

Subject: Duke Marine Lab Drone Policy

Background. Aerial drones, when operated responsibly, can be amazing tools for marine science research and education. Platforms, sensors, and applications are evolving daily and the Duke Marine Lab will stay at the forefront of these technologies in a safe and responsible manner.

Duke University Drone Policy at <https://drones.duke.edu/policies> addresses flying on and off Duke University property to include complying with FAA Section 333, Part 107, student research, and hobbyist rules. This policy letter builds upon the Duke Drone Policy as it relates to aerial drone flying at the Duke Marine Lab.

Policy. The Duke Marine Lab is within Beaufort town limits, less than one nautical mile from the airport, and in the vicinity of active boating and recreational areas. In addition to these mission planning considerations, drone use must also not conflict with academic and research programs in the region. To do so, the following will apply to aerial drone flight operations on Duke Marine Lab property:

- All hobby operators will have an Academy of Model Aeronautics membership and will be a member of the student-led Duke Marine Lab AMA Club affiliated with the Duke Marine Robotics and Remote Sensing (MaRRS) Lab.
- All drone operators will receive an orientation from the MaRRS staff prior to flying at Pivers Island to highlight the unique nature of flying on the island.
- The MaRRS staff has excellent rapport and flight coordination procedures established with the Beaufort Airport (Michael J. Smith Field). Prior to aerial drone flying, all operators will work with the MaRRS staff to attempt to notify the Airport Manager with flight time, location, and altitude.
- The primary Duke Marine Lab flight launch and recovery area is defined in Attachment 1. Launch and recovery of aerial drones outside of the defined area will be considered exceptions and coordinated with the MaRRS staff.
- All flights will avoid non-participants, boats, vehicles, and recreational activities in accordance with FAA guidelines and Duke University Drone Policy.
- Damage to drones is the responsibility of the operator.
- Reckless, unauthorized, or inappropriate flight activities will result in suspension of flight privileges as determined by the Duke Marine Lab Deputy Director. Appeals of suspension will be reviewed by the Duke Marine Lab Director.
- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Andrew J. Read, Director

Duke Marine Lab

Attachment 1 – Duke Marine Lab primary flight launch and recovery area

