

Call for Abstracts

Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Society of Parasitologists

March 19-21, 2026

Charleston, South Carolina

Hosted by the College of Charleston



We cordially invite members of the Southeastern Society of Parasitologists (SSP) and their guests to the 2026 annual meeting. This meeting is largely sponsored by the College of Charleston's [Department of Biology](#) and [School of Natural and Environmental Sciences](#), and is hosted at the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Marine Resources Research Institute (MRRI) at historic Fort Johnson on James Island in Charleston, SC.



The South Carolina Marine Resources Center encompasses 78 acres of historic property located on James Island adjacent to the Charleston Harbor estuary. The Marine Center occupies land where the [historic Fort Johnson](#) was once located, and where the first shots of the American Civil War were fired. Today, the Marine Resources Center supports several state (CofC, MUSC) and federal research facilities (NOAA, NIST) on a campus that is largely maintained by the SCDNR.

Important deadlines

- Reserve hotel rooms by Tuesday, **FEBRUARY 17, 2026**.
- Register [here](#) by Sunday, **MARCH 1, 2026** to receive the “early bird” rate.
- Complete the [abstract submission form](#), and email abstract as an attached Word Doc with subject line “SSP Abstract” to ssp.abstracts.2026@gmail.com by Sunday, **MARCH 1, 2026**.
- Sunday, **MARCH 8, 2026**: deadline for full refund of registration cost.
- Confirmed poster presenters: Send poster PDF to ssp.loc26@gmail.com by Sunday, **MARCH 15, 2026**.



Have questions?

Email [Dr. I. de Buron](#) regarding general meeting information.

Email [Dr. C. Faulkner](#) regarding registration payments.

Email [K. Hill-Spanik](#) regarding the scientific program.

Abstract submission:

1. Please complete the [abstract submission form](#) no later than Sunday, **March 1, 2026 (11:59 pm EST)**.
2. Email abstracts with the subject line "SSP ABSTRACT" directly to ssp.abstracts.2026@gmail.com no later than Sunday, **March 1, 2026 (11:59 pm)**. See additional abstract guidelines below.



Posters are restricted to undergraduate students who are first-time SSP presenters, and the poster session will be held on Thursday, March 19, in the evening (~7-9 pm). All poster presenters are required to attend this session. If you do not plan to arrive on Thursday, please do not sign up for a poster presentation. A maximum of 10 posters will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Posters can be printed and posted by the LOC prior to the start of the social if emailed directly to ssp.loc26@gmail.com by **March 15, 2026** – no late submissions will be accepted. Passed this date, poster presenters will be expected to bring their posters to the meeting site by 5 pm.

After submission, you will receive an email confirming receipt of your abstract. If you selected "poster" or "poster preferred" on the submission form, this email will also indicate whether you have been assigned a poster presentation. If you do not receive an email within 48 hrs after submission, please email the Program Chair (K. Hill-Spanik; ssp.abstracts.2026@gmail.com). Please also email the Program Chair with any questions regarding the program, or in the event of a last-minute cancellation or other issue. **Abstracts that are not formatted properly will be returned for editing. See the example abstract below.**

Abstract guidelines: Please submit abstracts as attachments in Microsoft Word format (DOC, DOCX). Do not submit your abstract text as a PDF file. Save the file as "LastName_FirstInitial_SSP 2026 Abstract." Abstract text should be single-spaced (no auto-spacing). Left justify all text. Please do not use any special formatting or include links/URLs.

Title: The title of the presentation should be in **ALL CAPS, BOLD TYPE, AND 12 PT FONT SIZE**.

Authors and affiliations: On a new line immediately after the title, give the names of the authors in title case, bold type, and 12 pt font size. Please underline the presenting author's name. Use an asterisk (*) to indicate consideration for the undergraduate student presentation award and a dagger (†) for the graduate student presentation award. On the next line, give the address of the first author. Present addresses and addresses for remaining authors, if different from that of the first author, follow sequentially, each beginning on a new line. Author and address associations are made using superscripted numerals that follow each author and precede each address. Please note that while author names are in bold font, numerals denoting associations are not.

Abstract text: All abstracts are restricted to **250 words or less**. Use the same font and type size (12 pt) throughout the abstract text. Single space throughout. For additional guidelines regarding general style please follow those of [The Journal of Parasitology](#).

Registration:

1. Download and complete the registration form on our [website](#) (or see the attached). Save the file as "LastName_FirstInitial_SSP 2026 Registration." Email the file as an attachment to ssp.loc26@gmail.com by **March 1**.
2. Submit online payment [on our website via PayPal](#) by **March 1**. You may submit payment as "Guest" if you do not have a PayPal Account. For payment questions, please contact Dr. Charles Faulkner (sec-treas@southeasternsocietyparasitology.org).

'Early bird' registration is \$70 for non-students and \$25 for students. Annual dues are also collected during registration and are \$10 for regular members and \$5 for students. A late registration fee will be applied to all registrations received after March 1 (additional \$25 for non-students, \$10 for students). Late registration will be possible at the meeting site. Your registration fee includes the food and beverages offered at the meeting (see below). If you register but cannot attend the meeting, please email ssp.loc26@gmail.com; you will be refunded your entire registration fee if we receive notice by **March 8**.

Accommodations: We have reserved blocks of rooms at three hotels located near Ripley Light Marina, convenient to both downtown Charleston and the meeting venue. All three hotels offer complimentary breakfast, free parking, and free Wi-Fi. **The booking deadline is February 17, 2026.** You may extend your visit for each hotel if you'd like.

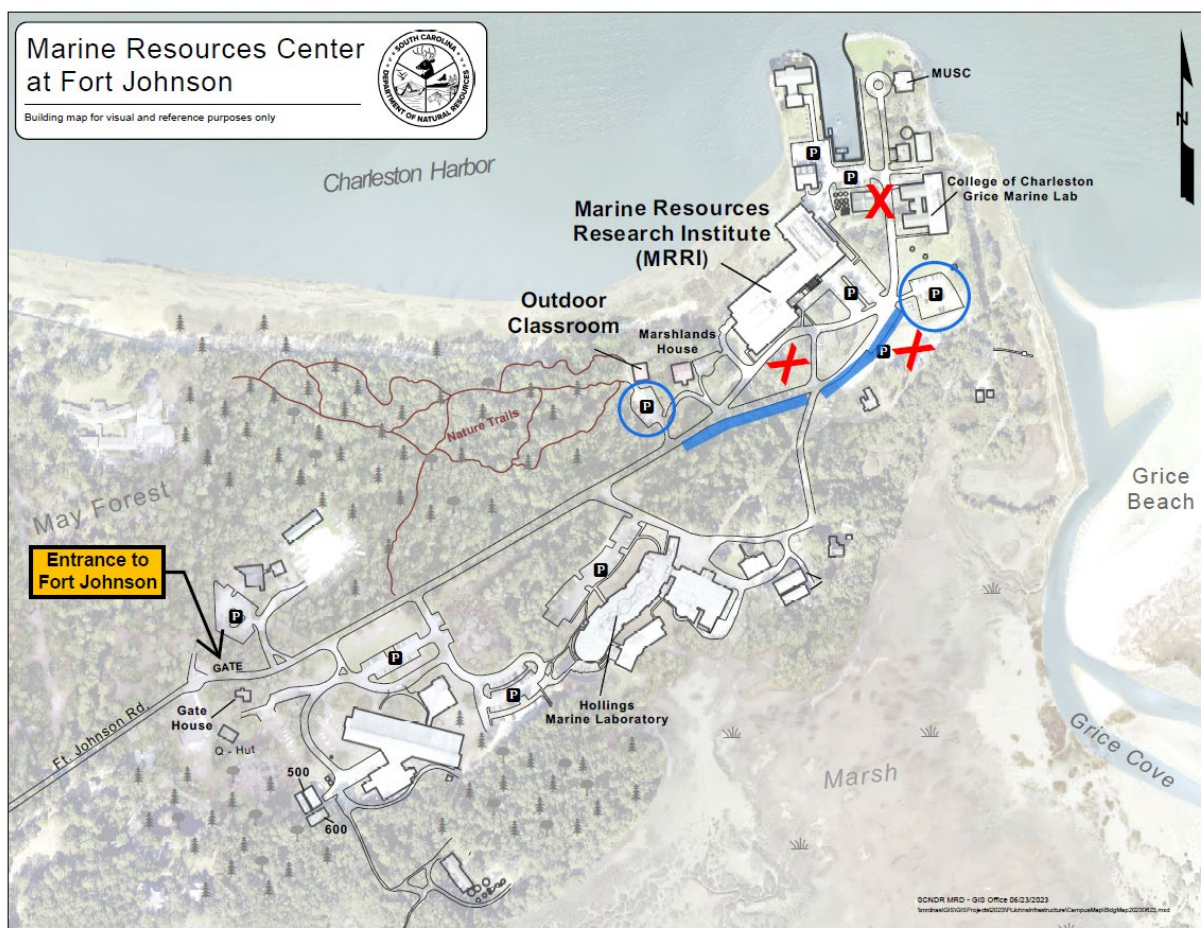
[SpringHill Suites](#) and [Residence Inn](#) are the more upscale options while the [La Quinta Inn](#) is the most affordable. You may reserve directly from these links (no code needed). If you prefer to reserve by phone (code needed), you can refer to the **Hotel Comparison Table** below.

La Quinta is a simpler hotel, and the online reviews are mixed – some are admittedly not glowing – but nobody can beat their price for the location. We were assured that all SSP rooms would be in their new wing, and an on-site visit met our expectations for cleanliness and comfort.



If you choose to find accommodation independently, please be aware that traffic can be quite heavy in Charleston, particularly on I-26, US-17, and US-61, so we advise you to avoid North Charleston and Mount Pleasant but look around James Island or towards downtown to counter traffic when coming to Fort Johnson.

Meeting facilities & activities: All conference events will be held in the SCDNR MRRI lobby, auditorium, and outdoor classroom. **Parking is free** and available around the venue (see areas circled and outlined in blue on map). **Please do not park in areas restricted to state vehicles** (crosses on map) and **respect the 25-mph speed limit after passing the SCDNR gate.**



Food: The Thursday evening social will include hors d'oeuvres, pizza, and beverages. Lunch and coffee breaks will be provided on Friday and Saturday. Because breakfast is included with the hotel stays, only light refreshments will be provided at the venue prior to the start of the talks. Please make sure you note on your registration form if you have a dietary restriction. We will do our best to accommodate everyone. All attendees will be on their own for dinner Friday night.



Help us make the meeting **greener** and bring your water bottle and coffee cup!



What to expect: Registration will start at ~4 pm and the meeting will begin on Thursday (March 19) at ~6 pm with the social event at the **SCDNR MRRI Outdoor Classroom** (see map). The poster session will officially be ~7-9 pm. More details will be given on site.

Oral presentations will be Friday and Saturday (March 20-21) in the **SCDNR MRRI Auditorium** (see map).

Lunch on Friday and Saturday will be served in the **Outdoor Classroom**.

The meeting will conclude Saturday midday with a business meeting and presentation of the Byrd-Dunn and Ciordia-Stewart-Porter student presentation awards. **Students are expected to be at the business meeting to receive their awards.**

Travel: [Map of hotels and meeting venues](#)

Charleston, SC is on the coast of South Carolina, accessible by major highways I-26 and US-17. The closest airport is Charleston International Airport (CHS), which is ~30 min to the hotels at Ripley Light Marina and ~40 min to 1 hour to the meeting venue, depending on traffic. **SCDNR MRRI is at [217 Fort Johnson Road, Charleston, SC](#)**

Recreation: [Charleston Activities Guide](#)

Downtown Charleston and James Island

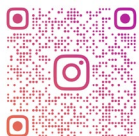
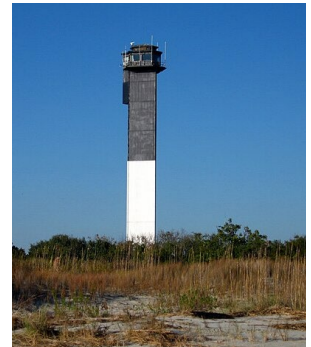
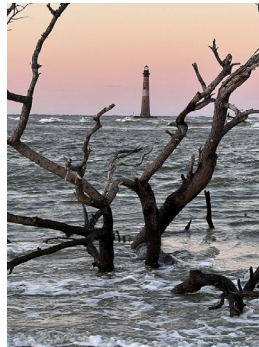
- Shop local at the Charleston [City Market](#) along Market St.
- Walk around The French Quarter and view the colorful historical homes of Rainbow Row
- View the Harbor and walk along the seawall at [The Battery](#)
- Visit the [South Carolina Aquarium](#)
- Check out some local breweries and bars including [Famulari's Brewing Co. - James Island](#), [Bohemian Bull - James Island](#), [Edmunds Oast](#), [Revelry Brewing Co.](#), and many others!

Beaches

- Folly Beach (closest to Fort Johnson)
- Sullivans Island
- Isle of Palms

Mount Pleasant

- Walk across the [Arthur J. Ravenel Bridge](#) (2.7 miles)
- Dine at [Shem Creek](#) waterfront
- Visit the USS Yorktown at [Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum](#)
- Visit the [Center for Birds of Prey](#) (Awendaw)



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The Southeastern Society of Parasitologists

An affiliate of the American Society of Parasitologists

<https://southeasternsocietyparasitology.org/>

Hotel Comparison Table

Hotel	La Quinta		SpringHill Suites	Residence Inn
Address	11 Ashley Point Drive		98 Ripley Point Drive	90 Ripley Point Drive
Reservation Link	Reserve La Quinta*		Reserve SpringHill Suites or Residence Inn	
Telephone	843-556-5200		888-287-9400	800-918-1276
SSP code	CG03192026SSP		SSP	SSP
Room type	2 Double Beds, Deluxe	One King Bed, Deluxe	2 Queen Studio (2 queen beds + 1 sofa bed)	One Bedroom Suite (1 queen bed + 1 sofa bed)
Room rate Thursday March 19	\$ 75 + 14% tax	\$80 + 14% tax	\$209 + 14% tax + \$2.28 Destination fee	
Room rate Friday March 20	\$109 + 14% tax	\$119 + 14% tax	\$209 + 14% tax + \$2.28 Destination fee	
Extension possible	2 days before, 2 days after		1 day before, 1 day after	
Extension rate	\$75 + tax for two days before, \$109 + tax for two days after	\$80 + tax for two days before, \$119 + tax for two days after	Rates will be honored one (1) day prior to and after the group event dates.	
Cancellation policy	Reservation may be cancelled up until 6pm on date of arrival without penalty. Cancellations after this time will be charged 1 night plus tax.		Individual reservations must be cancelled no later than 48 hours prior to intended arrival in order to avoid cancellation charges of 1st night's room & tax fee.	
Booking deadline	Feb. 17, 2026			
LOC Contact	SSP.LOC26@gmail.com			

**Note that on the La Quinta booking website, the room rate is average over 2 nights (\$92 + tax for 2 double beds, \$99 + tax for 1 king bed)*

Example abstract

PARASITES ARE NOT EVOLUTIONARY ACCIDENTS

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²Grice Marine Laboratory, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, USA

³Department of Natural Sciences & Engineering, University of South Carolina Upstate, Spartanburg, SC, USA

Parasites are widely maligned as freeloaders, villains, or biological party crashers; however, parasitism is one of the most evolutionarily successful and biologically intricate life-history strategies. In this example abstract, we draw on well-established principles of parasitology, illustrated by representative taxa including *Ashia primus*, *Kristinella adaptiva*, *Elliotella manipulans*, *Chucktrema robustum*, and *Kamilia persistens*, to argue that parasites are objectively cool. Parasitic organisms constitute a substantial proportion of Earth's biodiversity and exhibit specialized adaptations for transmission, persistence, and immune evasion. *Ashia primus* exemplifies efficient host exploitation, maximizing fitness through streamlined resource use. *Kristinella adaptiva* demonstrates phenotypic plasticity across host environments, a trait closely associated with resilience under ecological change. Host manipulation—a defining feature of many parasite lineages—is illustrated by *E. manipulans*, which alters host physiology or behavior in ways that enhance transmission while limiting immediate host mortality. Beyond individual adaptations, parasites play essential ecological and evolutionary roles. Species such as *C. robustum* influence host population dynamics and contribute to food-web structure, while highly persistent taxa like *K. persistens* provide key insights into host–parasite coevolution, immune function, and evolutionary trade-offs. Together, these examples emphasize that parasites are not evolutionary accidents, but finely tuned products of natural selection and integral components of biological systems.

*Denotes submission to the undergraduate student paper competition.

†Denotes submission to the graduate student paper competition.