

KIAWAH PARTNERS

KIAWAH ISLAND ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

Kiawah Island's enduring asset is its natural environment. Kiawah is the most carefully preserved barrier island of its size in the nation, outside of government lands. Roughly half of the Island's 10,000 acres are natural lowlands, and of the high ground, half again has been set aside for conservation, parks, or recreational uses.

Development began on Kiawah in the mid-1970s when a multi-disciplined planning team was assembled and charged with a single overriding premise – protect the Island's spectacular natural beauty. To do this, a team of scientists, historians, and environmentalists conducted a \$1.3 million study during the course of 16 months. From the study's findings, a blueprint was crafted to balance the social, recreational, and commercial needs of Kiawah's future residents with nature. When Kiawah Partners purchased the Island in 1988, the development company adopted that blueprint as its own.

Flora and Fauna

- **Birds** – Bald eagles, osprey, hawks, bluebirds, painted buntings, bufflehead ducks, cormorants and various species of heron are just a few of the more than 200 species of birds and waterfowl present on Kiawah Island.
- **Marine Wildlife** – Outside of wildlife refuges, Kiawah is the region's most prolific nesting area for loggerhead turtles. Island residents volunteer their time to an active turtle patrol and hatching program to maximize the number of hatchlings that make it to the ocean each year. Among the many species of marine life found here are dolphin, spottail bass, croaker, blue crab, mullet, flounder, shrimp, and shellfish.
- **Other Wildlife** – White-tailed deer, bobcats, alligators, raccoons, foxes, otters, upland voles, gray squirrels, opossum, and rabbits.
- **Plant Life** – The flora of Kiawah is rich and diverse due to the many habitats found here. The front beach and dune environment is characterized by the dune plants as well as pennywort, yucca, prickly pear cactus, butterfly pea, and sea oats. Throughout miles of centuries-old maritime forest and pond habitats, slash pine, live oak, magnolia, and palmetto trees shadow smaller trees and thicket consisting of common species such as wax myrtle, beauty berry, red bay, rice myrtle, and yaupon holly.

Beach

- Kiawah's beach is more than 10 miles long and at high tide is about 100 yards wide. Noting the pristine condition of the beach and its surroundings, renowned beach expert Stephen Leatherman ("Dr. Beach") named Kiawah as the nation's Best Wildlife Getaway Beach.
- Kiawah is unique in that it accretes sand, unlike most barrier islands. A 1999 study found that over a period of 16 years, the Island's net gain in sand volume was estimated at 5 million to 7 million cubic yards.
- Self-imposed development setbacks – a 200-foot minimum setback from the beach for oceanfront property – provide a permanent buffer to protect the beach's beauty. Kiawah Partners deeded this immensely valuable duneland, about 200 acres, to the Kiawah Island Community Association.

Marsh and Lowland

- Approximately half of the Island is composed of salt marsh, tidal creeks, freshwater wetlands, and more than 100 brackish and freshwater ponds, lakes, and lagoons.
- Protective measures include self-imposed setbacks (20-foot minimum on marshfront property), use of shared and community docks, and zoning restrictions on waterways. In fact, Kiawah is the only location in South Carolina to zone its waterways.

Conservation Easements

- Little Bear Island – In January 2000, KP put into permanent conservation 150 acres of pristine high ground known as Little Bear Island, and then granted the holding of the trust to Wetlands America Trust (an affiliate of Ducks Unlimited) and the Kiawah Island Natural Habitat Conservancy. The location of this property, at the Island's eastern tip, is key to coastal birds as it forms a critical link between Skimmer Flats (where birds nest) and a tidal slough and dunes (where birds gather). Birds that have made their home on Little Bear include the least tern, piping plover, peregrine falcon, and osprey. Additionally, the state's only recorded spotting of a roseate tern was at Little Bear.

Kiawah Partners is the master developer of Kiawah Island, a 10,000-acre barrier island located 21 miles south of Charleston, South Carolina. The company's subsidiaries include Kiawah Island Real Estate; The Kiawah Island Club, which encompasses the Tom Fazio-designed River Course, the Tom Watson-designed Cassique, The Beach Club by Robert A.M. Stern and Sasanqua, the Members-only spa; Freshfields Village; The Lodge at Doonbeg in Ireland; and Christophe Harbour in St. Kitts. For more information, visit www.Kiawah.com, or contact Mike Touhill, Director of Public Relations, (843) 768-6529, MTouhill@Kiawah.com.