



Solo® Cup Brigade® Spotlight Location

Karen Opderbeck, Daufuskie Island Conservancy

Daufuskie Island, SC



**Number of People
Collecting:**

12



Cups Collected:

45,170



**Points
Earned:**

192,766

Tell us more about yourself and the Daufuskie Island Conservancy.

The Daufuskie Island Conservancy was formed in 2005 on Daufuskie Island, SC. Daufuskie Island is a bridgeless, eight square mile island located one nautical mile from Hilton Head Island, SC. The Conservancy is a 501c(3) organized exclusively for education, scientific and charitable purposes related to the study, protection and management of the natural resources of Daufuskie Island and the surrounding ecosystem. In 2006, we approached Haig Point, a large, private community on the island, and they agreed to initiate a recycling program. It was very rudimentary at first, but has expanded and upgraded to include many, many types of recyclables. In March, 2011, the Conservancy was awarded a \$12,500 matching grant by the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry to conduct a study that, we believe, will lead to a recycling facility that will serve all residents and businesses on Daufuskie in 2013.

My husband and I retired to Daufuskie Island in 2003. We moved from Fairfax County, VA, where recycling was in place. Because transportation to/from Daufuskie is via ferry, waste disposal is expensive and recycling was not on anyone's radar. The Daufuskie Island Conservancy decided to create a task force to research what we could do to bring recycling to Daufuskie. I agreed to head that task force. Because Beaufort County, SC, provides waste disposal service to much of the island, we approached them first. They were not in a position to do anything about recycling until several years in the future. With that, we decided to approach the largest private community on the island, Haig Point, since private communities are responsible for their own waste disposal.

Tell us why you participate in TerraCycle and how you involve your organization.

It was not until April 2011, that we learned about TerraCycle while on a tour of a Sunoco MRF in Columbia, SC. Being a non-profit, we are always looking for ways to raise money. TerraCycle offers several Brigade programs that are a fit for our island residents and businesses. The Solo Cup Brigade is our most popular one. There are several golf courses, tennis facilities and swimming pools on Daufuskie. The golf facilities on the island are participating with us by collecting Solo Cups when golf carts are returned after golf rounds. Our volunteers pick up the cups from the golf and tennis facilities and the swimming pools.

Our ultimate goal is to keep as much out of the landfill as possible and we provide education on reducing, reusing and recycling. Though all of the Brigade programs in which we participate are for recyclable items, it's an additional benefit that these items are being recycled and we are adding to our treasury. Our participation in TerraCycle has definitely raised awareness about recycling among island residents and businesses.

Tell us how you like to spend your points.

We turn our points into cash that we deposit into our bank account. We hope that someday in the future, we will acquire land through a donation or we can purchase land on which we can build a nature/education center. Just about every month, we have an education program of some kind. We might take a field trip or have a speaker on a topic related to nature or the environment. We intend to use the nature center as our "home" where we would hold our educational events and display examples of our local environment.

Tell us a story about your most exciting, memorable, or inspiring moment in collecting for the Solo Cup Brigade.

The Conservancy is very happy to see the impact that our efforts to educate residents and businesses has had on the volume of recycling, in general, and on the volume of Solo cups that we are collecting. The word "TerraCycle" has high name recognition on the island. Arthur Helmus, a long time resident, can be found on the golf course, the tennis court, at the pool table or on the croquet pitch. Wherever he is, he's checking trash cans and recycle bins for Solo cups and collects them for us. A high priority for our golf course staff, led by Steve Barco, is to collect the cups that are left in the golf carts when they are returned at the end of the day. The fact that these two men have taken on the Conservancy's cause as their own, serves as a great example to others in the community. As I'm out and about on Daufuskie, often, people will stop me to hand over their Solo cups!

