

For Immediate Release

February 24, 2025

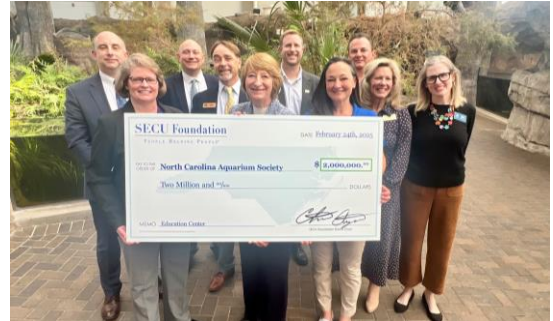


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## SECU Foundation Awards \$2 Million Grant to Support Expansion of the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher

**KURE BEACH, N.C.** – [SECU Foundation](#) has awarded a \$2 million capital grant to the [North Carolina Aquarium Society](#), contributing to the expansion of the [North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher](#) (NCAFF). The development project will increase the interactive space at the state’s most visited aquarium and include a new education center to serve North Carolina students.

Operated under the [North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources](#), the North Carolina Aquariums include three aquariums and Jennette’s Pier. They welcome more than 1.4 million visitors annually. About 500,000 of those guests visit NCAFF, including tens of thousands of students, who visit on field trips. Through engaging and immersive educational activities, the Aquariums foster a deeper understanding and connection to aquatic environments with the hope that visitors are inspired to protect them.



Holding the check left to right are SECU Foundation Board Vice Chair Mona Moon, North Carolina Aquarium Society President and CEO Liz Baird, and NCAFF Director Joanna Zazzali, surrounded by SECU Foundation, SECU, and NCAFF employees and board members from the North Carolina Aquarium Society.

“We are so pleased to be a part of the expansion of the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher,” said SECU Foundation Board Vice Chair Mona Moon. “With the SECU Foundation grant and the support of many others in the community, improvements made to this landmark Aquarium will propel it to a world-class facility for our state. With a new education center and other exciting additions to be announced later this year, even more visitors from all corners of our state and beyond can engage with our coastal ecosystems and aquatic environments.”

“On behalf of the North Carolina Aquarium Society, we are immensely grateful for this generous grant from the SECU Foundation,” said Society Board Chair Drew Covert. “Among other exciting renovation plans, this grant will fund the creation of a new educational center – one that extends beyond the Aquarium walls to provide truly immersive experiences for students in North Carolina who need it most.”

“We are honored to have the ongoing support of the North Carolina Aquarium Society and their important collaborative work with partners like the SECU Foundation to bolster the North Carolina Aquariums,” said North Carolina Aquarium Division Director Hap Fatzinger. “The North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher renovation and expansion is the most consequential project since the creation of the marine resource centers nearly 50 years ago. We are excited for what’s ahead and the lasting impact this will have on our state.”

**About SECU and SECU Foundation**

A not-for-profit financial cooperative owned by its members, and federally insured by the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), SECU has been providing employees of the state of North Carolina and their families with consumer financial services for 87 years. SECU is the second largest credit union in the United States with \$53 billion in assets. It serves more than 2.8 million members through 275 branch offices, 1,100 ATMs, Member Services Support via phone, [www.ncsecu.org](http://www.ncsecu.org), and the SECU Mobile App. The SECU Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization funded by the contributions of SECU members, promotes local community development in North Carolina primarily through high-impact projects in the areas of housing, education, healthcare, and human services. Since 2004, [SECU Foundation](#) has made a collective financial commitment of over \$300 million for initiatives to benefit North Carolinians statewide.

**About North Carolina Aquarium Society**

The North Carolina Aquarium Society is a nonprofit (501c3) organization dedicated to supporting the North Carolina Aquariums through private fundraising, membership, and revenue generation. Established in 1986, the Society partners with the Aquariums to enhance exhibits, animal care, education programs, and conservation initiatives beyond what state funding provides.