

Open Space Committee



Open Space is the Soul of the Community.

Defining Open Space:

Why do we call Open Space “The Soul of the Community”? Because these are places where we reconnect with nature, have access to the marsh via community docks, find solace and stillness in the woods, and where we can gather. Development in these areas is limited to provide wildlife habitat, pocket or passive parks for residents to enjoy and areas for recreation.

Open Space has so many benefits for us besides providing privacy and peacefulness. Homes surrounded by natural areas add to improved health and well being and lead to an increase in property values. We will continue to look for ways to expand and improve our open spaces.

Accomplishments in 2025

In 2025 we tried to enhance and reveal some open space areas by identifying places in the IOB that are available to the community but hadn't been highly visible.

We marked pathways and parks by putting up signage at our newest park on Cotton Island (Sunset Point), and adding footpath signs to common walkways. We also added six new benches throughout the neighborhood. There is a map on the Islands of Beaufort website that points out these locations. Log into the Homeowners Page and look for the Open Space Committee by its **Fir Tree** icon. You will find the IOB Footpaths and Parks map link, along with our past newsletters.



Sunset Point with new picnic table and 2 of the 4 new chairs

Neighborhood Trees Benefit You and Our Community

One area where we can improve our island is by adding more tree canopy to shade our streets. The **Grounds and Landscape Committee** has been working on bringing more canopy trees along roads that lack shade, and adding native grasses that help capture swampy water that has the potential to pool in streets. We will continue to support G&LC's tree planting efforts and provide updates in this newsletter.

There are many ways trees help the community. Shade extends the life of pavement, cools our homes and neighborhood, and creates privacy. Trees also provide food, shelter and host plants for caterpillars... creating essential habitats for butterflies and birds. One mature Oak can collect up to 100 gallons of water per day.

Spending time among trees can help people manage stress, lower blood pressure and your focus of attention. In addition to producing clean air for us to breathe, trees also remove pollutants from the air that could otherwise contribute to health problems for residents.

If you have questions about the best trees for your landscape, Kathy Gardner, who runs G&LC, is a great resource for optimal trees for your particular yard. She has been working with both The Greenery and local arborists on what trees work best in our area.

Kathy was in charge of the landscape at a small community within Bonita Bay near Naples, Florida. Her efforts resulted in the neighborhood being recognized as a lusciously landscaped community and property values went up. She is also a Lowcountry Master Gardener. G&LC has formed a new Green Team that will keep a lookout for areas in the community that need attention and reporting these to the Greenery for cleanup.



Example of a clean up: Before and after photos of dead and overgrown saw palmettos on De La Gaye.



What's Next for Open Space?

- Adding a picnic table adjacent to the playground in Belle Grove Park for families to enjoy. This will be a wood edged pad filled with bark. G&LC has engaged Action Tree to provide free fresh mulch for the area.
- Continue to improve pathways throughout the neighborhood and add more footpath lights over time; plus re-mulch the original pathway in Belle Grove Park from Battery Chase to Islands Avenue, possibly with more fresh mulch from Action Tree.
- Prepare and distribute an Open Space survey so we have an understanding of what people seek out when they think of beautifying and upgrading our neighborhood, while still keeping our natural habitat as intact as possible.

We continue to welcome your ideas and suggestions, don't hesitate to reach out to any of us on the committee with your comments. Committee members include: Linda Tunstall - Chair, Bill Prokop, Bruce Sullivan, Kat Klingler, Laurie Babernitsh, and Eric Powell - Board Liaison.