

Weekly News Summary for Sunday, July 21, 2024.

Good news from water testing at former Buxton Navy/Coast Guard Base

In Buxton and Frisco, Dare County launched its own water testing in an effort to make sure no public health concerns were present at the former Buxton U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard bases.

On Tuesday, July 16, 2024, Dare County Manager Robert L. Outten announced that two weeks ago, Dare County staff pulled samples from ponds in Buxton around the base area and from the raw wells feeding the Reverse Osmosis plant in Frisco and the treated water in Frisco.

The tested water showed compounds below detectable levels and shows water quality meets or exceeds all potable water standards.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers still has not provided test results to Dare County or the Buxton Civic Association. "Everybody is frustrated," said Outten, "at the lack of response."

During public comment, Jason Hall with the Buxton Civic Association called the water tests "very, very good news."

On the July 16 agenda was an item about moving the date of Buxton/Avon Beach Nourishment from 2027 to 2026. The change was recommended by the county's Capital Improvement Plan Committee.

In presenting the item, Outten said "erosion is at an enhanced pace." He cited protection of NC 12. "We can't afford to lose the road there."

Outten said financing is in place to nourish Buxton and Avon beaches.

During public comment, Brett Barley gave a brief history of the jetties that were installed in the late 1960s. He reported that the jetties fell apart in 2015-2016 and a drastic change in erosion occurred. In 2021-2022, 10-yard sections of the jetty fell in the ocean. About the sand, Barley said "then it's gone."

Jason Hall said "we need something in place to hold the sand."

The commissioners approved moving the Buxton/Avon nourishment project up one year, to Fiscal Year 2026. It cannot occur sooner, said Outten, because the county cannot get the project permitted that quickly.

South Carolina man dies in kayaking incident at Cape Hatteras National Seashore

A 72-year-old man from Florence, South Carolina, died Saturday morning as a result of an incident that occurred while kayaking. The kayaker launched from the beach near Cape Hatteras National Seashore's Ramp 43, located east of the Cape Point Campground near Buxton.

Bystanders reported seeing the kayak capsize while attempting to ride a wave approximately 50 yards from the beach. They swam out to help pull the man from the kayak and brought him to the beach.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation efforts were initiated; however, they were unsuccessful. Several agencies and partners assisted with the incident including the Dare County Emergency Medical Service and Sheriff's Office, Hatteras Island Ocean Rescue and Cape Hatteras National Seashore Rangers.

Because the fatality occurred while kayaking, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission is investigating the incident.

Balloon ban adopted for Hatteras Island and other unincorporated areas

On July 16, Dare County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a ban on balloon releases in unincorporated areas of the county, which includes Hatteras Island.

The penalty for violating the ban is a \$250 fine. Balloon releases have also been banned in five of the six incorporated towns, including Duck, Southern Shores, Kitty Hawk, Kill Devil Hills, and Nags Head.

Outer Banks-wide balloon release ban was spearheaded by Southern Shores resident Debbie Swick. She spoke to the Board of Commissioners in Manteo Wednesday evening.

In 2022, Cape Hatteras National Seashore staffers collected 733 balloons along the seashore's shoreline.

Real estate business news

June 2024 statistics for the Hatteras Island's residential real estate market contained good news in a number of areas.

The trend charts indicate the supply of homes for sale has continued to increase, writes Radio Hatteras Business Correspondent Tom Hranicka.

The June inventory was almost double the number of houses being marketed during the same month last year.

The number of residential properties sold in June was basically unchanged from June 2023.

For the past 18 months, the number of homes sold each month has averaged about 20.

This pattern may reflect buyers' perceptions of the combined impact of affordability of interest rates and elevated asking prices, writes Hranicka. It is also possible that some buyers are waiting to see the results of the November election.

Sellers may be seeing a reason for optimism as the median residential sale price increased significantly in June to \$747,500.

Interestingly, about 81 percent of residential and lot sales were properties that were either waterfront or close to it.

Properties under contract to be sold continue to exhibit a downward trend.

30-year fixed mortgage interest rates were just below 7 percent in June.

In the market for undeveloped lots, the supply of properties for sale showed a strong increase accompanied by fewer sales than during the first six months.

The median sale price for building sites was basically unchanged at \$140,000.

In other measures of the Hatteras Island economy, the results for May, which just became available, reflected continuing weakness in the occupancy tax receipts. The receipts declined about 51 percent year to date from the same month last year.

Meal tax receipts also declined but by only 2.1 percent for the January through May period in comparison to 2023.

The beaches on Hatteras Island are one of our most important resources. Recognizing this fact, the Dare County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to advance the Buxton and Avon beach nourishment projects to Fiscal Year 2026.

Congratulation to Sherriann Sarsfield, Dare County employee of the Month for July. Sherriann Sarsfield, who serves as chief water treatment plant operator for the Dare County Water Department at the Joseph “Mac” Midgett Reverse Osmosis Water Plant in Rodanthe, has been named Dare County Employee of the Month for July 2024. The prestigious award was presented to Sarsfield by Dare County Public Utility Director William Nash during the Dare County Board of Commissioners meeting held Tuesday, July 16, 2024.

Sarsfield began her service to Dare County on July 1, 2002, when she was initially hired as a water treatment plant operator at the Reverse Osmosis Water Plant in Rodanthe. She was promoted to her current position as chief water treatment plant operator on September 16, 2012. And congratulations to Dustin Peele, special projects and purchasing manager in the Dare County Finance Department, for receiving his 10-year pin.

Portions of the Cape Hatteras Light Station are transforming into a dunelike landscape!

With the landscape completion of Phase One, approximately 12,400 native variety grass plugs have been planted across 1.5 acres. The area was graded using locally dredged sand. The grass types include:

Sea Oats at 42%

Saltmeadow Cordgrass 32%

Switchgrass at 12%

Silkgrass 7%

And Jobell flowers with another 7%.

A new Dare County Schools student enrollment platform is now online.

This platform is now open for incoming students who are either new or returning to Dare County Schools. Families of students who were enrolled during the 2023-2024 school year do not need to re-enroll. Also, families of soon-to-be kindergarteners who have already completed registration are all set!

Go to Dare to Learn dot org and hit the button that says “enroll.”

With just 35 days before the start of another School Year on Hatteras Island, administrators at Cape Hatteras Secondary School have put together a school supply list for sixth through twelfth grade students:

Required Supplies

One three inch binder

Dividers

Loose leaf paper

Five marbled composition notebooks

¼-inch graph paper (if taking math)

Colored pencils

Pencils

Pens (blue or black)

Erasers

Highlighters

Scissors

3-hole punched 2-pocket folder for homework (suggested)

4 glue sticks

Classroom Donations Needed

The administrators say they are always grateful for additional supplies such as tissues, Clorox/Lysol wipes, hand sanitizer, extra spiral notebooks, extra glue sticks and extra composition notebooks

A Pop-Up Bazaar Monday, July 22, serves as the warm-up act for the annual Shake Hatteras Music Festival August 12.

Monday's Pop-Up Bazaar features a vendor market and a number of charity-driven activities, including a dunking booth, (sponsored by Beach Pharmacy), to benefit the KOA Care Camps, and a 50/50 raffle to support the first responders of the Chicamacomico Banks Water Rescue Team. There will also be a kite demo and exhibition by Reider Decker of Hatteras Island Sail Shop.

Delicious food and drinks will be available nearby at Tina's Poolside Cafe at the KOA, and there will also be music and tunes throughout the afternoon by the Outer Banks' own DJ, Papa Squat. The Pop-Up Bazaar will be held at the Cape Hatteras/Outer Banks KOA Resort's soundside event site at 25099 NC 12 from 1 until 6 in the afternoon, July 22. The event is free and wide open to the public.

It's that time of year again, the **Hatteras Island Meals** annual fundraiser has started. Raffle tickets are available from Rene Peterson Midgett at 252-489- 7488.

Now, be careful out there. Love the Beach. Respect the Ocean. Thanks for listening to this news program. This is Radio Hatteras.