

*June 2022*

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## Welcome to June

WELCOME to the JUNE 2022 edition of **THE CURRENT**. In the "winners podium of summer months" June never quite gets the credit of the others. It doesn't kick things off like May, or come with crazy fireworks like July. It isn't known for the oppressive heat of August or the "last hurrahs" of September. But that's OK! If there's one thing June is good for, it's being a reliable time of solid summer fun. In a way, it's the "gently used sedan" of summertime; sure it's not too flashy or loaded with features, but it also won't leave you stranded in the hot sun.

While many may look at June with the same nonchalant concern as they do the "flyover" states of the mid-west, in today's world there's something to be said for reliability in relaxation. If there's anything the last couple of years have

taught us as a society, or even as the human race, is that you never know what's just around the corner. Enjoying the calm not-too-hot, and also not-too-busy weeks provided by this middle-of-the-year month, should be just as fulfilling as the most exotic vacations or memorable celebrations. And just like the month of June itself, if there is one thing Oak Island can consistently deliver on, its reliable relaxation. Just because others have skipped out on the fun, doesn't mean you have to. There's still plenty going on and even more to do, so snap on your best arm floaties and dive in! Welcome to the JUNE edition of THE CURRENT.



# MONTHLY REVIEW

**REMINDER:** Information on all news items can be found on the Town Website at: [www.OakIslandNC.gov/NEWS](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/NEWS).

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## Council Recap

The Town Council's regular meeting on **May 10, 2022** began with Presentation and Proclamation for Safe Boating Week, in

which the Coast Guard Auxiliary gave a presentation and Mayor White read the Proclamation. It was followed by a presentation by the Oak Island Beach Preservation Society of their Scholarship Awards, in which recipients were formally announced and introduced to the Council.

**COUNCIL REPORTS:** Councilmember Bill Craft reported that he had recently learned of the option to donate to the Public Utilities Department, to assist others in need with utility payments, and encouraged the practice. Mayor Pro Tempore John Bach congratulated the Recreation Department on the success of the recent Seafood Festival & Car Show. He then reported that he, the Mayor, and Councilmember Craft attended the recent Hurricane Conference hosted by with Brunswick County, and again encouraged preparedness ahead of Hurricane Season. Mayor White gave comments commending the "great deal of effort" by Staff and Council in

preparing the Proposed Budget.

**COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:** Council unanimously appointed Carol Schroeder to the Par 3 Golf Advisory Board.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:** Town Manager David Kelly reported that the second portion of the Phase II Nourishment project had been completed, and a walkthrough with the contractor was performed to update post-and-rope on access locations. Kelly then informed the Council that a new Mobile Speed Radar unit had been purchased for the Police Department, to help assess and respond to speeding concerns in residential areas (*more on this coming up in the **News & Notices** section*). In response to questions from Mayor Pro Tem Bach, the Town Manager reported that the street paving contractor anticipating completing the current contract some time in June.

**NOTE:** *Monthly Department Reports are available to view any time on the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/DEPT](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/DEPT).*

**OLD BUSINESS:** **(1)** Council reviewed and discussed the Planning Board Priorities. No action was taken. **(2)** Council unanimously approved the contract for Sea Oats Planting. **(3)** Council directed for two elected officials and staff to meet with the developers of the Williamson Tract, to revise the draft of a Development Agreement.

**NEW BUSINESS:** **(1)** Council approved the preliminary plat with a 4-1 vote for *The Orchard At OKI*. **(2)** Police Chief Charlie Morris gave a presentation on the newly formed Beach Services Unit. **(3)** Council approved a contract with Stature

Engineering. **(4)** Council approved an amendment to change the membership requirements on the Par # Golf Advisory Board to five members who are Oak Island residents. **(5)** Consideration of Amendments to the Town Council's Code of Ethics was moved to the July 12 meeting. **(6)** Review of the Charges/Missions for the Town's Advisory Boards and Committees was moved to the July 12 meeting. **(7)** Council voted 4-1 to renew the contract with Oak Island Water Rescue. **(8)** Council voted 4-1 to approve the land lease for the Oak Island Water Rescue Station. **(9)** Council unanimously approved the lease renewal of the Town building in the Yaupon Beach area to Matthew's Ministry **(10)** Council discussed Beach Access Parking. No action was taken.

Council entered into Closed Session to consult with the Town Attorney, with no action taken following closed session.

To view the video, agenda, and minutes from this or any other

Town Council meeting, just visit the Town Website  
at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/MEETINGS](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/MEETINGS), or click the link below.

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## Fiscal Fundamentals

On **Tuesday, May 17, 2022**, during a special called meeting of the Oak Island Town Council, Town Manager David Kelly and Town Finance Director David Hatten formally presented the **Recommended Fiscal Year 2022 - 2023 Budget** to the Council and public.

This presentation came as a result of several months spent working with staff and council to develop and refine the Budget, heading into the new fiscal year. Throughout much of April and May, a total of **six (6)** public **Budget Workshops** were held on [April 14](#), [April 20](#), [April 22](#), [April 26](#), [May 3](#) and [May 12](#), as well as the public presentation on [May 17](#).

The Recommended FY 2022-23 Budget, along with the presentation materials and the presentation video, are now available for public review on the special **Budget Information** page of the Town Website at

[www.OakIslandNC.gov/BUDGET](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/BUDGET), or directly by clicking the links provided below:

- [CLICK HERE to view the Recommended Budget presentation materials](#)
- [CLICK HERE to view the Recommended FY 2022 - 2023 Budget](#)
- [CLICK HERE to view the Recommended Budget presentation](#)

**PLEASE NOTE:** These materials have been made available for public review prior to the Budget Public Hearing, which will be held during the Town Council's regular meeting on **Tuesday, June 14, 2022** at **6:00 PM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of the Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Drive. This meeting is open to the public, and will also be broadcast LIVE on OKI-TV (Spectrum Cable channel 8 / 122), as well as livestreamed online at

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## BSU Is On The Move

During the May regular meeting of the Town Council, Police Chief Charlie Morris provided the Council with a presentation on the newly formed **Beach Services Unit** (BSU). Since their initial launch just a few short weeks ago, the BSU has already been covering lots of ground ... *or rather, "covering lots of sand!"* There's a good chance you've already seen the staff members on the job, so here's a little more detail on just *who they are, and what they do*.

Building upon previous "Beach Patrol" programs, the new BSU is a civilian-staffed branch of the Oak Island Police Department, which works to preserve and maintain the public beach areas within the Town of Oak Island.

The BSU works in conjunction with sworn officers to serve both residents and visitors, through the monitoring of public beach areas, Beach Access Locations, and parking areas along the streets within the beach vicinity. Staff members do not carry firearms or conduct police tasks, but are authorized to issue citations for violating Town ordinances related to dunes, beach safety, and parking. All BSU members wear specific uniforms, with BEACH SERVICES prominently displayed across the back of their shirt.

Primary BSU activities include:

- Patrolling the 10 miles of public beach areas, from both east and west directions.
- Preventing damage to the dune system through staff / officer presence and ordinance enforcement.
- Patrolling Beach Access Locations and area streets to address parking violations.
- Utilizing a drone (UAS) to spot violators and address safety concerns.
- Ensure fair and consistent enforcement of Town Ordinances.
- Provides information and general assistance to the public.

As noted by Chief Morris in his introduction of the Unit, this is a "first year effort" and there is a good potential for refinement and "tweaking" to be done. Expect to see growth and further development as the new unit learns their current role, and potentially expands the services they offer.

The Beach Services Unit consists of thirteen (13) civilian staff members, who work in shifts to conduct beach patrols on UTVs, and parking enforcement along the Beach Access Locations and streets in the beach vicinity. The BSU also utilizes the Town's UAS (drone) Division for aerial monitoring and response assistance.

For the 2022 Summer Season, the BSU will be active every day from **May 13 - September 5** (115 days total), between the hours of **10:00 AM – 6:00 PM**.

UTV Beach Patrol will be conducted seven (7) days per week from both East and West directions, while Parking Enforcement will be conducted by a single BSU member on Thursdays - Sundays (2 during holidays). Aerial (Drone) Patrol will be utilized on weekends, holidays, and as additionally needed. Sworn officers will assist as staffing allows during all non-holiday times, with two (2) officers assigned to assist during holidays.

To learn more about the Beach Services Unit, their mission, or how to contact them for service, just visit the BSU Information page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/BSU](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/BSU) or click the link below.

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## Register Park Renovation

On **Thursday, May 5, 2022** regular visitors to the [Malcom \(Mac\) Register Park](#) were confronted with an ominous site of traffic cones and demolished walking paths. Thankfully, this wasn't due to the devastating effects of a hurricane or other disaster, but was an intentional effort as part new renovations to the park grounds.

Throughout the month of May the park, located at north end of NE 52nd street, received several upgrades. Most notably

the addition of paved walkways connecting the the more than 160' from the street end to the Park's fishing pier over the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW).

Once paving was complete, the **Operations Division** of the Public Works Department stepped up with fresh new grass and split fence railings (something they've been adding to several park facilities in recent months).

The compliments and adds to what is known as the **Register Park Complex**. This houses many facilities and features, including a picnic shelter, fishing pier, kayak launch, tree trail, the Dot Kelly Butterfly Garden, a floating dock, and the **Oak Island Nature Center** (*more on the Nature Center in the **Division Spotlight** of this edition!*).

Whether it's enjoying bird watching, or dreaming while boat watching, the new facility upgrades at the Register Park make for an event more convenient and beautiful place to sit and enjoy your surroundings.

To view information on the location or amenities of this or any park provided by the Town of Oak Island, just visit the **Parks & Facilities** page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/PARKS](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/PARKS) or click the link below.

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## Turtles Take A Trip

On Monday, May 9, 2022 staff from the **Karen Beasley Rescue and Rehabilitation Center** in Surf City, NC joined members of the **Oak Island Sea Turtle Protection Program** and the **Caswell Beach Turtle Watch**, to conduct a **Live Turtle Release**, hosted by the Town of Oak Island.

For a couple of hours, the SE 49th Street Beach Access Location was packed with around 1,000 or more onlookers, who came out to see what for many was a once in a lifetime event. The Release saw the reintroduction of FOUR (4) turtles back into the ocean, including three (3) Kemp's Ridley, named *Aquamarine, Drummer, & Pocus*, along with a single juvenile Loggerhead named *Coconut*, which weighed in at nearly 200 lbs!!

lbs....

Since then several more private releases have been held, once again reaffirming Oak Island's reputation as a Sea Turtle haven. A brief video recapping the public release on May 9 was posted on the official Town of Oak Island Facebook Page, and can be viewed by [\*\*CLICKING HERE\*\*](#).

#### ABOUT THE AGENCIES INVOLVED:

The ***Oak Island Sea Turtle Protection Program*** (OISTPP) is an all-volunteer, nonprofit environmental and conservation organization whose mission is to monitor and protect the sea turtle population that visits the Oak Island beach strand, and to foster community-based conservation, education, and preservation. OISTPP was founded in 1989 and is authorized by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC), to conduct its activities to monitor and protect sea turtles. To learn more, visit [www.okiseaturtle.org](http://www.okiseaturtle.org).

The ***Caswell Beach Turtle Watch*** is a private, non-profit program staffed by volunteers, and supervised by program members who hold permits from the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. The purpose of the Caswell Beach Turtle Watch is to protect the threatened and endangered sea turtles that lay their eggs on Caswell Beach. To learn more, visit [www.caswellturtlewatch.org](http://www.caswellturtlewatch.org).

The ***Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center*** is a nonprofit organization who focuses on the conservation and preservation of all species of marine turtles. This is accomplished through the rescue, care, and release of sick and

injured sea turtles, public education, and learning opportunities. To learn more, visit [www.seaturtlehospital.org](http://www.seaturtlehospital.org).



# CONTRIBUTIONS

Each month, between the *MONTHLY REVIEW* and upcoming *NEWS & NOTICES* sections, you'll find **CONTRIBUTIONS**. This section features content contributed from various Town Departments and staff, as well as the Town's municipal and non-profit partner organizations. Regular contributing partner

organizations include the [Oak Island Fire Department](#), the [Beach Preservation Society](#), the [Friends of Parks Foundation](#), the [Sea Turtle Protection Program](#), the [Friends of the Library](#), and [Oak Island Water Rescue](#), among others. For more information on the content presented in this section, please reach out to the contributing department or organization directly.

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## Oak Island Fire Department: Summer Safety Tips

(Contributed by **Timothy Fleckinger**) Well it's that time of year again. The Oak Island Fire Department would like to put out a

few reminders to help ensure that everyone has a safe summer, as well as a fun one. These are just some things that we have seen, or lessons learned from calls we've been to over the years:

1. **GOLF CARTS** on the roadway are treated the same as cars so the same laws apply. Most importantly seatbelts and car seats should be utilized while operating them to avoid injuries from falls or ejections resulting from accidents
2. **HOLES** on the beach should always be filled back in, as these can become dangerous for someone walking or jogging (*especially at night*). *Don't forget it's Sea Turtle Season also!*
3. **HELMETS** should always be used when riding a bike around Town, and be aware of your surroundings. There are a lot of visitors to the area that may be distracted, causing a strike unsuspecting from riders.
4. **SHUFFLE** your feet in the water, as we do see a rise in stingray incidents. Shuffling will alert them, whereas stepping on them just makes them mad ... *Trust us, some of our firefighters know this lesson all too well!*
5. **FIRE** in any form should always be respected and attended to. Recently, there have been several fires on the Island due to poor grilling caution. Be sure that all charcoal is completely out before emptying, and it's always a good idea to have a metal receptacle to contain them in. Try to grill in an open, well-vented area; but be mindful of the wind, which can blow hot embers to places susceptible to fire. Grills should **never** be left unattended.

Oak Island encourages everyone to get out and enjoy the summertime, but to take the few extra steps for safety! To learn more about the Oak Island Fire Department and the many ways we work to help serve our community, just visit the our page on the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/FD](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/FD), or click the link below.

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## Sweeps

*(Contributed by the **Eileen (Elly) Keates**)* Join the Oak Island Beach Preservation Society, Inc. on **Saturday, June 11 at 8:00 AM** for the annual **Spring Beach Sweep**.

Email [OKIbeachcleanup@gmail.com](mailto:OKIbeachcleanup@gmail.com) for a list of  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile sections of beach to reserve for your group to clean; or stop by the tent located at the beach front cabana located at SE 46th Street and E Beach Drive on event day to receive instructions and a beach access parking area to collect debris. Volunteers should wear sunscreen and bring a reusable water bottle. Trash bags and gloves will be provided. The collected debris will be counted and weighed, and the data will be shared with Surfrider Foundation to help monitor the ocean trash problem locally and globally and influence long term trash solutions.

The Oak Island Beach Preservation Society, Inc. (BPSI), is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, dedicated to education and community engagement to enhance the Oak Island beach experience and leave the beach better for everyone now and in the future. To learn more about BPSI and how you can help support their mission, visit their website at [www.beachoki.org](http://www.beachoki.org) or click the link below.

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## Friends of Parks Foundation: Summer Solstice Celebration

*(Contributed by **Dennis Maneri**)* The Parks Foundation is proud to co-host the **2nd Annual Solstice Festival** with the Brunswick Arts Council.

On Friday, June 17 from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM, FREE event at the Middle Park Amphitheater – Come hear the fabulous Tim Clark Band as they play music from the 70s, 80s & 90s.

During the session break, you'll have a blast learning about SHAG dancing as the Society of Brunswick Shaggers holds a live demonstration and brief history of Shagging in the Carolinas.

Then on Saturday, June 18, from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM, The

Middleton Park Sports Fields will have Food Trucks, vendors, a great music lineup – that will continue past 5 to 8pm -- multiple stations with artisans and community booths! Find that gift or cool art you've always wanted. Featuring potters, sculptors, jewelry, clothing, painting, furniture and all kinds of fun works for home and garden!

There will be lots of fun activities for children to enjoy – including live pirates (Black Sails Adventure Company) the Reptile Trailer (Fresh Start Rescue) and motion & movements with Turning the Wheel.

Come meet your neighbors, and see what community groups are doing to help make Brunswick County special!.

Saturday The Friends of Parks will be hosting a Cornhole Tournament starting at 11am and going until 5pm. Team Categories for Adults – including doubles; mixed doubles and Youth (13 & under. There will be fun prizes to top off the action. Donation requested: Adults \$20 per team; \$10 for Youth. For more information you'll find us on our FaceBook page. Pre-register at the Rec Center or at the Foundation's tent at Middleton Park.

All proceeds go to improving the parks experience.

For more information visit the Friends of Parks Foundation website at [www.okifriendsofparks.org](http://www.okifriendsofparks.org), or click the link below.

SUNDAY, June 19th the Solstice by the Sea Celebration continues with its first ever FILM FESTIVAL. Films will run from 3 to 5pm at the AMUZU Theatre at 111 N Howe Street in Southport, showcasing short films made in and around

Brunswick County, featuring new works by local artists covering topics within our communities, including Gullah Geechee. Tickets can only be purchased online: TO BUY TICKETS: <https://brunswick-arts-council.ticketleap.com/1st-solstice-film-festival/>

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# NEWS & NOTICES: JUNE

## Council & Board Meetings

**REMINDER:** All televised public meetings listed below will be broadcast live on OKI-TV (Spectrum Cable channel 8 / 122), as well as livestreamed on the Town Website. Meeting agendas, minutes, and any livestreamed or recorded videos are available at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/MEETINGS](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/MEETINGS).

**TOWN COUNCIL** (*televised*) will hold a regular meeting on **Tuesday, June 14, 2022 at 6:00 PM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Drive. **PLEASE NOTE:** Included in the agenda for this meeting will be a public hearing on the **FY 2022-23 Town Budget**.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE** (*non-televised*)

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (non-televised) will hold a regular meeting on **Thursday, June 16, 2022** at **8:30 AM** in the Police Department Training Room, located on the second floor of the Police Department adjoining Town Hall at 4621 E Oak Island Drive.

**PLANNING BOARD** (televised) will hold a regular meeting on **Thursday, June 16, 2022** at **10:30 AM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Drive.

## CLOSURES & HOLIDAYS

**INDEPENDENCE DAY:** Administrative Offices for the Town of Oak Island will be **CLOSED** on **Monday, July 4, 2022** in observance of Independence Day.

**PLEASE NOTE:** There will be **NO** interruption of Garbage & Recycling Collection services for Independence Day, however services may be delayed due to higher than normal volume

Police, fire, and other emergency services are not affected during any holiday closure, and are always available by **calling 9-1-1**. The **Oak Island Pier** will be open during their seasonal hours. All currently available parks and public Beach & Water Access locations and facilities will be open as well. For all 2022 closure dates available, the *Holiday Calendar* can be found on the Town Website at:

[www.OakIslandNC.gov/HOLIDAY](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/HOLIDAY)

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## Direct Beach Access Pathway Revisions

With the recent completion of both FEMA sand nourishment projects (**Phase I** in 2021 & **Phase II** in 2022), new options have again become available for direct, private pathway accesses across the dunes.

Privately established **Direct** or **Shared Access Pathways** will now be allowed from 19th Place East to the west end of the island (The Point). Although direct pathways are again allowed, neighbors are still strongly encouraged to establish Shared Access Pathways together, as a way to reduce the overall amount of over-dune traffic. Direct Access Pathways can utilize post-and-rope methods to mark the new pathways completely from one toe of the dune to the other.

The division of Coastal Management is allowing the use of composite or wood rollout matting, but only for dune areas with existing stable, natural vegetation. Recently planted vegetation on the new dune areas is anticipated to become stable within the next 2-3 years.

For now, the previously installed Shared Access Pathways **will not** be removed immediately. Their use will be reviewed throughout the summer season for frequency and effectiveness, and removed at a later time as needed.

***In addition, newly revised information on the installation of sand fencing is available as well.***

BOTH the installation of Direct or Shared Access Pathways AND Sand Fencing will require a permit. Permits are available through the links provided below:

[CLICK HERE to download a Direct / Shared Access Pathway Application](#)

[CLICK HERE to download a Sand Fence Permit Application](#)

For further details on these updates, just visit the **Beach Access Pathways & Sand Fencing** page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/DirectAccess](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/DirectAccess), or click the link below.

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## Second Skatepark Meeting Scheduled

One of the most heavily anticipated projects going into 2022 was the reconstruction of the **Kevin Bell Skatepark**. A total loss following Hurricane Isaias in late 2020, the project spent much of 2021 in a search of funding and qualified designers / engineers.

A renewed sense of excitement sprang up in November 2021, when it was announced that the design team of Pillar Designs & Artisan Skateparks had been awarded the contract for design, construction, and management of the rebuild project. The team immediately set to work receiving ideas and input from Town staff, and later the community through a Public Input session held in January 2022.

***Now five (5) months later, the team is ready to bring back the***

***“Skatepark that never had a chance”***

A **second** Kevin Bell Skatepark Project public meeting has now been scheduled for **Thursday, June 23, 2022 at 5:00 PM**, in the **Town Council Chambers**, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Drive. The meeting will also be broadcast LIVE on OKI-TV (Spectrum Cable channel 8 / 122), and livestreamed on the Town Website. **Please note:** broadcasts are for viewing only, and do not offer options for direct interaction. Input must be given in-person during the meeting, or submitted in writing to the Recreation Director. For more information on the history and current status of the Skatepark Project, just visit the special page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/SKATE](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/SKATE) or click the link below.

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## Hurricane Season Starts

As most every coastal resident know, June 1 marked the beginning of **Atlantic Hurricane Season**. [According to Forecasters at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\) Climate Prediction Center](#) (a division

of the National Weather Service) an above-average amount of hurricane activity is predicted for 2022.

The forecast stands at a 65% chance of an above-normal season, with a likely range of between 14 - 21 named storms, of which possibly 6 - 10 could become hurricanes. If this prediction holds true, it would make it the seventh consecutive above-average hurricane season.

While the experts at NOAA may only be able to provide these forecasts with **70% confidence**, one thing you can be 100% sure of, is that being prepared ahead of any storm will **ALWAYS** be a smart move. "Being prepared" doesn't mean running to the the store to buy (and then learn how to use) a generator 4 hours before the storm surge hits.

***Preparing for a storm at the last minute is like going grocery shopping when you're hungry; you're going to miss all of the essentials and just end up eating melted ice cream and feeling***

***sorry for yourself.***

Good news! The Town of Oak Island is here to help, with the newly updated ***Hurricane Information & Resource Guide***. This helpful little brochure condenses the information found on the ***Hurricane Information*** page of the Town Website, in a way that doesn't even need electricity or the internet to view.

Helpful insights on what to do *Before, During, and After* a storm, along with FAQ's and tips on "what to expect" can all be found in this handy tri-fold guide.

Printing is underway, and it will soon be hitting the information shelves in the Town Hall. So feel free to pick one up the next time you stop in to pay a utility bill or pick up a **Parking Decal**. Of course, you can also find the information presented in the guide anytime on the Hurricane Information page of the Town Website mentioned above. Just visit [www.OakIslandNC.gov/HURRICANE](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/HURRICANE) or click the link below.

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## Officer "Sign" Reporting For Duty

As mentioned in the Administrative Reports of the Council Recap earlier, during their regular meeting in May, the Town

Council was informed that the Police Department had recently purchased a mobile radar unit. The goal of the purchase was to help prevent and respond to concerns of speeding in more residential areas.

The new **SpeedAlert 18** model unit comes from **All Traffic Solutions** out of Chantilly, VA. It comes with all the usual features one would expect in a mobile speed station. It registers and displays the speed of all approaching vehicles, alerting drivers to their pace with a 30"x20" easy-to-read full matrix display.

However, like any good human officer - *and some other "more famous robots"* - it's much ***more than meets the eye***.

That's right! It blinks, records vehicle data, and even captures photos of offending vehicles! The unit also features flashing blue lights to help grab the attention of those significantly over the speed limit.

Now before you dust off your copy of **1984**, or pull out your old **The Terminator** VHS cassette tape, this is not a case of justice being outsourced to the machines (who may eventually start their own authoritarian uprising). Quite the opposite, in fact. This tool, and the data it provides, will help the Police Department to determine the *real story* on speeding in Oak Island. It will help distinguish areas where speeding is an actual, or perceived problem.

After about a week of calibrating and training on the new software, the SpeedAlert received its first assignment in the areas along Yacht Drive. Be on the lookout though, as it is sure to be making its rounds about time in the coming months!



# COMING EVENTS & PROGRAMS

**REMINDER:** Information on all special events, recreation programs, and educational activities can be found on the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/EVENTS](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/EVENTS).

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## Summer Concert Series

**WHEN:** Friday, June 3, 10, 17, 24, 2022 • 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

**WHERE:** Middleton Park (SE 46th Street & E Dolphin Drive)

**COST:** Free to attend

**ABOUT:** The sun is out, the fun is back, and the “Bands by the Beach” are once again ready to rock, groove, swing, and swoon their way through the soundtrack of your perfect summer! For 15 weeks, from May to September, we turn the amps up to “11” and come together for the annual Town of Oak Island Summer Concert Series.

To view the full concert series schedule, visit

[www.OakIslandNC.gov/CONCERT](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/CONCERT) or click the link below.

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## Farmer's & Artisans' Market

**WHEN:** Every Monday (June 13, 20, 27) • 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

**WHERE:** Middleton Park (SE 46th Street & E Dolphin Drive)

**COST:** Free to attend (vendor fees vary)

**ABOUT:** The Oak Island Farmers' & Artisans' Market is a great opportunity for the public to see, and financially support the very best of Oak Island's local growers and crafters. Farmers and artisans alike can be found in this great showcase of

and artisans alike can be found in this great showcase of baked goods, produce, handmade crafts, and artistic masterpieces!

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## Kayaking Tours

**WHEN:** August 16 • September 13 • October 11 \*Times will be tide dependent. For details, contact Ryan Gordon at 910-278-4747\*

**WHERE:** Davis Canal • Intracoastal Waterway

**COST:** \$30 Town of Oak Island Residents / \$40 Island Visitors & Non Residents

**WHO:** 18 years & Older

**ABOUT:** Enjoy Oak Island's beauty from the water! Guided trips are available through the Oak Island Recreation Department. Trips last approximately 2 hours and include kayak rentals, paddle, personal flotation device, and experienced guides. Kayak trips are destinations include the Intracoastal Waterway backwaters or Davis Canal (weather depending). Paddle difficulty is easy. For questions simply reach out to Program Supervisor, Ryan Gordon at [rgordon@oakislandnc.gov](mailto:rgordon@oakislandnc.gov) or by calling 910-278-4747.

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## Fort Fisher Aquarium Visit

**WHEN:** June 9, July 7, August 4 • 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

**WHERE:** Recreation Center • 3003 E Oak Island Dr.

**COST:** Free to attend

**ABOUT:** Oak Island Beach Preservation Society has partnered with Fort Fisher Aquarium and Oak Island Recreation Department to bring fantastic nature to our community residents and guests. All programs will be held at the Oak Island Recreation Center (3003 E. Oak Island Dr.) at 2:00 PM.

Programs are FREE to all participants!

**PLEASE NOTE:** There are **MANY** fun, educational, and exciting events and programs planned for the month ahead (way too many to list here)! For a complete list of upcoming activities, contact the Recreation Department at **910-278-5518**, or visit the **EVENTS & PROGRAMS** page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/EVENTS](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/EVENTS), or just click the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)



# DIVISION FEATURE: OAK ISLAND NATURE CENTER

**PLEASE NOTE:** This article kicks off a special two-part summer series covering both the Nature Center and the Ocean Education Center. Stay tuned for the July edition, which will feature the Ocean Education Center.

The northeast corner on the "island-side" of Oak Island holds many options for free entertainment, education, and general recreation. Whether you're watching the weekend warriors back their boats down the ramp at NE 55th, catching crabs from the NE 78th dock, or enjoying Register Park's new amenities we mentioned earlier ... there's always something fun (*and free!*) to do on that side of Town. By far however, one of the best educational opportunities can be found right at the corner of NE 52nd Street and E. Yacht Drive, in the ***Oak Island Nature Center***.

As part of the Malcolm Register Park complex, the Nature Center was constructed along with the rest of the park throughout much of 2005 - 2006. The Nature Center offers visitors a unique opportunity for visitors to get a "hands on" learning experience about the wildlife and natural habitats that surround Oak Island and the lower cape fear region.

Positioned right on the banks of the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW), it is the perfect place to let the kids play and explore, while area volunteers share a wealth of knowledge about the wildlife that make their home along the ICW.

The Nature Center building is nestled at a height of 11 feet up in the trees right in middle of the forest. It is surrounded by 120 feet of wraparound handicap accessible ramps and viewing platforms that provides visitors with views of the forest and the Intracoastal Waterway. The building was designed with materials to that blend in with the surrounding natural environment. As a result of thoughtful planning, the facility was built without having to remove any trees.

Inside the Nature Center building is full of literature, crafts, coloring activities, and informational exhibits which help to put a fun twist on the "classroom" aspects of learning. Filling

out the grounds surrounding the Nature Center is a diverse offering of exhibits and activities, including a walking trail, information markers, exercise / activity stations, community flower gardens, a floating dock, and the Dot Kelly Butterfly Garden (in honor of former Mayor, Dorothy Kelly).

swap content



**PROFILE:** *Recreation Program Supervisor:* Eric Falkenhagen has been with the Oak Island Recreation Department for eight (8) years. While his duties may include things like organizing a Seafood Festival & Car Show, or planning nature adventures, one of his most notable responsibilities is that of coordinator for the Nature Center. He actually has a personal history with Center, as one of his first challenges after joining the Oak Island team was overseeing re-opening of the Nature Center and surrounding park.

*"My first time going in, it was a mess"* Eric recalled laughingly about the experience. *"But I worked with Town staff to clean it out and really bring back the facility. We worked with local artists to add new features throughout the years, including the beautiful coastal murals on the inside walls."*

Throughout the years since, Eric Falkenhagen and a small team of dedicated volunteers have guided incredible transformations, which include the addition of numerous exhibits. From day one, they have worked partner

organizations such as the [\*\*Oak Island Beautification Club\*\*](#), and the [\*\*Sea Biscuit Wildlife Rescue\*\*](#) to provide enhanced beauty and numerous programs on coastal wildlife.

swap content



**SPLIT SHIFT:** While Eric Falkenhagen provides the coordination and oversight from a Town staff perspective, the small but dedicated group of volunteers who work at the Nature Center are vital to its everyday operation. Because several of these volunteers also help in other areas, *operating hours* for the Nature Center are divided throughout the week,

to help accommodate staffing for the [Ocean Education](#)

[Center](#) as well (more on that in the JULY edition).

Because this facility is largely operated on a volunteer basis, specific program schedules and operating hours may be subject to change. However, in general the Nature Center is usually open for the summer season, from around Memorial Day to Labor.

**Seasonal hours are 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM, every [Wednesday](#), [Thursday](#), and [Friday](#).**

Without the tremendous support provided by the volunteer staff, every operational effort, from unlocking the doors to carrying out the crayons would be severely reduced.

Nature (Center) is a busy place! With the single dedicated staff member, and 2 - 3 volunteers mentioned above, you might not think of the Nature Center as a hub of activity about Town. But you'd be wrong. Amazingly, the Center hosted 70 visitors just in the first three days of being open for the 2022 season. Between the learning opportunities inside and the more than 30 other exhibits and activities outside, along with the weekly activity and information topics, the Nature Center easily sees hundreds, if not thousands of visitors per year.



Just like nature itself, the Center and the amenities it offers are always changing as well. Outdoor exhibits and the classroom learning materials provided are constantly being refreshed, updated, remodeled or replaced. All to accomplish the goal of keeping a clean, inviting atmosphere that continually engages learners of all ages. Achieving this requires support from Town staff far beyond just the Recreation Department. In fact support is pulled from just about everywhere, including the Public Works Department who repaired the floating docks after Hurricane Isaias in 2020; and prior to the opening for the 2022 season provided pressure washing, cleaning, and maintenance to all decks, walkways, and railings.

The constant revision of exhibits and information, and the prioritizing of regular maintenance and repair, shows the Town's commitment to helping others understand the natural habitats within our community. The hope is that the more we can understand our surroundings, the better we can all live, work, and build in closer harmony with the wildlife who also call Oak Island their home.

The Oak Island Nature Center provides a unique perspective on island living for both local residents and visitors alike.

While all ages are welcome, the Center frequently holds programs specifically for kids and young adults throughout the summer. There are several ways to stay up to date with the latest fun and educational offerings, with the most obvious being the dedicated Nature Center page on the Town website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/NATURE](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/NATURE), or by clicking the link below. You can also call the Recreation Department at 910-278-5518, or just stop by in-person during regular operating hours at 5202 E Yacht Dr.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)



# PHOTO REVIEW: JUNE 2022

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Photo Review section contains reader-submitted photos, and allows for greater exposure of the artistic contributions made by members of the Oak Island community. Submissions are donated and not compensated by any means other than courtesy credit here. Please view the captions below for information on this month's contributors. To contribute a submission (must be from the current month), please email the photo along with a description of the date, location, and photographer or business name to: [photos@oakislandnc.gov](mailto:photos@oakislandnc.gov).



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