WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE JANUARY? A LOT HAS HAPPENED!

CRITICAL STABILIZATION: The students and professors from the American College of the Building Arts (ACBA) completed their study of the Hutchinson House (HH) during spring semester. Their preliminary report included an assessment of condition, recommendations for stabilization and restoration of the house, and some cost estimates. Guyton Ash, the timber-framing instructor, provided a plan for temporary shoring systems that would allow restoration work to proceed yet give the structure needed support. The first step has been to stabilize the two chimneys to prevent potential hazards to the crews working on the shoring systems. Eddie Stroud, graduate of ACBA and mason from Up South LLC, has completed this chimney process. This is not the final work on the chimneys and fireplaces, but he secured the brickwork to make it safe for construction during the external house stabilization project. With this completed, Guyton Ash of Artis Construction can begin the actual work. Work is expected to start shortly after the first of the New Year.

GRANTS: We have received two grants thus far: the SHPO (State Historical Preservation Office) grant ($15,000 - matching) to be used for assessment, design and pricing for the restoration project & the Joanna Foundation ($2,500) to help with the archaeological assessment of the house site. We are currently working on a second letter of intent for the AACHAF (African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund) grant. We applied for round one but were not awarded a grant. They have notified us that we can apply again to be part of round two.

RFQ FOR ASSESSMENT: As part of the SHPO grant award requirements, we sent advertised RFQ’s (Request for Qualifications) and have received five responses that we are currently assessing to find the most appropriately qualified Architect/Engineer/Preservationist team for the HH. This needs to be completed by December 30. Once selected the team will provide a full assessment, structural engineering plan, restoration scope of work, drawings and cost estimates for house restoration.

SEA ISLAND COTTON PROJECT: We have received the proper authorization to be able to plant and grow a demonstration plot of Sea Island Cotton. Tom Austin, EIOLT Land Protection Associate, is researching the details of how best to accomplish this project. We are working with Bill McLean who will provide the Bleak Hall cotton seeds.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT: New South Associates has given EIOLT a proposal to perform an archaeological survey with metal detection of the property and geophysical survey of the fields. This work needs to be completed prior to doing any major work on or near the house to prevent the disturbance of significant artifacts. It will also help locate evidence of other structures on the site that may also be historically important. The timeline at this point is to start the archaeological survey in January and work on the geophysical survey after that. There will be a lot going on in the next few months.

PARKING AREA: During the EIOLT Auction in June, $10,000 was raised specifically to pay for a visitor parking area. To allow the public a closer look at the house, the Land Trust has installed a fenced-in parking area. This area will include an informational kiosk with photos, house and family history and eventually information on the progress of the restoration. These informational panels have been designed by New South Associates. It is anticipated this project will be completed and ready for use in February, at which time EIOLT will have a formal ribbon cutting ceremony, so keep an eye out for that announcement.
EDISTO ISLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION SOCIETY HOUSE TOUR: On October 13th the Hutchinson House was included in on the Edisto Museum’s tour. It was a truly special day as Hutchinson Family descendants came from around the U.S. to use the occasion to hold a reunion and share their story with guests that came to visit the house.

SECURITY SYSTEM: Shortly after the canopy was installed over the top of the house, a security system was installed. It has six independent cameras that provide 24-hour surveillance live and recorded. This system will be upgraded when the house is more stabilized to include inside motion detectors and possibly more cameras either hard wired or wireless.