

Weekly News Summary for Sunday, March 16, 2025.

Two new projects for Hatteras Island

On March 3, Dare County Commissioners approved the construction manager at risk for two, Phase III Hatteras Island projects.

On the recommendation of the county's Capital Improvement Plan Committee, the commissioners approved Barnhill Building Group as the construction manager at risk.

New Hatteras Island construction projects are the Buxton Public Works facility and a completely new Emergency Medical Station 6 in Waves at the previous Dare Building site.

The board approved Barnhill Building Group as the construction manager and authorized the County manager to negotiate and sign contracts.

National Park Service reports record visitation in 2024.

The National Park Service reported a record 331.9 million recreation visits in calendar year 2024, which represents a 2% increase over 2023.

The previous record was set in 2016 with 330.9 million recreation visits.

Overnight stays increased 2.6% from 2023 for concession and NPS-operated facilities. Overnight stays at concession operated lodging alone were up 11.7%.

Visitors are spreading out their visits throughout the year. 55% of parks experienced an above average number of visits in February through June and October through December.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore ranked as the 35th busiest national park in the country in 2024. Cape Hatteras National Seashore saw 2,762,954 visitors last year, the fourth-busiest ever. However, the visitor figure represents a decline of 2.3% from 2023.

Marine Fisheries Commission comes to Dare County

Meeting in Kitty Hawk, the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission took action on the southern flounder fishery management plan.

The commission sent out the Draft Amendment 4 for review by the public and advisory committees. The amendment moves the allocation shift to 50/50 commercial/recreational to this year.

The commission voted to adopt the Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan Amendment 1 with the following provisions:

Under Recreational measures: A 14- to 20-inch slot limit with an allowance for one fish over 26 inches and a 3-fish bag limit.

Under Commercial measures: A Saturday through Sunday closure January through September; a Saturday through Sunday closure October through December; and formalizing the stop net fishery management in the fishery management plan.

The Spotted Seatrout Amendment 1 also addresses Adaptive Management and Cold Stun Management.

The commission also approved rules on Simplify Pot Marking Requirements; False Albacore Management; and Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact.

The commission will also send a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce in support of Amendment 59 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region regarding Red Snapper.

The commission selected five preferred management options for the draft Eastern Oyster Fishery Management Plan Amendment 5 and draft Hard Clam Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3 to go for legislative review. The draft plans will return to the commission for final adoption in May.

Kip Tab, writing for the Outer Banks Voice, reports that 30 people addressed the commission during public comment times. The March 12 and 13 commission meeting was the first held in Dare County in seven years. All but one of the votes were decided by 5-4 tallies.

The Outer Edge six episodes are now on YouTube; new video on gardening released.

Produced locally by the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, the series is part of the organization's "ongoing commitment to responsible travel and the vibrant local community it serves."

Some 23 Dare County residents were interviewed and followed on camera during the endeavor. Three local residents also participated behind the camera, and assisted with production of the series.

Another local production is Spring Gardening Tips from the Dare County Extension Master Gardeners. Partners Dare County and Current TV released the video which gives expert advice on the unique coastal conditions of the Outer Banks.

The video is packed with practical information to help planters of all experience levels cultivate something special this season. The video is available on the Dare County YouTube channel.

Two Cape Hatteras students going to state Science Olympiad Tournament; 14 students finished high in regional competition

Cape Hatteras Secondary School Science Olympiad teams earned top placements at the Regional Science Olympiad Tournament, held Saturday, March 1, at East Carolina University. This year's competition was the largest regional Science Olympiad in North Carolina, with more than 20 teams in each division.

Cape Hatteras students demonstrated exceptional scientific knowledge and problem-solving skills, earning high placements in multiple events.

Two CHSS teams won first place and will advance to the state Science Olympiad Tournament at North Carolina State University:

- 1st Place – Disease Detectives: Rylee Oberbeck & Becca Fitch
- 1st Place – Electric Vehicle: Sofia Bills & Jack Fuller

Science Olympiad Regional Results

Division B (competing against 21 teams)

- 3rd Place – Fossils: Ben Galleo & Camryn Hedgepeth
- 4th Place – Anatomy & Physiology: Camryn Hedgepeth & Gary Austin
- 4th Place – Potions & Poisons: Sam Davis & Ella Ransom
- 5th Place – Codebusters: William Raez, Sam Davis & Gary Austin
- 5th Place – Scrambler: William Raez & Daniel Briones-Avila

Division C (competing against 26 teams)

3rd Place – Microbe Mission: Rylee Oberbeck & Taylor Hickman

5th Place – Material Science: Taylor Hickman & Liam Van Druten

5th Place – Air Trajectory: Liam Van Druten & Chris Myers

6th Place – Geologic Mapping: Max Syrrist & Marissa Liner

8th Place – Entomology: Stella Galleo & Marissa Liner

This year marks the tenth consecutive year of Cape Hatteras Secondary participation in Science Olympiad. The team is coached by teachers Jessica Polk and Julianna Gorges. Some Cape Hatteras 29 students participated in the Science Olympiad.

The Cape Hatteras Secondary Science Olympiad team extends its gratitude to Dare County Schools, the Hatteras Island Youth Education Fund, and the Cape Hatteras Secondary Booster Club for their support in making this trip possible.

Coming up this week:

A **Pop-Up Library** returns to Rodanthe, Waves and Salvo on Thursday, March 20 at the village's Community Building, 23646 NC 12, Rodanthe.

The library will be open from 9 to 11 with Miss Tammy delivering a story time from 9:15 to 9:45. Check out books. Get a library card. Learn about library programs.

Hatteras Village Waterfowl Festival happens Saturday, March 22 with lots of things to enjoy.

At the Hatteras village Civic Center, a Raptor Demonstration happens at 1 and at 3. Between those demonstrations will be a Duck Calling competition. At the Hatteras Island Ocean Center, take a self-guided bird walk. At the community building, from 11 to 2, is guided painting with artist Kristina McEwan. And of course, food and drinks will be available in the Civic Center along with vendors and displays. Be there.

We have a storm coming this evening and into the night. Stay safe.

This is Radio Hatteras.