



NEWS RELEASE

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New Species Discovered at Caw Caw Interpretive Center by Staff Member

(CHARLESTON COUNTY) -- This summer, a staff member of the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission's (CCPRC) Nature Interpretation Team was credited with discovering a new species of millipede at Caw Caw Interpretive Center.

Tess Moody, a part-time CCPRC staff member and current student at North Carolina State University, first saw the small millipede at Caw Caw, located in Ravenel, in June of 2018 and noticed its uniquely marked appearance. Tess took a photo of the arthropod in hopes that she could later identify it. After posting it to an online forum for entomologists, Tess was contacted by Dr. Jackson Means of Virginia Tech, who believed it could be an unidentified species.

Dr. Means and Tess were unable to find the millipede specimen at Caw Caw again until June of 2020. This second discovery allowed the two to confirm that the millipede was indeed previously undescribed in scientific literature.

The millipede belongs to the genus *Pleuroloma*, and Tess will have naming rights to the species name. She has indicated that she may choose something along the lines of "harenae," which means "sand," to reflect the species' texture as well as its habitat preference.

"It is incredibly rare to discover a new species in this thoroughly explored region," said Keith McCullough, natural history interpretation coordinator for CCPRC, "but it is no surprise that Tess, or other members of our Interpretation staff would be the ones to do it."

Rich in natural, cultural and historical resources, Caw Caw Interpretive Center was once part of several rice plantations and home to enslaved Africans who applied their technology and skills in agriculture to carve the series of rice fields out of cypress swamps. The site is operated as a low-impact wildlife preserve, and is managed for waterfowl, songbirds, otters, deer and others. Caw Caw is also known as a coastal South Carolina birding hotspot, and is a favored habitat for American alligators, swallow-tailed kites, bald eagles and others. The site features over six miles of trails with trailside exhibits, and elevated boardwalks through wetlands. Caw Caw Interpretive Center is located at 5200 Savannah Highway in Ravenel and is open to the public every Tuesday through Sunday. For more information on Caw Caw Interpretive Center, visit CharlestonCountyParks.com.

The mission of CCPRC is to improve the quality of life in Charleston County by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs and services. The large park system features over 11,000 acres of property and includes six regional parks, three beach parks, three dog parks, two landmark fishing piers, three waterparks, a skate park, an aquatic center, 19 boat landings, a climbing wall, a challenge course, a historic plantation site, an interpretive center, an equestrian center, cottages, a campground, a marina, as well as wedding, meeting and event facilities. The park system also offers a wide variety of recreational services - festivals, camps, classes, programs, volunteer opportunities, and more. For more information, download the Charleston County Parks mobile app, call 843-795-4386, or visit www.charlestoncountyparks.com.

