



Dear Conservation Partner,

The fifth annual **Santee Birding and Nature Festival** will be held on April 27th, 28th and 29th, 2012. The festival will be headquartered at the Santee National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center and will promote tourism through outdoor recreation activities such as birdwatching, kayaking and hiking. In 2011, the festival generated positive publicity for the entire region and attracted visitors from as far away as Canada, New York and Iowa. The mission of the event is to increase awareness of our national and state heritage in natural areas and to provide a wide array of wildlife watching opportunities in South Carolina.

A core committee consisting of representatives from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, South Carolina State Parks, National Park Service, Old Santee Canal Park, South Carolina Nature-Based Tourism Association and Santee Cooper Country Tourism Center are all participating in the development process. Numerous other local organizations will be asked to lend their talents, resources, and knowledge of the outdoors to enhance and supplement this festival.

The festival will offer guided field trips by regional and local naturalists along with nature-based workshops, demonstrations, and exhibits. This year's keynote speaker is Bill Thompson III, editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, the popular bimonthly magazine that has been published by his family since 1978. An avid birdwatcher since the age of eight, Bill is the author of numerous books on birds and birdwatching, including his most recent book, *The Young Birdwatchers Guide to the Birds of Eastern North America* (Houghton Mifflin, 2008).

Please consider making a contribution to the festival to assist in making it a success, enclosed you will find a summary of sponsorship options. The birding community and planning committee thank you for considering to support this festival and as a company, family or individual, you will be recognized with a logo or name in our advertising. If you have any questions about sponsorship, please contact me at (843) 437-1180 or via email at kristinalpoole@gmail.com.

This festival provides unique opportunities for people across diverse backgrounds to connect with nature, which is critical, in this ever-increasing technological world. Your contributions are needed to help cover various event-related costs such as printing rack cards, advertising and funding for the registration system. For general festival questions, please contact Susan Heisey at (803) 478-2217 or susan_heisey@fws.gov. Thank you for your consideration!

With deepest gratitude,

Kristina Wheeler
SBNF Donor Chair



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