Pinckney Island NWR
Programming & Accessibility

Introduction

The Friends of the Savannah Coastal Wildlife Refuges was awarded a generous grant of $37,000 from Community Foundation of the Lowcountry for **Pinckney Island NWR Visitor Accessibility and Programs.** The grant funds are for purchasing equipment including a 15-seat golf cart, bicycles, binoculars, informational brochures, tables/chairs and improved signage.

As a result of the grant and in partnership with the Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex, there will be expanded programming for all visitors including the elderly, very young and mobility impaired. You can look forward to guided nature programs for all ages, many utilizing our recently purchased electric shuttle car, bicycles and binoculars. We will also be providing visitor assistance including water on very hot days.

Pictures of the purchased equipment are provided at the end of this page.

Accessibility and Programming at Pinckney Island NWR

George Cathcart, Member of Friends BoD

Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1975 when it was donated to the Fish and Wildlife Service after nearly 40 years as a privately owned game preserve. About two-thirds of the refuge's 4,053 acres are salt marsh and tidal creeks. The rest is made up of several islands and small hammocks. Pinckney Island, the largest of the islands in the refuge, is the only one open to the public, and it is the most visited of the seven refuges that make up the Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex.

More than 14 miles of gravel roads and grass trails wind through Pinckney Island providing visitor access to a wide range of habitats, including salt marsh, forestland, brushland, fallow fields and freshwater ponds. Wildlife includes waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, raptors, neo-tropical migrants, white-tailed deer and American alligators. In spring, freshwater ponds often serve as rookeries for white ibis and several species of herons and egrets.

At present, these trails and roads are used only by walkers and people who bring their own bicycles. The narrow roads and trails cannot manage two-way traffic, and it is impractical to create a wildlife drive loop such as found at many other refuges, including the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge. In the hot months, few people venture more than a mile or two from the parking lot. Even in more temperate seasons, most of the refuge is beyond the reach of many people, including small children, the elderly and mobility impaired.

The non-profit Friends of the Savannah Coastal Wildlife Refuges wants more people to be able to visit the more remote areas of the refuge without disturbing existing wildlife and habitat. In addition, the Friends hope to provide more programming to educate visitors about the refuge and its residents, because knowledgeable people will be more supportive of the mission of Pinckney Island and other National Wildlife Refuges.

With the support of a $37,000 grant from the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry we have purchased a 15-seat electric cart, 15 binoculars and 15 bicycles to improve access and enhance the visitor experience in the refuge. Funds will also be used to print information brochures, purchase tables and chairs, and improve signage in the refuge. Volunteers will offer more programs, including nature walks, bird walks, bike tours and children's' programs. The electric cart will provide a comfortable and way for groups to explore the refuge with a driver/guide.

Links: **Join the Friends** **Friends Website** **Pinckney Island NWR**

CitEcar 15 Transport Buddy Electric Shuttle

Supplier: **citEcar Electric Shuttle** - Charleston, SC

Sun Revolution 26" Bicycle (Red)

Supplier: **Bluffton Bicycle Shop**

Eagle Optics 8x42 Binoculars

Supplier: **Eagle Optics**

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