

Weekly News Summary for Sunday, April 20, 2025

On Thursday, April 17, Congressman Greg Murphy visited Hatteras Island. The Congressman and Dave Hallac, Superintendent of the National Parks in Eastern North Carolina, visited Buxton specifically. Hallac briefed Murphy on threatened structures, erosion on the seashore, the status of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse restoration project and the situation at the Formerly Used Defense Site at the old Coast Guard Station at the north end of Buxton. Buxton is getting attention. On May 1, North Carolina Coastal Resource Commission members will also visit the Formerly Used Defense Site at the old Coast Guard Station property. Commission members want to take a look at the threatened houses and the old Coast Guard station site. The Buxton Civic Association has taken the lead in bringing attention to the petroleum contamination on the beach and in the water. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has finished the first phase of cleanup, and they are planning to search the 50 acres for additional contaminants.

On Wednesday evening, April 16, the Buxton Civic Association held a fact-finding meeting about a request to remove the residential density limitation in a 1988 amendment creating a Zone of Influence in Buxton and Frisco. Some 40 people showed up at the old Buxton Fire Station with standing room only. In March 1988, Dare County's Board of Commissioners adopted the Special Environmental District-1. The zone is mapped over 1,868 acres of maritime forest in Buxton and Frisco. Six months later, on Sept. 19, 1988, a zoning amendment was adopted. That amendment created a Zone of Influence limiting multi-family development, townhouses and condominium projects located within a half mile of any SED-1 zoning district to a dwelling density of three single family units ... per acre of usable land. Noah Gillam, Planning Director for Dare County, cannot find a map showing the Zone of Influence in 1988. In 1994, the village of Buxton underwent a planning process setting up use specific zoning. Nine zones were mapped in the village. Again, the Zone of Influence was not mapped or discussed in the use-specific zoning process. On April 1, 2025, Dare County's Planning Board, after an hour of discussion, unanimously decided to advise the current Board of Commissioners to delete the entire amendment from the Zoning Code. At the Buxton meeting, Gillam said that he had asked County Manager and Attorney Robert L. Outten for an opinion about the Zone of Influence amendment. Is it properly codified? Did the staff take the proper steps for the amendment to be effective?

The entire matter is scheduled for the May 5 Board of Commissioners meeting, which will start at 9 a.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room, Dare County Administration Building, 954 Marshall C. Collins Drive, Manteo. Hatteras Island residents are able to offer public comment remotely by attending the meeting which is streamed at the Fessenden Center Annex off Buxton Back Road, Buxton.

The Real estate market is looking quite healthy. The business news this week focuses on the performance of the Hatteras Island real estate market through March of this year.

Through the first quarter of 2025, the island's residential market is looking quite healthy, writes Business Correspondent Tom Hranicka. All major market indicators with the exception of properties under contract were positive.

The number of homes for sale continued to be strong with the inventory up 85% over the March 2024 supply of properties. The 176 homes available for purchase represent the highest number during the past two years. Residential sales increased 19% above the first quarter of last year. However, looking at long-term trends, sales continued to show a slight downward pattern with an average of 19 homes per month having been sold since January 2023. Selling prices remained in the \$600,000 range with the median residential sale price for March reported as \$599,100. Residential properties under contract to be sold recorded a decrease, continuing to follow a downward long-term trend. For a 30-year fixed mortgage, interest rates remained high at 6.65%.

Except for increases in the number of properties for sale and the median sale price, the performance in all other major categories in the undeveloped lot market were negative for the first quarter. The winter months are historically not a strong time of the year for lot sales, writes Hranicka.

In other measures of the Hatteras Island economy, meal tax receipts for February increased 5.4% from the level reported in February 2024. Occupancy tax receipts for February increased 13% over the previous year as renters sought to lock in the reservations for their vacations.

Data for meal tax and occupancy tax receipts lag real estate market statistics by about one month since these take a little longer for the county to acquire the underlying information from local businesses.

Finally, in conjunction with the property value increases associated with the recent revaluation, the Dare County Board of Commissioners indicated that the tax rate will be reduced so that the total tax money collected by the county will be “revenue neutral.” Updated property valuations have been sent to all dare county property owners. New property tax bills will be mailed this summer.

The Hatteras Island Community Emergency Response Team announced this last week that its Starlink system has been set up behind the Avon medical center, and will remain on in case of future communications outages and other emergencies. Park in the lot behind the medical center to use the system, stated the announcement. The network is named C a h a cert.

Jerry Tillett, the Sr Resident Superior Court Judge for the First Judicial District, announced he will retire on May 1, ending a career as a Superior Court Judge that spanned more than 3 decades. In light of his retirement, former District Attorney and current Superior Court Judge Andy Womble will become the Senior Resident Superior Court Judge. Governor Stein will appoint Judge Tillett’s replacement. For a full Tillett biography, go to the Island Free Press.

North Carolina State 2025 hurricane prediction. It is proffered that the 2025 Atlantic hurricane season will see 12 to 15 named storms forming in the Atlantic basin, according to researchers at NC State University. The Atlantic basin includes the entire Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. The number of named storms predicted is in line with recent averages. Of the predicted 12 to 15 named storms, 6-8 may grow strong enough to become hurricanes. The historical average is 6. The possibility exists that 2 or 3 storms will become major hurricanes.

King Tides are scheduled for April 26 through 30. King tides are the highest naturally occurring tides of the year. They happen when the Earth, moon, and sun align, and the moon is at its closest point to Earth (called perigee) during a new or full moon. This gravitational alignment creates exceptionally high tides. These are often called sunny day flooding, because vulnerable areas along the coast flood during high tide even when no weather is occurring. Five more King Tides will occur this year.

For early morning weather reports, go to Radio Hatteras Storm Coverage on Facebook. Volunteers post the National Weather Service brief sometime around 6am. For daily beach reports posted about 8 in the morning, go to the website lovethebeachrespecttheocean.com. Both sites carry the graphics produced by the weather service.

On Saturday, April 26, from 10 to 1, the Rodanthe-Waves-Salvo Civic Association will host a free Earth Day Celebration at the villages’ Community Building, across from the Chicamacomico Lifesaving Station in Rodanthe. Festivities will be held rain or shine, and the event will kick off with Josie Walker of the Black Seed Saving Collective, who will share information about saving seeds for next year’s crops.

Free activities include a plant swap, a pop-up library, a native-plant giveaway, and plant projects for kids. Folks who stop by will also enjoy music by Martin Somers, and grill fare from members of Chicamacomico Banks Fire and Water Rescue for a donation to the department.

Community organizations including the Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative, the Surfrider Foundation, Dare County Hatteras Library, NC Cooperative Extension and Master Gardeners will be on hand for information. The Earth Day Celebration will feature the return of the event’s popular raffle drawings.

Come join in the fun to learn more about gardening and sustainable living, take home free plants and help celebrate this third annual springtime event.

Going on Now

The First Four Twenty Festival at Neptunes Kitchen and Dive Bar, Mile Post 40, Rodanthe. Live music started at 1 o'clock. Ray Gun Ruby is in the line-up. Soundside stages at Neptunes, located at 24394 N C 12.

Boating Safety Class is set for Saturday, April 26 from 8 to 4. The class will be held at Cape Hatteras Anglers Club, 47231 Light Plant Road, Buxton. This U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary's "Boat America" Boating Safety Course is a comprehensive course designed for both the experienced and the novice boater.

In North Carolina, any person operating a boat powered by 10 horsepower or more, who was born on or after January 1, 1988, may operate a boat if they have successfully completed an approved Boating Safety Course and are carrying their Boater Education Certification Card on board during boat operation.

Call, email, or text for more information to John at 304-281-5355, or at 52johnnyz@gmail.com or, simply show up at the class. Snacks and water are provided. Bring your own lunch.

Be safe out there. This is Radio Hatteras.