12. And in May, CCPRC and SCSGC were awarded the Spirit of Cooperation Award by Community Pride, Inc. of Charleston County for their partnership on the project with Clemson's Carolina Clear Program and the College of Charleston's Grice Marine Lab.

The BioDiscovery Project invited 10 teachers from across South Carolina to participate in the program, in which teachers and their students constructed racks, using sampling devices called bioracks. These racks were launched in local bodies of water and were monitored throughout the school year. In addition to the rack materials, teachers also received a projection microscope to participate in a field experience in a County Park with access to a data portal to upload and share the data collected. The program continues to be successful and to grow, with additional teachers committing to participate in next year's project.





McLeod Plantation
Historic Site

Honoring (continued)

Two Parks Honored as “Sites of Conscience”

McLeod Plantation Historic Site and Caw Caw Interpretive Center were honored as “Sites of Conscience,” a designation that places the two park sites among an international coalition of museums, historic sites and memorials that confront both the history of what happened at the site and lasting impacts. McLeod and Caw Caw are the first two historic sites in South Carolina to be accepted into the organization. The honor was granted by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, a worldwide network of 230 sites in 55 countries. Sites of Conscience are places that interpret history, engage the public in programs that stimulate dialogue on pressing social issues, share opportunities for public involvement and positive action on the issues raised at the site, and promote justice and universal cultures of human rights.

Tourism Advertising Grant for McLeod

The South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism awarded Charleston County Parks a Tourism Advertising Grant to promote McLeod Plantation Historic Site. The grant will be used to advertise McLeod to out-of-market audiences and to encourage visitors to experience this important Gullah/Geechee heritage site that explores the lives of people – black and white, enslaved and free - who lived there.

Collaborating

McLeod Plantation supports the U.S. Women's Open

Sections of McLeod Plantation Historic Site helped support operational aspects of the USGA's national championship, the U.S. Women's Open, from May 27 – June 3. Held in Charleston for the first time at the Country Club of Charleston, the tournament took place just down the street from the historic site. All measures were in place to protect the historic buildings, landscape and cultural resources at McLeod, and Charleston County Parks was pleased to be able to support the Open and its impact on the Lowcountry while welcoming new visitors to the historic site.

Storywalk at Wannamaker County Park

In January, Charleston County Parks and the Charleston County Public Library partnered to promote a love of literacy, exercise and the great outdoors through the installation of a StoryWalk at Wannamaker County Park.

The original Storywalk Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. StoryWalks offer a fun way for book lovers of all ages to exercise their bodies and minds by following a path marked with sequential pages from an interactive children's book. The first installment at Wannamaker County Park featured "From Head to Toe" by Eric Carle. The Charleston County Public Library will update the StoryWalk each quarter with a new picture book.



Storywalk at
North Charleston
Wannamaker County Park



Swimming Lessons in the Portable Pool

Charleston County Parks Foundation

In 2019, The Parklands Foundation officially changed its name to the Charleston County Parks Foundation with a mission to help all residents experience the Charleston County Parks and programs. The Charleston County Parks Foundation has a vision to develop and sustain projects that enable people to access the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission's facilities, programs and services for living an active and healthy lifestyle.

Swim For It Saves Lives

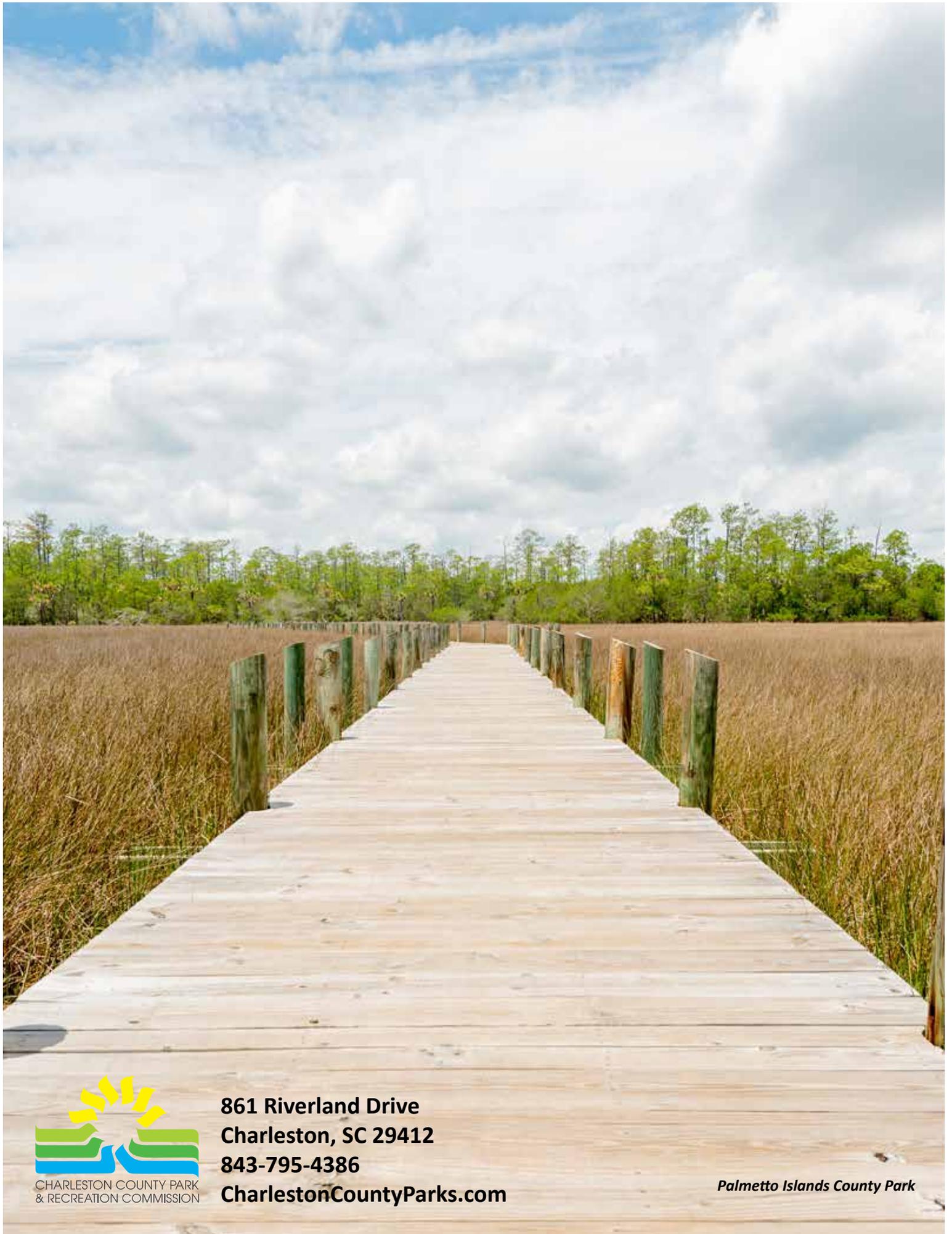
The Swim For It campaign is designed to generate awareness and support for the Charleston County Parks Foundation's Genesis Project by soliciting donations at the gate of each of the three Charleston County waterparks and the West County Aquatic Center in Hollywood, SC from May 4 through Labor Day. The Genesis Project began in 2014 after the Hollywood, SC drowning of 13-year-old Genesis Holmes, who did not know how to swim. The project aims to eliminate drownings in Charleston County by providing swimming lessons and water safety classes in rural areas.

Sk8 Forward Project

Now in its third year, SK8 Forward's goal is to develop programs that give access and introduce the sport of skateboarding to low-income communities near the park. Participants are provided free access to SK8 Charleston, use of equipment, instruction from SK8 Charleston's specialized staff and opportunities to visit again. In 2019, more than 200 youth spent a free day at the SK8 Charleston skate park as part of the Charleston County Parks Foundation's Skate Forward initiative. The project continues to be supported by a \$30,000 grant from The Speedwell Foundation.

McLeod Plantation Historic Site Project

Formed in 2019, the McLeod Plantation Historic Site Project supports the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission's cultural and historical research, preservation, interpretation and education for diverse audiences with an emphasis on underrepresented histories at this site and throughout Charleston County Parks



861 Riverland Drive
Charleston, SC 29412
843-795-4386
CharlestonCountyParks.com

Palmetto Islands County Park