



NORTH CAROLINA AQUARIUM AT PINE KNOLL SHORES  
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### **Aquarium Pier at Emerald Isle Advisors Appointed**

The North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores and the Town of Emerald Isle have chosen eight members of a new advisory committee to help guide development of the proposed Aquarium Pier at Emerald Isle.

Emerald Isle Mayor Art Schools said the abundance of highly qualified applicants made the choices difficult. A total of 31 people applied.

“We generally have people that are willing to serve in Emerald Isle, but we have never had this much interest,” he said. Due to the enthusiastic response, the Town Board converted a slot designated for a Town Commissioner to an at-large position, allowing more citizen participation.

Aquarium Director Jay Barnes said the Town and the Aquarium thank all those who applied. “Their input still will be welcome as the plans progress,” he said.

Under their partnership agreement, the Aquarium and the Town each appointed four members, representing specific interests, and a wide variety of backgrounds.

“They will bring a lot of different points of view to the table,” Barnes said.

The committee will advise the Aquarium and the Town on design, and eventually, on operation of the complex. General plans call for a 1,000-foot, concrete, storm-resistant ocean fishing pier; a pier house to include classrooms, meeting space and exhibits; and a sound-side fishing dock and kayak launch.

The Town is in the process of conveying the 4.5-acre Eastern Regional Ocean Access to the state for the pier. Eight miles from the Aquarium, the site stretches across Bogue Banks at about its midpoint. The oceanfront was home to the privately owned Emerald Isle Fishing Pier until it fell victim to hurricanes in the mid-1990s.

The Aquarium’s positions and appointees are:

- *Current Aquarium Advisory Board member:* Randy Mason of Emerald Isle. He has served in this capacity since July 1995. Before his retirement, he coordinated education and outreach programs for the North Carolina Coastal Federation, a prominent environmental advocacy organization. He continues to serve on the federation’s board of directors.
- *Research community representative:* Rick Luettich, director of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Institute of Marine Sciences in Morehead City. Luettich is an active participant in the Marine Science and Education Partnership (MSEP), a consortium of area marine science institutions and organizations. He was MSEP’s consensus choice for the pier committee. He also is a former member the Carteret County Board of Education.
- *Surfing community representative:* Greg “Rudi” Rudolph of Emerald Isle. Rudolph owns Emerald Isle Surf Shop, a few hundred yards from the pier site. He has been surfing locally and elsewhere for more than 25 years. He also is engaged in beach renourishment issues as the Carteret County Shore Protection Manager.

- *At-large member:* Alex MacFadyen Jr. of Raleigh. A part-time resident of Emerald Isle, MacFadyen is a retired group vice president and corporate secretary of First Citizens Bank. He is a past chairman and a current member of the North Carolina Aquarium Society Board, which supports the three state Aquariums. He also is active on a number of other statewide committees and boards.

Emerald Isle's slots and appointees are:

- *Neighboring property owner:* Don (Donalt) Eglinton of New Bern. Eglinton has owned a home in the Emerald Bay Villas for more than a decade, and is active in the homeowners' association. Eglinton is an attorney with Ward and Smith. He is an avid outdoorsman, and a long-time member of the North Carolina Aquarium Society.
- *Avid fisherman.* Richard Ehrenkaufner of Emerald Isle. Also known as "Dr. Bogus," Ehrenkaufner is recognized as one of a foremost pier, near-shore and sound fishing experts of Bogue Banks. He conducts a weekly radio fishing report and writes fishing columns for local publications.
- *At-large member:* Mal Boyette of Emerald Isle. He has fished Bogue Banks since 1965, including on the old Emerald Isle Pier – the site of the proposed new Aquarium Pier – for 30 years, as well as on the Bogue Inlet Pier, and in the surf. A permanent resident since 1989, he served on the Town Planning Board in the 1990s.
- *At-large member:* Jim Woolard of Emerald Isle. Now manager of the Island Harbor Marina, Woolard began a relationship with the Emerald Isle Pier in the 1960s that continued until the pier was destroyed. Woolard worked at the pier's snack bar and was a fisherman, lifeguard and surfer. He has served on the Town Board of Adjustment, and on a committee to research relocating the Bogue Inlet channel.

The pier advisory board will meet for the first time in March, coinciding with architect selection. "Then we can really get down to business," said Barnes. "We have the funds allocated to complete all the engineering, permitting and design work." The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries last year awarded the project \$2.2 million from the Waterfront Access and Marine Industry Fund for planning and site preparation.

The North Carolina Aquariums Division, under the Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources, also plans to build piers near the other two state Aquariums, at Fort Fisher and on Roanoke Island. Barnes said the Aquarium Pier at Emerald Isle Advisory Committee would closely watch advancement of the first of the three projects, the Aquarium Pier at Nags Head. Initial construction bids opened last month exceeded expectations.

"The Aquariums are working to close the gap through negotiations with the contractors," Barnes said. "We are optimistic that the Aquarium Pier at Nags Head will be under construction soon."

The rapid disappearance of ocean piers due to hurricanes and economic factors prompted the state efforts. Aquarium staff views the piers as a means to promote conservation through exhibits, and with programs that are educational as well as recreational.

Websites for the Aquarium and the town – [www.ncaquariums.com](http://www.ncaquariums.com) and [www.emeraldisle-nc.org](http://www.emeraldisle-nc.org) – will carry updates on the Aquarium Pier at Emerald Advisory Committee meetings and other progress on pier plans.

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*Photo: Aerial view of future site of Aquarium Pier at Emerald Isle. North Carolina Aquariums photo by George Mitchell.*