

May 2022

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# Welcome to May

**WELCOME** to the **MAY 2022** edition of **THE CURRENT**.

Astronomically speaking, the "*First Day of Summer*" is said to be when the Sun reaches its highest point in the sky. This occurs on the summer solstice, which is usually between June 20–22. For the travel, tourism, and business communities, Memorial Day is traditionally considered the unofficial beginning of summer in the United States. However, most longtime residents of the southern swamps and Brunswick beaches know that summer actually starts "when the 'skeeters bitin' and the Sun's a burinin'!"

In non-native speak, this means every year Oak Island gets approximately 45 minutes of mild, quiet, enjoyable Spring weather. After that, nature immediately cranks up the heat, breaks off the knob, and settles in for five months of warm, wonderful summertime fun! That's okay, because it's a game plan shared by many residents and visitors alike. You don't need an astrological event, or 3-day holiday weekend to start your summer. You just need good folks, and even good-**er** times! From concerts and car shows to festivals and funnel cakes, the Town of Oak Island is getting a jump start on

providing those good times ... all that's left is for readers like you to provide the good people! So if giving your summer an early kickstart sounds like a good plan, then climb aboard as we set sail for the May 2022 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 **April 12, 2022** began with three (3) public hearings. **(I)** Council adopted the

Resolution close the street end at NE 54th Street. **(II)** Council approved a Special Use Permit Application at 5219 E Oak Island Dr., for heating and air condition installation and repair with open storage. **(III)** The Council did not approve a Special Use Permit Application at 6963 Kings Lynn Dr., for a "Large Single-Family Residential Home" (the motion to approve the application failed on a 1-4 vote).

**PRESENTATIONS & PROMCLAMATIONS:** The Council removed a presentation for the Rotary Club's *Officer of the Year*, as the awarded officer was unable to attend. The council did hear a presentation from [Oak Island Water Rescue](#), which was summarized in the meeting minutes. The Environmental Advisory Committee the presented the **Tree City USA** flag to Mayor White, and the Mayor issued an Arbor Day Proclamation.

**COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:** Council appointed Rosalie

Farley to the to the Par 3 Advisory Board, for a term ending in January 2025. (NOTE: There are three terms available -- one ending in Jan 2025, one ending in Jan 2024 and one ending in Jan 2023 for Town residents who do not live in the South Harbour community)

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:** Finance Director David Hatten provided a quarterly financial report, in which ad valorem tax collection was currently at a 97.5% collection rate, and was estimated to be on track for a 98% collection rate. Hatten also provided updates on current collection amounts for the Local Option Sales Tax (\$2.46M), Water Utility Revenue (\$3.1M), Sewer Utility Revenue \$3.7M, Tap Fees (\$352K Sewer District Fees (\$683K), Accommodations Tax (\$2.19M).

Public Works Director, Scott Thornall reported that Beach Access Locations were being cleaned and prepared for the upcoming summer season, with new gravel, parking bumpers, and installation on shower towers. Several new Mobi-Mats were also being installed, now bringing the total offered to ten (10).

Town Manager, David Kelly provided an update on the Phase II Beach Nourishment project (*see article below for details*). Mr. Kelly also reported that two (2) utility vehicles were being rented for the summer season, for use by the newly implemented Beach Services Division of the Police Department. The Sidewalk Project has been modified to have Phase I now begin adding sidewalks from NE 51st - NE 46th.

**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: (I)** Council approved a motion to contract with the Cape Fear Council of Governments to perform an audit of the Town's UDO. **(II)** Council approved a motion to reaffirm the consensus for using Option 1 in Funding Beach Nourishment.

There was no New Business or Closed Session on the agenda. for this meeting. The Council then Adjourned.

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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# Budget Breakdown

Throughout the month of April and into May, the Town Council has been holding a series of special meetings, for the purpose of hosting **Budget Workshops**. The Budget Workshops are held annually during the spring, and allow the Council to view and provide direction on the proposed departmental budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. Workshops typically last between 2-4 hours per day, and review the proposed budgets for 2-3 departments per day. As of this publication, there have been **five (5)** Budget Workshops so far, with one additional workshop and a public hearing on the budget still scheduled.

### Dates and departments reviewed include:

- Thursday, April 14: Fire Department
- Wednesday, April 20: Fire Department (*continued*), Recreation Department, Development Services
- Friday, April 22: Police Department, Public Works
- Tuesday, April 26: Town Council, Outside Agencies
- **Tuesday, May 3**: Public Utilities, Outside Agencies (*continued*)

**UPCOMING MEETINGS:** During the May 3 Budget Workshop, Council scheduled an additional on **Thursday, May 12** from **10:00 AM - Noon**. Pending no further workshops are scheduled, the proposed budget will then proceed to a **public presentation** on **Tuesday May 17** at **6:00 PM**, followed by a **public hearing** during the Council's regular meeting on **June 14** at **6:00 PM**. All meetings are being held in the Town Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Dr.

**REVIEW:** All Budget Workshops are currently being broadcast every Saturday and Sunday on OKI-TV (Spectrum Cable channel 8 / 122), and are also available for review anytime on-demand at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/MEETINGS](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/MEETINGS) (*or by clicking the link below*). For those with difficulty viewing on the Town Website, the workshops have also been added on a special playlist on the Town's YouTube channel, which can be accessed at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/YOUTUBE](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/YOUTUBE).

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## Shovel Ready Success

**"*Blessed Are Those Who Plant Trees, Under Whose Shade They Will Never Sit.*"** These famous 1866 words of French theologian, Hyacinthe Loyson, were lived out in real time on Oak Island on **Wednesday, April 13.**

While Arbor Day was officially commemorated on Friday, April 29, the Town got a much earlier start as Mayor Elizabeth White joined representatives from the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) to welcome about 50 student members of the **South Brunswick Middle School, National Junior Honor Society** to Veterans Park, located at 1408 East Yacht Dr.

The students had gathered on April 13 to plant a total of **four (4) new live oak trees** in the park, each with a compost base and soil coverings on top. The project was initiated several months ago when when Molly Jenkins, an 8th grader at South Brunswick Middle School approached the Public Works department about replacing the oak tree in the park that was lost due to Hurricane Isaias.

The estimated maturity of these trees will not be seen for another 15 - 20 years. By that time, Molly Jenkins and most of her classmates will be well into their 30s.

*"It definitely makes me feel like I'm part of something bigger. The trees will most likely outlive all of us here today"* Jenkins remarked. *"It's really cool to think that younger kids, maybe 100 years from now will look at these trees and think about how they got here, and who planted them."*

The morning also featured a brief ceremony, with remarks from Mayor White and EAC project organizer Carolina Candelaria. Additional photos from the event are included in the **PHOTO REVIEW** section at the end of this edition.



# Sand Project Summary

By Thursday, April 30, 2022 All equipment demobilization efforts from the [Phase II Beach Nourishment Project](#) were completed. Following this, all of 3rd PI E was reopened for public use. In addition to the equipment demobilization, all of the new [Shared Access Pathways](#) planned for W Beach Dr. have been installed, with post-and-rope guides constructed. The dune profile and beach access options are now consistent along ALL of E Beach Drive and W Beach Drive. Properties along W Beach Drive should now exclusively use Shared Access Pathways, similar to what has already been in use along E Beach Drive. Post-and-rope guides have been installed at these pathways, as well as the public Beach Access Locations. Together, this provides approximately 206 combined Direct and Shared Pathways for accessing the Town’s public beach areas.

In total, the on-beach operations for the Phase II Project lasted 61 days, from February 20 to April 21. The project provided over 770,000 cubic yards of sand onto the public beach areas between 3rd PI E and The Point parking lot at the end of W Beach Dr. E Beach dr.

Moving forward, vegetation planting on the new dune structures will take place over the following weeks. Information on the expected planting locations and schedules will be published on the **Beach Nourishment Projects** page of

the Town Website, which can be viewed by visiting [www.OakIslandNC.gov/SAND](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/SAND), or clicking the link below.

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# Festival Fun

In addition to wildlife emerging from their winter hibernations, springtime weather also makes for the perfect opportunity to see a human reemergence as well. The month of April provided several public events where both residents and visitors were treated to some Town-sponsored social

visitors were treated to some town-sponsored social interaction.

**SHELL & FOSSIL SHOW:** On Sunday, April 10 over 260 attendees came out to the first ever **Shell & Fossil Show** (*pictured*). A shared love of shells brought participants out to the [801 Event Center](#), to view presentations and creative displays of some of their favorite findings of seashells and fossils from, both the Oak Island coastline and beyond. This year's program will welcomed both exhibitors and shell vendors of all ages.

Awards were presented in several categories, including *Best In Show* and *People's Choice*. The North Carolina Shell Club assisted with the event, and even donated a shell framed poster to be used at the [Oak Island Ocean Education Center](#) as well.

**EARTH DAY FESTIVAL:** On Friday, April 22 the Town of Oak Island went **GREEN**, as this year marked the 7th Annual Oak Island Earth Day Festival. Always an anticipated event for Oak Island's environmentally-conscious citizens, this exciting festival provided displays and activities designed to educate attendees on the protection and care of our planet. Numerous area conservation, environmental, and local groups were on hand to explain how their efforts benefit the community and world we live in. Among the many subjects presented, popular topics Included Sea Turtles, Coastal Birds, and Recycling; as well as exhibits from both the [Oak Island Nature Center](#) and the [Oak Island Ocean Education Center](#).

**NOTE:** Photos from both events have been included in the PHOTO REVIEW section at the end of this edition. *Do you have photos from a Town event you want featured in The CURRENT?* Just email them to [photos@oakislandnc.gov](mailto:photos@oakislandnc.gov) to be included with other reader-submitted content.





# 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.

# on Beach Bonfire Season

The month of May brings the start of Sea Turtle Nesting Season; which by extension, also means the end of Beach Bonfire Season.

From when the first fires were lit on November 16, 2021, until the last one went out on April 30, the Oak Island Fire Department processed a total of **1,593 Beach Bonfire Permit Applications** this season. Of those permits, 477 came from Town residents, with 804 out of town (but still in NC), and 312 from out of state.

At 24 for weeks long, that makes for a season-long average of more than 9 bonfires per day. With November only having 15 days available for bonfires, that goes above the season average to an even higher 26 bonfires per day.

SE 72nd St. was by far the busiest spot for bonfires, with over 8% of all permits at or near this Beach Access Location.

Unsurprisingly, the two busiest days were New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, with a combined 206 applications for the 48 hour period.

As we unpack the numbers from another successful Beach Bonfire Season, the most important number to note is the **ZERO (0)** reported injuries or damages as a direct result of beach bonfires. By following the program rules: obeying wind conditions, cleaning up and disposing of burned materials, and providing the Fire Department with records of when and where fires are expected through the permit process - we

have truly come together as a community to safely enjoy this time honored tradition.

As always, we'll be reviewing and refining the permitting process, to make it more efficient for next season. We'll also be making sure to rollout new educational efforts prior to this coming November as well. In the meantime, special thanks to all Fire Department and Town staff, and our residents and visitors for a safe (**but busy!**) Beach Bonfire Season. To learn more about Beach Bonfires, and the rules surrounding the programs, just visit [www.OakIslandNC.gov/BONFIRE](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/BONFIRE) or click the link below.

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# Sea Turtle Protection Program: Sea Turtle Season Has Started

(Contributed by the **Suzan Bell**) The 2022 Sea Turtle Season began on May 1, and will end on October 31 ... *or when the last nest is excavated!* The **Oak Island Sea Turtle Protection Program** is the only permitted program from the NC Wildlife Resources Commission to care for and protect the sea turtles that visit our Oak Island beach.

Please call us anytime, day or night if you see any sea turtle activity (nesting Moms, hatchlings, washed-up turtles, etc.) at **910-945-8888**.

If you see any activity, please do not approach or shine lights on the turtles. If you see a nesting turtle, stand back, stay quiet, and watch from a distance. If you approach the nesting turtle, she might not lay her eggs and will return to the sea. As a reminder, those not authorized under the NCRWC permit are subject to Federal law which states that *“Feeding or touching turtles in any way, including shining a light on them, harassing them, or disturbing their nest is considered a disturbance and is illegal. Federal penalties include jail time and fines up to \$15,000 for each offense.”*

Sea turtles are protected under the Endangered Species Act so we need your help in protecting them! We monitor and

patrol from the west side of the Oak Island Pier to the west end of the island (The Point). Our friends from Caswell Beach Turtle Watch (also permitted by the NCWRC) monitor and patrol the east side of the Oak Island Pier and Caswell Beach. We are two separate programs but we collaborate and work together to make sure all of our sea turtles are protected and safe!

We have wonderful volunteers that sit at the nests when they are ready to hatch! Although we don’t share locations of nests (per the NCWRC), we do invite anyone to come and sit with us! If you see a nest with a runway attached headed to the water, that nest is ready! Our volunteers are usually at the nests by 7:30 PM so please feel free to bring a chair, sit with them, and learn all you can about sea turtles and ways to protect them!

We ask that you follow all state, local, and program guidelines

and be respectful to our volunteers just as we ask our volunteers to be respectful to you!

We will offer “Turtle Talks” this summer on Wednesdays from 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM beginning June 22, through August 17 at the Oak Island Recreation Center. Also, please stop by our tent at the Farmers' & Artisans' Market on May 30, June 27, July 18, and August 8. We look forward to participating in any town or Recreation Center events that we are invited to! But, most of all, we want to THANK YOU, our Oak Island locals and community that share our love of our sea turtles and help us educate the public and visitors! You make a difference in their care and protection and we appreciate your help so much!

To learn more about the Oak Island Sea Turtle Protection Program, just visit our website at [www.okiseaturtle.org](http://www.okiseaturtle.org), or click the link below.

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# GV Barbee Library: Family Game Fridays, Smart Kids, & Summer

## Reading Program

(Contributed by **Erika Doshier**) The G.V. Barbee library will be offering several fun and exciting programs for kids and families throughout the months of May, June, and July.

**The SUMMER READING PROGRAM is coming soon!** This program encourages kids of all ages to read, or be read to every day. The Program runs for 7 weeks throughout the summer, and features live storytelling from local and regional guests. Registration is required, and begins on June 1. The first 10 participants to register will receive a free canvas tote bag! Programs are each Tuesday at 11:00 AM, and registration can be done in person or by calling 910-278-4283.

**FAMILY GAME FRIDAYS** bring the entire family together for board games, card games, and other game-day fun! The program is held each Friday, and is open specifically for homeschool families from 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM. and all families

with children anytime between 2:30 PM - 5:30 PM.

**S.M.A.R.T. KIDS CLUB** stands for Science, Math, and the Arts, and offers weekly activities including games, robotics, arts and crafts, and construction. Open to kids of all ages, SMART Kids Club is a great way to extend learning and creativity after school. For parents, SMART Kids Club is a way to watch your kids at play, or to let them do their thing while you do other library research or simply sit and read, knowing that your kids are in a fun and safe setting with adult supervision. The Program meets on Thursday afternoons at 4:30 PM.

The G.V. Barbee Library is part of the Brunswick County Library System. It is located at 8200 E Oak Island Dr., and is open from 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM, Monday - Friday, and 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM on Saturdays. To learn more about the entire Library System visit [www.brunswickcountync.gov/library/branches](http://www.brunswickcountync.gov/library/branches) or click the link below.

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## Beach Ambassadors: Season Training Session Completed

(Contributed by **Skip Cox**) On Friday, April 29, 2022, the Beach Ambassadors program held it's initial training session for program volunteers for the 2022 season.

A total of 27 of the program's 28 volunteers attended the 2.5 hour session, which introduced new participants to the program guidelines, and refreshed previous volunteers on any updated procedures.

Brief presentations were also given by Town Manager David Kelly who spoke on updates to the beach areas following the Phase II Nourishment Project, as well as new Police Chief Charlie Morris, who thanked the volunteers for their service, and provided previews of the Department's new "Beach Services" initiative that would complement their efforts.

***The program is scheduled to officially launch for the 2022 season on Saturday, May 7.***

The Beach Ambassadors Program trains volunteers to help educate and inform visitors about Town ordinances related to beach areas, and how their actions can provide a safe environment for visitors and sea turtles alike. Ambassadors provide monitoring and observation, reporting potential safety issues, ordinance violations and wildlife concerns, with an emphasis is on visitor-friendly communication.

The program is collaborative effort between the Town and the Beach Preservation Society, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, dedicated to education and community engagement to enhance the Oak Island beach experience. For more information on the program, just visit their page of the Beach Preservation Society's website at [beachoki.org/beach-ambassadors](https://beachoki.org/beach-ambassadors), or click the link below.

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# NEWS & NOTICES:

## MAY

### 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, May 10, 2022 at 6:00 PM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Drive.

**TOWN COUNCIL** (*televised*) will hold a special meeting (Budget Workshop) on **Thursday, May 12, 2022 at 10:00 AM** in the Council Chambers.

**TOWN COUNCIL** (*televised*) will hold a public presentation of the **Proposed FY 2022-23 Budget** on **Tuesday, May 17, 2022 at 6:00 PM**, in the Council Chambers.

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE:** Additional meetings for the purposes of Budget Workshops and / or a Public Hearing on the budget may be called by the Town Council in the month of May. For the latest on these meeting notices, please sign up for email notifications at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/NOTIFY](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/NOTIFY), or visit the News & Notices page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/NEWS](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/NEWS).

**ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE** (*non-televised*) will hold a regular meeting on **Thursday, May 19, 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, May 19, 2022 at 10:30 AM** in the Council Chambers.

### CLOSURES & HOLIDAYS

**MEMORIAL DAY:** Administrative Offices for the Town of Oak Island will be **CLOSED** on **Monday, May 30, 2022** in observance of **Memorial Day**. There will be no interruption of Garbage & Recycling Collection services for Memorial Day weekend.

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

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 usual.

The *Holiday Closures Calendar* can be found on the Town Website at: [www.OakIslandNC.gov/HOLIDAY](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/HOLIDAY).

## Recreational Openings

While the Town of Oak Island's most obvious recreational opportunity can be seen just by looking south (*HINT: that's the direction facing the ocean*), there are several other major attractions that will soon be opening back up as well.

**SPLASHPAD:** Mark your calendars, and grab your towels! The **Oak Island Splashpad** is *tentatively* scheduled to open just in

time the Memorial Day weekend on **Friday, May 27**. Hours of operation will be from 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM daily, with hourly rentals available from 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM for \$100 / per hour.

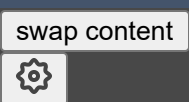
**PLEASE NOTE:** *This schedule is subject to change, and the Splashpad may open earlier, if conditions and equipment maintenance allows. Updates will be posted in the News & Events section of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/NEWS](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/NEWS).*

**NATURE CENTER:** Get hands on with Oak Island conversation, as the **Oak Island Nature Center** is scheduled to reopen for the 2022 season on **Thursday, June 2**. Located right next to the Intracoastal Waterway at 5202 E Yacht Dr., the Nature Center 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 features a fishing tee, shelter, floating dock, and more! Regular hours will be Wednesdays, Thursdays, &



Fridays, from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM. To learn more about the Nature Center, visit their page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/NATURE](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/NATURE).

**OCEAN EDUCATION CENTER:** Uncover secrets hidden in the sand, as the **Oak Island Ocean Education Center** reopens for the 2022 season on **Monday, June 6, 2022**. Located at 4700 E Oak Island Dr. (across from Town Hall), the Island's newest community space features hands-on crafts and activities that the entire family will love! Learn about sea turtles, crabs, dolphins, and other classic sea animals, as area volunteers share insight into many of the coasts biggest challenges and what we can do to help. Regular hours will be Mondays, Tuesdays, & Wednesdays • 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM. To learn more about the Ocean Education Center, visit their page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/OCEAN](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/OCEAN).



## Clear a Path for Emergency Vehicles

With the completion of the Phase II Nourishment Project, all dune profiles and Beach Access Locations should now look very similar, ***but that doesn't mean that all accesses are made the same!***

**Emergency Vehicle Access Locations** have a much wider and more broad path that crosses over the dune. This is to allow for the vehicles, and sometimes even watercraft to have direct access to the beach. The speed with which first first responders reach those in danger, can directly influence their survivability in times of emergency.

However, it's much more than just getting *on the beach*. Once on the sand side of the dunes, those emergency vehicles still need to navigate through a sea of sunbathers, surfers, and Shibumi shades.

That is why it is critical and the Town and all emergency responders are reminding you to ***NOT place beach equipment or occupy any space in any of the Emergency Vehicle Access Locations. This includes areas of the access pathway, all the way to the waterline and up to 15 feet on either side.***

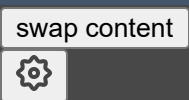
These locations are vital in the event of a medical or public

safety emergency, and allow for police, rescue, and medical vehicles to access the beach areas quickly when called upon. By keeping these paths clear all the way to the water line, it prevents responders from losing crucial response time to navigate through crowds and equipment.

As a reminder, walking, climbing, or any other traffic in unmarked areas across the sand dunes is PROHIBITED. To report dune violations, contact the Oak Island Police Department by calling 9-1-1 or the non-emergency number at 910-253-7490 (*dune protection is provided under section 14 of the Town Code of Ordinances*).

For full information on Emergency Vehicle Accesses, including an interactive map of all their locations, just visit the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/SAFETY](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/SAFETY) or click the link below.

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## Slow Down (It's The Law ... Again)

Not to get too technical, but "golf carts" are not the small, open air, electric vehicles you see cruising on the streets of Oak Island. To be technically accurate, they're "properly

equipped Low Speed Vehicle" or **LSVs** for short. In the Town of Oak Island. Regardless of what you call them, the one overarching characteristic is the speed, or rather, *the lack thereof*.

If you prefer a leisurely LSV cruise, that's an option on most any Town street with a posted speed limit of 35mph or less. And starting in mid-May, the number of streets available to drive on will increase.

Each Spring (mid-May), to help accommodate the swell of visitors and seasonal residents, the speed limit along both E Beach Dr. & W Beach Dr. is lowered to 35mph. This allows for properly equipped Golf Carts and other Low Speed Vehicles to safely, legally travel along the entire beach strand. Starting in September, the speed limit is raised back to 45mph for the Fall and Winter months.

The NCDOT doesn't publish exact date of the changeover, but

it usually expected around middle of the month. So it's probably best **NOT** to assume you're fine to keep flying down the road until Memorial day. In fact, paying attention to speed limit signs may just be good practice all year long!

Are you new to the world of Low Speed Vehicles? Maybe just need a refresher on what is and isn't allowed? No problem! All information on LSVs (*and mobility device access*) can be found under the Police Department pages of the the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.com/LSV](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/LSV), or by clicking the link below.

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## Public Works Week 2022

National Public Works Week (NPWW) is **May 15-21, 2022**.

This is a time dedicated to honoring those who provide the services, and maintain the infrastructure which supports the daily functions of the Town. Originally created as a public education campaign by the American Public Works Association (APWA) in 1960, NPWW brings attention to the important efforts of public works employees throughout the nation; by showcasing not only the services they provided to

their communities, but also the dedication, training, and skillset through which they provided those services.

The theme for the 2022 National Public Works Week is "**Ready & Resilient**," a theme that truly defines the commitment the 30+ members of the Oak Island Public Works Department (*pictured*) live out every day. The featured department in the inaugural edition of ***The CURRENT*** (way back in December 2020), Public Works employees over 30 staff members, consisting of seven (7) divisions: **Facilities**, **Fleet Maintenance**, **Operations**, **Solid Waste**, **Stormwater**, **Streets**, and the **South Harbour Grounds Crew** (for the [Oak Island Par 3 Golf](#)).

From daily Town maintenance, to being the ones "hunkered down" during storms or other emergency events, they are usually the first ones out when something breaks, needs repair, or just a good ol' cleaning up! In fact, if you don't see

Public Works staff every day out "fixing" something, that only because they've succeeded in properly maintaining equipment and infrastructure so it doesn't break!

While they may be used to hearing comments about broken amenities, or complaints on service delays, It shouldn't take a nationally recognized Public Works Week to thank them for all they do. If you'd like to learn the full extend of what their responsibilities cover, just visit their page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.com/PW](http://www.OakIslandNC.com/PW), or click the link below.

**(NOTE:** *A longer version of this article will be posted on the Town Website prior to the start of NPWW)*

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# 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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## Kayaking Tours

**WHEN:** May 3rd • June 7th • August 16th • September 13th  
• October 11th \*Times will be tide dependent. For details, contact Ryan Gordon at 910-278-4747\*

**WHERE:** Davis Canal • Intracoastal Waterway

**WHO:** 18 years & Older

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

**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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## Seafood Festival & Car Show

**WHEN:** Saturday, May 7, 2022 • 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

**WHERE:** Middleton Park • 4610 E Dolphin Dr.

**WHO:** All Ages

**COST:** Free to attend • Artisans: \$30 per space • Food

vendors: \$100 • Non-profit Exhibitor: Free for 501(c)(3)

**ABOUT:** Spring into the summer with the finest seafood the Carolinas has to offer at Oak Island’s Seafood Festival and Car Show. Enjoy an outdoor concert at the Oak Island Amphitheater while coastal residents and guests peruse the craft market and car show featuring categories for classic cars, jeeps, muscle cars, and more! It is the hope of OKI Recreation Department to partner with nearby groups to help volunteer, promote & sponsor the festival.

## Farmers' & Artisans' Market

**WHEN:** (Each Monday) May 23 - September 5, 2022 • 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 baked goods, produce, handmade crafts, and artistic masterpieces!

## 2022 Summer Concert Series

**WHEN:** (Most Fridays) May 27 - September 3, 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.

For more details, visit the Concert Series page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/CONCERT](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/CONCERT) or click the link below.

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE

**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



# DEPARTMENT FEATURE: OAK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT

By far, it serves one of the most vital roles in local government. Without this one singular resource, it becomes increasingly difficult to guarantee the public safety; and although society can function without it, very few would want to live in a world absent of it's protection. In case you haven't figured it out, we are of course, referring to ... **SUNBLOCK!** That's right! Good old SPF 45 or higher, preferably. *So, what does sunblock have to do with ensuring the safety of an entire town?* Well, when your local law enforcement works as hard as the men and women of the Oak Island Police Department, you spend a LOT of time out in the public, and every advantage for staying calm, cool, and protected during those long days is appreciated!

To truly appreciate the Oak Island Police Department, you have to understand the wide-ranging dynamic of the town they serve. Situated on the southern end of North Carolina's picturesque coastline, the Town of Oak Island (OKI) encompasses nearly 20 square miles; including 10 miles of beachfront along the 12-mile-long island that is the Town's namesake. With approximately 8,500 residents year-round, the Town boasts a summertime population that swells to nearly 50,000 visitors and seasonal residents alike. Through the dedicated staff of the Oak Island Police Department, the Town works hard at successfully maintaining a safe balance of its bustling, vibrant tourism, with the traditional, quiet charm of a small coastal town.

Fully staffed, the Department consists of over 50 employs, which includes a mix of 28 full and part time sworn officers,



as well as administrative, civilian, and seasonal staff. That means while officers usually serve at a ratio of around 1 for every 300 civilians, for several months out of the year that number can jump to well over 1,000 civilians per officer. Because of the seasonal contrasts in population size and variety, managing the public safety of Oak Island is really a "tale of two cities" rolled into one. While basic principles of policing remain the same, being able to seamlessly transition from "small town service" to "metropolitan protector" is a no small feat. It takes strong adaptability, keen situational awareness, and a driving dedication.

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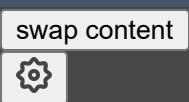


**PROFILE:** *Police Chief:* Charlie Morris has quite literally hit the ground running. With less than a month since his official employment began in mid-April, he has already been involved in multiple emergency responses, and overseen the development of an entirely new "Beach Services" unit. However, that work pace is nothing new for the Morganton, NC native. Throughout his nearly 30 years in law enforcement, he has served at every level of response in the state. From local Deputy Police Chief, to a Sheriff's Deputy at the County level, even the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (NCSBI), from which he retired in 2019 as an Assistant Special Agent in Charge.

In addition to his diversified work experience, Chief Morris also brings equally impressive educational credentials. A graduate of the F.B.I. National Academy and the West Point Leadership program, he also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Lees McRae College, and a Master's Degree in Justice Administration from Methodist University. He continually maintains his North Carolina Advanced Law Enforcement Certification.

When you already have the best training and experience in your field, the only way to improve on that is to employ those skills in a place you love. Despite being a native of Carolina's foothills, the flatlands of the coast have always called to him. *"I am excited and honored to have been selected as the Oak Island Chief of Police"* Morris said in his initial meeting with the Town Council. *"My wife Tracy and I have been looking into this area for years. That's why when this position became available, it*

was **the only** place I applied."



**PROFILE: Administrative Assistant:** Theresa Tickle is one of the first faces you'll see, or voices you'll hear when interacting with the Police Department. It hasn't always been walking the blue line for Theresa though. As Oak Island's first female career firefighter, she served with the Oak Island Fire Department for nearly 10 years, before a knee surgery took her off the trucks in 2016.

Not letting that wealth of knowledge and experience go to waste, the Police Department took her transfer in October of the same year, where she has served in her current role ever since.

As the Admin Assistant, she has the unique challenge of maintaining a balanced schedule. Between making sure the officers have all of the gear for their uniforms, checking schedule rotations, and dealing with a wide array of public requests, keeping a balanced schedule is key to ensuring every task gets done.

But it's **the people** that make it more than a job for her. "*The thing that I enjoy the most with serving the community in my role is getting to meet an array of people. From the juveniles to the elderly*" Theresa says of her responsibilities. "*I enjoy getting to talk with them in the community and see their perspectives on the Town.*"

Whether those conversations are in person or online, communication in any form takes up the majority of her schedule. That's why the most important tool for her, is by far her email. Between responding to public requests, scheduling the Chief's meetings, contacting officers, of just communicating with other departments, her email is one of the main assets to keeping her desk, and the entire department organized.

**MORE THAN A JOB, IT'S A MISSION.** The mission statement for the Oak Island Police Department, is to "**serve the public by furthering a partnership with the community to prevent crime**

*furtherring a partnership with the community to prevent crime, thereby protecting life and property, and resolving problems.”*

This mission is lived out through the clearly defined departmental goals of providing:

- Community Policing through established partnerships and visible presence.
- “Family-First” work environments, by emphasizing internal growth through personal development.
- Consistent Services to the community, through the efficient utilization of resources.



**JUST THE FACTS.** The Oak Island Police Department is a whole service, fully accredited law enforcement agency. The department is responsible for the enforcement of all local and state laws, and the investigation of any crimes within the Town limits. Staffing is composed of 52 employees, which includes 24 full time sworn officers, 4 part time sworn officers, 2 full time administrative staff, 12 part time seasonal staff, and 10 civilian volunteers. Together, the officers and administrative staff are committed to protecting the residents and visitors of Oak Island, and to preventing crime through partnerships with the community.

However, the job is much more than simply responding to, or even preventing crime. In fact, the Police Department offers

several other programs that contribute to public safety. From fingerprinting, to prescription medicine disposal, child safety seat checks, home or business security checks, and even LSV / Mobility Device inspection, there are many services they offer to help prevent emergencies before they happen.

**EDUCATION IS KEY.** In a world where everyone lives online, it can be easy to forget that real-world problems are handled differently when a keyboard or smartphone isn't directly in front of you. There's a good reason why police may never respond to a comment or complaint posted to a private social media page, ***because that's not where they are.*** That's why a large component of true "community policing" involves educating the community on how to interact with their police department. As explained in the soon to launch "***Call Before You Comment***" campaign, before taking the time to type out your concerns in an online forum, making a quick call to dispatch law enforcement ***instead*** will go a lot farther in protecting lives and property. Calling 9-1-1 or the non-emergency number (910-253-7490) is the best way to let them know about any situation as it happens, even if it's something you think is a simple complaint.

*Remember the police to civilian ratios mentioned above?* Officers simply can't be at every event before it occurs, **but they can help resolve problems they are made aware of.** So whether it's a drug dealer or a dune damager, if you see something that needs their attention, your response should be the same, to ***call before you comment.***

**FUTURE PROOF.** Between a global pandemic, lock downs, and economic downturns, it's no surprise the world has drastically changed over the last two years. But the nature of life itself, is that it's constantly changing. Regardless of whether that change comes rapidly or over an extended period of time, two constants will always be the task of doing good, and the temptation to do evil. The Department must continually assess and adapt to the changes in our world and community, but at the same time remain true to the core values of service and protection that define modern policing. That's why seeing your police in the grocery stores, parks, and community places of your daily life is so important. The officers of Oak Island aren't faceless badges, but family, friends, and neighbors who have an equally vested interest in creating a great community to call home.

If you'd like to learn more about the Oak Island Police

Department, and the many programs and services they offer, you can visit their page of the Town Website at [www.OakIslandNC.gov/PD](http://www.OakIslandNC.gov/PD), or click the link below.

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE

# PHOTO REVIEW: APRIL 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.



**READER SUBMITTED PHOTOS:** 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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