

WASHINGTON

T H E M A G A Z I N E

The Wild East

INSIDE

TRAINING
Gun Dogs

PAINTING
Works of Art

RESTORING A
Historic Lodge

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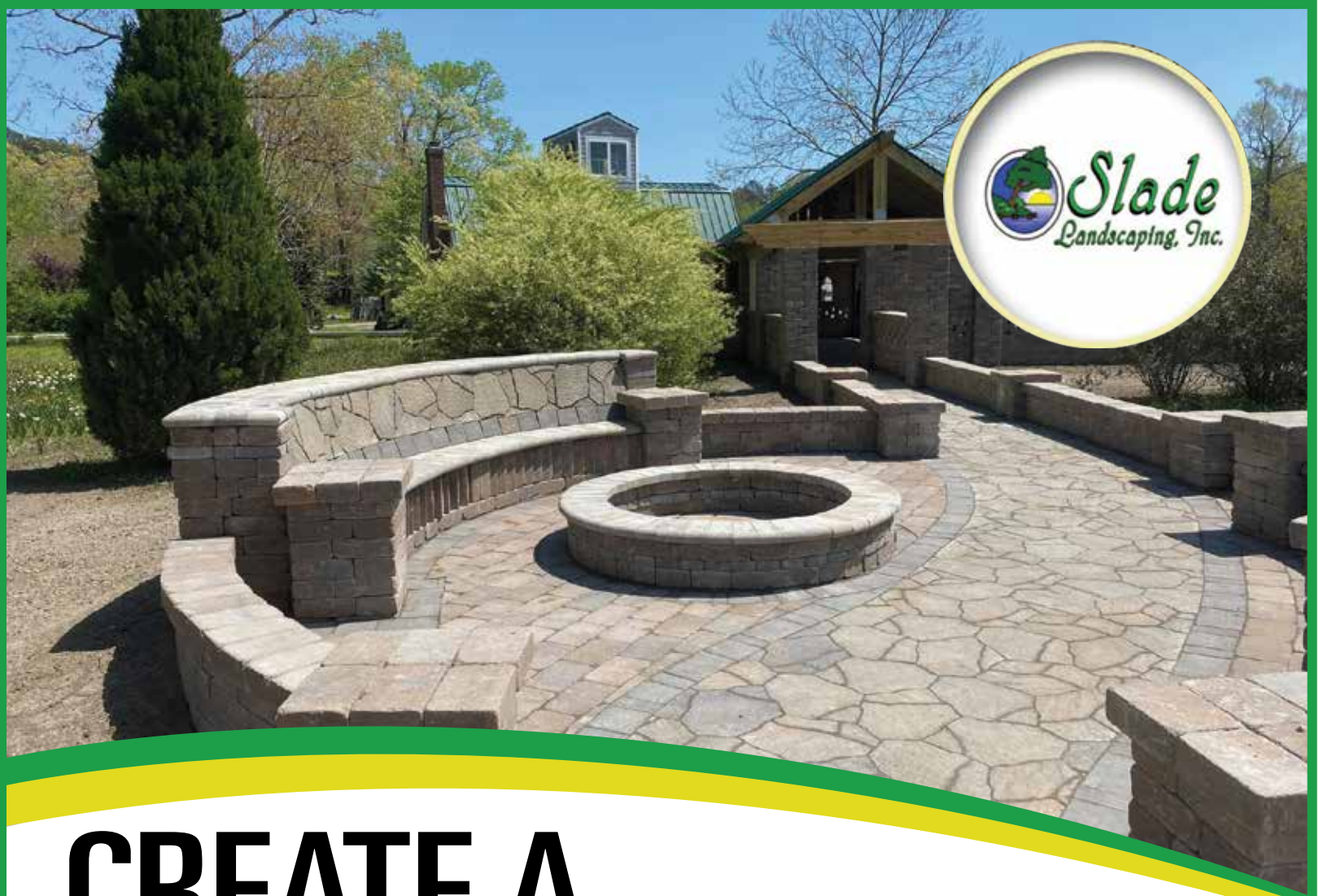


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Publisher

Ashley Vansant

Editorial

Steve Barnes
Holly Jackson

Contributors

Richard Andrews
Shawn Bennett
Clark Curtis
Vail Stewart Rumley

Marketing & Sales

Kristen Smith

Distribution

Ann Fitzpatrick
Gina Lee
Kim Riggs

Art Direction

Ryan Webb

Contact Information

Washington the Magazine
P.O. Box 1788
Washington, NC 27889

Advertising Inquiries

252-946-2144 Ext. 221

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LADIES WHO LUNCH

PHOTOS BY HOLLY JACKSON

Ripe for Revival, a nonprofit organization in eastern North Carolina, co-hosted a luncheon with Flatlands Jessup Insurance in July. The luncheon brought Ripe for Revival's mission to the forefront of the minds of 35 invited guests. Ripe for Revival works with North Carolina based companies to offer produce at a reduced price for low-income families and individuals. Those who are served by Ripe for Revival can pay either the suggested price for produce (which is about 30% less than grocery store prices), they can pay it forward or pay what they can that day knowing that other people have paid it forward. Utilizing five mobile markets, Ripe for Revival is able to reach underserved populations in eastern North Carolina, including Beaufort County. They also offer a delivery service that can be scheduled either monthly or weekly.

At the luncheon, guests learned from Art Chadwick, of Chadwick & Sons, about orchid varieties and how to care for them. Art carries on a tradition of growing orchids his father, Arthur Chadwick Sr., began in 1943. Since then they have grown in popularity and have named Cattleya hybrid orchids after the wives of the six most recent U.S. Presidents and personally presented the orchids to most of the honored recipients. Last year, they published a book about it called, *First Ladies and their Cattleyas: A Century of Namesake Orchids*.

Chadwick's operates 11 greenhouses in rural Powhatan County, Virginia, two retail stores in Richmond, and boards over 13,000 orchids for local clients, per the American Orchid Society.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: FRONT ROW, PAIGE HARRIS, CARMEN KELLUM FOLK, CHRISTINE MCKEEL. MIDDLE ROW: KARA COX, MARY EDITH. BACK ROW: ANNE PARKER CHAMBLESS AND RILEY CUTLER.



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HEATHER CHESNICK, BLYTHE WHITE AND ART CHADWICK



BECKY WHICHARD



CHRISTINE MCKEEL, PAM SHADLE, KATE DALDOSS AND DOREEN TROTTIER

Capturing the beauty around us

Local artist's love of animals and nature

STORY AND PHOTOS BY **CLARK CURTIS**

For Norlina Kelly her love of art started as far back as she can remember when she was three or four years old. “I grew up on a small family farm in Aulander, North Carolina, and as soon as I could hold a crayon I was coloring,” said Kelly. “By the time I was eight, I got my first sketchbook and started sketching and drawing. When I got to high school, I started oil painting, and would often do commission pieces for some of the teachers, which included portraits of their pets.”

Kelly, who moved to Washington in 2007 from the Outer Banks, said she has always gravitated towards drawing and painting animals. She figures her love for them can be directly attributed to her roots of growing up on the family farm. “I was always drawing pictures of deer and other wildlife,” said Kelly. “But I was fascinated with ducks. I just loved them, and all of the details that were in their feathers. I would often sit in an empty room at school, spending hours drawing ducks.”

Kelly said she is often asked which bird is her favorite to paint. And the answer is very simple. “All waterfowl are very fascinating to me,” said Kelly. “We have Blue Heron, Canadian geese, and Egrets just to name a few. They all have their unique details that are specific to each one of them. Plus they all have their own personalities. Heron can stand there patiently for hours and then as quick as lightning they take off like a flash. And depending on the light of day, the colors of all of the birds may appear to



Norlina Kelly



Blue
Heron



Egret

change.”

This true love and passion for painting wildlife and nature has finally become a full-time endeavor for Kelly. For the last 13 years or so, she has devoted her time to transferring her spiritual connection with the outdoors to the canvas. “Painting wildlife and nature brings about a sense of peace and fulfillment and the feeling that this is what I’m supposed to be doing with my life,” said Kelly. “I really put my heart and soul into each animal or landscape that I do. It also helps me to get my mind off all of the other ‘stuff’ that clutters our minds daily and time to appreciate all of the beauty that surrounds us. Nature is so amazing and everything is so interconnected. Painting can take me places even if I’m not there in person.”

Kelly said she hopes that when people view her art they too experience that same sense of peace and amazement that she does. She looks at her artwork as a gift to others. “People seem to always be running around thinking about yesterday or worrying about tomorrow and fail to pay attention to where they are at that moment,” said Kelly. “I hope that when they see a beautiful bird or a serene landscape that I have drawn, it will bring about the same fulfillment that I experience, and they will take the time to go out into nature and experience it for themselves. The singing of the birds, the leaves rustling in the wind, or observing how the light embraces a flower, a tree, or the edge of a building. Even if it is just five minutes a week. Then, perhaps in the future, they will be more observant and aware of the beauty and complexity of nature that is all around us.”

Kelly’s work is currently on display at the Turnage Theatre, Maker’s on Market in Washington, and Salt Gallery in Moorhead City.



Top: Gulls over the Atlantic, Left Bottom: Male Mallard Duck, Right Bottom: Egret in flight

Mother Canada goose
with her goslings





A shining example

Saving a “wonderful piece” of Hyde County history

STORY BY **HOLLY JACKSON**
PHOTOS BY **SANDY CARAWAN**

Standing in the middle of Mattamuskeet Lodge, with eyes closed, you can almost hear the voices of those who have visited the lodge in its 109 year history. Men recalling the day’s hunt as they dined on their victories, brides swooning over doors dressed in window panes that look toward Lake Mattamuskeet and children playing a game of chase around a mezzanine floor that connected the ballroom and lobby.

The second you open your eyes, you’re instantly transported back to present day. The three-story lodge is still and quiet. What remains are the lodge’s bare bones that are ready for renovation and repurposing projects.

Debbie Daughtry, a fifth-generation Hyde County native, shared that her cousins - Jack and Lucille Oswald - were innkeepers at Mattamuskeet Lodge. She would visit them with her grandfather on Sundays to visit Lucille’s mother who was his sister.

“We had lots of family fun here, family dinners, birthdays and weddings,” she said.

As children, she and her brother were the ones playing chase around the lodge’s mezzanine.

Last year, the North Carolina General Assembly granted Hyde County \$6.5 million to begin renovations to the near 15,000 sq. ft. building that has been closed for a quarter of a century. This is in addition to a total \$7 million that has been poured into the lodge



Mattamuskeet Lodge is well known for its contrasting red roof and green and white striped observation tower. It is a common misconception that the tower has been and is a lighthouse because of its resemblance to Bodie Island lighthouse in Nags Head, North Carolina.





The entry way leads to another world, another century of Lake Mattamuskeet's history. For 70 years, attempts were made to drain the lake until in the 1930's the former pumping plant was turned into a hunting lodge. For another 40 or so years, it was the crown jewel of Hyde County society. Restoration projects are underway to bring back Mattamuskeet Lodge to its former glory.

for stabilization projects, roof repairs, repairs to the observatory tower. It is anticipated to take at least four years and millions of dollars more to completely renovate Mattamuskeet Lodge.

Part of renovations include Hyde County Extension moving their office into the lodge which is 10 miles away from their current location in Swanquarter. This way, the lodge will have a daily purpose in addition to possibly having space for special events and a museum, according to Daughtry who is a spokesperson for the Mattamuskeet Lodge Society - a nonprofit organization whose mission is to bring awareness to the lodge and educate the public about it.

Should a museum be built, Hyde County residents will contribute their artifacts for display, but Lewis Forrest, of Greenville, will provide historically accurate information. Curating information on the lodge, and

separating fact from folklore, has been Forrest's life's work for the last 37 years.

"It's a wonderful piece of history," Forrest said about the lodge. "There's something about it. It's such a rustic, old building that a lot of people look at and they say why would people pour money into this old, dilapidated building, but they don't understand the history that's behind that building in terms of it having housed the largest capacity pumping plant in the world when it operated as a pumping plant."

Forrest's first visit to Mattamuskeet Lodge was in 1986 while on a family vacation to the Lost Colony. Two years later, he and a photographer visited the lodge to collect information and photos for an article Forrest wrote about the lodge. Six weeks into his research for the article, Hyde County residents helped him create a list of 100 people to

interview.

That research led Forrest to a woman in Belhaven who had hundreds of historic lodge documents sitting in a barn she planned to demolish. The day after Forrest visited her to view the documents, he returned with a trailer to take boxes upon boxes of documents to his home. He spent the next seven-and-a-half-years interpreting those documents. For the last decade, Forrest has collected 5,000 newspaper clippings from newspapers.com about Mattamuskeet - everything from banquets held there to book club meetings there. These clippings are organized into 400 three-ring binders at his home.

In February of 1995, Forrest established the Mattamuskeet Foundation - a nonprofit dedicated to the study of Mattamuskeet's history. Four years later, he authored a book called, "Lake Mattamuskeet: New Holland



The view from the observatory tower over looks Lake Mattamuskeet.







and Hyde County.” Royalties from the book go to the foundation.

Forrest hopes a “first class,” state-of-the-art museum can be built that teaches visitors about the lodge’s history. Forrest would be “very pleased” if future generations could use a portion, if not all, of the information he’s researched in a museum.

“I used to speak a lot in Hyde County on the history of the land. I’d tell the same story every time, but a lot of the same people came back every time I spoke and I say, ‘why do you come back’ and well, they’d say ‘every time you’ve found something else that’s new and I want to know what you’ve found that is new.’ And they’d say, ‘you have such passion about this - that’s a word they always used. And I guess I do, but I would just love to find somebody else who fell in love with it like I did,” Forrest said.

The lodge’s history actually begins in the 1830’s when the North Carolina General Assembly was intrigued by an idea to drain Lake Mattamuskeet so that rich soil under the surface could be farmed, according to the National Register of Historic Places.

Lake Mattamuskeet is the largest natural inland lake in the state - measuring 15 miles long and eight miles wide, averaging two to four feet deep.

In 1840, The General Assembly passed a bill approving drainage of Lake Mattamuskeet. The lake and surrounding property was transferred

from state ownership to a literary board who sold portions of the marsh to raise money for public education. The first attempt to drain the lake was by gravity flow from two canals that were dug by enslaved people. The attempt was unsuccessful and was a loss of nearly \$200,000 according to the National Register of Historic Places.

Almost 70 years later, the dream of draining Lake Mattamuskeet for farming lingered legislators’ minds. They passed a bill offering the purchase of the lake bottom in 1909. In 1911 the Southern Land Reclamation Company purchased the 48,820 acre lake for \$99,960. Six years later, due to financial difficulties, that plan was scrapped and the lake was once again up for sale. New York philanthropist and builder, August Hecksher, purchased the lake bottom and completed construction of the canals and “world’s largest” pumping plant, the National Register of Historic Places states. By “world’s largest,” Hecksher meant the capacity with which the facility could pump water, not the size of the building.

“When I saw the lake, I was astonished. I had no idea it was so huge. I don’t know that I had anyone ever tell me how big it was and the fact that you can’t see either ends from the causeway,” Forrest said.

Six-and-a-half years later, excessive rainfall, pumping difficulties and agricultural pests forced Hecksher off the land. Water soon filled the lake and 49,925.05 acres was sold to the United States Government as



a wildlife refuge for \$311,942.67 in 1934. (That's more than \$7.3 million today.)

"During that period of approximately 20 years, 17 million dollars were spent trying to farm Lake Mattamuskeet," the National Register of Historic places reports.

Two years later, the pumping station was converted into a hunting lodge for hunters traveling to the area and operated that way until 1974. The lodge was placed on the National Register of Historic places in 1980. Ownership of the lodge was transferred to the state in 2006. In 2023, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission agreed to lease the lodge to Hyde County.

Surrounding the lodge is Mattamuskeet Wildlife Refuge which provides a sanctuary for migratory birds and other wildlife in addition to providing a plethora of opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreational activities. Daughtry said the refuge can have as many as 50,000 visitors annually.

Bird watchers can find Canada geese, snow geese, tundra swans, and 22 species of ducks during the winter at Mattamuskeet each year as well as migrating warblers in the spring and fall.

"The lake, marsh, and woodlands provide habitat for over 240 bird species. Ospreys nest in low cypress trees near the edge of the lake. Hundreds of migratory shorebirds find resting and feeding spots along the edge of the lake and throughout the marsh impoundments. Migrating warblers are popular subjects for bird watchers in the spring and fall. It provides habitat for threatened and endangered species such as the peregrine falcon, bald eagle, and red wolf. Mammals such as deer, bobcats, otters, and an occasional black bear find refuge here. A variety of amphibians including frogs, toads, and salamanders are common throughout the refuge," U.S. Fish and Wildlife shares.

The appeal of Hyde County, Daughtry described, is the "peace and quiet" that can be found. With less than 5,000 residents, Hyde County is one of the least populated counties out of the 100 counties in North Carolina.

"People come to escape and be still and quiet," she said. "We're still one of the very calm, undeveloped natural places in North Carolina. People are wanting to escape and unplug for a little bit."





ON THE WATER



FOWL PLAY



Blake Haddock, of Feather Point Retrievers, has had a lifelong affinity with training gun dogs. From childhood, Haddock has had a passion for training dogs, mostly labradors he's bred, that the retrieve is the reward.

The Retrieve is the Reward

STORY BY **HOLLY JACKSON** PHOTO BY **WET DOGS PHOTOGRAPHY**

It's a nine mile drive from the Washington/Beaufort County border to Feather Point Retrievers in Greenville. That probably doesn't mean much to you, unless you are teetering between complete adoration or full on apoplexy. In that case, you might be one of Blake Haddock's clients on your way to see if your beloved four-legged friend could be the next great American gun dog.

Haddock is the founder and owner of Feather Point Retrievers. It is a 100-acre farm off of Highway 264 that specializes in breeding American Labradors and training dogs to retrieve during a waterfowl hunt.

Sending your dog to training is similar to sending your kid to a sports camp. While you can teach your kids the basics of basketball or baseball, you need professionals with years of

experience to coach them so they achieve their full potential.

That's where Haddock comes in. Dog owners, also known as clients, will drop their dogs off at Feather Point Retrievers for months on end depending on how advanced they want their dog to be. Haddock and his team will train the dogs, a majority of them being Labradors they've bred, to be gun dogs that can retrieve downed waterfowl and return it to their owner's hands.

Clients can't simply drop off their dog then return five months later and magically have a trained dog. Haddock's method involves training dogs alongside their owners to achieve smooth, harmonious communication between the pair.

"If I give you a tool that you can't use, then the tool is no good," Haddock illustrated.

Dogs can spend anywhere from five months to a year or more



The first two to three months are critical in a gun dog's training, because they are learning obedience. If they cannot learn to obey and respect their owner's commands, they will be considered a "washout."

in training, again depending on how advanced the clients want them to be. Too, some dogs need more or less time than others. Each training session is customized to what the dog needs to learn and how he or she learns best.

Haddock says he can tell if a dog has the potential to become a gun dog within two to three months. The first two to three months of training are critical, because a dog is learning basic obedience skills. If a dog cannot pass obedience training, they are more likely to be a "washout" or a dog that is unfit to be a gun dog. Which, coincidentally, increases their owner's chances of either having a coronary or ending up on a therapist's couch and hearing them ask, "today's session is about...your dog?"

The chances of having a washout are low, but still there. For every 100 dogs Haddock encounters, he estimates there's one dog that wouldn't catch a sausage biscuit if it were thrown.

What makes a hunting dog great, Haddock describes, is

“ I remember with her, the first retrieve I did. I put a dead dove on the fishing rod and would throw it out there and if she didn't bring it back, then I could reel it in and play keep away. That makes a dog want to get it, because you're not going out there and getting it.”

BLAKE HADDOCK

OWNER AND FOUNDER OF
FEATHER POINT RETRIEVERS

“breeding, pedigree, trainability and an innate desire to retrieve.”

Once Haddock has deemed a dog fit to continue with training, they are taken to one of three ponds on Haddock’s farm. These ponds simulate real life hunting environs. The bottom of the ponds are uneven to mimic waterways. The ponds are outfitted with natural duck blinds to give the full experience. Hours upon hours are spent training dogs to sit, heal, retrieve and deliver downed birds to their owner’s hand - in over simplified terms.

Owners learn hand signals that tell their dog which direction to go in to find downed birds. Dogs must rely on their owner’s hand signals rather than relying on their noses, because they can smell the scent of birds they picked up earlier.

When dogs are looking at their owner for directions, it’s like looking at a mirror. Their owner may be pointing to the left with their left hand, but from the dog’s perspective, their owner is pointing to the right. It’s essentially teaching the dog to be dyslexic but that’s okay, because dogs can’t read.

Gun dogs also have to listen to their owner’s whistle commands to know whether to move forward or backward.

In training, a blank shot is fired, a fake or frozen duck is thrown into the air then lands either in the pond or surrounding field. The dog listens for their release word which happens to be their name. They are released then run toward the downed bird. Sometimes, they know exactly where to go, because they follow the bird with their eyes. Other times, they need assistance from their owner’s hand and whistle signals.

This is why Haddock says a gun dog’s eyesight is oftentimes more important than their sense of smell, and why a dog needs to learn and respect the sound of their owner’s voice.

Gun dogs are also expected to know how to make blind retrieves. This is when a dog must retrieve a bird they did not see fall. In these scenarios, gun dogs have to fully rely on their owner’s commands.

If you’re not one of Haddock’s clients,



Haddock says a gun dog’s eyesight is more important than their sense of smell. A dog needs to be able to see where downed waterfowl falls. Too, if they rely on their sense of smell only, they will likely go to spots where they picked up birds before.

fluctuating between laudation and lamentation, you may be wondering how a person becomes interested in training dogs to retrieve.

Haddock is a life long waterfowl hunter who, as a kid, started copying a cousin who liked to hunt quail and dove with dogs. The cousin gave Haddock a labrador puppy, Onyx, and soon after Haddock began to mimic how his cousin hunted with gun dogs in the field.

“I remember with [Onyx], the first retrieve I did. I put a dead dove on the fishing rod and would throw it out there and if she didn’t bring it back, then I could reel it in and play keep away. That makes a dog want to get it, because you’re not going out there and getting it,” Haddock said.

He admitted that it was a very amateur way of training a dog to retrieve; however, that experience stayed with him and has now grown into a full-time job training 36 dogs at a time.

Later in life, he modeled professional trainers who are fellow members of the Neuse

Retriever Club in Kinston. A professional trainer with Neuse Retriever Club taught Haddock how to properly train dogs.

Haddock began training dogs after people took notice of his yellow Labrador Retriever, Camie, who excelled at AKC hunt tests and became a Master Hunter before she turned two years old in around 2012.

“That’s how we got into training - when I started showcasing her in AKC hunt tests, people started calling me to say ‘hey will you train my dog,’” Haddock explained.

As an adult, Haddock maintained a career in the construction industry but trained dogs on the side. Word got out quickly about his successful program. Clients referred their friends to Haddock. Those people became clients who referred their friends and so on. In 2015, Haddock started Feather Point Retrievers. By 2017, he was ready to take a leap of faith and pursue dog training full-time.

“I was like, alright I’m either going to neglect the business I built, or I’m going to neglect the construction company that I work





for,” Haddock said.

When he made the jump, Haddock hoped the phones would continue ringing. Today, there is a six to eight month waitlist.

Not only does Haddock train dogs to retrieve, he trains certain dogs for hunt tests. These tests are administered by the American Kennel Club (AKC) and the UKC (United Kennel Club). Instead of competing against one another, dogs compete against a standard of training and behavior.

“There are three hunt test levels – Junior, Senior, Master, and titles can be earned at each level. Judges score dogs on their natural ability to mark and remember a fall, on their hunting style, perseverance or courage. They are also scored on learned abilities such as steadiness, control, response and delivery,” per the American Kennel Club.

“The Upland test consists of a simulated walk-up with a subsequent quartering or tracking test. The Upland dog is required to honor another dog, be steady to wing and shot and will be presented with a minimum of two birds to flush in the quartering test. Successful completion of each test earns the dog ten points,” per the United Kennel Club.

Haddock has trained multiple Master level Labradors, and is preparing for hunt tests in South Dakota this year.

To a dog, it doesn’t matter if they are learning how to retrieve, practicing for hunt tests or out in the wild with their owner. Each and every scenario is fun to them. Though they appreciate praise (and treats) they view the retrieval as the ultimate reward, Haddock says.

And for the owner, the ultimate reward is having both a companion and retriever in one dog. Knowing their dog saved them thousands in medical bills isn’t half bad either.



Haddock’s affinity for training gun dogs started at an early age doing amateur exercises involving a duck tied to a fishing pole. Throughout the years, he has learned how to properly train gun dogs and has trained several Master level Labradors.

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SIMPLY DELICIOUS

Set the table with an easy feast for fall

FOOD PREP, PHOTOGRAPHS AND STORY BY VAIL STEWART RUMLEY



The days are getting shorter; nights have just a hint of the chill to come. Fall is on its way, and with it, the urge to prepare for the winter to come.

What better way to welcome the new season than preparing a fall feast — one that's deceptively simple, yet doesn't sacrifice deliciousness?

These easy-to-make, impressive-to-guests-and-tastebuds-alike recipes come straight from the kitchens of some of the best cooks Beaufort County has to offer. All that's needed is a house salad on the side to make each a meal to remember. Spice up dinner with Barbara Hagan's Taco Casserole, a versatile dish guaranteed to please. Jingle Robinson's Mediterranean Pasta is the perfect quick meal for the family on the go, and makes for a great leftovers lunch. Ann Venuto's Meat and Ricotta Meatballs can double as both appetizer and entrée, just add a dipping sauce for that fall potluck or pasta of your choice for a sit-down meal at home.

For most eastern North Carolinians, fall feasting isn't complete without a pig-pickin' — and there's no better accompaniment to pork straight off the cooker than a hearty Brunswick stew (maybe some slaw ... and hushpuppies). While both Virginia and Georgia lay claim to being the first to cook Brunswick stew, Charlie Cline's recipe for this traditional fall fare puts North Carolina on the map.

Whether you're on the move or settling in a home, make a feast of your fall nights with these scrumptious suppers. Enjoy!



CHICKEN PARMESAN

Recipe by Vail Stewart Rumley

4 chicken breasts (boneless, skinless); 1 cup Panko; 1 cup Italian bread crumbs; 4 eggs, beaten; 1/2 cup all-purpose flour; 2 tablespoon fresh basil, chopped; 1 tablespoon fresh oregano, chopped; olive oil; 2 jars store-bought marinara sauce; 1 ball fresh mozzarella, sliced; 1/2 cup fresh Parmesan cheese, grated.

Cover a cutting board with clear plastic wrap. Place a chicken breast on the covered cutting board and cover with clear plastic wrap. Use a mallet, a hammer or other tool to gently and evenly pound the chicken breast flat. Set chicken breast aside and repeat with other chicken breasts.

Place flour in one bowl; beat eggs in another, and Panko and Italian bread crumbs in a third bowl.

Dredge each chicken breast first in flour, then egg, then evenly coat with bread crumbs.

Pour 1/4 inch of olive oil in a pan and place over medium heat. Cook each chicken breast until golden. Allow to drain on paper towels.

Coat the bottom of a 9-inch-by-13-inch casserole dish with marina. Place chicken breasts in the dish, cover with marinara, sprinkle with Parmesan, chopped basil and oregano. Top with fresh mozzarella slices.

Bake at 300 degrees for 30 minutes.

**Note: The clear plastic wrap on your cutting board and covering the chicken breasts is solely to prevent making a mess! Also, if you like a little heat, you can spice this up a bit with crushed red pepper flakes.*

CHARLIE'S BRUNSWICK STEW

Recipe by Charlie Cline

"Say Grace," Women of the ECLA Grace Lutheran Church, Washington

2-3 pounds chicken (dark meat); 1-1 1/2 pounds pork; 32 ounces tomatoes; 32 ounces Lima beans; 32 ounces field peas; 32 ounces corn; 2-3 potatoes, cubed small; 1 medium onion; 2 teaspoons salt; 1 teaspoon black pepper; 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes.

Vegetables may be fresh or frozen. Cook chicken and pork together in enough water to cover. Cool. Reserve stock. Skim off most of the fat. Remove bones and chop meat finely. Heat stock with meat to boiling, add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Simmer for 3-4 hours or more, adding water as needed. Caution: scorches easily.



TACO CASSEROLE

Recipe by Barbara Hagan

"Favorite Recipes," St. Clair's Church of Christ, Bath

1 pound ground beef; 1 small onion, chopped; 1 cup salsa; 3/4 cup water; 1 can diced green chilies; 1 package taco seasoning mix; 1 package taco shells, broken, divided; 1 cup mild cheddar cheese, shredded, divided; garnish: chopped tomatoes, green onion, sour cream.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease an 11-by-7-inch baking dish. Cook beef and onion in a large skillet until beef is browned. Drain. Stir in taco sauce, water, chilies and seasoning mix. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low; cook, stirring occasionally for three to four minutes. Layer half of broken shells on bottom of prepared baking dish. Cover with half of meat mixture; sprinkle with 1 cup of cheese. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until bubbly and cheese is melted. Garnish with tomatoes, onion and sour cream. Makes eight servings.

**Note: Another versatile recipe! I made my own taco seasoning — it's easy and you probably already have the ingredients — and used not only taco shells but the remaining tortilla chips in bag that had been in the pantry for a while. Guacamole, chopped jalapeno and chopped cilantro also make great garnishes for this super-easy, super-yummy dish!*





MEDITERRANEAN PASTA

Recipe by Jingle Robinson

"Plate & Palette," Beaufort County Arts Council (Arts of the Pamlico), Washington

4 cups chopped tomatoes, vine-ripened or plum; 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil; 3 tablespoons chopped black olives; 1 tablespoon olive oil; 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar; 1/4 teaspoon salt; 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper; 1 garlic clove, minced; 4 cups angel hair pasta, cooked; 1/4 cup feta cheese.

Combine first eight ingredients in a bowl. Stir and let stand 10 minutes. Serve at room temperature, stirred into pasta. Sprinkle with feta cheese. Yield: 4 small servings.

**This is a very versatile recipe. I added chopped salami, more feta and changed up the pasta to fusilli instead of angel hair. Chopped artichoke hearts and cubed fresh mozzarella would also be great additions*

STUFFED PEPPERS

Recipe by Natasha Green

"Asbury's Olde Tyme, Good Time Recipes II,"

Asbury United Methodist Church, Washington

6 green peppers; 1 pound ground beef; 1 egg, slightly beaten; 1 can tomato soup; 2 tablespoons onions, minced; 1/2 teaspoon salt; 1 cup bread crumbs or rice; dash of black pepper.

Cut tops off of peppers. Remove stems and seeds, turn upside down and drain. Combine meat, onion, salt, pepper, bread crumbs (or rice), egg and 1/2 the can of tomato soup. Mix and stuff peppers. Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes, until done.

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CHICKEN CORDON BLEU

Recipe by Brenda Yert

"Country Favorites," Tri-Community Ruritan Club, Winsteadville

8 (8-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breast halves; 8 slices thin deli ham; 8 slices Swiss cheese; 2 eggs; 1 cup milk; 2 cups crushed cornflakes; 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder; 1/2 teaspoon salt; 1/2 teaspoon black pepper.

Flatten chicken to 1/4-inch thickness. Top each with a slice of ham and cheese. Roll up and tuck in ends; secure with toothpicks. In a small bowl, whisk eggs and milk. In another bowl, combine cornflakes and seasonings. Dip chicken in egg mixture, then roll in crumbs. Place on a greased baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes or until chicken juices run clear. Discard toothpicks before serving.

MEAT AND RICOTTA MEATBALLS

Recipe by Ann Venuto

"Without A Doubt, St. Thomas' Best," St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Bath

1 pound ground meat of choice; 1 clove garlic, minced; 3/4 cup Ricotta cheese; 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese; 2 eggs; 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped; 1/2 cup Sun Dried Tomato dressing; 1/2 cup plain breadcrumbs; 1/4 cup scallions, chopped; salt and pepper to taste.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Combine all ingredients in a stainless-steel bowl; keep the mixture well-chilled. Dip hands into cold water and make meatballs desired size (golf ball size works the best). Place meatballs on a baking sheet and bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes. Serve hot with extra Sun Dried Tomato dressing on the side for dipping or with your favorite pasta dish.

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Explore the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum

FROM NORTH CAROLINA MARITIME MUSEUMS HATTERAS

In 2002, the museum first opened its doors to the public, offering a glimpse into the rich maritime history of the North Carolina coast. The state took over the museum's management in 2007, bringing it under what was then the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources (now the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources). Over the years, the museum garnered support from various sources, including a significant \$4.2 million from the state in 2021 for renovations, along with contributions from Dare County, the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau and others.

The remodeling process began in late 2022, with Riggs Ward Design contracted to create a comprehensive design plan. Collaborating closely with state staff members specializing in maritime history — including exhibit designers, collections specialists and historians — in every step of the design process and the installation, they were able to help shape the exhibit narratives and support them with objects we had in our collection, as well as finding other objects to help tell a fuller and accurate history of our area.

The revamped museum boasts an array of interactive experiences, from touch screens to holographic video displays, providing visitors with engaging ways to delve into the region's maritime heritage. Children, in particular, can enjoy scavenger hunts and tailored programs designed to both educate and entertain.

Notable highlights of the museum include a Monomoy surf boat, a first-order Fresnel lens from the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, and interactive displays showcasing shipwrecks off the coast. The exhibition covers periods from pre-colonial times to the present, offering a comprehensive journey through the region's history.

As visitors step into the museum's lobby, they are greeted by a visually striking space, with a redesigned welcome desk relocated to the center of the room. A curved wall behind the desk helps separate the space and lead visitors



into the gallery experience. The rooms off to the right after entering the lobby are being reworked into a library/education space separate from the main gallery. And the Meekins Chandlery Gift Shop, also located off the lobby, was redesigned to add an entrance from the gallery directly into the shop. Outside, the familiar museum design remains unchanged, with the exterior evoking the timbers of a shipwreck and helping to inspire the interior redesign.

The museum shares so much history related to the North Carolina coast, and staff and volunteers are excited to share these stories with the public. The design is set up so that the space can be adaptable and updated to make it a new experience. The displays themselves aren't just static; they're designed so people can interact with them to form a deeper connection. Educational programming that enhances the main exhibits and allows visitors to explore new activities and ideas will be scheduled throughout the year. These objects on display, the interactive elements and the public programming work together to help connect the state's maritime

history to coastal life today.

This reopening marks the beginning of a new chapter for the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum in exploring and celebrating the rich maritime heritage of the North Carolina coast. There are so many interesting stories that are a part of our shared history. It's a great opportunity to explore more about the region and learn just what makes us so unique — and have fun while doing so.

The museum is one of three sites that comprise the North Carolina Maritime Museum System. The other two are the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Beaufort and the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport. All three museums are part of the Division of State History Museums within the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

The Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum is located at 59200 Museum Drive, Hatteras, North Carolina. They are open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. Donations are appreciated and directly support museum operations.



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Opening day in the dove field

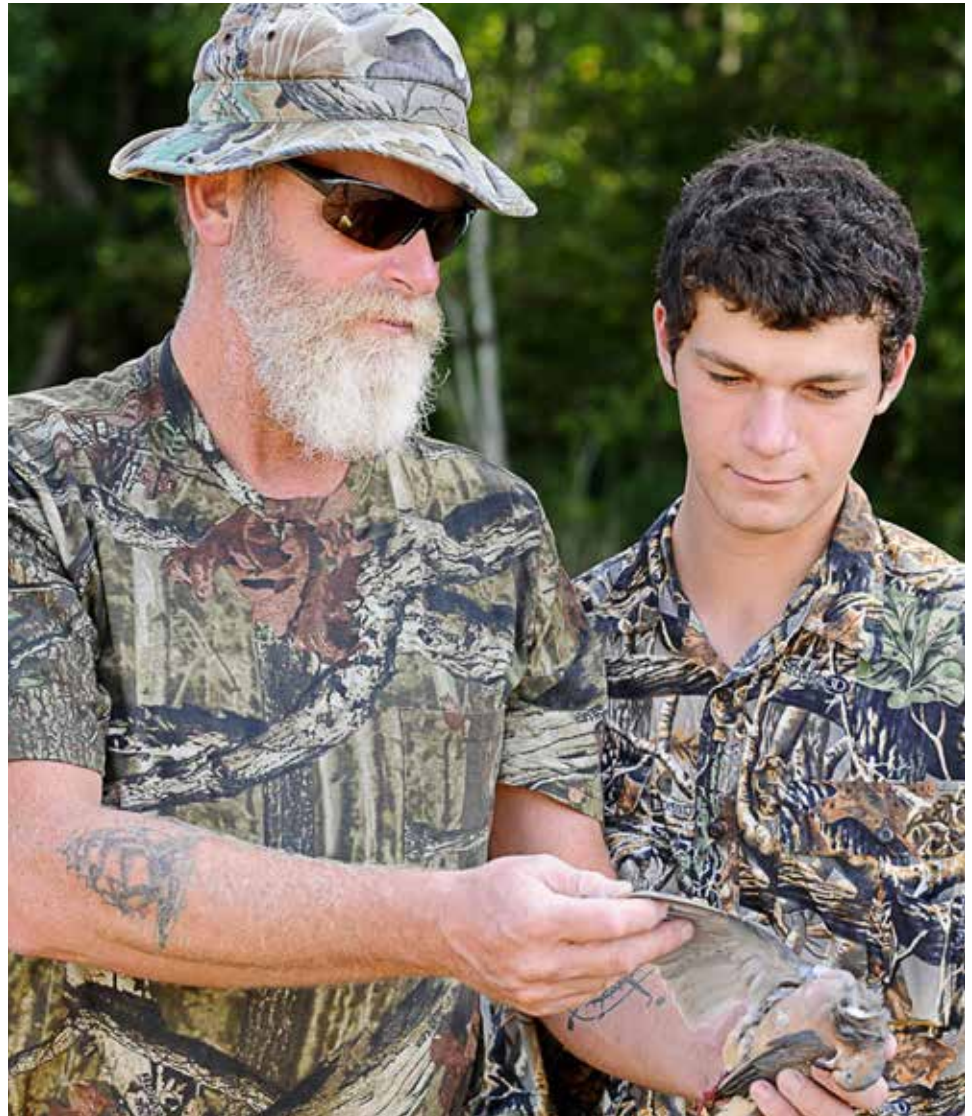
WRITTEN BY SHAWN BENNETT

Once the long, steamy dog days of summer dwindle down late in August, Americans look excitedly to the month of September, with its Labor Day holiday. The three-day weekend right at the front of the month marks the unofficial ending of summer, generally with one last shebang. Families take one last trip to the beach or perhaps grill that last party pack of kielbasa on their patio.

For me, I look forward to Labor Day weekend not just for its end-of-summer parties, but for the excitement it brings in an entirely different but no less significant way. Labor Day weekend signifies the beginning of early fall and the opening of a new hunting season, commencing with a two week stretch of dove hunting.

The Mourning Dove is the most hunted migratory game bird in North America, and can be hunted in 41 states. Hunters harvest around 24 million of these birds each year. For many it's a nice hobby, but big revenue is also involved. Some states boast millions of dollars in seasonal income from dove hunting alone, which indicates the popularity of this most basic of all bird hunting. I say basic, because all you really need is your scattergun with a box or two of shells, a five-gallon bucket for a seat, and a field of cropped corn or sunflowers to park yourself in. And trendy shotguns are not needed to participate. The guy shooting his grandfather's old JC Higgins single shot is just as much at home as the hunter with a Benelli Super Black Eagle.

Unlike other types of hunting, the allure of dove hunting can be found in its simplicity. There is no stalking or calling involved, and very little strategy. Hunters simply sit in the woods-line around the



Gathering in that hot and sweltering dove field on opening day is a time-honored experience like few others, especially in the South. The day is more than a hunt, it's a cultural gathering of high significance.

perimeter of the field, or hide in the field's ditches, for a day of pass shooting at darting and dodging birds that are busy rifling for scattered grains. Due to the speed and erratic flight patterns of doves, hunters need quick reflexes and sharp shooting skills to be successful.

Gathering in that hot and sweltering

dove field on opening day is a time-honored experience like few others, especially in the South. The day is more than a hunt, it's a cultural gathering of high significance. It is a social event on the side roads and dusty corn fields of America, where whole families participate with folding chairs and packed lunches. Many boys and girls will

try hunting for the first time this day, with fathers and grandfathers present to pass down much needed lessons for a new hunter, such as marksmanship, hunter's etiquette and gun safety.

On this particular day, spirits soar from sunup to sundown. Old friends and new acquaintances gather at midfield or at an open tailgate, catching up and sharing everything that has happened since they last hunted. Laughter and heartfelt backslapping is commonplace. The sense of amity and fellowship permeates every aspect of the day as hunters will reminisce of times gone by and how important it is to share days such as this. They will also share how imperative it is to pass along to sons and daughters the traditions that make this day so time-honored and special.

The tailgate itself is a unique part of dove hunting. Hunters will start their morning departing from their truck bed, removing their gear and retriever maybe, and as if on cue, will all return at lunchtime. The familial Igloo cooler will be opened and an array of delicacies will be spread out on the dusty tailgate for all to share. BBQ beans, potato salad, pork ribs, fried chicken and gallons of ubiquitous sweet tea are all staples of the day. Most folks think tailgating started in the parking lots of college football stadiums, but we all know it began somewhere long ago during a day of dove hunting.

The corn fields might be miles away from the football fields, but football does play a part in opening day. One of the other fine elements of September's first weekend is the kick off of the NCAA college football season. Many Saturday gridiron contests are followed from smartphones right there in the cornfield. Hunters check box scores between shots, adding to the day's excitement and anticipation. It's not uncommon to hear a radio-broadcasted game drifting aloft from someone's truck cab deep in the fields. I myself have shouted (spilling a Solo cup of iced tea on myself) from a dove stool cheering East

Carolina University in a close match with NC State.

Finally, as the end of daylight nears, sunburned and dusty hunters congregate once more at the open beds of their trucks for the days final sip of comradery. Contentment lingers in the air long after the birds stop flying. Fathers smile approvingly at their progenies and bird counts are tallied. Good buddies joke about whose shoulder is the sorest or who missed the most. The new guy is invited to come on back any time he wants. Bonds are created or deepened between men caught in the flux of the same passion as they iron out life's kinks, one bird at a time. To them, days like this are long-awaited and greatly needed. The friendships that are forged and fortified afield will last forever.

The fun doesn't end in the field. Afterwards in the kitchen, dedicated hunters prepare the little medallions of dove breasts for eating. Dove meat is tasty and not near as gamey as other birds, especially if you leave them with the slightest bit of pink in the middle. More often or not they are char-grilled to taste after a night of marinating in lemon and herb brine, or oven-cooked with mushrooms, rice and gravy in Grandmama's Corningware.

My favorite way to prepare them however, is to make jalapeno dove poppers. You take big jalapeno peppers, slice them in half the long way, and remove the fiery seeds. In the 'boats' you add a good daubing of cream cheese and insert slender slices of dove breast. Finally, bind them snugly with a strip of bacon, pop them in the air fryer, and roast them at 360 degrees for 12 minutes or until done. Delish!

All of this is why the opening of dove season is more than just a sport or pastime. It's a deeply rooted ritual that brings together family, friends, and heritage. Whether you're a seasoned hunter or a novice, the traditions of dove hunting offer a unique and enriching experience that exemplifies the spirit of rural America.



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NATURAL SOLITUDE

Goose Creek State Park planted in history

BY MATT WINDSOR

What I would prefer to write about is why I love Goose Creek State Park, which is an important part of Washington's natural and cultural history.

Goose Creek was formed as a state park during a very different era of the NC state parks system, in September 1974. Next month marks half a century of existence as a state park, which we celebrated this past New Year's Day with visitors and friends.

Sometimes to see where you are going, you have to look back at where you've been. State parks of the 1970s operated under very different, spartan conditions compared to what we enjoy today, and I think that can provide us a little perspective on what we get to enjoy at the park today and what we might offer in the future. In the 1970s, the state parks system began a period of growth after two very pivotal pieces of legislation that had a profound effect on Goose Creek.

The passage of the bipartisan Clean Water Act of 1972 gave greater protection to our rivers and wetlands. Two years later, the NC General Assembly approved a \$13.9 million appropriation to the NC state parks system, of which Goose Creek State Park was a beneficiary, and along with federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grants, helped build the park's first facilities.

An initial land purchase from Weyerhaeuser Inc., allowed reforestation of the land after generations of timbering the longleaf pine and building of tar kilns changed the composition of the forest.

It was recognized early in the park's



formation that the few remaining longleaf pines on the park needed to be protected, and the park should be replanted with longleaf pine. Some limited replanting of our state tree was attempted back then, and the park began planning prescribed burns (critical to the survival of longleaf) but were not able to implement burns for years after the park's formation due to various reasons.

The park's first superintendent, Lauris Joyner, was trained as a burn boss and was one of the few state park employees in the state conducting prescribed or controlled burns for many years. He put fire on the land on many of the same areas we control burn today.

Today the park staff at Goose Creek is proud to continue to carry that torch that Mr. Joyner lit decades ago to help bring back our state tree to Goose Creek State Park. You can view the longleaf restoration project at the park's visitor center and environmental education center, which was one of the first buildings of its kind in the NC state parks system, funded by a bond referendum in the mid-1990s.

To me what really makes Goose Creek special is that the pace and solitude are what I remember many parks having when I was new in my career in the late 1990s. Walking the shoreline of the Pamlico River or Goose Creek under

bald cypresses, live oaks and Spanish moss can be really moving to a lot of people. You are getting to experience a part of the natural and cultural heritage of North Carolina on the edge of the estuary that is in constant change but will always be here in some form for North Carolinians to enjoy.

I am regularly amazed at meeting people who live locally and have not experienced the park and encourage them to come explore it. It really is a slice of natural North Carolina that was and continues to be worth preserving.

Matt Windsor is the Superintendent of Goose Creek State Park.



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