

## May River Waterbody Management Plan

watershed. Relevant discussions of the characteristics and possible impact of the watershed on the May River are introduced at the beginning of this Inventory. The characteristics, uses, and relationships within the May River are discussed in greater detail.

### May River Watershed Characteristics

The May River watershed (HUC 03050208-110-030) is located in Beaufort County, South Carolina approximately 17 miles northeast of Savannah and seven miles west of the Town of Hilton Head Island. The May River watershed encompasses an area of approximately 25,582 acres (10,353 hectares) with approximately 85%, or 21,918 acres (8,870 hectares), being upland drainage area that may contribute freshwater inflow<sup>1</sup>. The watershed is located in the Coastal Zone of the Atlantic Coastal Plain, geological deposits from the Late Cretaceous to Holocene that extend from New Jersey to Texas. Around Bluffton, this area lies on the geologic Pamlico terrace, a ridge believed to be caused by fluctuations in sea levels during the Pleistocene epoch and generally found below twenty-five feet<sup>2</sup>. Muds, silts and clays settled out atop this layer and became the foundation of much of the soil types in the coastal plain.

#### *Soils*

The predominant soil type within the May River Watershed is fine sand, comprising nearly 40% of the upland soil classification (10,123 acres)<sup>3</sup>. Loamy fine sands comprise approximately 16% of the upland soil types (4,143 acres) and fine sandy loam makes up about 6 % (644 hectares)<sup>4</sup>.

Soil types found in the watershed include Bladen (bd), Cape Fear (Ca), Chisolm (CmB), Deloss (De), Eulonia (Ee), Murad (Mu), Nemours (NeB), Onslow (On), Ridgeland (Rd), Rosedhu (Ro), Santee (Sa), Seabrook (Sk), Sewee (Sw), Tomotley (To), and Yemassee (Ye). Soils types commonly found in the transitional and upland areas adjacent to the May River include

Capers (CE), Bohicket (Bk) Association, Wando (Wd), Coosaw (Cs)

Williman (Wn), Polawana (Po), Baratai (Ba), Nemours (NeA), and Yonges (Yo)<sup>5</sup>. The Bohicket soil (shown in light green), in particular, is associated material found in salt marshes and is predominant in many parts of the Study Area.

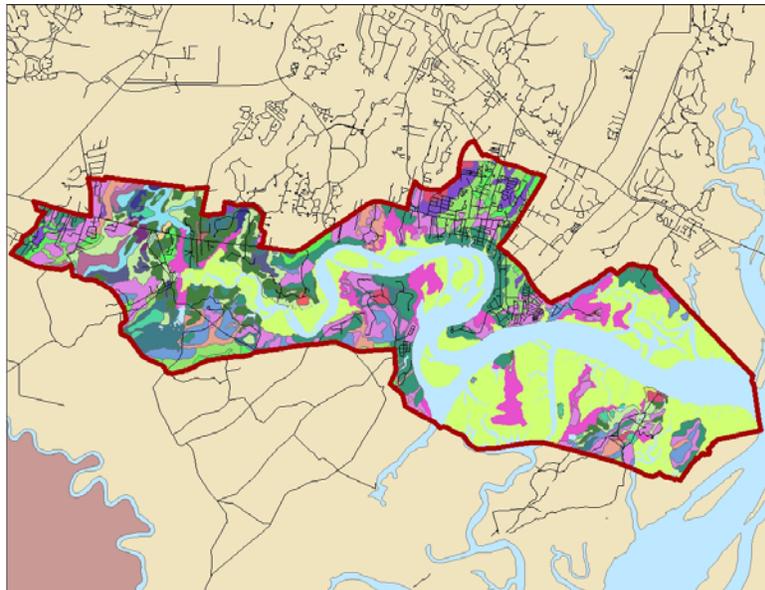


Figure 3. Soils found within the May River the Study Area.

## May River Waterbody Management Plan

### *Parks, Recreation and Open Space*

Parks and recreational opportunities within the watershed are mainly associated with Beaufort County Parks and Leisure Services (PALS), with the County Department of Public Works performing maintenance operations<sup>24</sup>. Five areas are mapped as parks within the Town portion of the watershed, while the County also manages the All Joy Boat Landing, access at Brighton Beach, and jointly manages the park at the Oyster Factory. The five parks within the watershed include a park at Heritage at New Riverside on Palmetto Bluff, Buckwalter Regional Park between The Farm development and Pine Ridge, Bluffton Park in the Shults Tract, an unnamed park south of Bluffton Park off of Dr. Mellichamp Drive. The Town also maintains the Town Dock on Palmetto Bluff and a Town Pier located at the end of Calhoun Street. All Joy Boat Landing, Brighton Beach, the Town Pier and the Town Dock at Palmetto Bluff are all located within the Project Study Area boundary.

The Oyster Factory is an important park for the Town of Bluffton, and for the region, and represents a significant opportunity for the preservation of open space, public access, and water-dependent use. Beaufort County Open Space Land Trust acquired the property in 2002 to protect the property from development for residential use. The Land Trust deeded the property to the County in 2003 and still holds a conservation easement on the property that prohibits significant alteration to the property and requires public access. The oyster factory is discussed in more detail later in this document.



**Image 5. The "Old" Oyster Factory in Old Town Bluffton.**

Open space in the watershed has been preserved through conservation easements in a number of areas, most notably on Palmetto Bluff as part of the planned unit development. Nearly 600 acres of existing maritime-forested area on Palmetto Bluff has been preserved through easement, and the County and Beaufort County Open Land Trust have preserved the area around the Old Oyster Factory for low impact recreational and commercial maritime use.

Barataria Island, located on the south side of the May River near the confluence with Calibogue Sound, has been under protective easements since the late 1970s. The Nature Conservancy took control of the 194-acre property after 2000 when the owner donated the island. Limited information is available regarding Bull Island.

### *Transportation*

The main road leading to Bluffton and the May River is Route 278, also known as Fording Island Road. Major north-south thoroughfares within the watershed include Route 170 (also known as the Okatie Highway) Old Miller Road, Buckwalter Parkway, Simmonville Road, Buck Island Road, Bluffton Road, and Burnt Church Road. Major east-west roads within the watershed include Route 46, also known as May River Road,