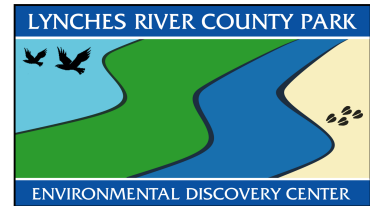


ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOVERY CENTER NEWS

Nature in the heart of Florence County
www.lynchesriverpark.com



ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOVERY CENTER CELEBRATES ITS FOURTH YEAR

**ENVIRONMENTAL
DISCOVERY CENTER
NEWS
JAN-MARCH 2012**

Plans were made to move forward with an interpretive center at Lynch's River County Park in 2004, and a committee was formed to design and build the Environmental Discovery Center (EDC).

The committee was made up of unpaid, private citizens who knew that creating a facility that would provide educational opportunities for residents and visitors of Florence County, concerned with protecting our natural resources, was an important project.

During the planning stages, the committee members visited other interpretive centers around the State of South Carolina, as well as Canada and Scotland. During one of their visits, the committee was introduced to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and understood that this was a way for the building itself to also represent the conservation ideal.

LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system,

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**Environmental
Discovery Center
at Lynch's River
County Park**
1110 Ben Gause
Road
Coward, SC 29530
(843) 389-0550

Operating Hours
Tuesday - Saturday
9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Sunday
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Park Hours:
9:00 am to sunset
daily except
Thanksgiving day,
Christmas Eve and
Christmas day

VISITING THE ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOVERY CENTER AND LYNCH'S RIVER COUNTY PARK

Lynch's River County Park is open everyday except Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas from 9:00 am to sunset.

Do not depend on Map Quest, Google Maps or GPS units for driving directions. These sources often provide alternate routes to the park, which may not be accurate.



**Mission
Statement**
To develop and
reveal the
natural
resources of the
park for the
purpose of
education,
stewardship, and
recreation for
the residents
and visitors of
Florence County

(continued from page 1)

providing third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies intended to improve performance in metrics such as energy savings, water efficiency, CO₂ emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.

By implementing the use of 100 percent recycled exterior siding; 100 percent recycled wood flooring; tinted/glazed windows; sensor regulated water faucets; low-flow toilets, and many other features, the EDC has been awarded a Certified rating and was the first pub-

lic building in Florence County to be LEED Certified.



From L to R: Jimmy Poston, Florence Conservation District Commissioner; Allen Wood, EDC Committee Member; Johnnie Rodgers, Florence County Council; H. Morris Anderson, Florence County Council; Sterling Sadler, EDC Committee Chair; Rusty Smith, Florence County Council Chair; Waymon Mumford, Florence County Council; Henry Swink, EDC Committee Member; Dr. John Rae, EDC Committee Member

A Sumter architect firm, Drakeford Architects, designed the building to look like the tobacco

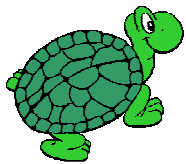
barns that were of cultural significance throughout the Pee Dee Region. Hawkins and Kolb Construction began work in February of 2007 and completed construction in November of 2007 at a cost of an estimated \$1.2M.

The major contributors for the building were Drs. Bruce and Lee Foundation, State of South Carolina Land and Water Conservation Fund, Senator Hugh Leatherman, USDA Rural Development, Florence Soil and Water Conservation District and Florence County.

The EDC officially opened in February of 2008 and has welcomed more than 78,000 visitors since that date.

WEEKEND PROGRAMS

Join us every Saturday and Sunday for live animal meet-and-greets! We'll introduce you to one of our animals and allow you the opportunity to meet that animal



up close. Animal presentations are every Saturday at 11:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

Stop by and say hello to your favorite critter!

ARE YOU CONNECTED?

Stay in the loop and learn the latest Environmental Discovery Center scoop! Join our online community to keep in touch with the latest news, tidbits, events and opportunities. Subscribe to our mailing list at www.lynchesriverpark.com or Like us on Facebook.



PLEASE HELP THE EDC WITH ITEMS ON OUR WISH LIST:

- Tetra Whisper Filter Cartridges (medium and large)
- Tetrafauna ReptoMin Floating Food Sticks For Aquatic Turtles, Newts and Frogs
- Exoterra SunGlo Daylight aquarium bulbs (60 and 100 watt)
- Aquariums with lids (any sizes)

ANIMAL SPOTLIGHT: AMERICAN ALLIGATOR

When you stop by the EDC, take some time to view the different live animals that call the EDC home. One of these animals is our juvenile American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*).

Because American alligators are still listed as a threatened species, a special permit must be granted from the SC Department of Natural Resources in order to possess an alligator. Otherwise, feeding, capturing or any form of harassment of an alligator is illegal and very dangerous for both you and the alligator.

Our male gator is about 8-9 months old and about 14-15 inches in length. He came to us from Alligator Adventure in Myrtle Beach in July of 2011. Many people ask if we will release our gator into

Lynches River when he gets too big; however, because he has been hand-raised, he will actually be returned to Alligator Adventure to grow to as much as 1000 lbs. and



an average of 12 feet. We will get a younger, smaller gator to bring back to the EDC.

Newly hatched young are only about six to eight inches long, and very vulnerable. In the wild, their mother protects them from preda-

tors, which include raccoons, bobcats, birds, and even other alligators. Young alligators stay with their mother for up to two years. After that, they're able to fend for themselves.

They are opportunistic hunters, so they will eat almost anything including fish, turtles, mammals, snakes, birds, and other alligators. While alligators have about 80 teeth, these teeth wear down over time and are replaced by new ones. An alligator can go through as many as 2000-3000 teeth in a lifetime.

While our little gator at the EDC poses no threat to visitors, larger, wild alligators can be surprisingly quick and are capable of running at speeds up to 35 mph. If you see an alligator in the wild, keep a very wide berth!

JOIN THE FUN: VOLUNTEER!

The EDC relies on the help of dedicated volunteers for many aspects of the center's operations, including animal husbandry, trail maintenance, gardening, assistance at special events, and interaction with our many visitors.

The EDC has many exciting and rewarding volunteer positions. You will have the unique opportunity to be a part of our ever-expanding and dynamic educational facility. Volunteers will also be eligible for the following benefits: after completing 20 hours of volunteer service, you will receive an EDC t-shirt; after 40 hours of service,

your name will be placed on the Benefactor Tree at the EDC.

Volunteer Job Descriptions:

•**Docent** - Assist with providing educational programs to visitors.

•**Gardening** - Assist in maintaining native plant gardens and landscape plantings.

•**Roving Naturalist** - Roams the EDC and answers questions about the animals, exhibits and Lynches River County Park.

•**Special Events** - Assist with events such as Earth Day celebrations, River Jamboree, first Saturday events, and

many more!

•**Exhibits** - Assist with exhibit design and construction.

•**Animal Husbandry** - Assist with the maintenance of habitats, food preparation and care for the EDC animals.

If you enjoy the outdoors and sharing your love of nature with others, then you will definitely enjoy volunteering at the Environmental Discovery Center! Come and volunteer - there's room for everyone! Learn about nature, gain experience, and build your resume. Come once a month or once a week — the sky's the limit!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Go to www.lynchesriver.com for more information about all the exciting activities happening at the Park and to join our mailing list!

Build-A-Bluebird-Box Workshop

Saturday, February 4, 2012, 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Join us at the EDC and make your own bluebird nest box to take home. All materials are provided free of charge (one box per family, please). Workshops will be held at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Registration is required and space is limited to 10 participants per timeslot. Children must be accompanied by an adult.



For more information or to register for this event, please us at call (843) 389-0550.

Guided Canoe Excursions

Saturday, March 3, 2012, 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Enjoy a scenic 5 mile guided paddle of the Lynches River from Lynches River County Park to the boat landing at Highway 52.

This excursion is free, but space is limited. Minimum weight/age for participants is 5 years of age and 50 lbs. At least one person in each boat must be 18 years or older; two people per boat only (no exceptions).

Registration is required and will be accepted beginning February 15, 2012. For more information or to register, please call the EDC at (843) 389-0550.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The environmental education programs offered at the EDC actively engage students in learning about nature and the environment and are correlated with South Carolina Science Academic Standards.

Teachers are encouraged to bring their public, private and home school classes to the EDC to engage in standards-based activities, including an off-trail nature hike, that will further their knowledge of the natural world while they have fun outside the classroom.

To see a list of programs offered, please visit our website at www.lynchesriverpark.com. There, you will also learn about grants that will assist you and

your students with the costs associated with traveling for field trips.



Programs range from one to two hours in length and can accommodate up to 60 students (unless otherwise indicated).

We are also very happy to announce the addition of our new Reptile Rodeo Outreach program where you can bring the EDC to your classroom with this one-hour program for all grade levels. This program features live reptile species common to South Carolina and teaches your students about the role and importance of reptiles in the ecosystem (only available within Florence County during the months of November, December, January and February).

There is no charge for our programs; however, specific times and dates must be reserved. Call the EDC at (843) 389-0550 to schedule a field trip experience.