

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE INCLUSION OF AN INTERPRETATIVE CENTER
IN THE CRYSTAL LAKE RESERVE MASTER PLAN
AND IN THE NORTHERN BEAUFORT COUNTY REGIONAL PLAN

WHEREAS, Beaufort County is a county of islands surrounded by salt water, brackish water, marshes and estuaries; and

WHEREAS, the ebb and flows of the tides in and around Beaufort County combine with the temperate climate of the area to create an environment that is beautiful, diverse and so wonderfully productive that this area is referred to by knowledgeable citizens and scientists as "The Nursery of the Atlantic Ocean" and these areas are believed, when measured by cubic meter, to be more productive than the tropical rain forests; and

WHEREAS, Beaufort County's citizens interact with the waters of the area in different ways than when the county economy was more directly reliant upon the produce of these local waters obtained by harvesting shrimp, fish and crab for consumption and sale; and

WHEREAS, Beaufort County is in a period of rapid residential growth with large numbers of citizens arriving with limited knowledge of the waters, marshes and tidal ecology of Beaufort County; and

WHEREAS, the quality, health and productivity of the waters and marshes of Beaufort County are today major contributors to the quality of life in Beaufort County, to the health and well being of fish populations throughout the Atlantic Ocean and the world, and to the attraction of Beaufort County as a place to live, visit, and work; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the residents and visitors to Beaufort County that opportunities be made available for people to learn of the contributions the estuaries, salt and brackish waters, tides and the life forms within these areas make to the quality of life in Beaufort County, the Lowcountry of South Carolina, the southeastern coast of the United States and the world; and

WHEREAS, Beaufort County citizens and Council have consistently supported measures to protect and preserve the estuaries, marshes, waterways and critical lands of Beaufort County; and

WHEREAS, the Beaufort County Council by this resolution wishes to express its desire to seek cost effective ways to inform citizens and visitors about the estuaries, marshes, waters and ecology of Beaufort County and the region; and

WHEREAS, funding sources available to support organizations providing the information and education described above include many private donations, grants and other sources which do not require increases in the tax burden on County residents; and

WHEREAS, Beaufort County has produced increased results with the voter authorized Rural and Critical Lands Program funds by cooperating with other funding partners including, but not limited to, the United States Government, the State of South Carolina, the Town of Hilton Head Island, and donations from local citizens and foundations of land and funds for planning; and

WHEREAS, Beaufort County has successfully partnered with other agencies for the management and operation of property acquired pursuant to the Rural and Critical Lands Program including, but not limited to, the United States Government, the State of South Carolina and the Town of Bluffton; and

WHEREAS, the Crystal Lake Reserve, owned by Beaufort County, offers a unique location for educational activities because it combines the following characteristics:

1. Crystal Lake Reserve contains salt marsh, brackish marsh and a relatively large body of fresh water;
2. Crystal Lake Reserve is connected by water to the salt marshes of the Beaufort River and Port Royal Sound;
3. Crystal Lake Reserve adjoins a major roadway with substantial visibility and easy access;
4. Crystal Lake Reserve is located in one of the fastest growing areas of Beaufort County;
5. Crystal Lake Reserve shares borders with two schools which offers the opportunity for student participation and support;
6. Crystal Lake Reserve includes an existing building and parking areas which may be reused for the purposes contemplated by this resolution.

NOW, THEREFORE, that Beaufort County Council does hereby recommend and request that action be taken to include in the Master Plan for Crystal Lake Reserve and in the Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan a space for an interpretative center at Crystal Lake Reserve.

Adopted this 27th day of November, 2006.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

By: Wm. Weston J. Newton
Wm. Weston J. Newton, Chairman

Attest:
Suzanne M. Rainey
Suzanne M. Rainey, Clerk to Council