



Insider's Update: Choosing to Lead
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If you are receiving this email, it's because we share something in common. We believe that through advocacy we can conserve one of the most spectacular places in the world: Georgia's 100-mile coast.

Advocacy = Action. We all know this. However, it is easy to assume that advocacy is a negative action – always *against* something. This mistake is not a stretch, because that is what is most often publicized. It is true that when advocating, we must often fight what we consider to be bad ideas. And the tools of advocacy that receive the most air time are litigation, letter-writing, lobbying, and speaking at public hearings...what some may call agitating or rocking the boat, most often against a bad idea.

I would argue that the world also makes this mistake because we aren't thinking big enough. It's the proverbial "missing the forest for the trees." Whether we're commenting on proposed coal ash rules or the Sea Island groin, our words and actions are guided by a desired positive future—the sustained magnificence of this special place for generations to come.

Just like advocacy is much bigger than each individual project, it is also more than any one individual tactic. Litigation, lobbying, and letter-writing are important tools in a rich arsenal of equipment. But some of the best advocates have never written a comment letter, spoken at a public hearing, or stepped foot in a courtroom. In fact, some of our coast's most effective champions aren't even recognized as advocates at all.

So yes, advocacy is action. But it is also celebration. Coastal advocates use their tools every day to celebrate the coast we love, in every way we know how. Some of us are writers, some are artists, others pick up trash on our beaches or shepherd sea turtle hatchlings out to sea. Whether you talk to elected officials or teach children, paint pictures, or protect land — however you choose to do it — by acting on your passion for this place, you are working for its conservation. And that is advocacy.

At One Hundred Miles, we're working to redefine what it means to be an advocate. Because if we are going to achieve our goal of preserving, protecting, and enhancing Georgia's 100-mile coast, we need an army of champions capable of sharing their passion in every way possible. We must build a broad tent that doesn't exclude different approaches and builds upon our collective strengths. We will take an important step in assembling this army on Saturday, January 7, 2017 when we host our first annual *Choosing to Lead* conference on Jekyll Island.

Why *Choosing to Lead*? Our vision was borne from the idea that while advocates come in all shapes, sizes, and backgrounds, the very idea of advocacy — of standing up for something you believe in — can sometimes be a scary thing. Each of us has to choose to make a difference, to take a stand, to share our story, make the personal public.

That's why, on January 7, we're bringing together activists, students, volunteers, thought leaders, and others in celebration of Georgia's coastal resources and the power of individual action. To promote collaboration among leaders past, present, and future, our day-long conference will welcome advocates who are new to coastal conservation alongside those who have been part of the movement for years.

We're planning a day full of interactive workshops, panels, and discussions. *Choosing to Lead* will highlight stories of everyday citizens working to preserve our coast's most special places, provide networking opportunities among diverse groups of advocates, and celebrate Georgia's world-class coastal communities and heritage. Our goal? That movement-builders and activists will leave filled with new relationships, ideas, energy, and inspiration for putting their projects into action.

You'll hear much more about our conference in the coming months. But as one of our most committed supporters (and fellow advocates), I wanted you to be among the first to learn about this exciting event. As always, I'd love to hear your thoughts and ideas on the conference, and how we can work together for the 100 miles we love..