

Pawleys Island considers \$50 fee for golf cart permits

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

When it only cost \$10 to get a golf cart permit from the town of Pawleys Island, 667 were issued. Last year, the town issued 850 at \$25 each.

Town Council stopped short

of raising the permit fee to \$50 this week, not because officials thought it was a bad idea, but because it wasn't included on the agenda as required by the state's Freedom of Information Act.

The town once banned golf carts, but a change in state law

in 2012 prevented local governments from restricting the vehicles. In 2017, the town required that the carts be registered so that police can identify the owners if they issue a parking ticket for a cart. Although they must be registered
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The town charges \$25 for an annual permit to operate a golf cart on Pawleys Island.

Charles Swenson/
Coastal Observer

SCHOOLS

District plans for sharp drop in enrollment

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

The Georgetown County School District expects to have 209 fewer students in the 2025-26 school year.

More than half of the decrease in enrollment is expected in Waccamaw Neck schools, according to a report presented to the Georgetown County School Board this week.

The largest decrease is expected at Waccamaw High, which currently has 792 students. Enrollment next year is expected to drop to 727.

The high school is expected to have the steepest decline in enrollment of all the schools in the district.

The second largest drop in enrollment is expected at Waccamaw Middle, which currently has 328 students. Next year's enrollment is projected to be 305.

The elementary school enrollment is projected to decline from 504 students to 491 next year.

A small decline is also expected at Waccamaw Intermediate, from 405 students this year to 395.

Waccamaw Neck schools have seen a steady decrease in enrollment in the last few years. There were 2,098 students in the 2023-24 school year and 2,029 in 2024-25.

With 17 more students, the elementary school was the only school of the four to see an increase in enrollment in 2023-24.

Since Coastal Montessori Charter School is only sponsored by the district, its enrollment numbers are not counted
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Chris Sokoloski/Coastal Observer

Savannah Rufus guides Coastal Montessori students through the preserve.

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

The Black River Cypress Preserve in Andrews has quickly become a destination for outdoor learning.

Lower elementary students from Coastal Montessori Charter School visited the preserve last week and spent a few hours discovering insects, plants and animal tracks during a hike.

"It fosters an empathy and responsibility for nature," said Shaye Heiskell, who is a lead teacher at the school. "It helps them build a better connection to the world around them"

Heiskell prefers "unstructured" time for kids rather than screen time.

"It's a time to sit and discover and notice
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BLACK RIVER EDUCATION INITIATIVE

A classroom as big as all outdoors

PALMETTO GIVING DAY | All4Paws Animal Rescue

Nonprofit's donors and programs reflect growing need for services

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

The nonprofit with the most donors during last year's Palmetto Giving Day was All4Paws with 525.

The animal rescue on Petri-gru Drive in Pawleys Island was also one of 10 nonprofits that raised more than \$100,000 during the 36-hour online fundraising extravaganza hosted by the Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation. All4Paws raised \$136,015.

"We really push it. We love social media," said Jennifer Averette, All4Paws' marketing director.

Palmetto Giving Day is one



Dogs get ready for a morning walks at All4Paws.

Chris Sokoloski/Coastal Observer

of the biggest sources of income for All4Paws according to Allison Gillespie, one of the nonprofit's founding directors.

"We get a lot of matching money ahead of time so we can really get the community engaged and try to find the best opportunities out there to bring in money so we can save as many lives as possible," she said.

Since All4Paws was founded in 2017, more than 21,000 dogs and cats have been adopt-

ed. The number of adoptions has increased from 621 in year one to 1,761 in 2024.

The majority of the animals arrive at All4Paws by way of a transfer program from other rescues. Some are from shelters as far away as Berkeley and Orangeburg counties. Others are from as near as St. Frances Animal Center in Georgetown.

"Whoever calls and has a need," Gillespie said. "I try to be fair and rotate and take what I can take and save as many as possible."

About a third of the animals are surrendered by their owners.

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