

This is Radio Hatteras. Hello, I'm Grace with the Weekly News Summary for Sunday, April 28, 2024.

Cape Hatteras Lighthouse has new temporary light

The contractor for the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse restoration project, Stone and Lime Historic Restoration Services, switched the lighthouse's source of light from the current beacon to a temporary, fixed beacon at dusk, Thursday, April 25. The temporary beacon, which is atop the scaffolding, will be visible for 18 miles and flash every 7.5 seconds.

Early next week, the U.S. Coast Guard plans to disassemble and remove the current beacon, which has provided light atop the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse for the past 52 years. Near the end of the restoration project, a replica, rotating first-order Fresnel lens and LED light source, will be installed and activated inside the lighthouse's lantern room.

Buxton Civic opens Change dot org petition

The Buxton Civic Association (BCA) recently launched a Change dot org petition to demand an immediate solution for the environmental and public safety hazards at Buxton Beach.

The petition is one of the association's recent actions to clean up the Buxton Beach.

Since September 1, 2023, an area of the beach in Buxton has been closed due to public health concerns. Testing done as a result of visible debris and the strong smell of fuel yielded results of petroleum hydrocarbons at levels greater than the actionable level, writes the group.

"These contaminants and their threat to public and environmental health are the direct results of years of inaction and failure to complete contractual requirements by the US Army Corps of Engineers. The residents and visitors of Buxton, NC are demanding immediate action to remediate this situation and restore the beach in its entirety," writes the association at the change dot org site.

Oregon Inlet Fishing Center opens

On Monday, April 22, a ribbon-cutting was held at the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center on the northside of the Oregon Inlet bridge.

The center's building has nearly 10,000 square feet. On the first floor is retail space, a boat reservation desk, a small museum with history of Oregon Inlet and a Sea Chef Dockside Kitchen with counter services. The kitchen opened this week.

The building will replace the single-story 6,000-square-foot building built in 1965 after the Ash Wednesday Storm. The old building will be demolished. The new building is 11 feet above sea level with a metal roof rated for 150-mile-per-hour winds and impact-resistant windows.

Under a new 20-year lease, construction started June 2022. The new building services the 60 boat slips in the marina.

Improvements to the boardwalk and bulk head were mandatory under the lease terms. The new building and in-slip fuel pumps were optional upgrades, says the Island Free Press.

The Island Free Press also reports that the Fishing Center pays the National Park Service \$40,000 a year and five percent of its gross receipts to operate the marina and receives rent offsets from the National Park Service for improvements.

Marine Fisheries forum set for May 1

On Wednesday, May 1 at 6 o'clock, the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission and N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission will hold a virtual online forum about temporary rules implementing mandatory harvest reporting requirements.

The two commissions are proposing temporary rules to implement mandatory requirements passed by the N.C. General Assembly in Session Law 2023-137, Section 6. The law requires that any person who recreationally harvests Red Drum, Flounder, Spotted Seatrout or Speckled Trout, Striped Bass and Weakfish or Gray Trout must report that harvest to the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries. Additionally, it requires anyone holding a commercial fishing license who is engaged in a commercial fishing operation to report all fish harvested to Marine Fisheries regardless of sale.

The requirement starts December 1 and applies to Coastal Fishing Waters, Joint Fishing Waters and Inland Fishing Waters adjacent to Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters.

The agencies host the virtual public hearing at 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 1. Pre-register for the public hearing online. Pre-registration is required. To join by phone call 833-568-8864. The webinar ID is 160 805 6277.

Comments on the Marine Fisheries Commission rules may be submitted through an online form or by mail to: N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rules Comments, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557.

Comments on the Wildlife Resources Commission rule may be submitted through an online form, emailing regulations at n c wildlife dot org (include name, county and state or residence) or by mailing: Rulemaking Coordinator, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, 1701 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-1700

The comment period closes at 5 o'clock, May 20.

Recreational Blueline Tilefish Season in South Atlantic Federal Waters Opens May 1 and Closes July 1.

The recreational season for blueline tilefish in federal waters of the South Atlantic will open a minute after midnight, May 1 and close a minute after midnight July 19.

The 2024 recreational catch limit for the blueline tilefish is 116,820 pounds whole weight.

In December 2023, NOAA Fisheries updated the recreational accountability measure for blueline tilefish through a final rule to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region. The accountability measure says NOAA Fisheries will annually announce the length of the recreational fishing season based on catch rates from the previous season. The fishing season will start on May 1 and end on the projected day of July 19.

After the Closure, recreation bag and possession limit are zero.

At Cape Point Campground, loops D, E, and F were opened Saturday, April 27. The restrooms on loop D and showers on loop F will also open April 27. Due to continued flooding of low-lying areas, all other campsites and facilities in Cape Point will remain closed until conditions improve.

So far this year, some 311,384 visitors have come to the Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

The total visitor count is higher than 2023, which had 297,267 visitors for January through March, but less than record-breaking 2021.

In 2023, the national seashore received a total of 2,826,169 visitors, which made it the fourth busiest year at the National Seashore on record.

Seashore visitation estimates are collected by counting southbound vehicles just north of the Oregon Inlet Bridge and using a multiplier to estimate the total number of passengers heading south. Those estimates are added to the number of passengers going to Ocracoke Island from Cedar Island and Swan Quarter.

Hotline South Thrift Store has new location

The Hotline South Thrift Store has been a Hatteras Island fixture for two decades and it now has a new home.

After leasing retail space in Buxton for roughly 20 years, the store needed to find a new location by the end of January 2024. The Buxton Hotline store temporarily closed.

The first-ever Outer Banks Hotline store opened in 1987 in Rodanthe. The store remains open to this day. Hotline South opened a decade later in Hatteras village and then moved to Buxton.

In the near future, Hotline will be moving to a new home on N.C. Highway 12 in Frisco, at the site of the former Surfside Casuals and Browning Artworks.

Outer Banks Hotline purchased the property in mid-April, and representatives – including longtime manager Donna Covey – are already making plans on how to best utilize the space.

The agency is hoping to have the store ready for customers and those who need help by Memorial Day weekend. Volunteers are needed. Call 252-423-4674 to volunteer.

New hotel and workforce housing in Rodanthe

A new hotel is set to open in Rodanthe this June, according to representatives of Edgencamp Pamlico Station.

The new lodging facility is a 14-suite-style boutique hotel that will be located at 24267 NC 12 in Rodanthe with an ownership team led by Richard Fertig, CEO of Stomp Capital and Owner of Edgencamp Pamlico Station.

The investor will also build workforce housing behind the new hotel for use by employees and vendors.

Hatteras Community Fish Fry getting ready for 2024 season

Organizers are readying for the 2024 season of the Hatteras Community Fish Fry, a weekly Hatteras village event that has been a tradition for roughly 80 years.

The Hatteras Volunteer Fire Department will be the seasonal home of the fish fry from May 25 until August 31. Profits from the Fish Fry are shared among various organizations, including the Hatteras United Methodist Church, the Hatteras Village Volunteer Fire Department, the Hatteras Ladies Fire Auxiliary, and the Hatteras Village Civic Association.

A large plate is \$15 and includes two pieces of locally caught fish, southern potato salad, cole slaw, and hush puppies, with sweet or unsweet tea, and homemade desserts available for a donation.

The fish fry is held every Saturday at the Hatteras Fire Station from Memorial Day Weekend to Labor Day Weekend, from 5 o'clock until dinner is sold out.

Volunteers are needed to keep the 2024 weekly fish fry going strong.

Contact Fish Fry coordinator, Linda O'Neal, by texting or calling 252-475-4390.

Wash Baum Bridge reopened for summer.

Going to Manteo is smoother now.

NCDOT has reopened all lanes on the Washington Baum Bridge at Pirate's Cove on U.S. 64.

The westbound lanes have been closed since mid-September as part of a \$21.3 million bridge rehabilitation project designed to improve rideability and extend the bridge's lifespan. While closed, the westbound bridge deck underwent concrete repairs and resurfacing, correcting the bumpy surface on the bridge in the past.

Concrete barriers remain in the center of the bridge, and the speed limit remains at 45 miles per hour.

All four lanes of the bridge will remain open through Sept. 16, when the eastbound lanes will close and undergo similar resurfacing efforts. The project is expected to be complete in the fall of 2025.

Meetings/Events coming up this week

Shave the Brave is Monday

Chicamacomico Banks Volunteer Fire and Rescue is challenging first responders to Shave the Brave. The station or team with the highest shavee participation or raises the most money will win.

Join the fun Monday, April 29, at Chicamacomico Banks Fire and Rescue, Station 48, 27209 Roth Road, in Salvo, from 4 to 7. Go to [St. Baldrick's Foundation dot org slash events slash Station 48](http://St.Baldrick'sFoundation.org/events/Station48) to register.

Dare County Housing Task Force meets Tuesday, April 30 for organizational matters. The meeting will take place at the Dare County Administration Building in the second floor conference room, at 954 Marshall C. Collins Dr., Manteo.

On Saturday, May 4, from 9 to 2, Cape Hatteras Secondary soccer players will wash cars or as a previous car wash showed a fire truck at the Secondary School in Buxton. After pollen season, rediscover the color of your vehicle.

Also on Saturday, May 4, the Hatteras Island Community Emergency Response team meets at 5:30 at the Avon Volunteer Fire Station.

That's all for now. Be safe out there. Thanks for listening. This is Radio Hatteras.