



Insider's Update: Local Impacts
February 15, 2017

Megan Desrosiers, CEO

2017 has started with a bang! From an amazing coastal leadership conference and the start of the 40-day legislative session, the One Hundred Miles team has been off and running from Day 1. In fact, we've been so busy that we almost forgot to tell you about the opening of our new Savannah office at 2424 Drayton Street. (I hope you'll join us on March 3rd. Stay tuned for more information!)

Since we first opened our doors in 2013 in downtown Brunswick and as we've traveled across the state these past three and a half years, we've come to realize just how diverse coastal Georgia's communities are. Though only 100 miles in length, our coast is home to one of the country's most vibrant and historic cities – Savannah – as well as remote, culturally-significant barrier islands and the ever-popular Golden Isles.

At OHM, we recognize the biggest threats to and opportunities for our coast as the local land use decisions that are made every day to accommodate population growth and sea level rise. Only four of Georgia's barrier islands are developed and accessible by car; three of those barrier islands (St. Simons, Jekyll, and Sea Island) are in Glynn County. While coastal Georgia's population has so far grown at a slower pace than neighboring states, we know that growth in coastal communities across the country is typically most rapid in places where beaches are easily accessible.

That's why we launched our first office in Brunswick and why much of our staff's time over the past three years has been spent in the local communities south of Savannah. We've been learning about and preparing to turn some of our coast's most pressing threats into opportunities for balancing growth and conservation.

And with your help, we've also been building towards a second office in Savannah – one with the resources and capacity to respond to critical local challenges.

In preparation for our grand opening, we've spent the last six months on a listening tour of our north coast, learning about critical regional issues and challenges as well as the specific needs of local residents. We recognize that the manner in which our cities and urban areas address population growth and sea level rise is different from less-developed areas. As One Hundred Miles builds our presence in Savannah and its surrounding communities, we will apply the recognition of these differences to the choices we make about our issues and positions.

So what does that mean? Well, boiled down, it means that, so far, our Savannah work has been focused on infrastructure improvements, sustainability, and smart growth projects.

Using the feedback we've gathered over the last six months, we have already started to work on projects that fit the specific needs of the Savannah metropolitan area. For example, we've partnered with businesses and local leaders on Tybee Island on a campaign to reduce plastic pollution. We're working to ensure that major infrastructure projects, such as the new Tybee Island Causeway, include accommodations for multi-modal transportation. And we're evaluating the impacts a new port in Jasper County will have on the Savannah River and the Floridan Aquifer. All the while, we continue to promote Georgia's coastal identity and value to everyone we meet in Savannah and beyond.

Our mission of preserving, protecting, and enhancing Georgia's coast starts with the friends and neighbors with whom we cross paths every day. That's why we're so excited to open a new chapter in Savannah. We're grateful for all you have done to get us to this point, and we look forward to growing our impact for our entire 100 miles with this permanent presence.