

COASTAL OBSERVER

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County faces suit over Murrells Inlet water quality

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Murrells Inlet residents gave notice to Georgetown County last week that they are ready to go to court to enforce compliance with federal regulations that require the county to improve water quality in the estuary.

If that happens, it will be the first action in the state to challenge compliance with federal permits for “municipal separate storm sewer systems,”

known as MS4s, according to Amy Armstrong, executive director and chief counsel of the S.C. Environmental Law Project, which is representing the citizens group Preserve Murrells Inlet and Murrells Inlet Seafood.

Georgetown County is one of 70 small MS4s in the state that operate under federal permits administered by the state. The Department of Health and Environmental Control notified the county last April that an audit of its MS4 program

Almost a third of the inlet’s shellfish beds are closed to harvesting.

Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

found deficiencies. That included the failure to show that it had implemented a 2014 plan to reduce the amount of pollutants entering the Murrells Inlet watershed.

“Georgetown County is not some sort of outlier. We’ve seen it in other places, but not as well documented,” Armstrong said.



The MS4 is part of the county’s stormwater management plan, which went into effect in 2007 under a federal mandate. In addition to issuing stormwater permits for development, the county was required to create a plan for bringing water bodies into compliance with water quality standards. Murrells Inlet was already on the list of waters that didn’t meet those standards because of high levels of fecal coliform bacteria found in shellfish.

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WAVERLY PARK

A whole new ballgame

Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

The 7- and 8-year-olds on the Braves, at practice this week, weren’t born when Waverly Park was put in the capital plan.

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

TWENTY YEARS AGO Georgetown County residents and officials had a vision of what the county could be.

The “Visions for the Future” program is now in the past after a ribbon was cut to officially open Waverly Park this week. It is the last of the Visions projects.

“It’s been a fun ride. A huge, huge undertaking,” said Beth Goodale, director of the county’s Parks and Recreation Department.

ment. “But what an amazing program it is and it keeps on going for years to come.”

The \$6 million Waverly Park project replaced two outdated fields behind Waccamaw Elementary School with four new fields and added restroom and concession facilities.

“We really needed some additional small fields on the Waccamaw Neck,” Goodale said.

Austin Williams played on the fields in Wachesaw Park when he was a kid. He never thought his son would be playing T-ball

on those same fields.

“We needed [Waverly Park] 10 years ago. It’s great,” said Williams, who now coaches his son’s 8U coach-pitch team. “It makes it so much easier to have fields right here in the middle of the community as opposed to having to drive 20 minutes.”

Jason Hunnicut has seen a yearly increase in the number of kids participating in baseball leagues, which made finding places to play and practice a “juggling act” in the past.

SEE “PARK,” PAGE 8

GEORGETOWN

Corps gets \$6.5 million for harbor dredging

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The Army Corps of Engineers expects to dredge the channel along the Georgetown waterfront to a depth of 12 feet with funding included in the federal budget last week.

The \$6.5 million was included in the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill last spring by Sen. Lindsay Graham, who serves on the Appropriations Committee.

The dredging project is a priority for the city and Georgetown County, which took ownership of the former State Ports Authority on the Sampit River last year. The transfer also included about 200 acres that were designated as a disposal site for dredge spoils from the harbor.

That will be the first place the Corps looks as it starts work on the project.

“Due to the preceding,
SEE “HARBOR,” PAGE 2

LAND USE

Wetlands issues delay council vote on creekfront development

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A zoning change to allow a 27-lot subdivision between Pawleys Creek and Highway 17 was put on hold by Georgetown County Council this week, raising concern that developers will create a development with more lots under the current zoning.

Council Member Bob Anderson, who moved to defer approval of the change, said he doesn’t think that will happen because of wetlands on the property.

“He’s going to have to develop it on terms that are suitable to the county,” Anderson said.

The deferral will allow him time to talk with the developers and their engineers, he added.

The project, called Magic Oaks, has the support of the citizens group Keep It Green because it would limit the number of dwellings on the 5 acres

SEE “ZONING,” PAGE 4

SCHOOLS

Former Army pilot ready to take controls at WHS

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

When Hunter Eddy began his teaching career a decade ago he got some advice from Celeste Pringle, who was the Georgetown County School District’s deputy superintendent at the time.

Pringle told him “as long as you do right by the students, you’ll be a success. Always put them first.”

Eddy, who has been an assistant principal at Waccamaw High School since 2018, took that advice to heart and will continue to do so when he takes over as principal on July 1.

He expects his years at the school will make the transition smoother and bring stability to the school.

“We have a great staff here. They’re outstanding at their jobs,” Eddy said. “The principal’s job is

to support them, but stay out of the way and let them do their jobs in the classroom because they are phenomenal. That’s kind of the way I see my role.”

The transition from interim principal David Hammel to Eddy has already started. Hammel loops Eddy in on all work-related emails and last week the two of them reviewed the teachers’ contracts for next year.

Hammel will leave Waccamaw to become the executive director at Teach My People, and after school mentoring program.

“That’s an invaluable experience

SEE “WHS,” PAGE 3

Hunter Eddy will take over from David Hammel in July.

Chris Sokoloski/Coastal Observer



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