

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP: *KIAWAH ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA*

Overview

Kiawah Partners has developed Kiawah Island, South Carolina and is widely recognized for its natural beauty and environmental sensitivity, as well as its commitment to preserving authentic experiences, both natural and cultural, while delivering the highest levels of service. Kiawah Island is emblematic of Kiawah Partners' careful, thoughtful and sensitive approach to blending manmade creations with an area's natural beauty and ecology.

Kiawah Partners and the Kiawah Island Ecosystem

Outside of government lands, Kiawah Island is the nation's most carefully preserved barrier island of its size. Roughly half of the island's 10,000 acres are natural lowlands, and of the high ground, nearly half has been set aside for conservation, parks or recreational uses. Preservation efforts began more than 25 years ago when a team of experts performed a comprehensive environmental audit. Over a period of 16 months, the island's wildlife, plant life and archaeological history were identified, categorized and studied. From this group's findings, a master plan was conceived to enhance Kiawah's natural beauty as well as the overall living experience.

- *Little Bear Island:* In January 2000, Kiawah Partners 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, Inc.), and to the Kiawah Island Natural Habitat Conservancy. The property, located at the island's eastern tip, is ideal for coastal birds, as it forms a critical link between Skimmer Flats – a common home to nesting birds – and a tidal slough and dunes, where birds often gather. Birds that have made their home on Little Bear Island 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.
- The successful Loggerhead Sea Turtle Nest Protection Program of Kiawah Island, which encompasses the entire Kiawah oceanfront, has been in operation since the 1970s. The program's components include:
 - Protecting rookeries from predators
 - Maintaining records of nesting and hatching activity
 - Educating residents and visitors about sea turtles and their habitats
 - Posting online maps of beach areas that are turtle nesting sites so the public is mindful of the locations
 - Conducting cooperative research projects with state and federal agencies
 - Implementing the "Lights Out for Sea Turtles" initiative, which requires that all beach-illuminating lights be turned off on evenings during the turtle-nesting season. (Brightly lit beaches are a deterrent to nesting females and a deathtrap for hatchlings; instead of being attracted by the moon's natural light and starlight on the surf, hatchlings move toward the brighter artificial lights and fail to find their way to the ocean.)
- While Kiawah's master plan originally called for approximately 7,000 residential properties, Kiawah Partners voluntarily reduced that cap to approximately 5,600 in its 1994 development agreement with the Town of Kiawah.
- Years ago, Kiawah implemented self-imposed development setbacks – a 200-foot minimum setback from the beach for oceanfront property. The setbacks were virtually unprecedented at the time they were implemented. The setbacks provide a permanent buffer to protect the beach's beauty. Kiawah Partners deeded this valuable 200 acres of duneland to the Kiawah Island Community Association.
- In the interest of preserving natural habitat, Kiawah Partners has placed a variety of restrictive covenants on Kiawah communities over and above island-wide covenants. They include a maximum square footage of individual homes; ground coverage limits as a percentage of the homesite; height restrictions; an emphasis on dark-hued colors and natural materials; preservation of natural vegetation in undisturbed condition; and the addition of native plant species.
- A number of the championship golf courses at Kiawah have been certified by Audubon International as "cooperative sanctuaries." This award-winning education and certification program recognizes golf courses and other facilities for their sensitivity to protecting the environment. To achieve the Audubon Sanctuary certification, golf courses must demonstrate a high degree of environmental quality in a variety of categories, including Environmental Planning, Wildlife Habitat Management, Resource Conservation, Waste Management, and Outreach and Education.

Awards

Kiawah Partners has been recognized with a number of significant awards for environmental sensitivity at Kiawah Island. These awards note, among other strengths, Kiawah Partners' record for careful dune preservation and sensitive integration of Kiawah's golf courses with nature. Kiawah Partners team of professionals specializes in close attention to detail, with particular care given to planning. Awards include:

- *Urban Land Institute* – Award for Excellence in community planning;
- *South Carolina Department of Natural Resources* – Environmental Stewardship Award;
- *South Carolina Wildlife Foundation* – Land Conservationist of the Year;
- *American Society of Landscape Architects* – National Merit Award for ecological planning;
- *Audubon Certified Cooperative Sanctuary* (The River Course and The Ocean Course); and
- *GOLF Magazine Green Golf Award*

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. For more information, visit www.Kiawah.com, or contact Mike Touhill, Director of Public Relations, (843) 768-6529, MTouhill@Kiawah.com.

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