

“ON EFFORT”

Newsletter Spring 2015

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THE DOLPHIN PROJECT

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The Dolphin Project is an all-volunteer, non-profit research, conservation and education organization, founded in 1989, dedicated to the protection of wild estuarine Bottlenose dolphins and our shared environment. Tax ID# 58-1914176

FROM THE HELM

Greetings Crew!

Spring is Here! - Finally!!!

We've been busy this winter. The training and dolphin programs have been updated and are getting rave reviews. We're still working on the survey charts, the Bylaws and survey data. We hope to have those tasks completed very soon. Our dedicated volunteers are awesome!

Be sure to check the survey dates posted on our website and in this newsletter. Mark your calendars and send in your registrations. A couple members have contacted me regarding their inability to register for surveys online. We've been receiving many registrations, so its possible that browsers may need refreshing. If you have submitted online registrations but have not heard from the survey committee 10-14 days before the survey date, please contact Peach at gadolpin@comcast.net. We'll do our best to accommodate you on a survey boat.

There are some very important public meetings coming up about critical coastal issues. The information is in this newsletter. Please attend if you can.

Don't be discouraged when you read about the serious issues confronting our coastal environment and wildlife. We CAN make a difference. The voice of the people must be heard in order to protect our coasts.

Peach

2015 FESTIVALS and EDUCATION OUTREACH EVENTS

We have a few festivals coming up that still need volunteers. Please contact Peach if you can help: thedolphinproject@gmail.com

Friday, April 10th

Jekyll Island Shell-E-Bration

10am—4:00pm

On the grounds of the Sea Turtle Hospital

Saturday, April 18th

Savannah Earth Day

11:00am—3:00pm

Forsyth Park

Saturday, May 2nd

Savannah Seafood Festival

All day

Savannah Riverfront

Sunday, August 2nd

Water Festival

12noon to 4:00pm

Chattahoochee Nature Center

DOLPHINS & DESSERTS

Our Spring Social will be on April 25th from 6:30—? at the Richmond Hill History Museum on Ford Avenue in Richmond Hill off I-95 exit 90. Our featured speaker will be the renown Cathy Sakas, founder of the Grays Reef National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, co-founder of the Savannah Ocean Exchange, producer, write and host of the Emmy winning series—*'The Coastal Naturalist'* for PBS as well as a documentary titled *'Secret Seashores'* about Georgia's barrier islands. Additionally Cathy was the host and science consultant for a multiple Telly award winning original nature series for Turner South entitled *'The Natural South.'* She'll talk about how we land dwellers are connected to the ocean. From 1998 to 2014 Cathy worked with NOAA Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary as an educator and scientific diver.



Attendance is \$10 which includes desserts and beverage. A casual grilled dinner is available for an additional \$10. Children under 12 are half price. Dinner is choice of chicken or shrimp with a variety of sides and a beverage. BYOB. **RSVP: thedolphinproject@gmail.com**

COASTS IN CRISIS...

Our coasts are facing many challenges...

The Palmetto Pipeline will extend from South Carolina, across the coast of Georgia to Jacksonville. This pipeline will be crossing wetlands and go UNDER rivers!

Oil Wells. Seismic Testing to look for oil on our shelf is expected to kill hundreds of thousands of whales, dolphins and fish. Testing which was conducted several years ago determined that there was only enough oil off our coasts to supply the United States for one month. This new seismic testing isn't worth the risk to our environment and wildlife.

The dredging of the **Savannah River** will alter the salinity and put the aquifer at risk.

The **Brunswick-Sapelo** area is full of dangerous toxins due to our government allowing the LCP superfund site to pollute the area. The

solution decided by the EPA is to cover the toxic mud and marsh with sand and rock. This does not eliminate the toxins. Marine life lives in the mud and marsh. A bandaid will not fix this problem.

Rayonier Corporation has been discharging up to 60 million gallons of dark, foul smelling effluent into the **Altamaha River** from it's Jesup-based pulp mill. The fish in the Altamaha are inedible for miles downstream. The pollution is visible from Google Earth. Rayonier wants a EPD permit to discharge.

The Dolphin Project is partnered with many other environmental organizations to address these critical issues. We encourage you as individuals to stay on top of these matters and contact your legislators.

Details on these issues were reported in our last newsletter and updates are printed in this newsletter....

UPCOMING IMPORTANT PUBLIC MEETINGS...

APRIL 9th SEISMIC TESTING MEETING

3:00-4:30PM and 5:30-7:00PM

Hilton Garden Inn—Midtown Savannah

Be there to stand up against seismic testing on our coasts. The US government admits it will kill thousands of whales and dolphins. Scientists say it can kill hundreds of thousands of whales, dolphins and fish.

APRIL 18th PIPELINE PROTEST RALLY

12noon. Meet at Jackson Square in Savannah

APRIL 21st PALMETTON PIPELINE

5:00PM

Richmond Hill City Center, Richmond Hill GA

Details on the pipeline are within this newsletter

BLACKFISH UPDATE...

John Hargrove can clearly recall the moment in 1980 when, as a wide-eyed six-year-old sitting with his family in the audience at a SeaWorld show in Orlando, he fell in love with killer whales. Harder to pinpoint is when his relationship with his dream job, training orcas for the theme park giant, finally turned sour.

It began with little things he says he started to notice about how SeaWorld treated its captive sea lions, dolphins and whales, and the trainers who would showcase them to the public. He says he saw cramped holding pools he believes were filled with too much chlorine; animals going blind or developing arthritis prematurely; and senior trainers banished from working with their beloved whales because they dared to speak out.

Later in his 14-year career, which is chronicled in his new book, *Beneath the Surface: Killer Whales, SeaWorld, and the Truth Beyond Blackfish*, he says he witnessed incidents that broke his heart: whales becoming aggressive towards trainers because of frustration at being confined in tiny pens for hours on end, or the anguished cries of whale calves forcibly separated from distressed mothers, against SeaWorld's stated policy.

Then, just 60 days apart, came the deaths of two friends and fellow trainers, Alexis Martinez and Dawn Brancheau, both killed by whales owned by SeaWorld.

The death in Spain of Martinez, in the jaws of a 14-year-old male named Keto on loan to Tenerife's Loro Parque, alarmed Hargrove and his fellow trainers, he says, not least because it was presented as a tragic drowning before the autopsy report revealed the extent of the violence Keto had

inflicted.

But when Brancheau was killed horrifically in February 2010, her body torn apart by an adult male named Tilikum at a public dinner show at SeaWorld Orlando, the company came under unprecedented scrutiny over its policies and safety procedures, leading to a \$75,000 citation from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and a ban on trainers working with whales in water.

Meanwhile, SeaWorld's attendances, earnings and share price have slumped. It has appointed a new chief executive and launched a major public relations offensive, designed to counter the fallout from the highly critical 2013 documentary *Blackfish*, which looked into Brancheau's death.

As for Hargrove, it was the deaths of his friends which probably tipped the balance. The trainer, who details his own near-fatal encounter with an aggressive whale called Freya in the opening pages of his book, weighed everything up and decided, in August 2012, that it was time to quit.

Yet the man who is now one of the company's most vocal critics says that for years, following the day in 1993 when he started as enthusiastic young apprentice cleaning out buckets at SeaWorld's San Antonio park, he firmly believed he was working for the good of the animals.

"It took a while," he says. "You had to learn what was healthy and unhealthy, what was normal and abnormal, because you don't know in the beginning. They taught us and we spouted it to the public.

"Then the company would make these decisions to strip calves away from their mothers and you would look at them in a different light as they tried to

BLACKFISH (continued)

explain it away. They'd say it has to be this way and this is the reason why, and you'd truly believe it; then they'd change their story.

"When there was a need, the protocols changed, the rules changed. You start to see cracks in the armour, and eventually it registers: this is not normal, this is not right."



John Hargrove speaks at WhaleFest2015 on March 14th in Brighton UK

SeaWorld accuses Hargrove of sensationalism. "We do not separate killer whale moms and calves, and in the rare occurrences that we do

move whales among our parks, we do so only in order to maintain a healthy social structure," says a rebuttal on its website seaworldcares.com.

Chuck Tompkins, SeaWorld's curator of zoological operations, said Hargrove was mistaken to say the whales were distressed. "We've trained them to be relaxed during that move," he told NPR in a recent interview. "To say that they're uncomfortable or stressed, that's just not the way we do our business."

But Hargrove is adamant that he is aware of at least 19 calves being separated from their mothers, and says any dissent is quickly quashed by SeaWorld's "cult-like" attitude.

"The way that it works is you keep your mouth shut. If you don't, there's a price to pay," he says, adding

that punitive measures include being moved out of the whale stadium or, if a trainer leaves SeaWorld on bad terms, being blacklisted.

Hargrove admits that his resignation was partly caused by his physical condition. Years of working with the whales in the water left him with a "laundry list" of injuries including broken ribs, fingers and toes, serious sinus issues and wrecked cartilage. "For the last three years, my doctor was telling me I needed to quit now," he says.

Ultimately, though, he says he stayed on because of his "spiritual connection" to the whales, and his mistaken belief that he could improve their circumstances.

"I'm conflicted about my career because I have memories I'll cherish for the rest of my life, memories that most people never have the opportunity to have. These whales gave me my childhood dream," he says.

"But I was also part of a system that did this to those animals. I was the one treating sunburns because their skins were drying out because they were lying motionless on the surface of the water with no shade for hours, and on and on.

"I was able to leave and go on with my life, and they're not. For everything they gave me, the least that I can do is take some criticism from boardroom cowards, the SeaWorld people sat behind a keyboard; weather that storm, and go out there and tell the truth.

"I was a killer whale trainer for 14 years and this is what I saw, the good and the bad."

MARK YOUR CALENDARS and don't forget to register early...

**April 25 - SURVEY
& Social**

May 10: Mother's Day

May 16 - SURVEY

June 13 - SURVEY

June 21: Father's Day

July 4: Independence Day

July 11 - SURVEY

& Social

August 15 - SURVEY

.....

September 7: Labor Day

September 12 - SURVEY

September 14: Rosh Hashanah

September 23: Yom Kippur

October 10 - SURVEY

October 12: Columbus Day

November 7 - SURVEY

& Social

November 26: Thanksgiving

TYBEE ISLAND CONSIDERS BAN ON PLASTIC BAGS *–the challenge continues*

The Georgia House has rejected a bill preventing cities from banning plastic bags. But a bill allowing people in Georgia to finance solar panels the same way they borrow money for homes or lease cars is headed to Gov. Nathan Deal.



The House's 67-85 vote on Friday makes the plastic bag bill's future uncertain. The Senate approved an earlier version. Officials in several Georgia cities have considered banning plastic bags within their limits, including coastal Tybee Island where supporters argue that sea turtles sometimes mistake them for food.

Rep. Tom McCall, who carried the bill in the

House, says local bans will create confusion and add costs to businesses while Rep. Trey Kelley criticized supporters as "extreme environmentalists."

Other Republicans who spoke against the bill called it a state overreach. Rep. Scot Turner told members that he wouldn't want such a ban in his city of Holly Springs but every community should make their own decision.

'CONSERVATION DAY' at the CAPITAL....



On February 18th, TDP members Gerry Sattelle, Chris Hines and Peach Hubbard joined other concerned citizens on a bus headed to Atlanta for 'Conservation Day'. The bus was provided by the environmental group One Hundred Miles which is located in Brunswick and is dedicated to the protection of Georgia's coast. Don Bender, TDP VP, met us there. Many environmental groups in attendance including the Riverkeepers, Garden Clubs and the Sierra Clubs.

We were able to speak to legislators by breaking down into smaller groups. Thanks to Megan Desrosiers of 100 MILES, many of Georgia's legislators are informed about the issues affecting our coast.

The small group I joined spoke with Senator

Lester Jackson (D-Savannah). I was impressed with his knowledge of the coast and it's problems. In past contacts with legislators, it was obvious to me that they knew little about coastal environment, even though they may have lived on the coast. There was a lot of head shaking and promises made. Senator Jackson was a refreshing change.

We implored upon Senator Jackson to reach out to the Bureau of Energy Management to arrange a public meeting for Georgia regarding the oil drilling. All the other coastal states had meetings but not Georgia. Senator Jackson came through and the meeting was held on March 24th in Savannah.

Unfortunately it was not as expected. The BOEM people located at the stations in the room knew only about their individual issue, not the big picture. They were not familiar with our coast and marine life. They wanted the attendees to provide them with that information!? They haven't done their homework. Seismic testing was not properly addressed. It was not a public forum.

Contact your legislators about the need to stop oil wells and seismic testing on our coasts. **Join us on April 9th in Savannah for the public meeting about seismic testing. 3:00-4:30pm and 5:30-7:00pm at the Hilton Garden Inn—Midtown.**

MARSH MADNESS....

Governor Deal of Georgia eliminated the marsh buffer law on Earth Day last year.!?!?!? Thanks to the diligence and determination of many environmental groups and concerned citizens, the Georgia legislators were rallied into reinstating the marsh buffer AND closing the loopholes in the original bill. The marsh now has “some” protection. Many thanks to all of you who contacted your legislators. The vote was almost unanimous. The only legislators to vote against SB101 were Williams of Cumming and Gooch of Dahlenega. Much more needs to be achieved to protect our marshes. David Kyler of ‘Center for a Sustainable Coast’ offers his concerns:

“The record of state Environmental Protection Division exemptions through buffer “variances” does not substantiate confidence in the practical outcomes.

EPD records indicate that about 1,500 buffer variances were awarded across the state between the fourth quarter of 2006 and the second quarter of 2014. That’s nearly 200 a year, about 86 percent of those that were applied for — a phenomenal number of “exemptions” allowing a wide range of activities, including paving, clearing and other significant buffer disturbance.

The conclusion to this assessment is clear: If the public expects the proposed marsh-buffer bill (SB 101) to reliably protect Georgia’s

prized tidal marshes, variance procedures must be carefully reviewed and, as justified, improved through the state Department of Natural Resources rule-making process.

Such a review should consider not only the criteria and corresponding information required in making variance decisions, but a revitalization of the obligation of marsh-front property-owners to help protect the productivity and health of adjoining public marshlands. Such an obligation should entail some method for EPD’s periodic assessment of variance-related buffer activities and their impacts.

Currently, there is no such requirement and therefore the cumulative probability of serious damage to public waterways and wetlands — essential habitat to valuable fish and wildlife as well as being vital to water quality and flood-protection — is mounting yearly.

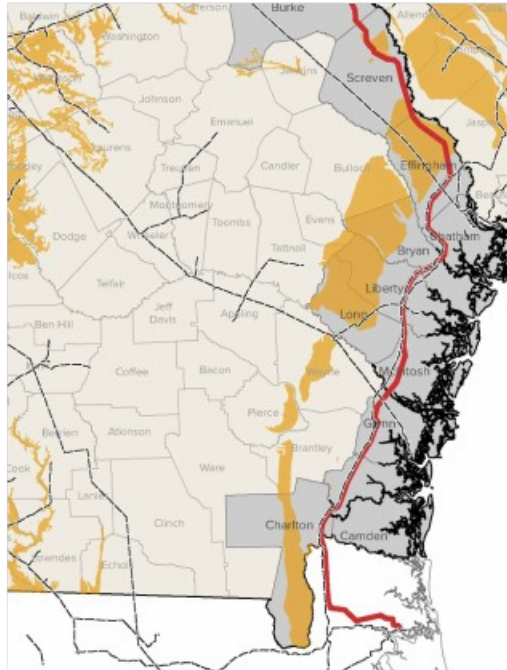
Any marsh-buffer legislation will only be as effective as EPD’s variance process allows. It is imperative that variance procedures are responsibly reviewed and strengthened through rule-making.



Example of marsh buffer variance. No protection here.

PUSH BACK THE PIPELINE...

On February 13th, the mammoth pipeline company Kinder Morgan, filed for a certificate of public convenience and necessity from the GA DOT, setting in motion a 90-day period in which the department can object to the company's plans for the proposed Palmetto Pipeline. If DOT doesn't object, Kinder Morgan gains the right of eminent domain to build the pipeline.



The **Palmetto Pipeline** is a connector feed from the Plantation Pipeline (which runs from Louisiana to Maryland). The Palmetto Pipeline will have 360 miles of galvanized steel and carry 167,000 of oil a day from the northeast corner of South Carolina (near Augusta GA) to Jacksonville Florida, with a stop at a storage facility in Richmond Hill, GA.

Kinder Morgan, 'promises' that 80 percent of its new pipeline will follow already existing infrastructure and is designed for minimal impact. But according to its own map handed out at a series of public information meetings, much of it will be dug through fragile wetlands and go UNDER Georgia's rivers including the much beleaguered Savannah River.

"SHOW ME THE MONEY!"

Follow the money trail to the pipeline... There

are high level politicians in South Carolina and Georgia that have invested in or received contributions from Kinder Morgan. Counties will get payments from Kinder Morgan for crossing county lands. They will take private lands if the owners will not sell at Kinder Morgan prices. While Kinder Morgan will not state who owns the oil that will be transported in their pipeline, it is our

understanding that EXXON is not only the owner of the oil but has a share in the pipeline as well.

Kinder Morgan has stated that the oil being transported within their pipeline is for the use of the coastal residents. If that is true, why send the oil to Jacksonville which is a shipping port for oil? Kinder Morgan claims that the oil is needed and is a public necessity for coastal residents. Not true.

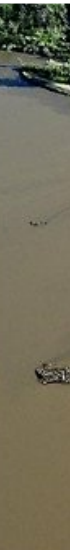
Kinder Morgan claims they have modern technology to detect leaks. Numerous oils spills, leaks and violations are attributed to Kinder Morgan even in recent years. So much for their modern technology. If a pipe is leaking UNDER a river, it's too late for that river and the wildlife within it. The damage could be irreparable.

FACTS ABOUT THE PALMETTO PIPELINE...

- The \$1 billion pipeline known as the Palmetto Project is a project of Kinder Morgan, the largest energy infrastructure company in North America.
- A new 360-mile pipeline from Belton SC to Jacksonville FL will be constructed with 218 miles crossing GA and 142 in SC, with additional facilities including storage tanks, pump stations and delivery terminals.
- The line will move 167,000 barrels per day of refined petroleum products Diesel, gasoline and ethanol through a batch system.
- The pipeline's depth will be approximately **4 feet** underground with 16" and 20" diameter pipes.
- The project's timeline schedule's permitting to begin in Spring 2015, construction to begin in 2016, completion/operation by July 2017.
- The pipeline is expected to cross the Revolutionary War Battle site Brier Creek in Screven County GA where 150 Americans died and are buried to this day.
- The pipeline's path through the Savannah River basin endangers not only today's natural resources, but also historical and archaeological artifacts yet uncovered.
- Kinder Morgan is currently soliciting/threatening landowners to map the final route and obtain the right of way easements. **Taking people's private property for private profit under threat of eminent domain is NOT a public purpose.**
- Because they can not be fenced off, pipeline easements effectively open up private property to common trespassing and pipeline damage risk.
- Digging, planting and other uses of the land by the landowner are prohibited but the landowner must still pay taxes on his property. The landowner must maintain the bridges and roads to the satisfaction of Kinder Morgan.
- Kinder Morgan and DOT have scheduled or conducted informational open houses, but these **meetings are NOT public hearings and violate DOT regulations.** In order to have an effective say in this, process, citizens must demand their right to a fair public hearing, that is, conducted by DOTR with faire notice to the public, disclosure of critical information including a detailed map of the proposed route and adequate time for public comments.

GREENWASH...

To GREENWASH means to frame a particular program or policy as environmentally friendly when it's actually quite the opposite.



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Kinder Morgan Accidents & Safety Violations

In 2009, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) cited Kinder Morgan for violating safety standards regarding the distance between a natural gas pipeline and a "high consequence area" such as a school or hospital; the pipeline was too close for safe operation in case of a leak.

In 2011, PHMSA cited Kinder Morgan for these safety violations: • failing to maintain update maps showing pipeline locations, •



XON Mobile pipeline rupture under the Yellowstone River in Montana. In 2004, a KM underground pipeline ruptured in CA spilling 12,000 gallons into Suisun Marsh. They didn't notify authorities for 18 hours.

failing to test pipeline safety devices, • failing to maintain proper firefighting equipment, • failing to inspect its pipelines as required, and • failing to adequately monitor pipes' corrosion levels.

In 2013, the headline "Wall Street Worries About Kinder Morgan's Safety Record: BC pipeline operator slashes and defers maintenance spending" was a concern to anyone who lived or worked near a Kinder Morgan pipeline. The Wall Street Journal asked, "Is Kinder Morgan Scrimping on its Pipelines?" after an investment analyst charged the company with starving its pipelines of routine maintenance spending in order to return more cash to investors.

Deferred maintenance may account for the high number of Kinder Morgan pipeline accidents in the last decade. Close examination of PHMSA's incident reports for Kinder Morgan's onshore gas transmission pipelines shows that faulty infrastructure causes 45% of onshore gas transmission pipeline significant leaks. Failure of the pipe, a cracked weld, and faulty pipeline equipment together account for 28.3% of pipeline leaks, and corrosion of the pipe causes 16.8%.

Accidents In Texas from 2003 to 2014, Kinder Morgan experienced 36 "significant incidents", resulting in fatalities or hospitalization, fires, explosions, or spills.

Throughout the U.S. since 2003, Kinder Morgan and its subsidiaries' pipelines have been responsible for at least 180 spills, evacuations, explosions, fires, and fatalities in 24 states.

SEAMAMMS...

SEAMAMMS = South East And Mid-Atlantic Marine Mammal Symposium. This conference is held every year at a different venue, hosted by marine science departments in universities or government agencies. This year SEAMAMMS was in Virginia Beach VA, hosted by the Virginia Aquarium.

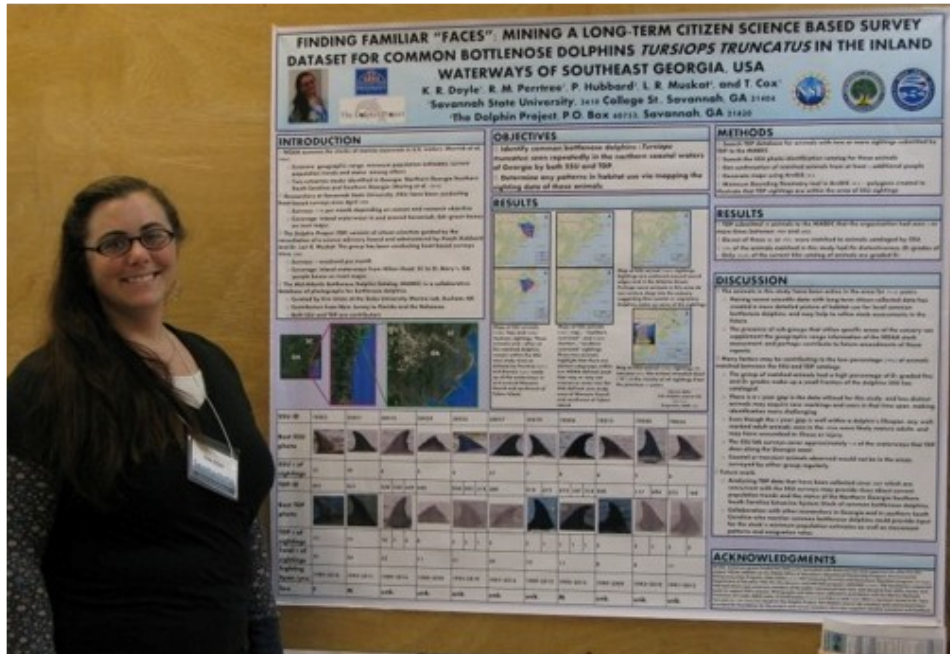
SEAMAMMS is a venue that offers undergrad, masters and PhD students the opportunity to present their research. They can choose to do it orally or through poster presentations. Non-profit research organizations may offer their research as well. The Dolphin Project hopes to directly contribute with the next couple years.

The Dolphin Project board members that attended were Sandy and Tom Workman who currently live in Charlotte NC, Lori Muskat who resides in Atlanta and Peach Hubbard from Richmond Hill GA. Peach and Lori connected in Augusta GA so they could ride together. Despite an arduous ride up I-95 that took almost 13 hours due to rain and bridge construction delays, the conference was worth the trip—as it always is.

SEAMAMMS is a wonderful opportunity for TDP to be connected with marine scientists who work on the East coast. They've graciously shared their research and offer answers to questions and clarification of information relating to the estuarine Bottlenose. Our

education outreach and training programs wouldn't be as educational as they are without their input.

TDP had a great honor this year when we were considered co-authors of a poster presentation by



Kate Doyle of Savannah State University.

Kate did a comparative study of dolphins that were recorded back in the early 1990's by TDP to dolphins that SSU recorded in recent years. Her findings have proven that some of the dolphins that we are seeing in the Savannah area are in their 30's. This is truly amazing given the pollution and abuse that challenge these dolphins.

Additionally her project also reports how important citizen-scientists, like The Dolphin Project, are to the marine science departments in this country. We fill in the gaps where universities and government



agencies cannot cover.

The Dolphin Project is the largest and longest running all-volunteer photo-ID Bottlenose dolphin research organization in the United States. Originally started as a 10-year program,

we're now in our 26th year. We can all be proud of this accomplishment. With your help, we will continue to educate the public and perform photo-ID research which adds to the database of Bottlenose dolphins on the Eastern seaboard at Duke University.

Clockwise starting left: SSU's Kate Doyle with her research poster.

Lori Muskat, Peach Hubbard, Sandy Workman and Tom Workman at SEAMAMMS.

Lori Muskat (TDP's Principal Investigator w/ NOAA) and Duke University's Kim Urian, curator of MABDC and OBIS-SEAMAP (where our research data is stored). They are standing in front of a screen of our database of fins.

Peach with Keith Rittmaster of the North Carolina Maritime Museum with his skeleton of a Rizzo dolphin. Keith and his volunteers cleaned and constructed the display of this Rizzo which may be the only known Rizzo skeleton in the U.S.



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