

REPORT

SOUTHEASTERN NATURAL SCIENCES ACADEMY 2003 ANNUAL REPORT

The Vision

The Academy, through development of an urban educational complex and floodplain nature park, will present practical and meaningful programs for environmental awareness, conservation and management to increase stakeholder understanding of natural resource issues. These programs are designed to bring educators, scientists and the general public together in a community-based effort for better stewardship of valuable natural resources.

The Mission

To promote environmental stewardship through education, research and public outreach. These programs support the Academy's goal to promote sustainable natural resource management—economic growth balanced with environmental protection.

SOUTHEASTERN
NATURAL
SCIENCES
ACADEMY



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(706) 828 - 2109

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Web site: www.phinizyswamp.org

From the President

The Academy celebrated a milestone year in 2003. Record breaking numbers of students participated in the Academy's education programs, which were honored with two prestigious awards this year. The fully funded Phinizy Swamp campus was completed, opening new doors for our education, research, and outreach programs. The Academy reached a groundbreaking partnership to form the Center for Ecological Restoration to study the restoration of a gold mine, and the Academy also established the Center for Urban River Research, already busy with two significant research projects. Equally important, despite the tangible impact of a sluggish national economy, members, volunteers, and the community demonstrated unwavering support for the Academy.

This was an eventful year for Phinizy Swamp Nature Park. Construction of the campus culminated with an impressively attended dedication ceremony on a moonlit October night. It was the realization of the Academy's vision of a swamp based campus to link our natural resources education, research, and outreach programs, opening a new chapter in our extraordinary but short history.

The public has responded very favorably to the opening of our Visitor Center. Well trained volunteers answer questions and provide literature and guidance. Visitors are enchanted with the videotape created and produced by Pattie and David Booker that provides a spectacular introduction to the wildlife of Phinizy Swamp. With our popular family programs and nature based outreach events, the park is becoming a favorite spot for many local residents.

Remarkably, our revitalized Phinizy Swamp, just a decade ago considered a degraded swamp of little ecological value, was featured as a tourist destination in a 2003 Georgia Public Television program highlighting

Georgia's lesser known swamps. Now that the park is included in many nature guides, and with ecotourism growing in the United States, we anticipate seeing many new faces.

Every visitor can see that Phinizy Swamp is a lively place, with busloads of excited K-12 students participating in our living laboratory and natural resources programs. Demand for our programs has increased steadily since 1998. Maintaining the quality of our programs has been challenging, as funding from local school systems, foundations, and granting agencies drastically declined due to economic conditions. But thanks to a talented staff supported by dedicated volunteers, and through careful use of our resources, we met the challenge. Every child's education is an investment and even in difficult financial times we maintained our philosophy of inclusion, making every effort to insure that no child was turned away.

These efforts did not go unnoticed. We received the 2003 Outstanding Service Award from the Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia and the 2003 Environmental Education Award presented jointly by International Paper and the Conservation Fund in Washington, DC, raising awareness of the Academy at the state and national levels.

In the fall the Academy became a regional science institute by negotiating a research partnership with Kennecott Minerals to develop a unique ecological restoration research and education program at the closed Kennecott Ridgeway Gold Mine in Ridgeway, South Carolina. We initiated affiliations with The University of Georgia's Institute of Ecology and Clemson



Danielle Seward, Christian Studios

University's College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Life Sciences that will encourage faculty and their undergraduate and graduate students to participate in our research programs.

The Academy's ecology based research program is young but strong. In 2003 we outfitted our new research laboratory to support our field studies and undergraduate teaching. Dedicated as the Center for Urban River Research, our laboratory has a focus on clean water. The Center initiated two significant research projects: optimization of Augusta's constructed wetland system and an abbreviated baseline monitoring program within the urban corridor of the Savannah River. These projects will provide important water quality data on the Savannah River.

On behalf of the Academy Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers, I extend sincere gratitude to every individual who supports our mission and our work. We hope that you see our programs as an investment in our future. Your support is vital, so please continue to grow and celebrate with us as we continue to move forward. We pledge to work hard to meet the challenge of becoming an influential regional natural sciences institute through innovative integration of our education, research, and outreach programs.

Sincerely,
Gene Eidson

2003 ANNUAL REPORT

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CORPORATE, FOUNDATION AND CIVIC PARTNERS

Nearly 200 businesses, school systems, foundations and civic groups have generously supported the Academy since 1998, and the Academy is tremendously grateful to these special donors. Perhaps one of the most striking characteristics of Academy partners can be found in their sheer numbers and especially in their diversity. The list below represents corporate, foundation and civic partners who have donated funds and/or loaned their skills and expertise to the Academy in 2003. We trust that these partnerships, which are formed out of a passion for the Academy's mission and vision, are as gratifying to our

partners as they are to the Academy. The future of the Academy is bright, and we pledge to be diligent in utilizing our partners' resources. (A complete list of partners since 2002 can be found in the Spring 2004 *Swamp Notes*.)

*in-kind

Platinum Sponsor

\$20,000+

Augusta Neighborhood

Improvement Corporation

City of Augusta

Kennecott Ridgeway Mining

Company

Gold Sponsor

\$10,000+

Capers & Associates, Inc.*

Columbia County School System

Creel Foundation

Edge Media*

International Paper Company

Foundation

Kilpatrick Stockton LLP*

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Sponsor

\$5,000+

Atlanta Gas Light/AGL Resources

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Augusta Metropolitan Convention

& Visitors Bureau

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PCS Nitrogen Fertilizer

Pfizer

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Richmond County Board of

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Sand Hills Garden Club

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Benefactor

\$2,500+

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Publix Supermarkets

The NutraSweet Company

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Barrett Tree Company*

Cherry, Bekaert & Holland*

Communigraphics*

DSM Chemicals North America

Groves Landscape Management*

John Deere Commercial Products*

KAMO Manufacturing Company*

Maid Your Day, Inc.

Martin Marietta Aggregates*

Monsanto

National Mail Services, Inc.

OMI*

Olin Corporation

Portable Services*

RedWolf, Inc.*

Rex Property & Construction

Management Co.*

The Home Depot

Tri State Media*

WRDW-TV News 12*

Corporate Associates

\$500-\$999

Advanced Services, Inc.*

All American Tent Rental*

American Wilderness Outfitters Ltd.*

Augusta Presstech*

Bank of America

Blanchard & Calhoun

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Club Car, Inc.*

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PQ Corporation

Rivers & Glen Trading Company*

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Sig Cox, Inc.

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The Fresh Market*

Very Vera Fine Catering*

Wachovia Bank N.A.

ZEL Engineers

Corporate Associates

\$100+

A.B. Beverage*

Andy Jordan's Bicycle Warehouse*

Atlanta Bread Co.*

Augusta-Aiken Audubon Society

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Auntie Em's Casual Catering*

Baillie's Art Center*

Broadway Tackle & Canoe Rentals*

Career Personnel

Ciao Bella*

Doc Savage Heating & Air

Conditioning, Inc.

E-Z-Go*

FastSigns*

Furniture Rentals*

Heavenly Ham*

Howard Lumber Company*

Lawyers Title Insurance Co.

Maner Builders Supply Co.*

Monro Moving & Storage Co.*

Papa John's Pizza*

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The Snug Steak and Grill*

United Distributors, Inc.

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Vinny's Pizzeria Bar & Grill*

Wooden Features*

Non-Profit Organization

\$50

Cherokee Rose Garden Club

Cranford Flower Club

Flower Study Club

Gateway Garden Club

Wood Valley Garden Club

STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES, AND FUND BALANCE

DECEMBER 31, 2003 (subject to audit)

Gross Revenues		\$567,688
	(includes \$191,621 in restricted capital revenues)	
Operating Expenditures		
Salaries	\$213,697	
Other Expenditures	\$265,796	
Total Operating Expenditures		\$479,493*
Other Income		\$2,565
NET INCOME		<u>\$ 90,759</u>
Current Assets	\$ 207,591	
Fixed Assets	<u>\$1,745,856</u>	
Total Assets		<u>\$1,953,447</u>
Liabilities		\$17,498
Fund Balance		<u>\$1,935,949</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE		<u>\$1,953,447</u>

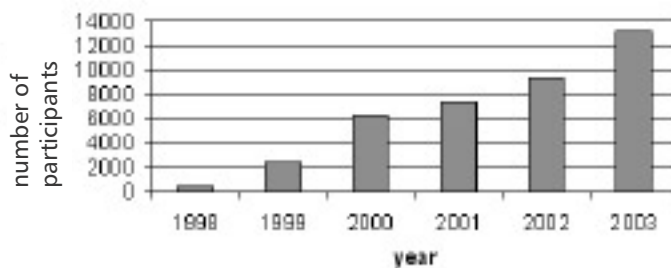
*includes \$63,451 in booked depreciation, and \$21,620 in program supplies funded in 2002

(Detailed Financial Statements may be obtained by contacting Academy headquarters at (706) 828-2109.)

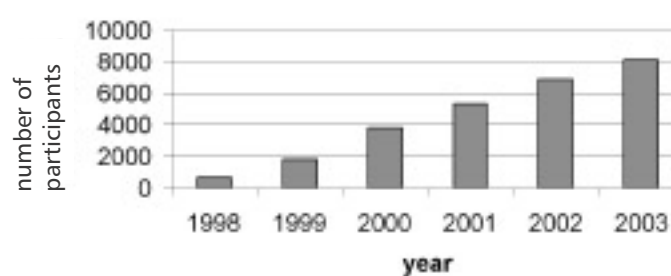
MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. We completed construction on the fully-funded \$1.2 million Phinizy Swamp Campus, with Education, Research and Visitor facilities.
2. We completed other significant park improvements, including a new boardwalk, an improved parking area, several new trails and a public restroom facility.
3. We formed the Center for Urban River Research, housed at the Phinizy Swamp Research facility, which will study scientific issues associated with preserving the health of our water - with a focus on the Savannah River, and other urban waterways.
4. We formed the Center for Ecological Restoration in association with the Kennecott Ridgeway Mining Company to research long-term, science-based, sustainable rehabilitation of impacted natural resources. The Center will also promote collaborative research among regional universities.
5. We initiated formal affiliations with The University of Georgia's Institute of Ecology and Clemson University's College of Agriculture, Forest and Life Sciences.
6. We taught a course on Restoration Ecology to Clemson University undergraduate students.
7. We worked to restore the Merry Brickyard Ponds to serve as a wetland mitigation bank.
8. Our K-12 education program provided 8,060 students and teachers with one-of-a-kind educational opportunities. These programs not only illustrated science principles, they also addressed local ecological issues.
9. We reached new audiences by putting Academy programs on wheels in the SwampMobile!, a roving celebration of the sights and sounds of the Nature Park.
10. Our education program was recognized with two major awards: the 2003 Outstanding Service Award from the Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia; and (through an award given to Academy President Gene Eidson) the 2003 Environmental Education Award from International Paper & The Conservation Fund.
11. We were a founding member of the Centers for Excellence in Natural Sciences Education, a coalition of private, non-profit nature centers dedicated to providing quality natural science education for Georgia citizens.
12. For the sixth year, we hosted a full slate of Earth Day activities, with workshops, displays, tours, an art-of-nature contest, an early-morning 5K race and educational fun for all age groups.
13. We expanded our summer EcoCamps by holding week-long outdoor adventures.
14. We heralded our 900th Academy member and continued to increase our corporate, foundation and civic partnerships.
15. Our volunteer corps thrived, and we continued to recognize the gift we have in these generous, talented individuals.
16. A brilliant and moving video, celebrating the sights and sounds of Phinizy Swamp, was created by dedicated Academy friends, Pattie and David Booker.

Overall Participation in Academy Activities



Participation in Educational Field Trips



EDUCATION/OUTREACH

2003 was the most eventful year to date for the Academy's education staff. With the opening of the Phinizy Swamp Campus, staff members were able to accommodate more students and utilize the park to its fullest potential while keeping the high standard of education for which we are known.

Educational field trip participation reached 8,060, up from 6,878 in 2002 - a 17% increase. Of the 8,060 students, 50% came from Richmond County, 34% from Columbia County, 8% from private and/or home schools, and 8% from other counties.

Help from Academy volunteer educators ensured we were able to support these numbers and provide quality educational programs for the students. All field trip programs continue to be routinely scrutinized to ensure they meet and exceed all QCC standards and offer the best possible hands-on educational experience in the CSRA. Several new field trip programs were introduced that met with immediate success, including Swamp Math, which teaches

students about the inter-relationship between math and science. The Academy hosted several teacher workshops focused on wetlands and wetland ecology.

Interest in after-school education programs continued to grow in 2003. An Adopt-a-Stream club was formed in the fall. The members of this club, dubbed the Creek Freaks, monitor the health of Butler Creek and submit this data to the Georgia Adopt-a-Stream database. In addition, the Academy's education department set up stations at several science competitions in 2003, including Science Olympiad and Eco-Meet.

Participation in public outreach programs also soared in 2003. More than 5,000 children and adults participated in events at the Nature Park or at other venues. Programs such as full moon hikes, Family Discovery Series, Swamp Saturday tours, and seasonal educational events provided something for the entire family.

2004 looks to be a stellar year. Existing programs will be revamped to correlate with new educational standards

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Education, cont. from page 3...

for Georgia. We will introduce an interdisciplinary field trip focusing on wetlands that will integrate multiple academic disciplines. New field trips are being designed that will link Academy research programs directly with educational programs.

The Academy looks forward to a very exciting and busy year, one in which we can continue to bring hands-on environmental education and the wonders of science and nature to the community at large.

RESEARCH

In 2003, the Academy established the Center for Urban River Research at the Phinizy Swamp Campus to conduct applied research addressing water quality issues within Augusta's urban corridor of the Savannah River and to provide leadership in assembling the critical scientific database necessary to address water quality issues within the greater Savannah River Basin. Two key research projects were initiated in 2003.

The City of Augusta funded an optimization study for Augusta's constructed wetlands, which are utilized for tertiary wastewater treatment. This research project is evaluating the long-term treatment capacity and efficiency of the constructed wetlands. Employing state of the art water-quality monitoring technology, along with chemical analyses and biological indicators, this project will compare constructed wetlands of varying ages and configurations. Another major goal of our constructed wetlands research is to evaluate the feasibility of recycling the wetlands discharge as cooling and irrigation water for nearby industries, reducing direct water withdrawal from the Savannah River.

The second project being conducted by the Center for Urban River Research is an

abbreviated river monitoring program addressing water quality within Augusta's urban corridor of the Savannah River. This corridor monitoring project is designed to complement ongoing research programs of universities and other conservation organizations addressing flow. Water quantity and quality research are needed to address the growing concern among stakeholders of the Savannah River that our river resources are at risk.

In 2003, the Academy also founded the Center for Ecological Restoration at the Kennebec Ridgeway Gold Mine in Ridgeway, SC. This closed mine site which is undergoing restoration offers a unique opportunity to develop a research program to test innovative ecological restoration techniques. A key feature of the Academy's research program at the mine will be development of a restoration botanical park to showcase and compare reforestation techniques. An intensive pit lake monitoring program is already providing important scientific findings on lake restoration.

Both of the Academy's research centers will offer opportunities for faculty,



undergraduates and graduate students of regional universities to conduct aquatic ecology and ecological restoration research and to participate in college courses sponsored by multiple universities. In addition, the centers will sponsor seminars and workshops focused on constructed wetlands technology and restoration techniques.

MEMBERS

Academy membership continues to achieve incredible growth...member number 900 joined in 2003! Here is a list of all year 2003 members. Thank you to all for your continued support of the Academy's mission and vision.

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