

2023 PONY SWIM SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Please note, pets are not permitted on Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, in Memorial Park, or at Carnival Grounds.

Friday, July 21, 2023

Carnival – 7pm – 11pm. Rides, games, food, live music, Bingo, and raffles. Tickets for the Neptune Pony go on sale at the Information Stand! Tickets are \$1 each. You must have a ticket and be present at the carnival bandstand at 7pm on Wednesday to win. Trolley Service available with last call at 10pm in front of Carnival Grounds.

Saturday, July 22, 2023

South Herd Roundup – 7am -The “Saltwater Cowboys” will ride out to the southern end of Assateague Island to herd the more than 50 ponies (adults and foals) into the Southern Corral. The public may come view the arrival of the ponies at the Southern Corral on Beach Road. The ponies will be here Saturday through Tuesday for photos and viewing.

Carnival – 7pm – 11pm. Trolley Service available with last call at 10pm in front of Carnival Grounds.

Sunday, July 23, 2023

North Herd Roundup – 6am (dependent on weather) - The northern end of Assateague Island VA is home to the largest population of ponies and their foals (about 100-150). The “Saltwater Cowboys” herd this group into the Northern Corral. PLEASE NOTE, the public does not have access to this event.

Monday, July 24, 2023

Beach Walk – 6am - The “Saltwater Cowboys” release the Northern herd ponies at daybreak and walk them along the shore of the Atlantic Ocean to join those in the Southern Corral. It is advised to be at Assateague Island National Seashore by 6am for parking purposes. Refuge gates open at 5am. Bring your beach gear and stay for the day or walk behind the ponies to the corral and visit awhile. Bikers and hikers may access the beach via Swan Cove Trail.

Carnival – 7pm – 11pm

Tuesday, July 25, 2023

Vet Check and Selection of Buyback Ponies – South Corral. Approximately 9am. - We want to be sure our ponies are healthy for the big swim. The public may view the ponies in the Southern Corral during the veterinary checks. Parking is available in the lot at Woodland Trail.

Carnival – 7pm – 11pm

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

Shuttles – Begin at 5am and end one hour after ponies arrive at the Carnival Grounds (free). See attached shuttle information and map.

Pony Swim – 8:30am – 10:30am window - At “slack tide”– The Chincoteague Ponies will swim across the Assateague Channel, led by the Saltwater Cowboys, just south of Veterans Memorial Park (7427 Memorial Park Dr.) on the east side of Chincoteague Island called Pony Swim Lane. Folks wishing to view the swim from Pony Swim Lane are advised to wear appropriate attire—old clothing and closed toe shoes or muck boots—as this area is very muddy and has oyster shells.

There is no charge by the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company or Town of Chincoteague for parking or viewing Pony Swim. There is no public parking at Veteran’s Memorial Park. All those seeking handicap parking and all day-trippers are encouraged to go to the Municipal Center (6150 Community Drive) and catch the free shuttle. There will be a handicap

accessible bus for your convenience. Those staying on the island may catch a shuttle bus near their lodging.

Charter boats and kayak tours/rentals are also available for watching the Pony Swim. Call the chamber office at 757-336-6161 for assistance in finding available seats. Spaces fill up quickly so don't wait until the last minute.

The first foal to come ashore will be named King or Queen Neptune and will be given away in a raffle drawing at the carnival grounds bandstand at 7pm. Tickets are sold each night at the carnival and during the wait time for the swim. You must have a ticket and you must be present to win.

After swimming the short distance across the channel, the ponies will rest for approximately 45 minutes to an hour before "parading" to the carnival grounds on Main Street. See shuttle bus map for parade route.

Trolley Service – Begins at 1pm

Carnival – 7pm – 11pm

Thursday, July 27, 2023

Auction of Foals – 8am at Carnival grounds. - The annual pony auction raises funds for the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company and veterinary care of the ponies and serves to control the pony population on Assateague Island. Foals will be auctioned at 8am on the Carnival grounds, and winners will receive certificates of purchase from the CVFC.

Select ponies, designated as "buy backs," will also be auctioned, but returned to the herd to help maintain the population. Each winner of a "buy back" pony gets to name their adopted pony. The "buy back" auctions are typically the most popular at this event, so if you're interested in naming a Chincoteague pony be ready to bid!

A few tips to remember:

1. Be there early if you wish to bid on a pony. The crowds are huge and you will want a space as close to the front as possible.
2. Wear a sun hat and sunscreen. Bring plenty to drink. A pencil and paper are always useful. A camera is nice. A folding chair is a great idea as bleachers will not be available due to insurance restrictions.
3. You do not have to register for the in-person auction. If you raise your hand during the auctioneer's chant, you ARE MAKING A BID. New in 2022, online bidding is also available during the live auction and registration is required. More information is available at www.chincoteaguechamber.com/auction-day/.

Trolley Service – 8am – 12pm

Carnival – 7pm – 11pm

Friday, July 28, 2023

Pony Swim Back – **TBD** - Ponies will leave the Carnival Grounds. - On Friday morning, the adult ponies make their swim back to Assateague Island where they will live...until it's time for the Pony Swim next year!

Carnival – 7pm – 11pm. Trolley Service available with last call at 10pm in front of Carnival Grounds.

Saturday, July 29, 2023

Carnival – 7pm – 11pm. Fireworks at 10pm. Trolley Service available with last call at 11pm in front of Carnival Grounds.

Follow the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce Facebook page
www.facebook.com/chincoteaguechamber/ for videos and pictures of Pony Swim festivities!

PONY SHUTTLE BUS INFORMATION

1. Buses will begin operation at 5 a.m. from Chincoteague Municipal Center at 6150 Community Drive. This service is free.
2. All visitors riding the Pony Shuttle will be taken to Veteran's Memorial Park. This **is not** the pony landing site. If you wish to go to the landing site, you will need to walk from Veteran's Memorial Park. Seating is not provided at either location. The pony landing site at Pony Swim Lane is marshland.
3. A large screen will be located in Veteran's Memorial Park with a live feed of the swim.
4. Volunteer guides are available on some buses to assist you. Other volunteers will be available to answer questions.
5. Please **be prepared** for hot and humid conditions on swim day. Bring plenty of water, sunscreen, and insect repellent. Pony Swim Lane is marshland so wear proper shoes. Flip flops not recommended.
6. Parking for persons with disabilities is available at the Chincoteague Municipal Center, 6150 Community Drive, ONLY. There will be a bus to transport to Veteran's Memorial Park. Parking is **very limited**. *No handicap parking will be available at Veteran's Memorial Park as in past.* Please see a Pony Shuttle Volunteer for assistance.
7. Day visitors should use Chincoteague Municipal Center, 6150 Community Drive. Turn left at the stoplight at the foot of the bridge. Proceed to Chincoteague High School and turn right onto Hallie Whealton Smith Drive. Continue as directed by Town officials. There may be some parking available at the Chincoteague Carnival Grounds, 3648 Main Street. Shuttles stop in front of the Carnival to go to the swim and return behind the Carnival grounds. There is no parking at other pick-up points.
8. Please remember where you are parked. Parking Lot A (Municipal Center), Parking Lot B (Elementary School), Parking Lot C (Island Nature Trail), Parking Lot D (Donald Leonard Park/High School) or Carnival.
9. The shuttles will leave the Municipal Center and pick up in locations along Maddox Boulevard and Main Street. Please look for the Pony Shuttle Stop Signs. There are no stops south of the Carnival.
10. DECISION! Immediately after the swim, two lines will form in the front of Memorial Park (*where you were dropped off for the swim*). One line is for transportation to the **Carnival** (*where the ponies are going*) and one line is for transportation to the **Municipal Center, motels, and other locations**. If you are going to a motel, you will first be transported to the Municipal Center where connections may be made to your lodging.

11. You must be in line to get shuttle transportation at Memorial Park. Please be patient after the swim! In the several hours before the swim, we transport thousands. We cannot accommodate thousands immediately after the swim. If you paid to park in areas around Memorial Park, you will need to walk back to your car as **there are no stops at the park after swim site is empty** (*approximately one hour after swim*).
12. Walking from the swim site to the Carnival after the swim is recommended. The distance is approximately 1/2 mile.
13. If you walk from Memorial Park to the pony landing site, you must return to the front of Memorial Park **within 30 minutes** of the ponies coming ashore.
14. **If you take a shuttle to the Carnival, you will not be able to reload on a shuttle until the SWIM SITE (Memorial Park) is emptied.**
15. **Buses will begin to load after the ponies arrive at the Carnival. Service from the Carnival will continue until APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR AFTER THE PONIES ARRIVE.**
16. Vehicle travel will be extremely heavy in the Carnival area and throughout the Island after the swim. Several of the roads from the swim site to the Carnival will be closed until after the ponies arrive. (Main Street south of Jester Street, Bunting Road, Ridge Road south of East Side Road and Beebe Road). Please do not attempt to go back to your car then drive to the Carnival. You will hold up traffic!
17. A **long** single-file line will form behind the Carnival immediately after the ponies arrive. The end of the line is to the south of the corral. You must get to the end of the line and work towards the buses. Be sure everyone in your party is counted for loading. The line moves quickly as buses become available.
18. After the swim area is cleared, there will be no further stops at Memorial Park. Buses will **only** be available behind the Carnival on Willow Street.
19. **The last bus leaving from behind the Carnival on Willow Street will be approximately 1 hour after the ponies arrive at the Carnival.**
20. Please do not carry large coolers, large strollers, yard/porch chairs or large umbrellas on the buses. **Bring only what will fit in your lap.**
21. The "Pony Express", the Island's trolley system, will begin service across from the main entrance of the Carnival Grounds on Main Street **at approx. 1pm**. The fare is 50¢ per person. [View trolley brochure and schedule](#).
22. Buses will run on WEDNESDAY ONLY. **Bus Stops for Pick-up** [Stops are subject to change]

ROAD CLOSURES

On Pony Swim Day, starting at approximately **4:30am** the following street closures will be in effect: - Willow Street from Jester Street to Bunting Road - North bound traffic on Deep Hole Road from Taylor Street to Hallie Whealton Smith Road - Memorial Park Drive

At **8am**, Bunting Road will be closed.

Once the flare goes up and until the ponies have cleared the streets, the following street closures will be in effect:

- Main Street from Jester Street to Beebe Road
- Ridge Road south of Sunset Drive to south of Beebe Road
- Beebe Road
- Eastside Road from Ridge Road to Sunnywood Drive

SHUTTLE STOPS

Municipal Center at Deep Hole Road Trolley Stop Day Visitors and Handicapped Visitors should report here. There is no parking at other pick-up points. There will be one handicap accessible bus.

Corner of Maddox Boulevard and Deep Hole Road Serving Chincoteague Inn, Atlantic Shores Inn & Suites, Sea Hawk Motel, America's Best Value

Corner of Main Street and Taylor Street (On Way Back to Municipal Center) Serving Island Resort, Holiday Cottages

Corner of Main Street and Clark Street Serving Watson House, Inn on Main, Comfort Suites, Hampton Inn & Key West Cottages

Corner of Main Street and Church Street At Don's Seafood Restaurant serving Channel Bass Inn & Miss Molly's Inn

Corner of Main Street and Marlin Street (BEFORE SWIM ONLY) At Fairfield Inn

Main Street Between Marina Bay/Anchor Inn & Waterside Inn (BEFORE SWIM ONLY)

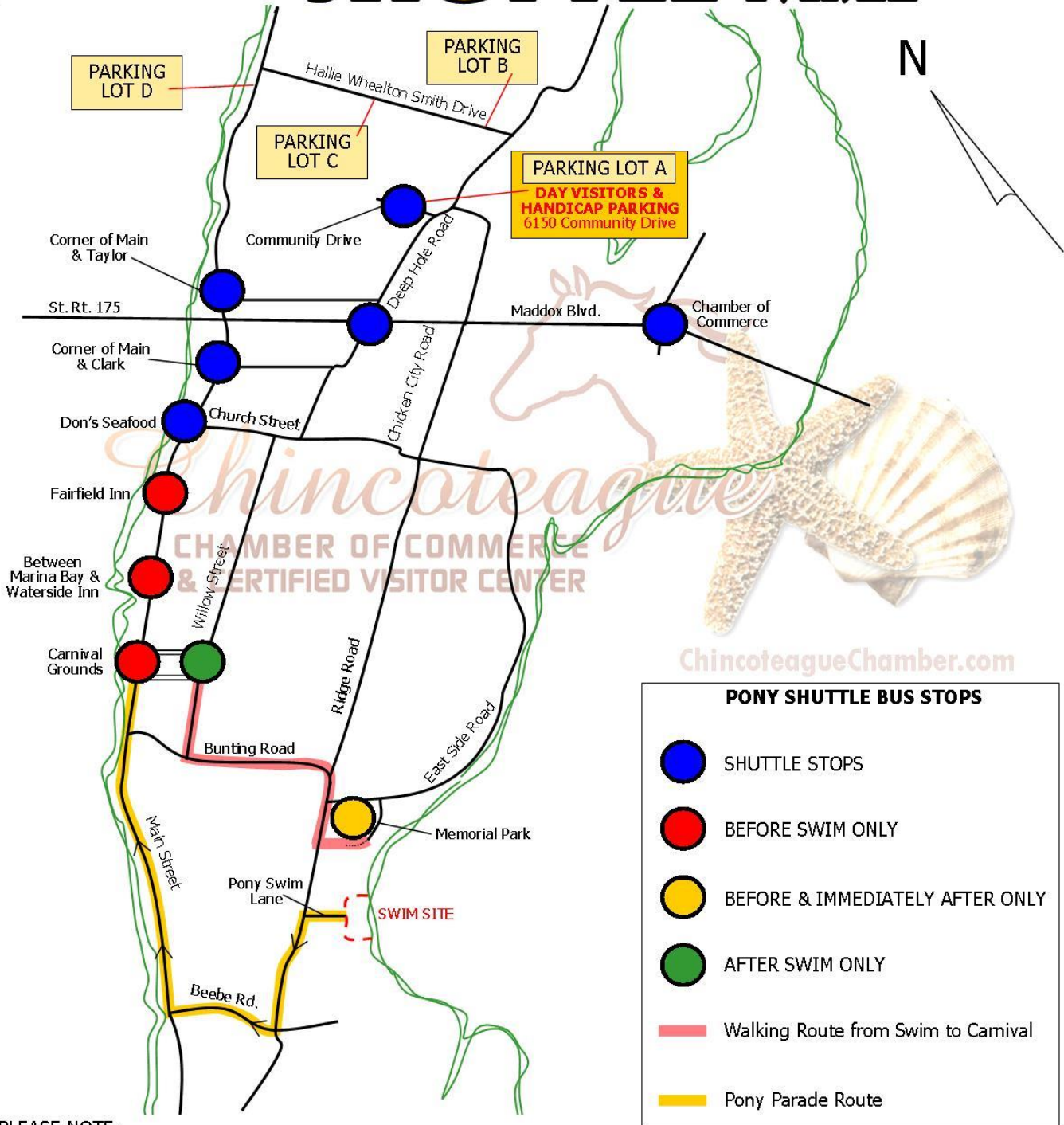
Traffic Circle on Maddox Boulevard At entrance of Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Camp-Resort serving Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park, Days Inn, The Reef Vacation Villas, Refuge Inn, & Best Western

Memorial Park Closest stop to the Swim Site. After the Park is empty this will not be a stop. (Before and Immediately After Swim Only)

Carnival Grounds Stop at front of Carnival Grounds BEFORE SWIM ONLY. Stop behind Carnival Grounds AFTER SWIM ONLY.

BEGINS AT 5 AM

2023 PONY SWIM SHUTTLE MAP



PLEASE NOTE:

HANDICAP PARKING is only available at Municipal Center.
TOUR BUS PARKING is available at Memorial Park (call Kelly at 757-336-6519 for directions & further instructions)

Official Pony Swim shuttle map provided in cooperation with the [Town of Chincoteague](http://TownofChincoteague.com) and the [Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce](http://ChincoteagueChamber.com).