

Outer Banks Citizens Request Buxton "New Ash Wednesday Inlet" TO BE CLOSED

The North Carolina State Highway Commission Raleigh, North Carolina
Gentlemen:

We, the undersigned, civic organizations, taxpayers, citizens of the Outer Banks of North Carolina, et al., urgently request your honorable commission to close and keep closed the inlet created during the recent March storm, two miles north of Buxton, N. C. We urge prompt action for the following reasons:

SAFETY AND ECONOMY

It is a well known fact that other inlets along the North Carolina coast which were not soon closed by the natural elements of tide, water, and sand, continued to expand in width and depth. The recent inlet south of old Hatteras Inlet started as a small stream about 600 feet wide and is now a half mile wide; Drum Inlet likewise, and the several inlets between Portsmouth and Drum inlet, did likewise. The State of North Carolina has during the past three years spent thousands of dollars on surveys and sand fences in a long range plan to stabilize the Banks to prevent the ocean from flooding the mainland farms of several counties. It is the opinion of many engineers and residents, that, if the small streams cut by storms had been closed soon after being cut, and subsequently maintained, hundreds of thousands of dollars would have been saved.

The Highway Commission has well considered the building of a bridge across Oregon Inlet, now under construction. The undersigned interest is most grateful for the Four Million Dollars which has been appropriated to build this bridge which will be the greatest benefit to all the Outer Banks. We are opposed to keeping the Buxton inlet open. We, especially those who consider the economic interest of the taxpayers as one of the paramount factors, believe that the cost to keep the inlet open, would require dykes and/or breakwaters at a cost of many times that of closing the inlet. In other words we are opposed to burdening the State and/or the Federal Government in spending another four million dollars unnecessarily when a small fraction of such amount, if prompt action is taken, would be sufficient to close the inlet.

FISHING GROUNDS

Proponents of keeping the inlet opened advocate a benefit to our fishing industry. This we deny. Ask any commercial fisherman or fish dealer in the Core Sound area if the inlets on Portsmouth Island have created a boom in the fishing industry. It is evident that former residents of Portsmouth Island have moved away on account of recessions in the supply of fish and oysters. Furthermore, legislation is now being proposed to subsidize commercial fishermen who claim that they no longer can make a living fishing. Legislation has been proposed to aid fishermen similar to paying a farmer for not planting and cultivating a crop. If open inlets had produced fish as alleged by proponents of keeping inlets open, the Core Sound fishermen would be in a better position. There are sufficient inlets for commercial and sport fishing without spending millions to make and maintain more inlets.

PRESSURE OF PAMLICO SOUND

It has been claimed by proponents that keeping the inlet open "would relieve the pressure of that body of water on the Outer Banks." The undersigned are willing, and indeed hope that Col. Brown and other authorities will answer this claim.

REVITALIZING FISHING, OYSTERING, AND SHRIMPING

Proponents claim the inlet would revitalize the seafood industry around Pamlico Sound by increasing the salinity of the water therein. This we deny and are willing and hopeful that the Department of Conservation and Development in collaboration with our Wild Life Resources are the best authorities to determine the validity of this fantastic claim.

THE INLET AS A HARBOR OF REFUGE

Proponents in their petition claim that keeping the inlet open will afford an important harbor of refuge to fishing fleets and may be useful to military services, etc. This we do not deny. However, we do not believe the State or Federal Government is in a financial position for building such a harbor when there are greater and more immediate needs for government expenditures, including the aid for rehabilitation of destruction to government and private property resulting from damage inflicted by the Ash Wednesday storm. We believe our present administration will not and should not consider favorably the keeping of this inlet open for the purpose of serving as an additional harbor of refuge.

Your favorable consideration is solicited,

Respectfully submitted:

TO: The Honorable Terry Sanford, Governor of North Carolina; The Honorable Herbert C. Bonner, United States Congressman; The Honorable Sam J. Ervin, Jr., United States Senator; The Honorable B. Everett Jordan, United States Senator; The Honorable Conrad Wirth, Director, National Park Service; The Honorable Merrill Evans, Chairman, North Carolina Highway Commission; The Honorable M. Keith Fearing, Jr., Dare County Representative; The Dare County Board of Commissioners and to others whom it may concern.

The undersigned petitioners represent that they are citizens of Hatteras Island or of Dare County in North Carolina, or that they are property owners therein, or that they, each and every one, have some other vital compelling interest in the advancement, safety and well being of the area of this concern;

That they are advocates of the premise that the Inlet cut across Hatteras Island during the Ash Wednesday Storm of March 7th, 1962 should be closed without delay and that they base this opinion on observations and experience accumulated over a long period of time and that this knowledge is extended by study of the behavior and effects that other inlets have made on the Outer Banks;

That they are interested in the safety and well-being of the people on Hatteras Island and in the economic advancement of the region;

That, giving full consideration to any advantage which might accrue as a consequence of the inlet being maintained at this particular place, they feel that the immediate and long range disadvantages far outweigh any benefits which may be received, and more particularly as follows:

1. The Inlet will present a formidable barrier to transportation which will seriously impair the availability of the area south of the inlet to the tourist and sports fisherman, thus causing a marked decline in the capability of those interests affected to make a living.
2. The inlet cannot be immediately contained and to do so as a long range project would be enormously expensive which could not justify the expected benefits.
3. The Inlet is located in an especially unprotected spot and maintaining a bridge across this waterway will be very expensive and there would be a danger of periodic wash-outs and of being cut-off from natural access without notice from time to time.
4. The Inlet will prove to be an ever widening waterway, consuming large amounts of land along its southern margin, and will eventually close leaving great stretches of marsh and swamp to the detriment of the outer banks as a whole, and which will further cause this, the narrowest stretch of the Island, to be more subject to erosion and more difficult to protect and build up.

In all these considerations it is respectfully represented and requested that immediate action be taken to close the inlet by dredging up material from the Pamlico Sound bottom, replacing the land in the same or an improved manner as that prior to the storm or in any other manner which might be feasible to accomplish the same purpose.

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- Danny Garrish
- Elisha K. Esham
- Alice K. Rondthaler
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- Violet Austin
- Stockton Midgett
- E. B. Ballance
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- Anderson Midgett
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- D. S. Skiles
- Ulysses Peele
- Hal Gray
- H. L. Oden
- Murray Styron

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- Beatrice Peele
- Leo Peele
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- Gene Newcomb
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- Helen Austin
- Humem Gaskins
- Daisy Gaskins
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- G. H. Ballance
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- Nacie Austin
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- Tine Ballance
- Minnie G. Ballance
- Ruby H. Oden
- Lovie Burrus
- Joe N. Rollinson
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- Irma Austin
- Evelyn Styron
- Rosie Rollinson
- Myrtle Ballance
- Lizzie Austin
- Ervin L. O'Neal
- Daisy O'Neal
- Clarice Gray
- Brittice Burrus
- Annie Stowe
- Alice A. Gray
- Charlotte Ballance
- John L. Austin
- Ralph Gray
- Thelma Gray
- James F. Shipman

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- Lee Robinson
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- Robert Austin
- Joyce Austin
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- Neva Gillikin
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- Thelma Gray
- James F. Shipman
- Rachel Ballance

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- Charlie H. Ballance
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- Maud W. Job
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- Talmage Willis
- Eugenia Willis
- Alonzo Willis
- Patricia Willis
- Josephus Willis
- Lora Willis
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- Johnie O'Neal
- Dexter Stowe
- Lillie Peele
- Eliza Peele
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- Don Oden
- Brittice Gaskill
- Ina Fulcher
- Leven Fulcher
- Geardine Fulcher
- Florence Layne
- Rony Gaskin
- Lola Gaskins
- Gwendalyn Evans
- Tine Ballance
- Lila Mae Waterfield
- Alice Oden
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