



Naples Pier during Hurricane Ian



Naples Pier a day after Hurricane Ian



Artist rendering of future Naples Pier

Photos & illustration courtesy City of Naples. Reprinted with permission.

"[The City of Naples Biological Assessment] was one of the best written assessments I've ever reviewed! This level of information greatly assisted in my review and increased my response time."

– U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
August 22, 2025

Disaster Reconstruction Approvals

CLIENT

City of Naples, Florida

BACKGROUND

In 2022, Hurricane Ian caused catastrophic damage to the historic City of Naples Pier, the region's major tourist attraction with more than 1 million annual visitors. That year, City officials applied to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for emergency reconstruction authorization. In 2024, Naples decided it wanted a larger pier and applied to the Corps for a Standard Permit, which involves a more rigorous approval process.

In January 2025, after substantial delays and no clear path forward, the City retained Dawson & Associates to help secure project approval and improve relationships with officials at the Corps and other federal agencies.

RESPONSE

Given the challenges of working across multiple federal agencies, Dawson assembled a team that included a former Corps Deputy Commanding General, a former Corps District Commander, a former Chief of the Regulatory Technical Section at Corps Headquarters, a former Director of National Oceanographic & Atmospheric Administration Operations, and a former Regional Director with the USFWS.

The Dawson team quickly identified principal causes of permitting delays. These included Section 7 consultation and the Naples' funding application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) involving dual-track environmental reviews across federal agencies.

The Dawson team worked closely with the City's environmental contractor to produce a biological assessment which the USFWS used to produce its biological opinion (BO) in five days (well below the 135 days statutorily allotted for BO completion).

The Dawson team also coordinated funding and permitting efforts with city, county and federal officials resulting in Naples receiving its Corps of Engineers permit and emergency federal funding within the calendar year.

Ultimately, this led to the start of construction on the new Naples pier in January 2026.