

TPO News, Events and Opportunities



Upcoming Events

August 20 at 10:00 a.m. -

Regular Monthly Meeting at Middleton Park next to Town Hall. Seating is limited please bring a chair if you are able.

Water Your New Plantings!

In this sandy soil we are always a week away from drought conditions. Mulch helps but sandy soil does not retain moisture well. It takes two years for a planted tree to become established.

UNCW Partners With Oak Island

We've been trying to connect the town of Oak Island with UNCW for a few years, seemed like a perfect marriage. The recent Memorandum of Understanding with UNCW certainly didn't hurt (July Town Council meeting / Memorandum of Understanding). A meeting was facilitated with Amy Long, Department of Environmental Services, Restoration Ecology Lab, and Brice Taylor, Stormwater Administrator, and Kristen Bauer, Town GIS Administrator.

What was to be an introductory meeting turned into an hour long discussion. Everything from dune restoration to stormwater/beach road flooding to mapping with drones was discussed. The town was receptive to everything, and as Bruce recently said to me, " What a great meeting we had, this would help our department in so many ways." We are currently waiting for the proposal from Amy.

Small steps can result in bigger things for our environment. Think globally, act locally.

Submitted by Chris Riegert

About Us

Tree Peace OKI is a 509 (a) (2) non profit incorporated in the State of North Carolina dedicated to promoting and educating about the value of trees to Oak Island, NC. We may endeavor to influence legislation for that purpose but we may not support any candidates or political parties.

Contact us

We meet the third Wednesday every month at 10:00 a.m. Message us on our Tree Peace OKI Facebook page.

Our Officers

Phil Dudley, President

Paula Byerly, Vice President

Eileen Soderberg, Treasurer

David Merkle, Secretary

Join or Donate to Tree Peace OKI

at treepeaceoki.org

A one year membership is only \$20

Member Profile ~ Pat Young

Oak Island's very own 'Johnny Appleseed' lives among us – who knew?! In Young, a transplant (no pun intended!) from New Jersey, we find a self-taught horticulturalist who toils and tinkers in his yard, experimenting with a wide variety of citrus plants as well as species more native to our coastal environment.

From oranges, lemons, and pears, to apples,

clementines, peaches, and cherries – he cuts and propagates species to better acclimate them to the local conditions. This includes de-sanding his entire back yard to create the healthiest soil, and treating it with fertilizers and growth products year-round. He says **EVERYTHING** requires a lot of water, owning 4 rain barrels as testament.



Pat in his happy place

Growing citrus on Oak Island is not an easy endeavor, but Patrick has managed to create an amazing grove of fruit-bearing bushes and trees in his garden. Residents in the Yaupon neighborhood may know of his curb-side offerings or impromptu classes on planting and managing their selections. Multiple beehives are cozy with a fig plant in a corner of his back yard, and will

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eventually be graced with a trellis of hanging wisteria.

This island Eden includes Japanese maples, a huge ordinary maple, crepe myrtles of all sizes and shapes, a record-size mum, as well as oddball plants tucked in here and there – a result of plant-swapping with friends or a trip to Wilmington’s Arboretum on sales day. Patrick is most proud of his dwarf Live Oak, something you are not likely to see anywhere else. It took years of nurturing to create this unusual plant. Two “teen-age” Live Oaks in Patrick’s front yard are super healthy due to a regimen of de-branching the upper center of the trees. Again, who knew?

Retired from a career as a consultant/salesman in banking, he and his wife moved to Oak Island in 2016, they moved into their self-designed home by 2018. Patrick was ready to immerse himself in gardening – one of his many passions. He was immediately drawn to the native plants and their resistance to heat, wind, sun, and storms. His yard is home to dozens of Live Oak seedlings which he has offered to distribute for free at TreePeaceOKI’s tent during the island’s final summer Festival on August 30 in Middleton Park.

TPO truly appreciates Patrick’s generosity, and looks forward to workshops he will be offering to our membership and beyond. We have certainly found a local treasure with a VERY green thumb!

Submitted by Judy Reid

A Big Success Story In The Making...

Several of us were sitting around a dining table early in 2025 pondering how we could ignite a fire beneath our floundering non-profit group TreePeace. Our membership numbers were lacking despite a good following on Facebook. Our meeting attendance was small. We were without a Treasurer and soon to be without a Vice President. We had a paltry bank account. Our visibility in the Town was minimal to nil. To put it bluntly our existing leaders were wondering whether our group and its goals had much of a future in Oak Island!!!

But Hark! we had some important intangible assets that we either overlooked or underestimated that could energize us despite all the gloomy pessimism: 1. We had some highly worthy goals that the public at large was sympathetic to, 2. a new Town Council, Town Manager, and Town Forester that were willing or wanting to work with us, 3. A group of about a dozen of our members who were willing to go out and do some physical work and get their hands dirty digging, mulching, tree trimming, organic feeding of trees on public land (ie street Right -of -Ways) etc., and 4. importantly-a core group of leaders who were steadfast in the belief that their Town was named after a tree, had a unique beach town environment with

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trees, had an official Town Seal featuring trees and beach, and a Town that had made commitments over the years to govern always considering our trees and environment.

So, we went to work. We needed to expand our membership and hoping that we would attract people willing to take on leadership roles. Fortunately, two newer members quickly stepped up and volunteered to take on our vacancies of Vice President and Treasurer. That was a biggie and wow...how great that has paid off! We needed to increase our public visibility. We needed to require membership dues-to 'walk the walk' and also not be shy asking for donations for our cause. And we got many! At several town events in Middleton Park we set up a tent, handed out information on trees and environmental topics, met numerous people, got new memberships and collaborative supporters. More of these events are upcoming. We began handing out business cards to people and businesses. We began a newsletter that extended way beyond our membership. We made a handful of trips to Penderlea Farms Nursery in Burgaw to accept donated trees that we were able to offer to property owners for donations and gain them as Members of TPO. We have also donated \$1,000 to the Town's 'Tree Fund' account on Arbor Day and another \$2,000 most recently. Another recent exciting initiative is underway whereby local businesses (or individuals) can purchase a sponsorship in return for advertising and public relations on TPO's website, newsletter, and public event postings. These contributions will be entirely donated to the planting of new trees.

Q. So where does all of that get us and all the other tree supporters in our Town?

A. A long, long way.

First of all; TreePeace paid membership has gone from about 20 to 77 in a matter of just several months who, as dues paying members (and a number of them donors beyond membership), are willing to be more active advocates for tree preservation and re-planting of trees.

Second: We have caught the attention of Town Council and Staff as a group who they trust to partner with on projects.

Thirdly; TPO is continuing to build and collaborate with others to build a consensus for our cause.

Fourthly; We have established our organization as one that is not just a fringe group of complainants or extremists-but one that works cooperatively and realistically with others to achieve common goals of tree canopy preservation and restoration.

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So, on one hand 'Hooray to us!' On the other 'Thanks to all who have helped us become more meaningful.' But...were not finished folks! We are seeking a lot more members, more leaders, new sponsors. We're asking all our friends to join us, help us grow, and preserve our Island town. Talk to your neighbors, your friends, and your church and club acquaintances and ask for their support. The time is right-let's not waste it!

Submitted By David Merkle

Recognizing our Sponsors!

Live Oak Level Sponsors



Magnolia Level Sponsors

Yaupon Holly Level Sponsors

Pelican Pack and Ship

Brunswick Beacon