

*Spring 2025*  
NEWSLETTER

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## Adopt A Sea Turtle Nest 2025

**FOR MANY OF US, MEMORIAL DAY** marks the beginning of summer. During the month of May, we started to see more people enjoying our Outer Banks beaches and national parks. But people aren't the only visitors who started making their way to the Outer Banks in May — May also kicked off the sea turtle nesting season at Cape Hatteras National Seashore!

Cape Hatteras National Seashore extends more than 70 miles and covers more than 30,000 acres, from South Nags Head to Ocracoke Inlet. Five species of sea turtles tend to nest on the Seashore: Leatherback, Hawksbill (rare), Kemp's Ridley (also rare), Loggerhead and Green. In the summer of 2024, over 300 nests were laid, including nests from the rare Kemp's Ridley and Leatherback!

Through our Adopt A Sea Turtle Nest program, you can symbolically adopt an active sea turtle nest that is being monitored by National Park Service rangers at Cape Hatteras National Seashore for a gift of \$100 or more. You will receive an official adoption certificate (paper or digital are available) and information about your specific nest!

Please note: To protect the sea turtles and per National Park Service protocol, the specific location of your assigned nest is not shared until after it hatches.

There are a limited number of nests available to adopt each year and they are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis, so adopt yours today! Learn more by visiting our website ([www.obxforever.org/adoptaseaturtlenest](http://www.obxforever.org/adoptaseaturtlenest)) or by scanning the QR code with your smartphone!



SCAN ME



Kemp's Ridley Adult

### HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

**Donate!** Give a tax-deductible donation of \$100 or more to reserve your 2025 sea turtle nest. Your gift will help us fund important projects that protect and enhance Cape Hatteras National Seashore and the vital sea turtle habitat it preserves.

**Get Your Nest!** As nests on the Seashore become available for adoption, you will be assigned a nest and will receive an adoption certificate by mail or email with initial information about your nest. Nest assignments begin in early June and will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Wait patiently for your nest to hatch!** When your nest hatches later this summer or fall (average incubation time for our nests is 61 days), you will receive a personalized update in the mail with information National Park Service rangers collect about your nest, including the number of hatchlings that made their way out to sea.



Outer Banks Forever is the official nonprofit partner of our Outer Banks national parks, helping you protect and enhance these special places. Established in 2019, Outer Banks Forever has helped support projects like the mobility-friendly Oregon Inlet Kayak Launch, programs like Adopt a Pony and Adopt a Sea Turtle Nest, virtual experiences that help keep visitors connected to our parks year-round, and more. To learn more please visit [www.OBXForever.org](http://www.OBXForever.org)

#### STAFF:

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## Director's Letter



Dear Friends,

My name is Bryan Burhans, and I am honored to introduce myself as the new Director of Outer Banks Forever. As someone who deeply values the beauty, history, and community spirit of the Outer Banks, it is a true privilege to step into this role and help steward the incredible work you've helped make possible.

Our national parks here on the Outer Banks — Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, and Wright Brothers National Memorial — are treasures that connect us to the past, inspire us in the present, and hold promise for future generations. I am grateful to join an organization that has already done so much to protect these places through strong partnerships and a passionate community of supporters like you.

As I begin this journey, my focus will be on continuing to build meaningful relationships, expanding our impact, and ensuring that these special places remain resilient and accessible for all. Whether it's through educational initiatives, environmental stewardship, or community engagement, I look forward to working alongside you to carry this mission forward.

The opportunity to serve Outer Banks Forever is a real honor. This organization encapsulates so many of my passions: aviation, conservation, education, and our public lands. On top of that, I will be able to live in one of the most beautiful places on Earth, the Outer Banks.

Thank you for your ongoing support, trust, and love for our national parks. I look forward to meeting many of you in the months ahead and hearing your stories about why these places matter to you.

With gratitude,

Bryan Burhans  
DIRECTOR, OUTER BANKS FOREVER



# Love the Beach. Respect the Ocean

As we enter another busy summer season, we want to share a few important beach and ocean safety reminders with you!



## BEACH SAFETY

- Pack it in, pack it out: Make sure to take all trash, fishing equipment, and beach chairs, towels, umbrellas, and tents with you when you leave the beach.
- Discard fishing line in designated recycling receptacles.
- Digging in the sand and building sandcastles is fun, but if you dig a hole, please fill it in. Holes along the beach pose hazards to beachgoers, ocean rescue personnel, lifeguards who need to be able to drive along the beach, park rangers on patrol, and nesting sea turtles.
- The best way to avoid sunburn is to wear sunscreen and UV-protective clothing and to limit outside time during peak UV light hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## OCEAN SAFETY

A perfect day on the beach doesn't always mean it's a perfect day in the ocean:

- If in doubt, don't go out. Visit [www.LoveTheBeachRespectTheOcean.com](http://www.LoveTheBeachRespectTheOcean.com) for a daily report on ocean and weather conditions. You can also sign up for OBX Text Alerts for beach and ocean conditions by texting OBXBeachConditions to 77295. Message and data rates may apply.
- Always enter the ocean with something that floats, like a boogie/body board, innertube, or lifejacket.
- Be aware that the waters of the Outer Banks are known for being extremely rough and present hazards like shore break, high surf, and longshore currents. Never turn your back on the ocean! Stay vigilant, even if you are walking, running, building a sandcastle, or fishing.
- Ensure that all children are supervised by an adult.
- Never swim alone, no matter your age or ability.
- It is unlawful to enter the ocean if red "No Swimming" flags are posted on the beach.
- If you are caught in a rip current, remember: Float, don't fight. If you can, swim parallel to shore and yell for help.



## LIFEGUARDED BEACHES

For your safety, we recommend that you swim at lifeguarded beaches! At Cape Hatteras National Seashore, these include:

- Coquina Beach
- Frisco Beach
- Ocracoke Beach
- Old Lighthouse Beach
- Rodanthe Beach Access

These beaches will be lifeguarded from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day.





## Robin Snyder, Deputy Superintendent

### *Please tell us a little bit about yourself.*

My hometown is Appomattox, Virginia. I hold a Bachelor of Arts in History and a Master of Teaching from the University of Virginia. I thought I would be a classroom teacher, but working summers for the National Park Service at Assateague Island National Seashore gave me an awareness of other career paths. I fell in love with the National Park Service and soon became an education specialist at a national battlefield where the park was my classroom.

I am serving in my 30th year of working for the National Park Service, and I have had the wonderful opportunity to work in multiple parks and central offices in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

I enjoy walking the beach and searching for seashells, stand-up paddleboarding, trail running, reading, cooking, painting, and spending time with Ruby, my 15-year-old beagle, and Sable, a cat who thinks she is a dog.

### *How did you end up in your current position with the National Park Service?*

I worked as the Deputy Superintendent on a four-month temporary detail in the fall and winter of 2020 – 2021. I enjoyed the park team and the area. I applied for the position when it became vacant in the winter of 2022, and I was fortunate to get it! While I was serving as the superintendent of two smaller parks in the Central Virginia area, the deputy position offered me an opportunity to work for a larger park organization and broaden my

management skills to experience the new challenges of a seashore park.

### *What does a typical workday or work week look like for you?*

There is no typical day or work week for me in this role. I work closely with the Superintendent and division Chiefs of Administration, Maintenance, Visitor Services, Resource Management, and Visitor and Resource Protection to manage park operations for the three parks. There are constantly challenges to manage, from a grounded boat to a stranded sea turtle, to a grant opportunity for an interpretive trail to navigating major construction projects. I often joke that I know more about the parks' septic systems than I do about the rich history of these sites. But I am continuing to learn.

### *What do you enjoy most about working in our Outer Banks national parks?*

I love the National Park Service to the point that I would characterize my job as a vocation. When the work is challenging, the mission to preserve and protect resources for future generations and provide for the enjoyment of these sites for future generations motivates me. How lucky am I to serve as a steward of Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, and Wright Brothers National Memorial? Our three parks have it all: history, amazing cultural and natural resources, and outstanding recreational opportunities for the public to enjoy. It is a labor of love to manage these sites with a dedicated



park team who navigate daily challenges to protect resources while also providing for visitor enjoyment.

### *Why are our Outer Banks national parks important?*

The history of the first national seashore, the first English settlement, and the first powered, sustained, and controlled flight is just the starting point. A community member or visitor to these parks can enjoy lighthouses and monuments that share the unique history of these sites. They can also explore the natural world and ecosystems of the barrier islands and maritime forests which provide something new to discover every day. The Outer Banks national parks offer something for everyone, and they belong to all of us to explore and protect as part of the National Park System.





# *Still Shining Bright:* A Brief History of the Bodie Island Lighthouse

IN 1837, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT sent Lt. Napoleon L. Coste of the revenue cutter “Campbell” to examine the coastline for potential lighthouse sites that would supplement the existing one at Cape Hatteras. Coste determined that southbound ships needed a beacon on or near Bodie Island to fix their position for navigating the dangerous cape.

Congress responded with an appropriation for a lighthouse that same year, but complications over purchasing the land delayed construction until 1847. Though the skillful Francis Gibbons was contracted as engineer, the project’s overseer was a former Customs official named Thomas Blount who had no lighthouse experience at all. Blount ordered an unsupported brick foundation laid and, as a result, the 54-foot tower began to lean within two years after completion. Numerous expensive repairs did not rectify the problem, and the lighthouse had to be abandoned in 1859.

The second lighthouse fared a little better than its wobbly predecessor. Though funded, contracted, and completed in prompt fashion at a nearby site in 1859, it soon succumbed to an unforeseen danger: the Civil War. Fearing that the 80-foot tower would be used by Union forces, retreating Confederate troops blew it up in 1861.

After the war, the coast near Bodie Island remained dark for several years while a replacement tower was considered by the Lighthouse Board. Many petitions came in

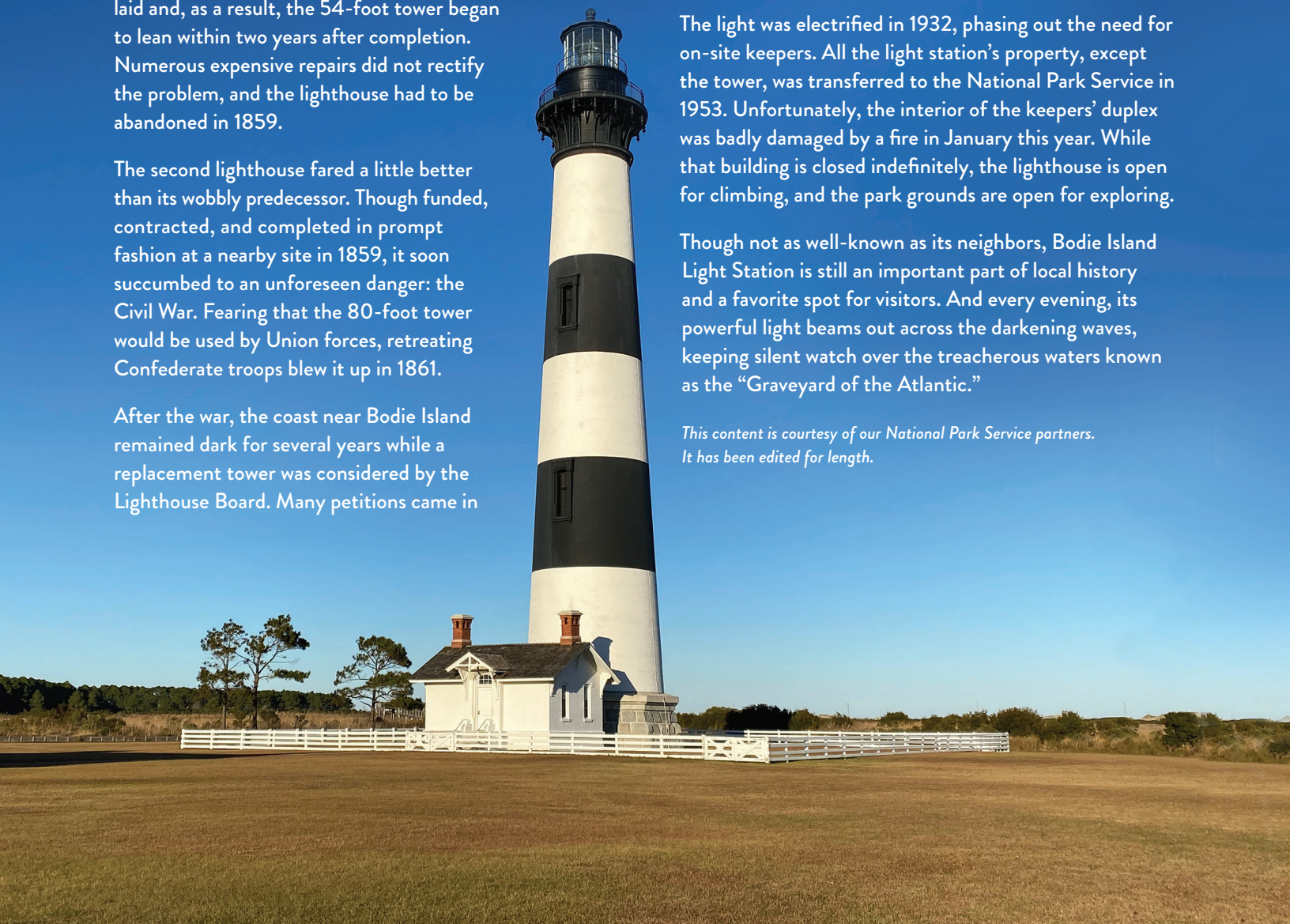
from concerned ship captains and, finally, it decided in favor of a third Bodie Island Lighthouse. Still, it was not until 1871 that construction began.

The new 15-acre site, purchased by the government for \$150 from John Etheridge, was north of Oregon Inlet. Work crews, equipment, and materials from the recent lighthouse project at Cape Hatteras were used to build necessary loading docks, dwellings, and facilities. Government contracts brought bricks and stone from Baltimore firms and ironwork from a New York foundry. Construction of the tower proceeded smoothly, and it first showed its light, magnified by a powerful first-order Fresnel lens, on Oct. 1, 1872. The keepers’ quarters duplex was completed soon thereafter.

The light was electrified in 1932, phasing out the need for on-site keepers. All the light station’s property, except the tower, was transferred to the National Park Service in 1953. Unfortunately, the interior of the keepers’ duplex was badly damaged by a fire in January this year. While that building is closed indefinitely, the lighthouse is open for climbing, and the park grounds are open for exploring.

Though not as well-known as its neighbors, Bodie Island Light Station is still an important part of local history and a favorite spot for visitors. And every evening, its powerful light beams out across the darkening waves, keeping silent watch over the treacherous waters known as the “Graveyard of the Atlantic.”

*This content is courtesy of our National Park Service partners.  
It has been edited for length.*





**OUTER BANKS**  
FOREVER

P.O. Box 1635,  
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## PARKS FOREVER FUND

Our parks need your support now more than ever! One of the ways we prepare for our parks' greatest needs is through our Parks Forever Fund, which allows us to pool funds from supporters like you, as well as our local business partners, to be able to adapt to immediate needs as they arise and create a sustainable way to address longer-term challenges.



To date, we've raised over \$13,500 for this important fund through the support of people like you!

We know how much you love the Outer Banks and that you have special memories of your time here.



We hope you will continue your impact on these special places and leave your legacy in the Outer Banks by making a gift to our Parks Forever Fund.

*Here's what's inside:*

### Adopt A Sea Turtle Nest 2025



### Meet Your Ranger Robin Snyder

### Still Shining Bright: A Brief History of the Bodie Island Lighthouse



*Plus:* WELCOME OUR NEW DIRECTOR!