

Originally from New York and Connecticut, I moved to Greenville, SC from Rochester, MI in 2008 and loved vacationing on HHI so when retired, that was where I wanted to be! Moved here July 2014 and so enjoyed walking Sea Pines beaches - even in winter - knew nothing about anything. In late spring of 2015, am beach walking with friend and come across 2 ladies near beach exit, one of whom has her arm in a significant hole, extracting 'ping pong' balls from the hole with other person putting them in a bucket. Whatever is going on? Cannot resist asking... Little did I know the SIZE of that ignorant question!!!!

Person with arm in the hole is Amber Kuehn (marine biologist and manager of Sea Turtle Patrol) and she says they are relocating sea turtle nest eggs! I say something stupid like 'What are Sea Turtles?' Banter continued with my kindergarten level questions; Amber (as always and everywhere) is patient with replies and info as they persist with their task - and now my curiosity is really aroused. She invites me to learn more by attending Sea Turtle talks at Sonesta Resort which I continue to do often - great info there and I progress to the 'honor' of assisting/setting up the room and props at those talks.

MY Sea Turtle enthusiasm/curiosity grows large, but WHAT? I learn from Amber that Sea Pines has yet to catch the bait of Loggerhead Sea Turtle excitement! A challenge arises as to how to educate and excite Sea Pines. I discuss with friends Melissa Krauss, Mary Ryan and Jackie Rosswurm: We need to have Amber come give a turtle talk! How, where when???? Mary (in charge of interest groups for our Women's Club of Sea Pines) and Melissa advise forming a turtle interest group. Amber says great and will be our mentor/advisor. Jackie on board but must 1st join the Sea Pines Women's Club - she does.

Thence, the 1st meeting of Sea Pines Turtle Trackers occurs on April 6, 2016 in Mary Ryan's living room. In addition to aforementioned 3 plus Amber and me, are Sigrid Carlson, Babs Erny, Cathy George, and Donna Tuttle. We are excited! Agenda is a Turtle Talk!!! We hopefully wish it should be at Sea Pines Beach Club - popular but pricey amenity of Sea Pines Resort. Choose June as a good time... After some disappointing stabs for use of venue, we cajole/harass enough to get a YES for use of upstairs banquet room GRATIS! Mutually is decided for Wednesday, June 8th (2016). Thankfully Turtle Trackers has attracted new members Colleen Thompson, Mary Page Boyd, Deb Gillette, Kathy Jo Holleran, Linda Crowe, Annette Walker, Christine Beal, Rita Kernan for a new total of 16!

Intention and date now nailed. Told that room accommodates 135 people. How are we going to fill it with people? No money, slim connections. All hands forward!!!! Creating a flyer and slathering it EVERYWHERE with strong focus on FREE - no charge for talk or at the gate and drum up email blasts from WCSP, SP Mens Club, SP Country Club plus blurbs from Outside Foundation, HH Monthly, Salty Dog, and new FB page.

155 people show up - grabbing extra chairs to seat them - the excitement was HUGE!! The sunlight thru the large windows not welcome, our available audio not great but STILL, Amber delightfully informs, entertains, and enthuses a contagious crowd!!!!

Turtle interest spreads with consistently growing membership plus significant assist from Bob Gosset at Salty Dog who allows us to set up a Sea Turtle Learning Station under a canopy near the popular ice cream window where our members greet and educate curious tourists and residents on Sundays and Mondays. Plus a "Be Cool - Keep the Turtles in the Dark" tee shirt is designed and Bob donates \$5 from every shirt sold to Turtle Trackers and Sea Turtle Patrol! That enabled us to get up and running in a myriad of ways and make a significant turtle difference not just in Sea Pines but over Hilton Head Island!

Turtle Trackers have now grown to 350+ members island wide. Our ongoing mission remains to support the preservation of our Sea Turtles by educating awareness and enthusing Sea Turtle interest and preservation. A primary effort toward that is supporting Sea Turtle Patrol HHI with physical participation - Turtle Tracker 'beach ambassador' volunteers are on our beaches daily to answer questions, incite awareness, encourage beach rules plus filling holes and removing obstructive beach litter.

All the above said, whether you are here to enjoy our island short time or often, we invite you "to catch the bait of Loggerhead Sea Turtle excitement on Hilton Head Island"!