

Ocean Ridge Nearshore Reef Project

Project Plan



Nearshore artificial reef construction



Photo Credit: Steve Anton

The Problem

- Waters off the coast of Palm Beach County have some of the most diverse populations of marine organisms along the east coast and are sensitive to changes.
- Shoreline stabilization projects which provide storm protection to beaches can also impact naturally occurring nearshore reefs.

The Solution

- Construct artificial nearshore reefs using limestone boulders and pre-fabricated modules to compensate (or mitigate) for unavoidable impacts.

Project Location

- Starting approximately 250 feet south of the South Lake Worth Inlet running southward approximately 2000 feet along the shoreline.

Benefits

- Provides additional shallow water habitat for hundreds of species of fish, crustaceans, and other marine organisms.
- Adds additional areas for snorkeling, diving, and fishing, reducing pressures on natural reef systems.

Project Overview

- Serves as mitigation for the Ocean Ridge Shoreline Protection Project.
- Construction of over 5 acres of nearshore reef habitat located in 6 to 12 feet of water to replace and mimic those reefs impacted from these shoreline projects. Reef tops in the shallow areas will come within 1 to 2 feet of the surface and 6 to 8 feet below the surface in the deeper areas.
- Site was selected to provide beach park users with additional recreational opportunities for snorkeling and fishing.
- Reefs will consist of 1-2 ton boulders placed within discrete piles or reef pods measuring 20 feet by 40 feet and spaced 30 feet apart.
- Approximately 62 reef pods will be placed east of the existing nearshore reef where a foundation of rock lies just below the sand providing support for the weight of the new rock.
- Construction began July 2009 and is expected to continue through August and September 2009.

Project Partners

PBC Department of Environmental Resources Management, PBC Tourist Development Council, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, United States Army Corps of Engineers



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