



SMALL TOWN, BIG BEACH™

DATE: April 5, 2021

ISSUE: Right of Entry Agreement with the University of Georgia, Department of Marine Sciences to allow ecological research on the City's Oyster Bay Nature Preserve and the Wenzel Wetland Preserve properties.

BACKGROUND: Researchers with the University of Georgia Department, of Marine Sciences would like to access the City's Oyster Bay Nature Preserve and Wenzel Wetland Preserve properties that were acquired in 2019 through NFWF's Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund. The acquisition and conservation of these properties resulted in the protection of 836 acres of critical habitat within the City limits.

The management goals for the properties are to protect the natural resources and enhance the ecological functions of these critical habitats, as well as provide recreational and educational opportunities for the public that foster an understanding and appreciation of our natural resources. The proposed UGA research will enhance the City's understanding of habitat conditions and ecological functions, thereby improving the City's ability to achieve its management goals.

Researchers, led by Dr. Amanda Spivak, will examine hydrological, ecological, and geochemical processes in the field over a period of three years. The objectives of the research include determining the historic impact of tidal restriction on soil carbon storage and accretion rates, determining the impact of hydrological management on salinity, and to evaluate plant, soil, and greenhouse gas (CO₂, CH₄) responses to changes in tidal creek and pore water chemistry.

RECOMMENDATION: Authorize the Mayor to execute a Right of Entry Agreement with the University of Georgia, Department of Marine Sciences, to allow researchers to access the City wetland properties.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION: The Council approved the NFWF funding agreement at the June 12, 2017 Council Meeting.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS: None.

DEPARTMENTS: Executive

STAFF CONTACTS: Dan Bond

ATTACHMENTS: Project Map