



Photos by Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

A loggerhead sea turtle hatchling makes its way to the ocean on Pawleys Island. Those who didn't survive provided genetic material for a program tracking male sea turtles.

ENVIRONMENT | Sea turtles

## Concern over rising temperatures leads to expansion of genetic testing

BY MADISON SHARROCK  
COASTAL OBSERVER

Volunteers are on the lookout for "hot chicks" and "cool dudes" buried in the sand this summer.

S.C. United Turtle Enthusiasts, better known as SCUTE, has collected maternal DNA from sea turtle nests for the last 15 years to track the mothers of hatchlings and study their nesting habits.

Now they're collecting paternal DNA for analysis due to concern that rising temperatures are reducing the number of male sea turtles and threatening the species' future.

"There's a big scuttlebutt about global warming and the nests getting really, really warm. The nests, theoretically, are coming out with more, much more, female turtles than male turtles," said Rick Scott, the head of SCUTE. "That's kind of a big concern right now."

The temperature of the sand where a nest incubates determines the sex of the hatchlings. Higher temperatures produce more females,

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A bucket with more than a dozen hatchlings captures attention at a nest inventory at North Litchfield.

## Former principal gets 2nd term as WHS interim

BY MADISON SHARROCK  
COASTAL OBSERVER

David Hammel was named interim principal of Waccamaw High two days before the start of the school year, replacing Hunter Eddy who stepped down after a year due to health reasons, according to Georgetown County School District officials.

Hammel served as principal from 2008 to 2018 before moving to the district office and then to the classroom at Georgetown High. He returned to Waccamaw High as interim principal in 2023 when Adam George was removed as principal following a senior prank that involved students entering and vandalizing the school overnight.

After Eddy, assistant principal at WHS since  
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David Hammel left WHS as interim principal in 2024.

PAWLEYS ISLAND

## Change coming as town holds council elections

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

At least one seat is due to open up on Pawleys Island Town Council, where filing begins this week.

Guerry Green said he won't run again after eight years on the council.

Council Member Rocky Holliday said he is still weighing a decision. He has served 10 years.

Ashley Carter and Sarah Zimmerman said they both plan to run. Carter has served 10 years. Zimmerman has served for 28 years.

Mayor Brian Henry will seek a fourth term as mayor.

"I'm definitely planning to run again," he said. "There are some good things that are being done."

Among those he counts is the increased role of the town's boards and commissions, which not only help operations but engage people who could fill seats on the council.

"We do have a strong bench of people," Henry  
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CHURCHES | Belin Memorial United Methodist

## Teens are 'hands and feet of Christ' for summer service program

BY MADISON SHARROCK  
COASTAL OBSERVER

A vision the Rev. John Culp once had in a field of cotton now carries tradition across the state and into Murrells Inlet.

"He said the other night, which I've never heard this, that he felt God call him. He just felt the calling to do it," said Chris McIntyre, Culp's daughter.

Culp, who was a minister and a volunteer firefighter at the time in Hampton, reported to a house that had burned down due to faulty wiring. He went to the funeral service, and once he saw three children in one casket who had died in the fire, he wanted to take action.

That vision he had was the Salkehatchie Summer Service, a Christian-based week-long camp that started in 1978 to make homes warmer, drier and safer.

"Now it's gone from one



Madison Sharrock/Coastal Observer

A Murrells Inlet home gets a new roof during the Creekfront Salkehatchie program.

camp to 30 camps across the state with over 60,000 people who have been involved with it," she said.

This summer was the eighth year for Belin Memorial United Methodist Church in Murrells Inlet, which hosts the Creek-

front Salkahatchie service ministry. There were 61 adults and teenagers who spent a week of their summer vacation repair-

ing four homes off of Wachesaw Road.

Wendy Brown, 61, lives in the same house where she was raised. She applied to Salkehatchie's Summer Service to get work done on her porch, kitchen, bathroom and two bedrooms. The only requirement is to be the owner of a home needing repairs.

"I needed the help because I work so much, and by the time I get home, I'm so tired. I don't have the strength," Brown said. "The Lord has blessed me with all this help."

The homeowners don't have to pay for any renovations. All they're expected to do is relax, just as they told Brown, but some go beyond expectations and provide water, Popsicles and sometimes a home-cooked meal.

"Their hearts will give back because they see what they're  
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