



RISSA

***ROTARY INITIATIVE FOR
SUBMERGED SEAGRASS AWARENESS***

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

BETWEEN

ROTARY CLUB OF VERO BEACH

ROTARY CLUB OF VERO BEACH SUNRISE

AND INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

INITIAL DESCRIPTION & PURPOSE

This project, upon permitting, is intended to preserve approximately 450 acres of existing grass flats that lay west of the barrier island and east of the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW). These shallow grass flats are well known among local anglers, fish ecologists and the scientific community, as “The Moorings Flats”.

In addition, at the center of the flats is a small oyster bar. The oysters at the south end of the bar are primarily old shells but at the north edge they are still alive and accreting. This is a unique location that warrants further investigation to see if an enhancement effort is possible with the variables and conditions that are required to support an expanded oyster colony. Based on recent research in this area, it appears the 16” X 16” mats with the affixed shells may work well at this location.

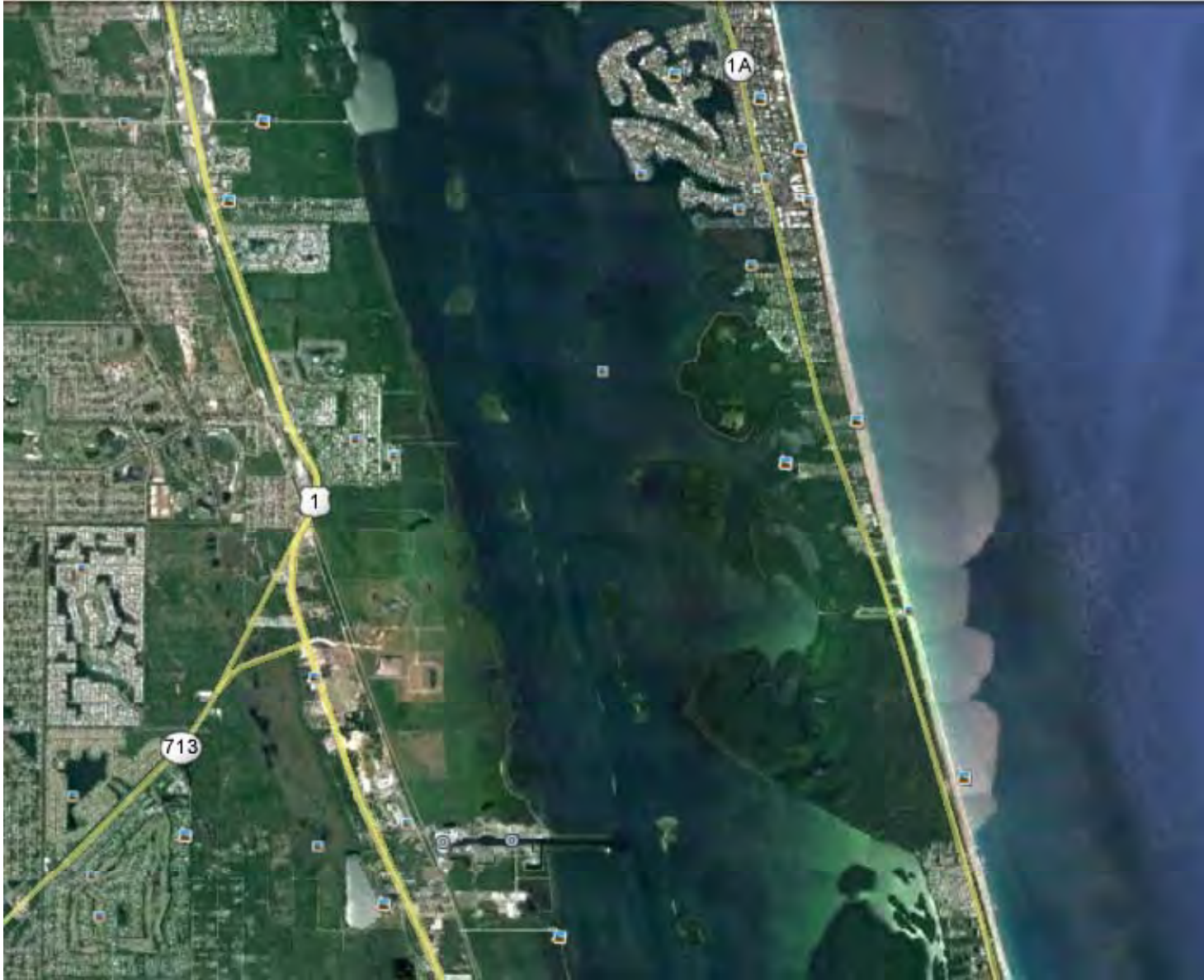


A solution to preserve the seagrass meadows, that seems viable, is one structured on Educating the Public by establishing an informational zone permitted through the FWC (Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission) in Tallahassee, Florida.

Some immediate advantages are:

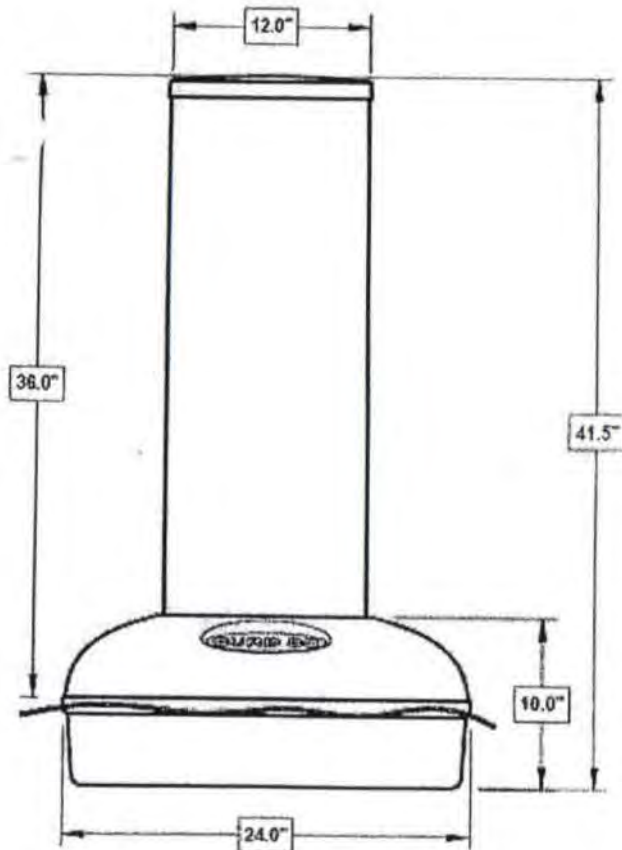
- Identifies the preservation area with a visual aid (24 low profile tethered buoys) at the perimeter of the project site.
- Preserves the seagrass bottoms and reduces further prop scar damage.
- Allows informed boaters to operate their outboard engines over and around the entire 450 acres for access to the ICW.
- Will allow the damaged seagrass (prop scars) to heal in time.
- Will enhance the fishery in coming years.
- An expanded oyster colony will help clarify the water by filtration.
- Will reduce vessel impact with grazing manatees.
- Will reduce “water rage” between anglers, pleasure boaters, kayakers, canoers and operators of personal watercraft.
- In no way does this project, as an Informational Permit from the FWC, prohibit boaters access to, safe passage over or circumnavigation around the 450 acres within the buoyed area. This project is educational and informational, not regulatory or enforceable.





CURD BUOYS

A lighter version of our Figure 29, this highly visible, self-righting buoy is well suited for all conditions and is especially great in shallow applications.



Height: 41.5"
Can Diameter: 12"
Collar Diameter: 24"
Visibility: 36"
Weight: 50 #

Advantages:

- Shallow draft (5")
- Stable in strong currents
- Durable ABS plastic outer shell

Options:

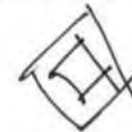
- Can be fitted with lantern
- Pick-up eye
- Internal radar reflector
- Stainless steel hardware
- Colors: Red Channel marker, Green Channel marker with flat cap, yellow for special purpose markers



Message(s)/Symbol Required:

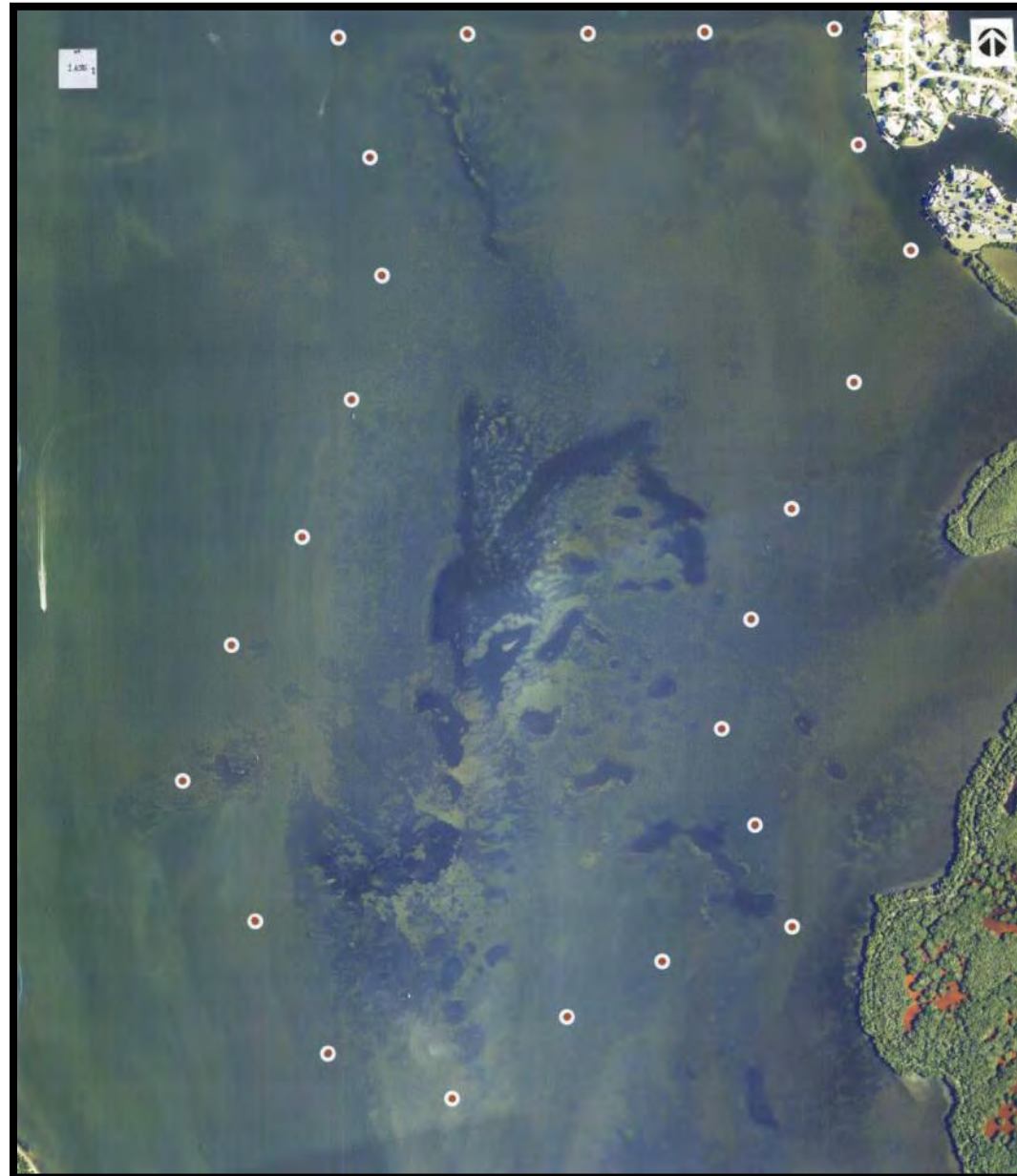
TEXT WILL READ:

CAUTION



SEAGRASS

BUOY LOCATIONS



RAMP SIGN



“RISSA” ROTARY INITIATIVE FOR SUBMERGED SEAGRASS AWARENESS



ATTENTION BOATERS:

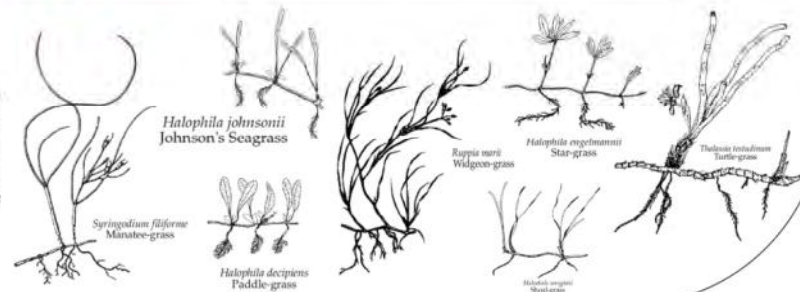
The Purpose of the “RISSA” initiative within the Indian River Lagoon is to preserve submerged seagrass meadows in the area depicted here, known as The Moorings Flats. This flat is now surrounded by white marker buoys that state “Caution Seagrass Area” in an effort to raise awareness of the presence of submerged seagrass that are critical to the survival of the Lagoon Fisheries. The seven varieties of seagrass that exist in this area are illustrated below. Boaters are urged to use caution in this defined area when operating their combustion engines over the seagrass beds to prevent prop scarring. Trolling motors and push poles are recommended in navigating this area.



Coastal Conservation Association
recommends catch and release in this area.

The “RISSA” project is funded through a Public / Private Partnership by the Rotary Clubs of Vero Beach and Vero Beach Sunrise and the Indian River County Commission, established in October 2012. Our combined efforts are intended to educate, rather than regulate, water related activities within this economically valuable resource area within one of the nations most diverse estuaries.

FWC Permit #12-1234











“RISSA” BUY-IN

The following agencies, scientists, individuals, not for profits, permitting agencies and similar groups have been contacted over the last three years in an effort to inform them of the RISSA (Rotary Initiative for Submerged Seagrass Awareness) project and garner their support and possible resources to bring RISSA to reality:

- 1) Dr. Grant Gilmore, Fish Ecologist and senior Research Scientist at Estuarine Coastal and Ocean Sciences, Inc.
- 2) Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Society
- 3) CCA (Coastal Conservation Association) Treasure Coast, Norm Ridgley
- 4) The Indian River Keeper, Marty Baum
- 5) Dr. Richard Baker, Audubon Society IRC
- 6) Warren Falls, Managing Director ORCA (Ocean Research and Conservation Association, Inc)
- 7) Dr. Jorge Rey, University of Florida, IFAS Florida Entomological Laboratory
- 8) Marine Resources Council, Captain Brian Carmen, Board Member
- 9) Justin Riney, Founder “Mother Ocean”, Vero Beach
- 10) Representative Debbie Mayfield, 80th District, Florida House of Representatives
- 11) Dr. Mary Rice, The Smithsonian Marine Ecosystems Exhibit, Ft. Pierce, FL
- 12) Charles Jacoby, scientist with St. Johns River Water Management District
- 13) Douglas Carlson, Director Indian River County Mosquito Control District



“RISSA” BUY-IN

- 14) R. Leroy Creswell, University of Florida Sea Grant Extension, Ft. Pierce
- 15) Indian River County Commissioner Peter O’Bryan
- 16) Indian River County Commissioner Bob Solari
- 17) FIND Commissioner for IRC Bruce Barkett
- 18) Dr. John Scarpa, Research Professor Florida Atlantic University at HBOI
- 19) Carl Greene at The Nature Conservancy
- 20) Peter Tyson, private homeowner in St. Christopher Harbor S/D
- 21) Laura Herren, DEP Aquatic Preserve Manager
- 22) David Leuthje, Surveyor with Carter Associates of Vero Beach
- 23) Shaun Davis, Permitting Officer with FWC, Tallahassee
- 24) Dr. Dennis Hanisak, Research Professor, Associate Executive Director HBOI
- 25) Cara Perry, Director of External Relations, HBOI
- 26) Janet Alford, Executive Director, HBOI Foundation, Inc.
- 27) Ken Gruidens, Director Indian River Land Trust
- 28) Emmanuel Tormes, Special Assistant to the Governor, Tallahassee
- 29) Mike Kreuser and Tom Juliano, Moorings Anglers Association
- 30) Various local newspaper and magazine writers and publishers



“RISSA” BUY-IN

- 31) CCA (Coastal Conservation Association) State President Ted Forsgren
- 32) Twelve local licensed Fishing Guides in Indian River and St. Lucie Counties
- 33) Larry Parks and the Rotary Club of Vero Beach
- 34) Board of Directors, Rotary Club of Vero Beach Sunrise
- 35) Dr. Margaret Leinen, HBOI and FAU associate provost for marine and environmental initiatives
- 36) National Geographic Wild on video shoot in IRC August 2012
- 37) Mr. George Lamborn, President SBPOA

“RISSA” – FINAL STEPS TOWARD PERMIT & INSTALLATION

- 1) Fundraising **Completed**
- 2) Place 1” diameter schedule 40 PVC pipes around the area of preservation and GIS/GPS each location. Fill in Lat/Long data in WGS 84 Datum on Waterway Marker Permit Application. **Not Yet Completed**
- 3) Complete the Florida Uniform Waterway Marker Application FWCDLE 153 (07/2010) 68D-23, 104 F.A.C. and submit to Shaun Davis at the FWC. **Completed**
- 4) Submit a Schedule for Maintenance to FWC with permit application. A 6 month and 3-year inspection is required, but no formal reporting is required to FWC. A courtesy memo is requested by FWC at the end of each 3-year inspection. **Completed**
- 5) Receive Letter of No Objection from:
 - USCG United States Coast Guard Miami, FL **Not Yet Received**
 - USCOE Army Corps of Engineers, Cocoa, FL **Received**
 - DEP Consent of Submerged Landowner, Central District (Indian River County), Orlando, FL **Not Yet Received**
- 6) Order the 24 buoys and 6 fixed signs. Install all units. **Not Yet Completed**

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