

WADMALAW ISLAND  
PLANNED DEVELOPMENT  
GUIDELINES

WADMALAW ISLAND LAND PLANNING COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 17, 1988

CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

WADMALAW ISLAND LAND PLANNING COMMITTEE

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## STATEMENT OF INTENT

1. WHEREAS, it is the desire of Charleston County to manage and regulate the development of Wadmalaw Island to assure adequate water, sewer, transportation, and other public services which will harmonize with and preserve the existing rural character and pristine nature of the Island; and

2. WHEREAS, this amendment will allow the Island to grow in a reasonable and orderly manner to approximately five to seven times its present population, while maintaining the farming character of the island; and

3. WHEREAS, Charleston County's desire to manage the development of Wadmalaw Island will be materially facilitated by zoning regulations that prescribes a reasonable scheme for minimum lot sizes; and

4. WHEREAS, the lot sizes of Wadmalaw Island are to be determined in light of the present needs of the community as well as with a view to the probable future requirements of the island that will arise from the normal development of the land; and

5. WHEREAS, the nature of the Island necessitates that traffic congestion be strictly regulated in order to allow emergency evacuation of the entire Island and also because there is no inexpensive or reasonable way to significantly increase the amount of traffic that the Island can safely and reasonably accommodate; and

6. WHEREAS, it is the desire of the residents of Charleston County as well as the residents of Wadmalaw Island to preserve the heritage of the Island as a separate and distinct community with a viable farming area; and

7. WHEREAS, the nature of Wadmalaw Island's terrain with its sandy, acidic, and highly porous soil is best suited only for low density housing requiring individual septic tank systems; and

8. WHEREAS, there are no public water or sewer systems on Wadmalaw Island, and Charleston County has no plans to install either a public water or sewer system due the exorbitant costs; and

9. WHEREAS, to protect the unique waterfront environment as well as to prevent the degradation of SAA classified water of the creeks, rivers, and marshes surrounding Wadmalaw Island, it is necessary to strictly regulate the number of septic tanks on the Island; and

10. WHEREAS, the low lying land on Wadmalaw Island creates potentially severe flooding problems, and the improper development or the over-development of the Island would accelerate the flow of surface water and the run-off from the roofs and paved areas, thus polluting the surrounding marshes and SAA classified waters of the Island and;

11. WHEREAS, Wadmalaw Island has always been an agricultural community and Clemson University Coopertive Extension Service estimates that 15 acres is the minimum amount of land necessary to support a very intense farming operation on Wadmalaw Island; and

12. WHEREAS, these zoning regulations will not displace low income families, but, provides and insures that they will have a home on the Island in the future, by allowing 15 times as many small lots (one-half and one acre) as 15 acre lots; and

13. WHEREAS, this zoning ordinance will not significantly increase the cost of housing on the Island; and

14. WHEREAS, this plan considers all aspects of Wadmaw Island's growth, with its aim of promoting not deterring the orderly growth and development of the Island.

WADMALAW ISLAND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

February 17, 1988

I. GENERAL

- A. These development guidelines pertain to and describe the various zoning categories for the Wadmalaw Island Planned Development as shown on the accompanying map.
- B. The development guidelines and map are applicable to the entire Island and extend to the center line of the surrounding creeks and rivers of Wadmalaw Island following adoption by Charleston County Council on February 17, 1988.
- C. Any property not conforming to the Planned Development at the time of its adoption will be categorized "legal, non-conforming" and will remain as such with no change in use or zoning required. However, the discontinuation of the non-conforming use for a period of one year will result in the property being zoned to conform with the development guidelines and attached map. If two or more lots or combinations of lots and portions of lots with continuous frontage in single ownership are approved lots of record at the time of passage or amendment of this ordinance, and if all or part of the lots do not meet the requirements for lot width and/or area as established by this ordinance, the lands involved shall be considered to be an undivided parcel for the purpose of this ordinance, and no portion of said parcel shall

be used or sold which does not meet lot width and area requirements established by this ordinance nor shall any division of the parcel be made which leaves remaining any lot with width or area below the requirements of this ordinance.

- D. The Wadmalaw Island Planned Development is a supplement to the Charleston County Zoning Ordinance, intended to provide specific descriptions of land use especially designed for Wadmalaw Island. These specific requirements supercede the Charleston County Zoning Ordinance wherever they conflict, but the County Zoning Ordinance prevails in any case not addressed by the development guidelines.

II. LAND USE ZONES -- All of Wadmalaw Island has been classified into one of the following descriptive land use zones:

R 1/2 - Residential 1/2 acre lots

R 1 - Residential 1 acre lots

R 2 - Residential 2 acre lots

(as identified in Appendix A)

R 3 - Residential 3 acre lots

(abutting critical areas or freshwater coastal wetlands)

RA 5 - Residential/Agricultural 5 acre lots

RA 15 - Residential/Agricultural 15 acre lots

RC - Rural Commercial

CH - Highway/Waterway Commercial

Each land use zone is subject to different limitations as to use, lot size, density, building size and other criteria. When implementing R-2 and R-3 zones on existing properties, creating a substandard residual, then the residual shall be zoned R-2 unless adjacent to an R-3 zone in which case the residual shall be zoned R-3. Land use zones are further described and requirements outlined in Section III.

III. LAND USE CATEGORIES AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES --

Requirements for each land-use category are outlined in this section.



DEFINITIONS:

1. Accessory Unit -- An additional unit on the same property. Not to be subdivided; for use by an employee or family member; not to be rented. For example: guest house, caretaker quarters, servants quarters, or house for elderly parent, etc. Only one mobile home per lot shall be allowed.
2. Bulk -- The part of the land that is covered by the structure, expressed as a percentage.
3. Clustering -- The placement or grouping of principal residential units on a lot or tract without creating individual lots and without subdividing the property. Zone densities and setback requirements as specified in these Development Guidelines must be met. This does not authorize the placement of two or more mobile homes on a lot.
4. Density -- The number of individual housing or business units allowed.
5. Freshwater Coastal Wetlands -- Those areas which are diked and contain fresh/brackish water and abut saltwater marshes or estuaries.
6. Front Setback -- The setback measured from a street right-of-way.
7. Height -- The overall height of a structure shall be measured from the first floor elevation as required by the Federal Emergency Management Act, (FEMA) adopted by Charleston County. Where no minimum elevation is required by FEMA, height shall be measured from the ground floor elevation.

8. Ratio -- The comparison of various property line dimensions. For example, a ratio of "1 to 5" means that the shortest boundary line of a parcel may not be less than 1/5 the length of the longest boundary line.
9. Residential Curb Cuts -- There shall be a maximum of two (2) 25 foot wide curb cuts per lot.
10. Screening -- Growth and vegetation left as a natural border along property lines and to be at least 4 feet in height. Where applicable screening shall be located within the first 30 feet of all front yards. Where growth is not sufficient, planting and landscaping shall be provided. Screening will be shown on the site plan at the time of application for a permit and must be in place prior to occupancy.
11. Setback -- The distance from the property line required to be kept free from construction; there are often different setback requirements for front lot lines, interior lot lines, and critical area lines.
12. Traffic -- The requirements for curb cuts, parking, turn areas and other concerns.
13. Type Structure -- The construction of the building (Stick-built, mobile home, etc.)
14. Width -- Minimum lot width will be at the street right-of-way and must extend a minimum of 3/4 of the depth of the lot.

LAND USE ZONE R-1/2

Lot Size 1/2 acre minimum.

Lot Shape Ratio of 1 to 3 (1/3).

Lot Width 100'

Use Single-Family Residential.

Density 1 principal unit per 1/2 acre; 1 accessory unit per principal unit.

Structures Individual construction, manufactured housing or mobile home.

Setbacks Front: 50'  
Interior: 10'  
Critical line: 50'

Height 35'

Bulk 20%

Screening 30' front  
3' interior

Traffic As required and restricted by the prevailing road code.  
(State Highway Department, Charleston County, etc.)

LAND USE ZONE R-1

Lot Size 1 acre minimum.

Lot Shape Ratio of 1 to 5 (1/5).

Lot Width 100'

Use Single-Family Residential.

Density 1 principal unit per acre, 1 accessory unit per principal unit.

Structures Individual construction, manufactured housing or mobile home.

Setbacks Front: 75'  
Interior: 10'  
Critical line: 50'

Height 35'

Bulk 20%

Screening 30' front  
3' interior

Traffic As required and restricted by the prevailing road code.  
(State Highway Department, Charleston County, etc.)

LAND USE ZONE R-2

Location 500 feet on either side of the road rights-of-way of roads listed in Appendix A. The R-2 zone shall be determined to be from the right-of-way for a distance of 500' or the first property line, whichever is less.

Lot Size 2 acre minimum.

Lot Shape Ratio of 1 to 7 (1/7).

Lot Width 125'

Use Single-Family Residential.

Density 1 principal unit per 2 acres, 1 accessory unit per principal unit.

Structures Individual construction, manufactured housing or mobile home.

Setback Front: 100'  
Interior: 20'  
Critical line: 50'

Height 35'

Bulk 15%

Screening 30' front  
5' interior

Traffic As required and restricted by the prevailing road code. (State Highway Department, Charleston County, etc.)

LAND USE ZONE R-3

<u>Location</u>	Affects properties which abut critical areas or approved freshwater coastal wetlands for a distance of not more than 1,000 feet inland measured from Critical Line.
<u>Lot Size</u>	3 acre minimum.
<u>Lot Shape</u>	Ratio of 1 to 7 (1/7).
<u>Lot Width</u>	150'
<u>Use</u>	Single-Family Residential.
<u>Density</u>	1 principal unit per 3 acres, 1 accessory unit per principal unit.
<u>Structures</u>	Individual construction, manufactured housing or mobile home.
<u>Setback</u>	Front: 100' Interior: 20' Critical line: 50'
<u>Height</u>	35'
<u>Bulk</u>	15%
<u>Screening</u>	30' front 5' interior
<u>Traffic</u>	As required and restricted by the prevailing road code. (State Highway Department, Charleston County, etc.)

LAND USE ZONE RA-5

Lot Size 5 acre minimum.

Lot Shape Ratio of 1 to 7 (1/7).

Lot Width 200'

Use Single-Family Residential/Agricultural.

Density 1 principal unit per 5 acres; 1 accessory unit per principal unit.

Structures Individual construction, manufactured housing or mobile home.

Setback Front: 100'  
Interior: 50'  
Critical line: 50'

Height 50'

Bulk 15%

Screening 30' front  
10' interior

Traffic As required and restricted by the prevailing road code.  
(State Highway Department, Charleston County, etc.)

LAND USE ZONE RA-15

Lot Size 15 acre minimum.

Lot Shape Ratio of 1 to 7 (1/7).

Lot Width 350'

Use Single-Family Residential/Agricultural.

Density 1 principal unit per 15 acres; 2 accessory units per principal unit.

Structures Individual construction, manufactured housing or mobile home.

Setback Front: 100'  
Interior: 50'  
Critical line: 50'

Height 50'

Bulk 15%

Screening 30' front  
10' interior

Traffic As required and restricted by the prevailing road code.  
(State Highway Department, Charleston County, etc.)



LAND USE ZONE RC

Lot Size 1 acre minimum.

Lot Shape Ratio of 1 to 5 (1/5).

Use As listed in Appendix B.

Density 1 unit per lot; 4 tenants per unit.

Structures Individually constructed on site.

Setback Front: 75'  
Interior 10'

Height 35'

Bulk As required by "Use" above, but not to exceed 15%.

Screening Shall be as defined and at least 10' in width adjacent to any residentially zoned property on the commercial property. A 10' natural or landscaped buffer area shall be maintained between the property line adjacent to the street right-of-way and the commercial activity, including parking areas. This buffer shall meet any vision clearance requirements as established in the Charleston County Zoning Ordinance.

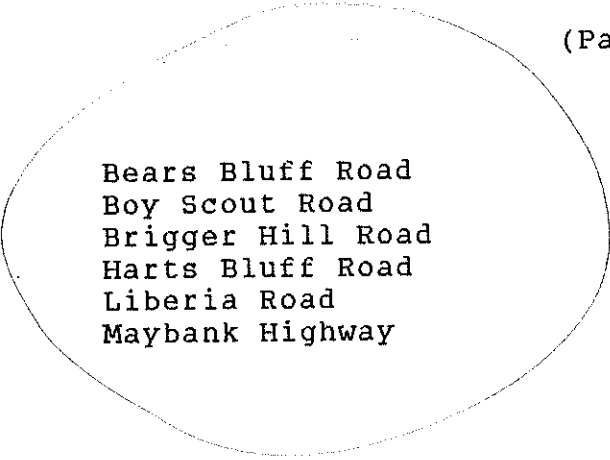
Traffic Parking, curbcuts, etc., as required by the Charleston County Zoning Ordinance.

LAND USE ZONE CH

As constituted in the Charleston County Zoning Ordinance which was in effect on November 18, 1987.

APPENDIX A

R-2 Roads on  
Wadmalaw Island  
(Paved Portions Only)



Bears Bluff Road  
Boy Scout Road  
Brigger Hill Road  
Harts Bluff Road  
Liberia Road  
Maybank Highway

## APPENDIX B

The Rural Commercial (RC) District permits the following uses as a use-of-right or by a Conditional Use Permit (P):

Transportation:

Taxi cab stand

Communication:

Telephone exchange stations (P),

Utilities:

Electricity substations (P), gas pressure control stations (P), water treatment plants (P), sewage treatment plants and pumping stations (P).

Retail Trade:

Variety stores limited to 10,000 sq. ft. of floor area; vending machine operators; grocery stores limited to 10,000 sq. ft. of floor area; eating places; drug stores limited to 4,000 sq. ft. of floor area; liquor; books; stationary; arts and craft supplies; sporting goods and bicycles; garden supplies; nurseries; florists; cigar & cigarette shops; gifts, novelties, and souvenirs; hay, grain and feed store; hardware store.

Services:

Laundrying, dry cleaning and dyeing (P); laundrying and dry cleaning (self-service) (P); beauty and barber shops; tailoring; shoe repair; physicians and dentist; kindergarten (P); religious activities; day care centers; finance, insurance, and real estate services; legal services; veterinarian; outpatient clinics; watch, clock, and jewelry repair; gasoline service station; and automotive and farm equipment repair.

Cultural, Entertainment and Recreational:

Arenas and field houses (P); stadiums (P), auditoriums (P); miniature golf, golf courses; tennis courts; gymnasiums and athletic clubs (P); and marinas (P).

Resources and Production:

Agriculture and Aquaculture processing.

CONDITIONALLY PERMITTED USES  
RC DISTRICT

Pipeline above ground\*, telephone exchange station, electric transmissions, electric substations, gas pipeline r/w\*, water pipeline\*, water treatment plant\*, storage tanks, water pressure control stations, sewage treatment plants\*, sewage pressure control stations, solid waste disposal, other pipeline r/w and pressure control stations n.e.c.\*, laundry, dry cleaning/dyeing services (except rugs), protected functions/ related activities, postal services, nursery, primary, secondary schools, welfare and charitable services, stadiums, arenas, field houses, auditoriums, exhibition halls, playfields, athletic fields, recreation centers, gymnasiums, athletic clubs, marinas\*, mining and quarrying of nonmetallic minerals\* (except fuels).

\*Subject to stipulations.

NOTE: Utilities are to be provided for developments on Wadmalaw Island only and subject to the Conditional Use Permit process.

## RURAL COMMERCIAL (RC) District Performance Standards

In addition to any other applicable provisions of this Planned Development, structures in the RC District shall be subject to the following performance standards.

### 1. Size of Gross Floor Area:

All structures, including accessory structures, shall be limited to a maximum 5000 square foot gross floor area; however, structures in excess of 5000 square feet gross floor area up to a maximum of 10,000 square feet gross floor area shall be permitted subject to a Conditional Use Permit. In no case shall a structure exceed 10,000 square feet gross floor area.

### 2. Limitation of One Principal Structure to a Lot:

No principal structure shall be located on the same lot with any other principal structure.

### 3. One Dwelling Unit Per Lot:

In no case shall more than one dwelling unit be allowed per lot in the RC District.

### 4. Commercial Activities Enclosed:

All commercial activities, excluding accessory gasoline outlets, shall be operated entirely within enclosed building.

### 5. Gasoline Pump Nozzles Limited:

In the RC District, accessory gasoline outlets shall be limited to a maximum of 4 nozzles; however, accessory gasoline outlets exceeding 4 nozzles up to a maximum of 8 nozzles shall be permitted subject to a Conditional Use Permit. In no case shall the number of gasoline nozzles exceed 8. Sec. 30.80.0553 shall also apply.

# WADMALAW ISLAND LAND PLANNING COMMITTEE

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### I. Conservation and Environment

Wadmalaw Island should be preserved as a model of people and nature living compatibly.

From public hearings and extensive study and consideration the Wadmalaw Island Land Planning Committee recognizes changes in circumstances which are substantially affecting the public health, safety, welfare, and environment on Wadmalaw Island since the original Charleston County Zoning Ordinance was enacted that justify the current amended ordinance for Wadmalaw Island.

The Wadmalaw Island Land Planning Committee recommends that a broad range of general planning criteria be used by appropriate planning and governmental agencies which include the following:

1. The preservation of the rural and non-urban pattern of development.
2. The necessity for the overall management of the rate of growth on Wadmalaw Island in order to preserve the integrity of and protect the aesthetic character of the Island.
3. The regulation of household density of the area.
4. The encouragement and preservation of agriculture.
5. The recognition that farmland is not undeveloped land waiting for another use but rather developed land which should be preserved as a vital and necessary and legitimate and important governmental and public policy goal.
6. The preservation of farmland and of the minimum of 15 acres which would, as supported by the Charleston County Extension Director's letter of October 28, 1987, be the minimum area required for a very intensive farm operation to be successful.
7. Row crops, tree farming, shrimping, fishing, and aquaculture are to be encouraged.
8. The preservation of the nature of the terrain, soil, water resources, creeks and rivers and their natural wildlife.
9. The preservation of the soil's capacity to absorb rainfall and the vital necessity of maintaining an abundant supply of drinkable well water from the limited and diminishing available fresh water aquifer.

10. The SAA water quality standards should be maintained and encouraged for all rivers and creeks. No sewer, treated or untreated, and no pollutants should be discharged into surrounding waters, directly or indirectly, and all such current discharges will be encouraged to be removed.
11. The adverse impact from non-point surface pollutants such as runoff, from reduction of natural habitat, from increased human disturbance of natural systems, from adverse pressure upon the limited fresh water supply and upon critical forest and wetlands should be minimized wherever feasible.
12. The specific environmental impact be addressed in any decision allowing a change in land use or increase in density.
13. The protection and safety of the population against large amounts of traffic on residential and emergency evacuation roads.
14. The protection against all unnecessary or excessive signs, visual, noise, waste or litter pollution, including the unnecessary current use of Wadmalaw Island as a location for a County dump for off-island generated waste which is now being inefficiently transported onto the Island, dumped at the Wadmalaw County dump and along the public and private roads, and then recollected and retransported off of the Island all at unnecessary and excessive taxpayers' expense and the citizens' aggravation.
15. The on-going activity and input from the Wadmalaw Island Land Planning Committee or similar body review and report its recommendations on any future proposed changes of land use on Wadmalaw Island.
16. And finally, that the Wadmalaw Island Land Planning Committee further study and work with the Charleston County Planning Staff and make a report to the Charleston County Council of its recommendations concerning a possible Wadmalaw Island Critical Area Program similar to the Kent County, Maryland Critical Area Program.

## II. Agriculture

Agriculture has been the economic life-blood of Wadmalaw Island for more than a century. It is an industry that has declined over the past decade and this trend may continue in years to come, however, the vast majority of high land on the island is well-suited to farming, and the



revitalization of the Island's agriculture, enhanced by changing farming methods, changing markets and changing national agricultural policies, is a concern of the Committee. The Committee supports the South Carolina "Right to Farm" law and recommends that State and County officials make every effort to encourage the preservation of agriculture as a viable industry on the Island.

The spirit of cooperation and support between the farming interests and the general population has always been excellent and every attempt should be made to encourage this feeling of good-will. As the population of the Island increases there may be conflict between the farmers and the residential population. County government should, through all its agencies and departments, encourage the continued harmonious relationship between the agricultural and other interests on the Island. Specifically, County government is encouraged to address land values in such a way as to reflect its productivity and usefulness. The Department of Health and Environmental Control and farmers are encouraged to work to minimize environmental damage from agricultural practices particularly as regards runoff into high-quality estuary environments while promoting the agriculture industry. The Public Works Department is encouraged to cooperate with farmers in maintaining drainage, roadways and other parts of the Island infrastructure that are vital to economically successful farming.

For the purpose of this section, "agriculture" is assumed to include all aspects of row cropping, as well as tree farming and aquaculture.

### III. Historic Preservation

Preservation of Historic and Archeologically significant buildings and areas, including the village of Rockville - listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1972 - and other culturally significant places shall be encouraged. Such buildings, areas, and places shall be identified by a qualified expert and a plan be presented to and approved by the South Carolina Department of Archives to protect them, before substantial land-use changes are undertaken. Land and property owners shall be encouraged to donate protective easements to qualified preservation organizations so that the pristine character of our Island may be preserved.

### IV. Traffic and Transportation

1. The future option of constructing the presently planned Bohicket to Main Road connector via Wadmalaw Island is unwarranted in terms of traffic demand for

Wadmalaw, would pose negative impacts environmentally to marsh areas along its route, could introduce undesired development pressures on Wadmalaw Island, and would serve relatively few taxpayers compared to its cost. This project should be abandoned from the CHATS Long Range Plan.

2. Because of its regional significance in allowing sea-island residents to fully utilize the proposed James Island Bridge and Expressway and Stono River Bridge replacement, the Mark Clark Expressway from Highway 17-S across Johns Island and James Island to Folly Road must be completed within ten (10) years and must be designed for future as well as present traffic volume.
3. As it would compliment and enhance use of the Mark Clark Expressway to Highway 17-S and James Island and be utilized by a vastly larger number of sea island residents, we recommend a new route from south Bohicket Road to the Mark Clark Expressway be placed in the CHATS 20-Year Plan in place of the Wadmalaw cross-island route.
4. As the growth of population on small lots along major thoroughfares will result in traffic hazards and overcrowding on highways, the Highway Department and County Public Works should begin now to plan for frontage roads and feeder roads along major thoroughfares and acquire necessary right-of-ways before development occurs.

#### V. Commercial/Office Development

The Committee realizes that development of Wadmalaw Island is inevitable and that population density will increase accordingly. It is our hope that development will be orderly and in keeping with the character of the Island.

As residential development intensifies on Wadmalaw, the need to accommodate shopping and service demands of the residents and visitors will increase.

The specific recommendations are included in the zoning section of the Wadmalaw Island Planned Development Guidelines.

#### VI. Public Works and Services Recommendations

It is evidenced by the concerns expressed by the community in public meetings and by the Wadmalaw Island Land

Planning Committee in its regular meetings that public works problems are major concerns of the residents of Wadmalaw Island. Therefore, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. Drainage

- A. That the South Carolina Highway Department and County Public Works Department maintain drainage on highways by cleaning the existing ditches and adding ditches as necessary.
- B. That County either maintain and improve drainage within easements in the master drainage plan or return these easements to property owners.

2. Garbage and Litter

- A. That Wadmalaw Island be declared a Special Solid Waste Service District serving the needs of Wadmalaw and not as a collection point for waste originating off the island.
- B. That the large collection site on Wadmalaw be removed and the Bees Ferry County landfill be made available on a reasonable basis to residents of lower Charleston County.
- C. That the present anti-litter laws be rigidly enforced to curb moving vehicle littering. To that end, the County Solid Waste Department employees should be deputized to enable them to make arrest of moving violators.

Further, County law enforcement officials should be given a priority to eliminate the practice of littering.

And further that the County Legislative Delegation be encouraged to amend the State Code of Laws to make citizens responsible for their property and waste until it is properly discarded.

3. Fire Protection System

- A. The Committee recommends that the existing fire station remain at its location because of easy access to the residents of the Island.
- B. That the location for the future fire station on Maybank Highway remain as planned.

4. Post Office

The present post office building is centrally located and we recommend no change in location.

VII. Recreational Facilities

That, as the proposed zoning plan for Wadmalaw allows a growth of from three to seven times the present population, some provision should be made for parks and recreation facilities. The Committee therefore recommends that the County specify sites for such facilities. Possible sites include:

The Bears Bluff laboratory, should the present use ever be discontinued by the federal government. Until such time as that site may be available, other sites should be explored that allow rights to water at public land sites.

That any recreation area or playground established by the County be named in memory of Arthur Williams, prominent Island citizen and respected member of the Wadmalaw Island Land Planning Committee until his death in April 1987.

VIII. Continued Input to Wadmalaw Planning

In order to implement the plan and provide continuity as specifically requested by the Island residents in public meetings, it is recommended that the Wadmalaw Island Land Planning Committee be notified promptly of any zoning change applications on Wadmalaw Island or any interpretation or application of the Land Use Plan.