

OBX Park News

Wright Brothers NATIONAL MEMORIAL *Cape Hatteras* NATIONAL SEASHORE *Fort Raleigh* NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Spring 2024
NEWSLETTER

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Revealing Diamonds: Sonja Griffin Evans' new painting helps tell the story
of the Freedmen's Colony on Roanoke Island

Celebrating
5 Years

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



2019

Outer Banks Forever
officially launched
to the public!

FIRST COMPLETED PROJECT



2021

With the support of our donors and grants from Towne Bank and Bass Pro Shops, we helped fund the construction of the first designated, mobility-friendly kayak launch on Cape Hatteras National Seashore!

STAFF & BOARD EXPANSION



2022

We launched in 2019 with just one staff member – our director, Jess – and a founding board of six dedicated individuals from the Outer Banks. In just 3 years, we added two more full-time staff members and three board members!

WHERE WE'RE GOING



2024 (and Beyond!)

To date, you've helped us raise more than \$500,000 for our national parks! We look forward to what the next five years hold, and we're working on our next slate of park projects to share with you soon!

LARGEST FUNDRAISING PROJECT



2023

We began fundraising for a new Cape Hatteras Lighthouse Pathway in the fall of 2022, and we broke ground for the pathway last November! The pathway is currently under construction and is expected to open to the public later this year.



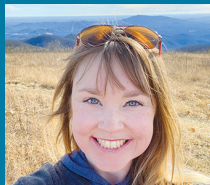
STAFF



Jessica Barnes,
Director



Nicole Erickson,
Development & Adoption
Programs Manager



Rachael Graf, Community
Engagement Coordinator

ADVISORY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Trip Forman, President
REAL Watersports

Mike Smith, Vice President
Max Media of Hampton Roads

Nick Graham, Treasurer
Standard Insurance

Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy
The Coastland Times

Paul Orser
My College Matters

Robert Poitras
Carolina Brewery

Bob Woodard, Dare County
Board of Commissioners

Ivy Ingram
Town of Kill Devil Hills

Meet Our Board



David Hallac, Superintendent of the Outer Banks National Parks (not on board); Bob Woodard; Mike Smith, Vice President; Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy; Jessica Barnes, Director; Beth Midgett, Board Member Emeritus; Nick Graham, Treasurer; Trip Forman, President.

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, our Board of Directors has supported our mission to protect and enhance our Outer Banks national parks through generously giving of their time, resources, and connections. Our board is now made up of eight dedicated individuals from the Outer Banks and beyond, and their passion and expertise are what help our organization thrive. Check out our founding Board of Directors (pictured above) at one of our very first meetings at Wright Brothers National Memorial - we've added three amazing new board members since then! We are so grateful for how our amazing board members have been with us every step of the way over the past five years.

OUR MISSION and VISION have remained the same since our founding in 2019. Outer Banks Forever is the official nonprofit partner of the three national parks of the Outer Banks, helping to protect and enhance these special places through public engagement, programming, and project support.

The Outer Banks national parks protect much of what you love most about being here. With your support, Outer Banks Forever will ensure that future generations can continue to learn, grow, and create memories here in the Outer Banks through history, conservation, and the celebration of innovation. Together, we will support the Outer Banks national parks by engaging current and future visitors through philanthropy, education, volunteerism, and partnerships.



Donor Spotlight: Barbara Jordan

It's 1952 and I'm in a house on the beach in Nags Head, and I'm seeing the ocean for the first time. I am 16 years old. I will try to briefly summarize my over 70 years of visiting the Outer Banks. I am now 87 years old.

Over the years, after marriage, five children, and discovering the Frisco Woods Campground and its owners Ward and Betty, I would vacation the entire month of August on the Outer Banks. I would stock my tent camper with all the necessities to last for a month and hit the road for the 15-hour drive from Pataskala, Ohio.

On arriving at Frisco Woods Campground, we would get the camper set up, the beds made, and start unloading items for the big screened-in kitchen. Our day would start early, breakfast finished, the campsite cleaned and secured, and away to the beach we would go, usually to Frisco Pier, which is no longer there. Around 5 p.m. we would head back to our campground and prepare dinner while nursing our sunburns.

Over the years I introduced a lot of people to the beautiful beaches and peaceful environs of this 100-mile stretch of islands. My daughter lived there for a while, and so did my third son, and my second son has lived there since 1984 and had a business there; his three children graduated from Cape Hatteras High School. And we were there when the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse began the trip to the new site in 1999.

Trips on the ferry were highlights and we would wander the streets of Ocracoke Island on rainy days when we couldn't be at the beach. Fresh seafood, campfires at camp and on the beach (when still permitted) were highlights of our days and nights. Watching the sun rise and set and the wonderful night skies was a favorite pastime. We saw many changes over the years as more people discovered this little-known strip of land; some changes were good, but the influx of people discovering the Outer Banks did have an impact on the serenity we enjoyed for many summers.

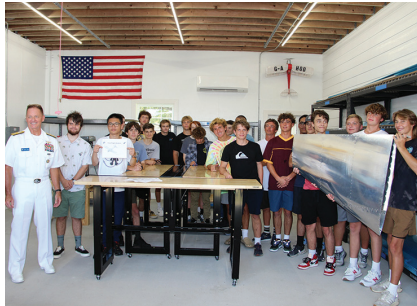
I live in Tucson, Arizona, now, so my trips to Hatteras have ended since it is very difficult for me to travel. However, my son in Ohio takes my grandchildren and great-



grandchildren there, and my son in Virginia is also a regular visitor. I spend many days looking at the thousands of pictures I've taken over the years. All those pictures provoke wonderful memories.

I urge people who love the Outer Banks to support Outer Banks Forever, to adopt a sea turtle nest during the season, and when you're on the beach, smell the salt air, chase the sand fleas, pick up litter, and keep the Banks as clean as possible given the sheer numbers of people visiting.

Oh, by the way, I never learned to surf!



1 The Wright Flight Academy

This past year, we helped Wright Brothers National Memorial launch The Wright Flight Academy in partnership with First Flight High School in Kill Devil Hills. Students are currently learning how to build an FAA-certified airplane in a new workshop that was built at the park. Check out the new series of videos we're helping our park



produce to document this exciting and inspirational new program!



2 Freedom Trail at Fort Raleigh NHS

The new Freedom Trail at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site will help tell the story of the Freedmen's Colony of 1862 following an existing 1.25-mile

wooded path through maritime forest. New educational signs, artwork, and life-sized silhouettes will lead park visitors along a journey taken by the freedom seekers who risked everything to reach Roanoke Island, exploring why the island was a safe haven for the community they built, as well as the island's role in the Underground Railroad. The Freedom Trail is made possible by a partnership between local community members who are descendants of members of the Freedmen's Colony, the National Park Service, our generous supporters, and grant funding from the 400 Years of African American History Commission and the National Park Foundation.



3 Pathways to Your National Parks

Whether you enjoy walking, running, or cycling, we need your support to help build new, paved multi-use paths in all three parks that will create new and safer ways for you and your family to explore these special places. The first pathway will connect Route 12 to Old Lighthouse Beach and the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. Along the route you'll learn about local wildlife, fishing and watersports in the Outer Banks, and walk step by step along the route the lighthouse itself took when it was moved in 1999 to its current site. We're also working to fund the installation of brand new, accessible restroom and shower facilities at the Old Lighthouse Beach Access!



4 Educational Exhibits at Fort Raleigh NHS

New educational exhibits will help improve your understanding of the lives of the Algonquian peoples and colonists on Roanoke Island and their known experiences to better connect us to the humanity of the Raleigh expeditions. This project will provide a new 3-D touchable map of the earthen fort for outdoor display, new educational signs throughout the park, historic props for programming, and marking the foundation of the newly discovered metalworking shop of Joachim Gans.



5 Adopt A Beach

Adopt A Beach is a program developed by Cape Hatteras National Seashore to help our community help our park! Organizations who support the Adopt A Beach program will help maintain its pristine beaches through regular cleanups, further connect with our community, and have their name displayed on their adopted section in recognition of their commitment.



Revealing Diamonds: Sonja Griffin Evans' new painting helps tell the story of the Freedmen's Colony on Roanoke Island

She has been likened to Michelangelo for her ability to capture the human spirit in and with her work. And for Sonja Griffin Evans, it all started with a large box of Crayola crayons.

"I am a self-taught artist, believe it or not," Evans said. "I always kind of dabbled and dabbled as a child in art. However, I'm going to say it all started with that 64 box of Crayola crayons."

Evans is from Beaufort, South Carolina, and is an internationally acclaimed, award-winning mixed media artist, painter and arts advocate whose works honor and reflect her Gullah Geechee heritage as well as the diverse cultures, stories and spirituality of people of African descent.

In April 2023, Evans was commissioned by Fort Raleigh National Historic Site to create a painting for the forthcoming Freedom Trail exhibit at the park, which will help tell the story of the Freedmen's Colony that thrived on Roanoke Island from 1862 to 1865 and the enduring legacy of the freedom seekers who established new lives for themselves there.

While a 1.25-mile-long, wooded Freedom Trail currently exists at the park, the new exhibit will create an experience that brings the stories of the community to life. The new Freedom Trail is made possible by a partnership between local community members who are descendants of members of the Freedmen's Colony,



the National Park Service, Outer Banks Forever, and grant funding from the 400 Years of African American History Commission and the National Park Foundation.

To create her new painting for the Freedom Trail, Evans traveled to the Outer Banks to meet with descendants of members of the Freedmen's Colony and park rangers at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site.

"I like to visit the area— it's almost like this spiritual journey to be able to walk on the land and experience the environment of where the people I'm recreating were on their journey, and of course learn as much as I can of the history of the area," said Evans.

"I love to talk with some of the local people of the area. When you hear the

term 'African American,' all African Americans are not the same. Their cultures have some similarities, but not the same. I always want to visit and meet the people and hear the stories of their family members and their ancestors. It gives me a better insight; it helps me to recreate the history or the feeling of the people, their determination, who those people were. It allows me to get to know the person.

"There's a lot of gems, diamonds, that people don't know anything about. ... I'm learning as I'm creating. ...With the painting, it's not just a painting – you're visually telling and recording a story."

By Rachael Graf, Community Engagement Coordinator at Outer Banks Forever



OUTER BANKS

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Adopt A Sea Turtle Nest 2024

FOR MANY OF US, Memorial Day marks the beginning of summer, and during the month of May we start to see more people around the Outer Banks enjoying our beaches and national parks. But people aren't the only visitors who start making their way to the Outer Banks in May — May 1 kicked off the sea turtle nesting season at Cape Hatteras National Seashore!

Through our Adopt A Sea Turtle Nest program, you can symbolically adopt an active sea turtle nest that is being monitored by park rangers at the Seashore for a gift of \$100 or more. You will receive an official adoption certificate and information about your specific nest when it hatches later this summer or fall.

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

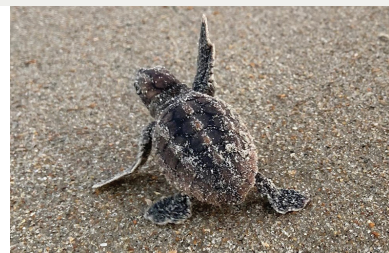


 Outer Banks Forever

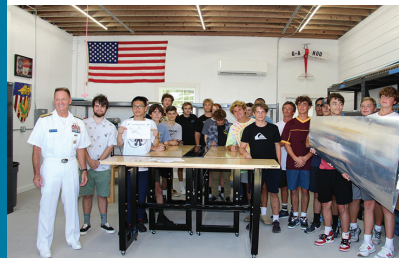
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Here's what's inside:

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Plus: DONOR SPOTLIGHT: BARBARA JORDAN