

Stewards should reconsider plans

Dear Editor,

Nature stewardship versus development on Cumberland Island. Starting in the 1880s, the Carnegie family bought land on Cumberland Island ultimately owning approximately 90 percent of the island. In 1930, the Candler family bought the Cumberland Island Club and additional surrounding land. Both families have worked diligently to maintain most of the island in its natural pristine state. With the dissolution of the Carnegie family trust in the late 1940s, the island was threatened by Jekyll Island-style developers, forest products industries and even strip mining plans. Again, the largesse of the Candler and Carnegie families fought the development and helped to create a national seashore to protect all but 1,000 acres of the 36,000-acre island. Today the island is facing a new threat from current generations of the very families that originally protected the island. Spearheaded by the Very Rev. Samuel G. Candler, dean of the St. Phillips Episcopal Cathedral in Atlanta, several of the owners of the unprotected 1,000 acres desire to subdivide their holdings and build oceanfront vacation homes, thereby destroying one of the primary attractions of the national seashore, 18 miles of uninterrupted wilderness seashore. The Candler 87-acre holding is in a particularly sensitive location being immediately adjacent to the primary ferry landing and the Sea Camp camping grounds. It is conceivable that these detrimental aspects due to development may threaten the national seashore's ability to maintain the park. Again, most surprisingly, the leader of the effort to alter forever one of the untouched jewels remaining on the Georgia coastline is the Very Rev. Samuel G. Candler who has publicly professed to revere the island where he found prayer and God. We humbly request that the self-proclaimed "steward of Cumberland Island" reconsider his plans due to the long-term consequences of his decisions. Carl Miller St. Marys