

Restoring Cultural Landscapes

Weaving Conservation with Community Heritage



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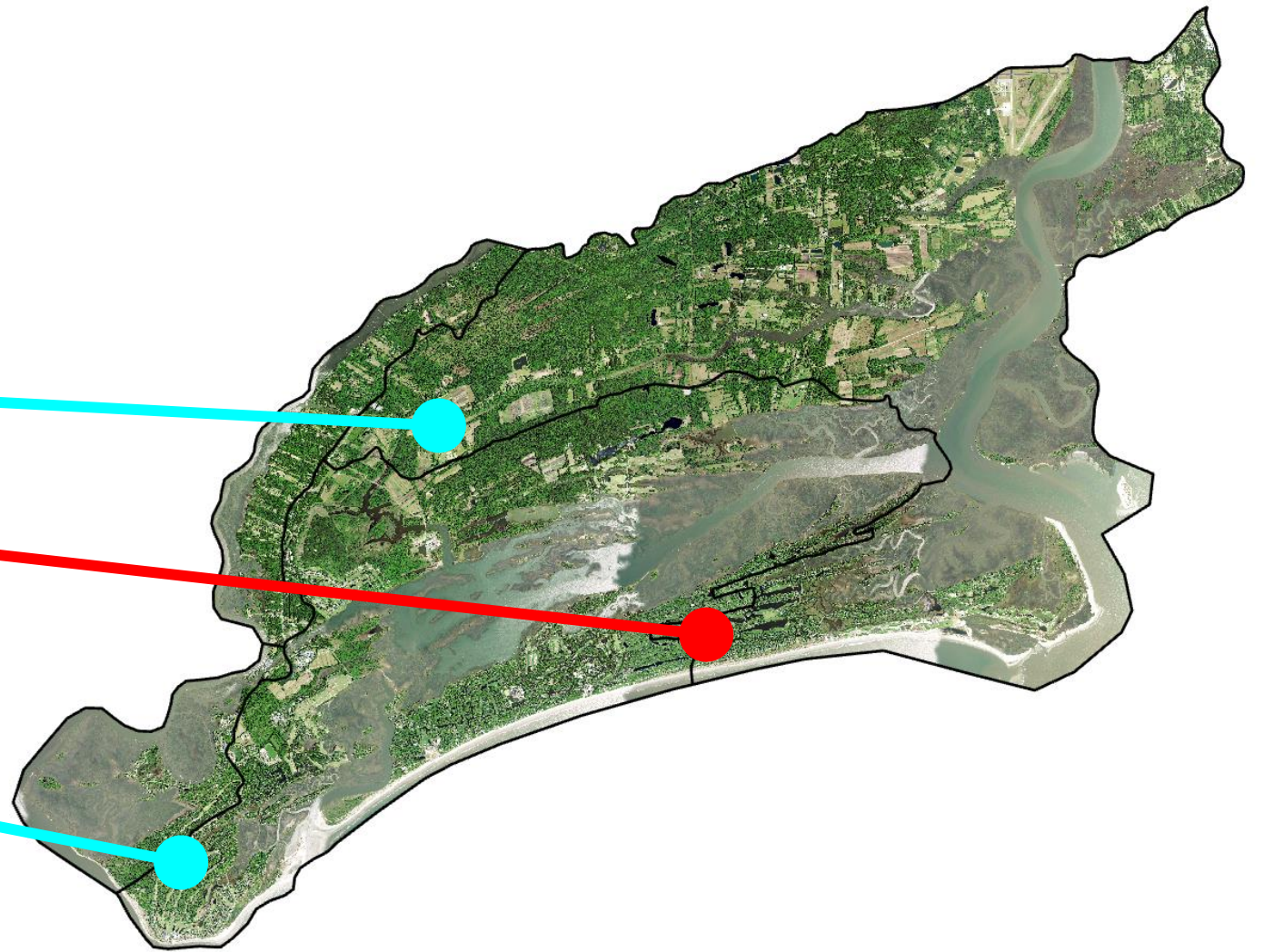


Corey Alston
Fifth Generation
Sweetgrass Basket
Weaver

Johns Island

Kiawah Island

**Seabrook
Island**



- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship

HISTORY, HERITAGE, CULTURE



COREY'S STORY







PARTNERSHIP MODEL

- Gullah Geechee Chamber of Commerce
- Kiawah Conservancy
- Sweetgrass Basket Weavers
- Volunteers



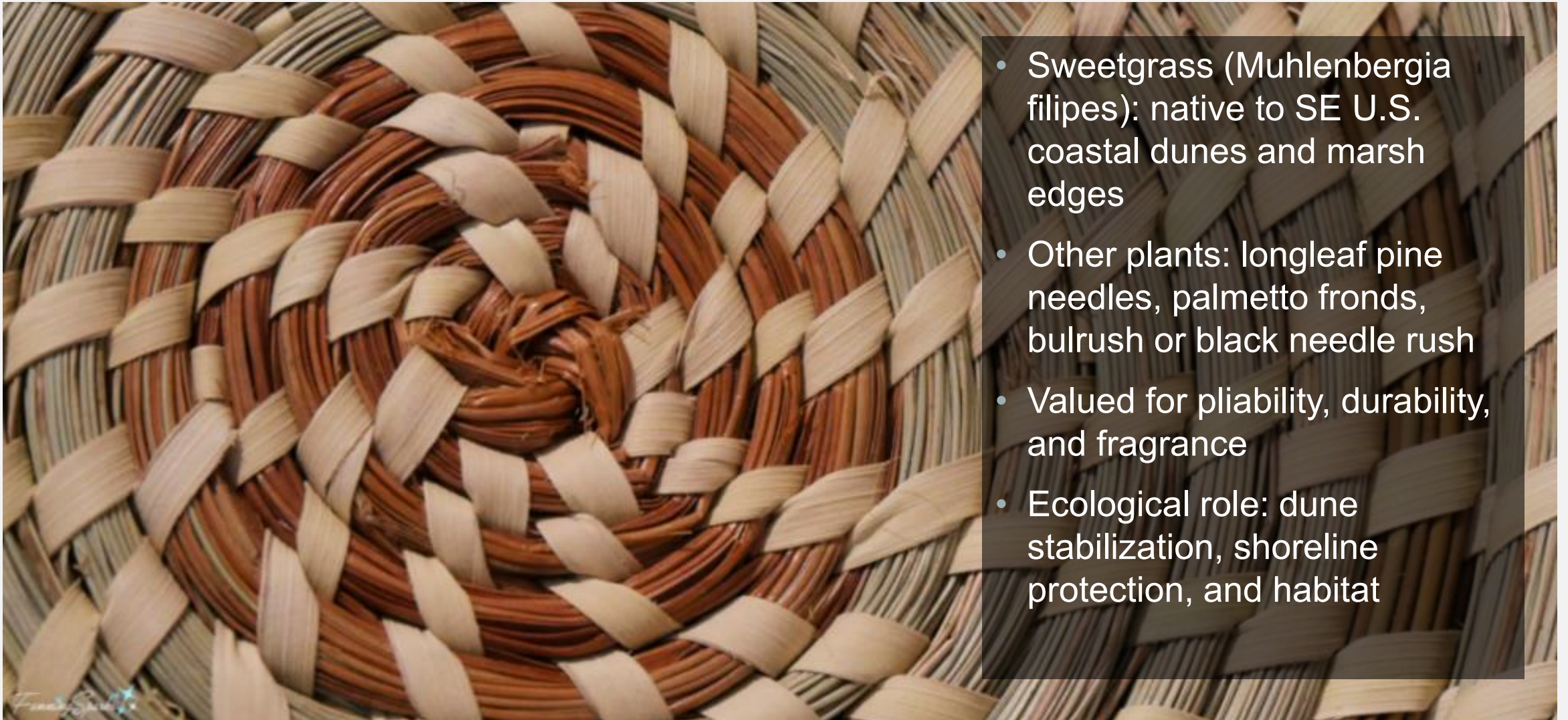
DEVELOPMENT AND LOSS OF ACCESS

- Urbanization and development reduced natural sweetgrass availability (*Muhlenbergia filipes*)
- Road expansions removed traditional roadside harvesting areas
- Habitat fragmentation and shoreline loss from erosion

ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS

- Stabilizes dunes and marsh edges
- Increases biodiversity and wildlife habitat
- Supports resilience to storms and erosion

THE MATERIALS



- Sweetgrass (*Muhlenbergia filipes*): native to SE U.S. coastal dunes and marsh edges
- Other plants: longleaf pine needles, palmetto fronds, bulrush or black needle rush
- Valued for pliability, durability, and fragrance
- Ecological role: dune stabilization, shoreline protection, and habitat









THE PROJECT VISION

- Restore sweetgrass habitat on conserved lands
- Ensure sustainable harvesting for basket makers
- Integrate cultural heritage into conservation strategies
- Use native plants to stabilize shorelines and improve resilience

PROJECT STEPS

1. Seed Harvesting – From native, local ecotypes
2. Propagation – Growing sweetgrass in nurseries
3. Planting – Along marsh edges, dunes, and conserved areas
4. Maintaining – Ensuring habitat health and resilience
5. Harvest & Donation – Providing materials to artisans at no cost



















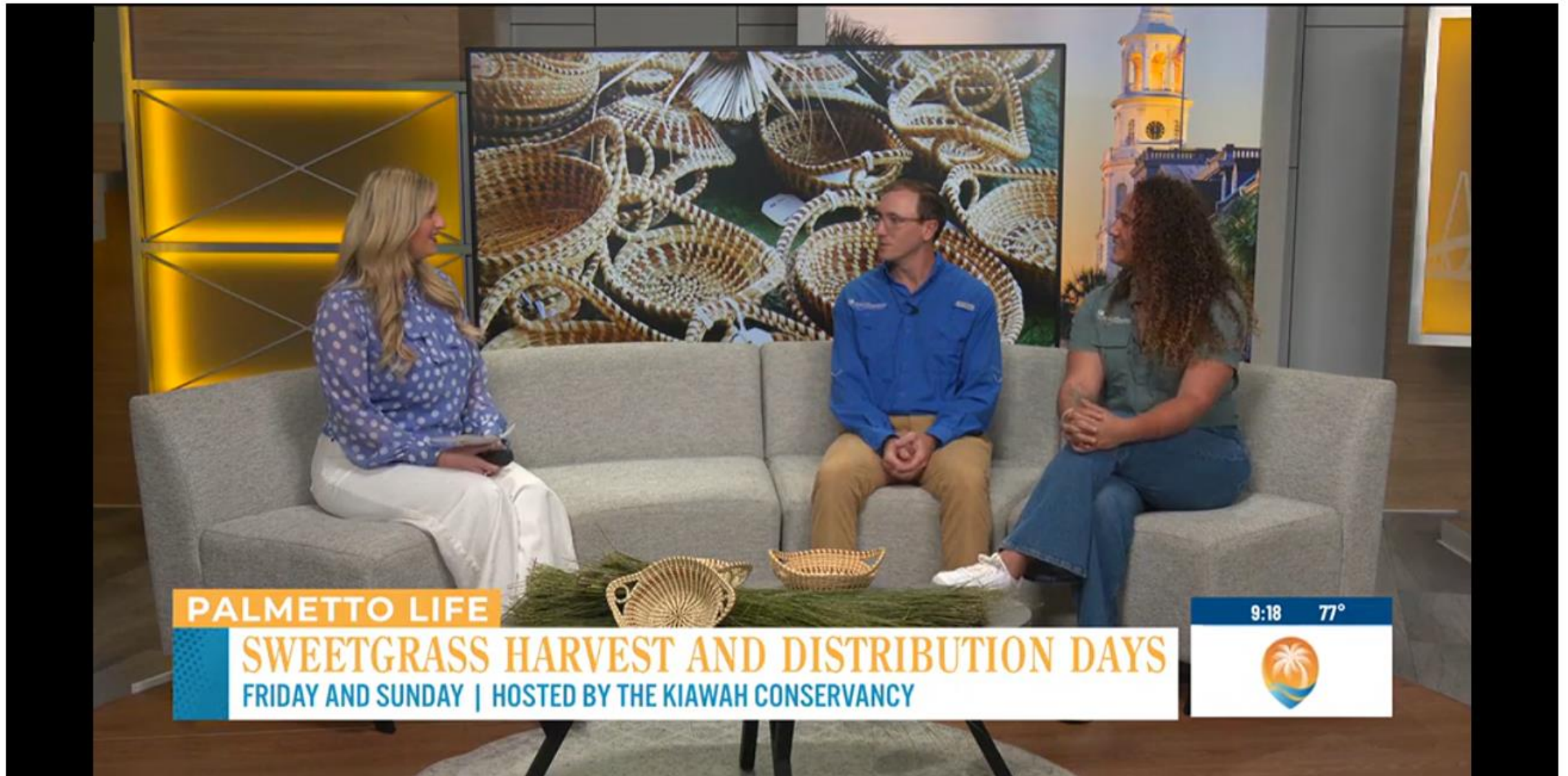












VIDEO: Harvesting and distributing sweetgrass in the Lowcountry The Kiawah Conservancy, is hoping to preserve the tradition of sweetgrass basket-making by hosting Sweetgrass Harvest and Distribution Days.









KIWAH CONSERVANCY

Betsy Kerrison | Johns Island | August 2025

CONCEPT 1

scale: 1"=50'-0"



REMARK











Betsy Kerrison
Nature Area

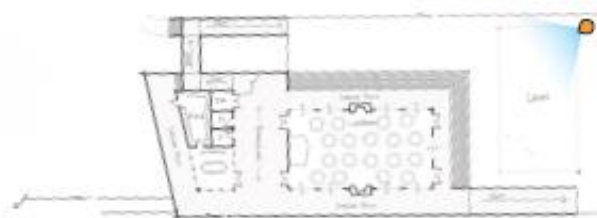




KIAWAH CONSERVANCY

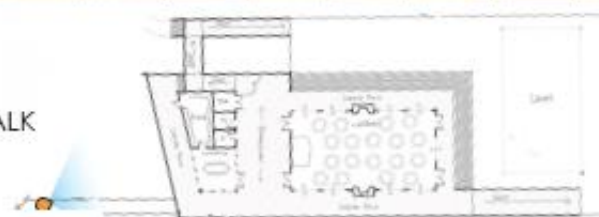
Betsy Kerrison | Johns Island | August 2025

LEARNING CENTER
VIEW FROM FRONT LAWN





LEARNING CENTER
VIEW FROM HAMMOCK BOARDWALK





QUESTIONS?



Gullah Geechee Chamber of Commerce

"Celebrating Our Heritage. Creating Our Future."

