

# Tenn. group rallying for South Carolina-moored Navy submarine Clamagore

Associated Press  
Aug 13 2014 6:19 pm



Patriots Point has been considering its options for the fate of the submarine Clamagore, which has been a part of the Mount Pleasant state-owned tourist attraction since 1981. File/Brad Nettles/Staff

A group from East Tennessee is trying to rally support to bring the submarine Clamagore, now at Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum, to that region.

Josh Richardson and the Friends of the Clamagore told the Knoxville News Sentinel that Knoxville would make an ideal location for the historic submarine.

"We really have no dedicated military history museum as such here in East Tennessee," Richardson said. "We have all kinds of different museums and markers and historic sites to go to, but there's not a single, consolidated location that presents the military history of East Tennessee. Trying to bring a World War II-era sub here would be a way to anchor that. If she came here, she'd be the only historic vessel inland in the Southeast."

The Navy sub was commissioned in 1945 and spent decades in service during the Cold War. It was decommissioned in 1975 and has been on display at the Patriots Point waterfront in Mount Pleasant since 1981.

It is the only sub of its kind to be preserved in the U.S. and has been named a National Historic Landmark. But it needs repairs estimated at about \$4 million, according to Patriots Point Executive Director Mac Burdette.

The submarine can't technically be sold to anyone who will take it. The buyer would have to prove to the Navy, who approves such transactions, that it can fund its repairs and annual upkeep of \$250,000.

Patriots Point has an agreement with Reefmakers, a Florida-based organization that specializes in sinking vessels to create artificial reefs. The organization would be responsible for locating a community that would pay to make it environmentally neutral and transform it into a reef - a project that could also cost millions.

"If a group offers to buy the sub, the contract will allow for their offer to be considered," Patriots Point spokesman Chris Hauff said.

Richardson said he thinks enough funding can be raised to restore the vessel and transport it to Tennessee. He is hoping the sub can be anchored at Fort Loudoun Lake.

"She's the last of her kind left," he said. "It's physically possible to bring her here. It can be an economic generator that draws people into the museum, and that way we won't have a piece of our nation's history sitting at the bottom of the ocean."

There seems to be growing support for bringing the Clamagore to East Tennessee.

"We're very interested in it," Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett said. "It's just a huge undertaking. If it's my money, I can be emotional about it, but with the taxpayers' money, it has to be vetted."

Abigail Darlington of The Post and Courier contributed to this report.