

THE PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO CONSERVING AND PROTECTING FLORIDA'S MARINE RESOURCES

SEAWATCH

PRESENTED BY **CONTENDER**

SPRING 23



**REDFISH
RESTOCK**

2023
STAR

**OYSTER LAKE
RESTORATION**



THE FRIENDSHIPS AREN'T THE ONLY THINGS BUILT TO LAST.

Your time on the water is precious. You return, season after season to make unforgettable memories, fight a few fish, reconnect with friends and re-center yourself. If you count on having this time, you need an outboard you can count on to power it. **That's why boaters choose Yamaha for the long run. For life. Because reliability starts here.**

Reliability Starts Here.®



REMEMBER to always observe all applicable boating laws. Never drink and drive. Dress properly with a USCG-approved personal flotation device and protective gear.
© 2022 Yamaha Motor Corporation, U.S.A. All rights reserved. 1-866-894-1626

features



STAR 2023 | 14



Multi-Year Scholarship
Program Partnership | 32



Oyster Lake
Restoration | 50

departments

advocacy news	6
habitat update maps	44
picture it	57
save the date	61
don't miss it	63

contents

THE PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO CONSERVING AND PROTECTING FLORIDA'S MARINE RESOURCES

Sea Watch is published three times a year by CCA Florida, a nonprofit state affiliate of the Coastal Conservation Association.

Editorial/business inquiries and information requests: Mary Hillyer Walther, P.O. Box 568886, Orlando, Florida, 32856-8886 407-854-7002

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CCA Florida, P.O. Box 568886, Orlando, Florida, 32856-8886

407-854-7002 • ccaflorida.org

Managing Editor
Mary Hillyer Walther

Creative Director
Debbie Dewell
Great Minds, Inc.
850-386-7401

Printer
Durruprint,
Tallahassee

CCA FLORIDA STAFF

Brian Gorski
Executive Director

Adam Miller
Chief Operating Officer

Trip Aukeman
Director of Advocacy

Frank Gidus
Director of Habitat
& Environmental
Restoration

Mary Hillyer Walther
Director of
Communications

Denise Perine
Controller

Zack Batley
Senior Regional Director

Mandy Tuckus
Director of Events
& Membership

Will Ramsby
Regional Director

Jimmy Michaels
Regional Director

Sara Anderson
Regional Director

John Woodward
Regional Director

Logan Kennovin
Assistant Regional Director

Andrew Danter
Logistics, Procurement
& Inventory Manager

Leiza Fitzgerald
STAR Director

Andrea Gillispie
Assistant STAR Director

RHODAN MARINE SYSTEMS: OFFSHORE ANCHORING SPECIALISTS



NMEA 2000® Compatible
Full Integration with Simrad®
and Lowrance® MFD's
Secondary control of
the motor from the helm



Precision dynamic positioning
to hold location within a 3 foot
circle, even in rough water

30% to 50% longer battery life due
to advanced motor & electronics
technology

36" to 96" shafts & highest thrust
for vessels up to 40 ft & 15,000 lbs

36v - 120 lbs Thrust
24v - 80 lbs Thrust
12v - 55 lbs Thrust

Official Trolling Motor
of CCA Florida



SET IT. FORGET IT. CATCH MORE FISH.

RhodanMarine.com | 941-706-4578 | Sarasota, FL

RHODAN
HDGPS ANCHOR+

REDFISH RELEASE RESTOCK

CCA Florida's East Coast Redfish Restocking Initiative

Anglers on Florida's east coast know that the redfish population has declined in recent years. And at CCA Florida, we know that something needs to be done to ensure this iconic fishery is healthy for generations to come.

We're working with our partners to restock Florida's redfish population and you can help. Phase I of our east coast redfish restocking initiative includes the raising and release of up to 100,000 juvenile redfish, but we can't do it without you.

With your support, we can meet our \$100,000 goal, which will fund the equipment, feed and other supplies needed to support the effort. Feeding the broodstock and juveniles is a \$25,000 annual cost alone! Get more information online and donate today.

Corporate partnerships are welcome. Learn more online.

DONATE NOW

releasethemfortomorrow.org



A letter to Bill Bird, Chairman of CCA National Government Relations Committee from John Hadley, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator & Fishery Economist, regarding Snapper Grouper Amendment 46 (recreational permitting & reporting)

Dear Mr. Hadley,

Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on Snapper Grouper Amendment 46 options for private recreational vessel permits to fish for snapper grouper species and to revise private recreational reporting requirements.

CCA has long supported the concept of recreational fishing licenses to better define the universe of participants and improve accountability and reporting for recreational harvest. We believe that licenses are key to better understanding the economic potential of the recreational sector and to providing socio-economic information which, ideally, would be used to base fishery management decisions for the vast portion of the public that participates in marine fisheries.

The need for improved recreational data is a hot-topic issue in the South Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico, but it is critical to point out that the recreational sector has supported these efforts for decades and the results to date from NMFS have been disappointing. In almost every instance, recreational anglers were the driving force to improve their own data and they have been frustrated by the lack of a cohesive plan to utilize it properly. Compounding that frustration, in some aspects of the federal fisheries management system the recreational sector is often portrayed as almost defiantly unaccountable and as a problem to be controlled rather than as partners with which to collaborate. The end result is that while anglers most certainly see the need for better data, they are growing suspicious of efforts like A46 that propose yet another permitting process without any indication that it will be any more acceptable or useful than previous federal efforts.

A cursory review of relevant and relatively recent events across the nation shows the extent to which recreational data problems have been identified repeatedly and yet no satisfactory, systemic solution has been presented:

Summer Flounder

- 1991 - is declared overfished. Quality of recreational data in the fishery called into question.
- 2000 - National Resources Defense Council sues NMFS over summer flounder quotas. Anglers demand better data as it is discovered that some MRFSS estimates are driven by single intercepts.
- 2008 - State of New York sues NMFS over MRFSS claiming that state-level allocations that harm the state are based on flawed data.
- 2010 - Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) demands MRFSS be scrapped. Letter signed by scientists and state directors states, "Closures based on fatally flawed data have deep and broad economic consequences."

Black Sea Bass

- 2009 - Mid-Atlantic black sea bass closure based on unsure science. Anglers demand a survey that is actually useful for management.
- 2017 - The black sea bass debacle ongoing. New York State

managers write letters to the Mid-Atlantic Council complaining about the poor-quality MRIP data being used to take drastic management action ..



Gulf Red Snapper

- Late 1990s - the Gulf red snapper debacle begins in earnest, with tighter regulations and shorter seasons impacting recreational anglers. Quality of recreational data comes into question.
- 2006-2017 - Gulf red snapper debacle intensifies. Progressively shorter and shorter seasons, culminating with a three-day season in 2017. Gulf states go largely non-compliant with federal regs. Anglers demand better data.
- 2013-2016 - Gulf States begin development of independent surveys for reef fish.
- Angler-funded response to NMFS inaction - Alabama Snapper Check, Louisiana LA Creel, Florida Gulf Reef Fish Survey (now State Reef Fish Survey) and Mississippi Tails 'n Scales.
- 2014 - Louisiana expands LA Creel to all species, fires MRIP. Fed up with drastic management action based on unsure science, Louisiana goes the way of the West Coast to improve reporting time and estimate precision. Angler funded.
- 2017 - Gulf Amendment 50: State Management. Due to lack of confidence in federal data, responsibility for private boat recreational data collection and management delegated to Gulf States. Rec angling fees pay for better data and state reporting systems widely supported by anglers.
- 2017 - 2018 - MRIP certifies LA Creel, Alabama Snapper Check, Mississippi Tails N Scales, and Florida Gulf Reef Fish Survey. Angler funded; license-endorsement based. Provides high-precision, in-season estimates that MRIP cannot.
- 2020 - NMFS insists that Gulf state level estimates must be made equal to MRIP estimates. State surveys are widely



viewed as better data collections - more timely and higher precision. National Academy of Sciences disagrees with NMFS calibration strategy.

South Atlantic Red Snapper

- 2009 -South Atlantic red snapper -Amendments 17a, 17b and 18 consider closures based on suspect, imprecise red snapper harvest numbers. Still ongoing and closures still threatened.
- 2010 -Massive red snapper bottom closure threatened in South Atlantic. First stock assessment declares stock overfished using very low-precision MRFSS data. Anglers call for better data collection.
- 2022 -South Atlantic red snapper closures under consideration again. Successful recovery but suspect discard data indicates stock may still be overfished. Anglers demand better catch and discard data.

West Coast Fisheries

- 1998-2002 -West Coast groundfish disaster. Nine stocks are declared overfished. Rebuilding plans implemented with major shelf closures. MRFSS data is found to be imprecise and delivered on the wrong time scale. Anglers and states demand change, and West Coast states develop their own recreational angler surveys.
- 2004-West Coast states ask NMFS for basic changes to MRFSS surveys. NMFS refuses, and West Coast states “fire” NMFS and MRFSS from the recreational data collection process entirely.

Federal Legislation

- 1996 -The Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA) Passes, putting sideboards on stock recovery and demanding action for overfished stocks. The Act pushes councils towards in-season quota and anglers call for better data to meet the needs of the Act.
- 2006-2007 -Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) passes. Forces drastic action and short rebuilding timelines, eliminates management flexibility. A complete redesign of MRFSS is ordered to meet management needs. Requires angler license frame. States are given the choice of either developing an acceptable recreational license system or using the federal registry. Virtually every coastal state eventually develops its own recreational licensing system.

MRFSS to MRIP

- 2008 -MRFSS begins producing annual implementation plans in a partial response to MSA. Redesign plans are mostly outreach. Constituent drumbeat for better data reaches a crescendo. NMFS conducts extensive “listening sessions” with recreational stakeholders.
- 2010 -MRFSS re branded as MRIP in response to MSA, but though millions of dollars are spent, there is no real change in precision or timeliness of data.

National Academy of Sciences Reviews

- 2006-First National Academy of Sciences review of MRFSS finds it to be fatally flawed for in-season quota management of the sort demanded by SFA and MSA, and nearly useless for rare-event or offshore species. Lays out recommendations for improvement.



- 2017 -Second National Academy of Sciences MRIP review finds MRIP still not acceptable for in-season quota management and still too imprecise for reef fish and other offshore species.
- 2021 -Data Management Strategies for Recreational Annual Catch Limits, another National Academy of Sciences review, concludes that MRIP is not suitable for in season quota monitoring. It finds no real changes in precision across important species.

This is by no means a comprehensive list and is only meant to demonstrate that recreational data issues are not new. Federal managers have long been aware of systemic problems in federal recreational data collection systems, first with MRFSS and now with MRIP, and yet here we are again grappling with the same issue in Amendment 46. Millions of dollars have been spent “improving” the federal data system, and yet the South Atlantic Council is debating a new permit to address the same fundamental recreational data problem that the Mid-Atlantic Council faced in 1991. In every region, except the West Coast which seems to have successfully divorced itself completely from federal recreational data systems, federal fisheries find themselves caught in a seemingly endless loop of the same predicaments over recreational data, with no end in sight.

CCA is committed to the concept of licenses to better define the universe of recreational anglers and improve recreational data and accountability, but the body of evidence indicates that permits alone will not solve the problem. How the federal government gathers data from the recreational sector and how it manipulates and uses those data in management are huge factors in the efficacy of a recreational permit, and for at least the last three decades the federal government has failed those functions. It is difficult to comprehend how a new permit for anglers in the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery will introduce data into a federal system that the National Academies of Science has found deficient three times since 1991 and produce a different, satisfactory result.

If there is a lesson to be learned in the events listed previously, however, it is that recreational permits are most effective when the role of the federal government is diminished to the greatest extent possible, and the states are given the greatest control and responsibility over the recreational fishery. The West Coast effectively solved its recreational data problems in 2004. The Gulf States were on track to solve most of the recreational data problems in the red snapper fishery in 2017 until NMFS insisted on calibrating state data

(continued on page 13)



Ingredients

Extra virgin olive oil

Salt and pepper

- 9 mini red, orange and yellow sweet peppers, seeded and sliced (3 of each color)
- 3 jalapeño, seeded and sliced
- 1 12 oz. can evaporated milk
- 1 12 oz package quesadilla melting cheese
- 4 oz cream cheese
- 1 tsp Cajun seasoning
- 1 clove garlic, grated
- 1 c green onion, thinly sliced
- 12 oz fresh lump crab meat
- 2 bags thick tortilla chips
- 2 c shredded Monterey jack cheese

Garnish: lime wedges, cubed avocado, sliced green onion

Cajun Crab Nachos

RECIPE & PHOTOS BY HEATHER PETEREK JOINCCA.ORG/RECIPES

Directions

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Arrange sweet peppers and jalapeño on a large baking sheet, drizzle with the olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake for about 10 minutes to soften. Remove from oven and set aside for assembly. Leave oven on for cooking nachos.

In a medium saucepan, heat evaporated milk until hot, but not boiling. Slowly add in cheeses, Cajun seasoning and garlic, and whisk continuously until smooth. Once all ingredients are thoroughly combined, gently stir in crab and green onions. Remove from heat and set aside.

Distribute a layer of chips on a 14"x19" sheet pan, greased and lined with parchment paper. Spoon desired amount of the crab mixture over the chips then top with another layer of chips. Spoon over more of the crab mixture, then top with the shredded Monterey jack cheese. NOTE: you will have enough crab mixture to make two full 14"x19" sheet pans full of nachos.

Bake in the preheated oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until the cheese is melted.

Remove from oven and top with roasted peppers, avocados and green onion. Serve immediately with lime wedges. SERVES A CROWD.





FISH HOW YOU WANT
ALL DAY



The Power-Pole CHARGE Marine Power Management Station does the work of three devices — a traditional battery charger, a charge-on-the-run and an emergency start system — all in one compact unit. The CHARGE automatically manages your power supply to all of your batteries and with the C-Monster app, you can monitor those batteries in real time, giving you the power to fish how you want for as long as you need to without having to worry about your power supply.

For complete details or to find a dealer, go to power-pole.com.

POWER-POLE
CHARGE
MARINE POWER MANAGEMENT

Powered by  **C-MONSTER**
CONTROL SYSTEM 2.0



January 17, 2023

Mr. Dale Diaz, Chairman

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

4107 West Spruce Street, Suite 200

Tampa, Florida 33607

Dear Chairman Diaz and I Members of the Council,

The American Sportfishing Association, Center for Coastal Conservation, and the Congressional Sportsman's Foundation would like to communicate our positions and concerns about the processes and outcomes related to the MRIP-CHTS to MRIP-FES conversions. In our view the Council's approach to handling the conversion process has resulted in a significant misunderstanding of outcomes, particularly as it is applied to allocations. The result has been increased divisiveness and animosities across the fishing sectors and within the Council itself. The sectors and the Council members themselves have expressed confusion and dissatisfaction with the process. It is our hope that the Council will recognize that continuing to handle the conversions in the same way without bringing a greater understanding of how the conversions are made, will further increase confusion and divisiveness.

Our Understanding of the MRIP-CHTS to MRIP-FES Data and Assessment Conversions

The upgrade from recreational MRFSS to MRIP and the changes from a telephone (CHTS) to mail (FES) survey has been in process for a number of years. The intent of the new system is to increase the accuracy of the recreational data as applied to stock assessments and management. For each species managed, recreational catch and effort data are calibrated across the two data systems so historical data collected using CHTS can inform stock assessment models and to generate a new overfishing limit (OFL), acceptable biological catch (ABC), and annual catch limit (ACL) based on FES currency. Simply put, because the CHTS is no longer in use or considered best scientific information available (BSIA), the old CHTS data are no longer useable or of value in the management process without conversion to the current FES survey. Pre-existing allocations between sectors that are based on a timeseries of CHTS-based historical landings face the same problem. After the conversion from CHTS to FES is made for a species that results in a new OFL, ABC, and total ACL, the old allocation values, based on the uncalibrated CHTS historical landings, are simply no longer valid and have no objective basis for being used nor can they be used to compare allocation changes. The allocations must be recalculated based on the recalibrated FES landings for the same time series used in the pre-existing allocations to match the recalibrated ACL. This is probably the most misunderstood and thus controversial issue associated with each species data conversions. Unfortunately, the misunderstanding is reinforced by the terminology used to describe the allocations by all of us including the fishing public, Council staff, and Council members. On occasion, NOAA legal staff try to clarify the terminology, but it seems to go unheeded.

The Allocation Issue

Understanding that allocation will be controversial no matter how it is presented, we recommend that the Council determine how to focus on the complete conversion of management targets and thresholds such as catch limits and allocations that are based on old CHTS data to MRIP-FES, and that this be handled separately from allocation decisions. This approach has been discussed in Council but dismissed because of lack of understanding or ignoring the fact that the recalibrated allocations based on the same time series represent a straightforward mathematical change from the old CHTS to the new FES system. Allocations converted to FES should be considered the base-line allocation and any changes from that a re-allocation. This was simply explained by staff using the example of a change in currency. As an example, if we were to change a currency system from pesos (CHTS) to dollars (FES) you have to change the entire system to dollars. You can't purchase a \$10 fish with 10 pesos because a peso is only worth 50 cents. It is the same with these data conversions. You can't leave allocation in pesos while now operating in dollars and furthermore a percent of allocation in CHTS is not the same as a percent of allocation in FES. A statement by Dr. Roy Crabtree at the August 2015 Council meeting summarizes this problem: "Imagine you had a stock with two sectors fishing it, and each sector catches 100 pounds per year. The total allowable catch is 200 pounds and this goes on for a while. The catches are estimated by a survey and so imagine you discover, through looking at the survey, that in fact one sector has actually been catching 200 pounds a year all along. Now, so the original allocation was 50/50, 100 pounds each and the TAC was 200. Now you realize in fact you've been harvesting 300 pounds all the time and so the TAC really is 300 pounds. Now, if you say we're going to stick with the original allocation of 50/50, everybody gets 150 pounds and so one sector that's only been catching 100 all along gets a bonus of fifty pounds. The sector that's been catching 200 pounds all along now is getting cut, because they are only getting 150 pounds from now on. That is what happens if you readjust the historical timeframe and the productivity but you don't make a shift in the allocation. It is a de facto reallocation away from the sector whose catches have been recalibrated to the other one and I say that is very oversimplified, probably, but that gives you the gist of it." Greater amberjack, (Reef Fish Amendment 33), provides a good illustration of our position. For this amendment the Council agreed to the new FES conversion for setting the OFL, ABC, and ACLs. As part of that total conversion, a recalculated allocation based on the original recalibrated historic landings resulted in an allocation of 84% recreational and 16% commercial. The old, and no longer relevant, allocation was 73% recreational and 27% commercial. Many argued that the recreational sector was getting a huge jump in allocation and thus taking away fish from the commercial sector. There was an immediate effort in the amendment alternatives to "stop the steal." The fact is, we went from pesos to dollars and a percent of allocation in CHTS is not the same as a percent of allocation in FES. The old allocation of 73%-27% simply has no validity or basis for existing in the new system. In fact, from a straightfor-



ward data recalibration perspective, if the old allocations were kept in the new FES system in Amendment 33, the recreational sector would be giving up 11% of its allocation based on using the original time series. The outcome of Amendment 33 was the use of a different time series that resulted in a 4% reduction to the recreational sector. While this was not our preferred outcome, we agreed to it because we could see that the Council did not fully comprehend that even this was a reduction to the recreational sector. There was still a latent misconception that the old CHTS allocations of 73%-27% were the base for comparison in considering reallocation and not the new 84%-16%.

Further complicating the process and outcomes is the fact that many of the conversions from CHTS to FES also coincide with a determination of overfishing or overfished status determination, which triggers significant management actions and results in large cuts in annual catch limits for all fishery components. The result has been a misconception, again, that the recreational sector is trying to take allocation from the commercial sector when in fact we are simply trying to maintain the status quo when making the conversions.

Recent Relevant Court Case

In a recent court ruling (Civil Action No. 22-1260 TJK), with a summary judgement in favor of NOAA on all claims, the following statements, among many, support our understanding of the FES conversions and allocation. These statements also seem to support our recommendations related to treating the FES based allocation calibration the same as the at the OFL, ABC, and ACL calibrations.

On Page 16, when discussing the validity of using the CHTS time series converted to FES allocation for red grouper (Amendment 53) the following was stated: The Service selected that alternative after concluding that allocation would pre-serve the basic policy of A30B while updating the limits based on the best scientific information available, apply the necessary reduction in total catch roughly equally among the sectors, and cause “the greatest net economic benefits” among the possible allocations. AR 7995.

On page 36 when discussing economic benefits the Court noted the following: The record reflects that the Service selected A53’s allocation mainly because it wished to keep its policy consistent by basing the allocation on “the same timeframe as [A30B]” while also using “FES landings” to set the limits—not because of its projected economic effects. AR 7967.

On page 20, when discussing the CHTS to FES conversions and how allocation is treated and particularly that the CHTS deter-

mined allocations are no longer relevant the following was stated: If the Service is right about the relationship between CHTS estimates and FES estimates, the now-immutable use of FES for estimating recreational catch means that preserving the prior nominal allocation would actually have reduced real-world recreational fishing opportunities dramatically.

Allocation Policy

There is a second issue that arises when considering actual re-allocation in addition to making the conversion to MRIP-FES. The Council has seemingly abandoned its new policies and processes for considering allocation changes. The Council’s allocation policy, which is located on the Council website, sets a process for allocation decisions that includes time schedules, a review panel, data and information gathering, application of more than just landing series, and a measured approach to determining the need for an allocation change. The fact that these policies have been effectively abandoned confirms our original concerns that the policies have no binding effect on the Council and were, in fact, designed to give the Council free will to abandon them. The recreational community pushed hard for over a decade to have accountable and objective policies and procedures for determining allocations and we have yet to see them applied during a time when multiple allocation changes have been occurring. While there has been an attempt to connect some of these allocation decisions to the allocation policy (i.e. greater amberjack), the Council has seemingly cherry-picked pieces of the policies and guidelines while leaving out others, all without following its process. This approach has exacerbated the perception that the recreational sector is trying to take commercial allocation when in fact we are just advocating for maintaining status quo in the new, BSIA currency as these conversions are carried out.

The NOAA Fisheries Transition Plan for the Fishing Effort Survey published May 2018 attempted to provide guidance on approaches to effectively managing the FES conversions and calibrations. While providing good guidance for handling the conversions, it did not provide adequate guidance to councils for handling the allocation conversions. There was an acknowledgement that proper messaging and outreach was needed to avert public misunderstanding and misconceptions with the conversions, and it seems that this has not been fully accomplished. It was also acknowledged that allocation would be a significant challenge, but we don’t see that the magni-

(continued on page 13)



As a CCA Florida Life, Heritage or Legacy member, you help support Florida’s marine fisheries, habitat, waterways, coasts and more. Join us as we continue to work toward enhancing these resources and Florida’s fishing future.

ENGEL® COOLERS

YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER FOR 60 YEARS

People have relied on ENGEL Coolers when adventure takes them out on the water, on the road, or off the beaten path. Based in Jupiter, Fla., we here at ENGEL have continued our mission to provide portable-refrigeration solutions for our customers and friends – something we've been doing since the launch of our portable AC/DC fridge freezers in 1962.





Snapper Grouper Amendment 46

continued from page 7

back to its own MRIP data with a calibration method that the NAS concluded was ill-suited for the purpose.

It is CCA's belief that the only realistic chance that a permit for recreational anglers in the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery will succeed in the applications for which it is intended is if the states are given complete authority for administering the program.

States are responsive to anglers and tend to treat recreational anglers as clients because recreational license expenditures and excise taxes on equipment and fuel support their management activities. That engenders a trust and a willingness to work with the data collection and regulatory arms of the states that benefits data quality and compliance. To the second point, states can elect to keep angler permit funds from disappearing into a general fund and instead may direct those funds to specific programs like enhanced data collection, enforcement, infrastructure investments or stock enhancement. The federal government cannot. Additionally, states are much more efficient and frugal with stakeholder funds. As proven through the federal experience with administering a saltwater license, the states could make money on their license programs, charging similar fees, while the federal system never broke even.

Finally, many anglers are concerned, and rightly so based on comments from NMFS staff in the region and many commercial and for-hire organizations, that a federal boat permit is the first step in limiting recreational entry to public fisheries. Limiting entry is a non-starter for state managers, recreational anglers and the recreational fishing industry.

CCA is confident that a properly constructed permit for snapper grouper anglers in the South Atlantic could provide information critical to improved management of the fishery. However, the federal government's track record of recreational data-gathering and management indicates that such a permit should be administered and run by the South Atlantic states.

While such a system is not a panacea to the problems that continue to plague recreational management at the federal level, state control of data gathering at the very least would provide a check and balance to federal use of both the data and the permit itself.

Regards,

Bill Bird, Chairman
CCA National Government Relations Committee Chairman

MRIP-CHTS to MRIP-FES

continued from page 11

tude of that challenge was understood nor has an effective outreach plan been employed. Most importantly, a defined policy on how the Councils and NOAA should approach the allocation conversions has not been developed which continues to lead to confusion, misunderstanding, and thus a catalyst to unnecessary contention within the Council related to allocation.

Summary and Recommendations

We are concerned that the conversion process from MRIP-CHTS to MRIP-FES has become unnecessarily divisive because the allocation conversions are being misunderstood as a reallocation when in fact, they are simply a mathematical change that converts the old CHTS to the equivalent FES allocations. This direct conversion is not a reallocation, and we will continue to strongly oppose reallocations during these conversions. While we understand that there are issues tied to the CHTS to FES conversions, these data are considered the best scientific information available and are being used as the basis for assessment and management decisions. We also understand that the conversions and concurrent overfishing and overfished findings present an illusion that the resultant recalibrated allocations are taking fish from the commercial sector when that is not the case. With that in mind, we offer the following specific recommendations for your considerations:

1. Better educate and continually re-educate all of us on the CHTS to FES conversions with focus on the allocation conversion. For example, how can you convey that a percent of allocation in CHTS is not the same as a percent of allocation in FES.
2. Develop consistent terminology for discussing CHTS to FES conversions and allocations.

3. Currently, terminology and explanations for allocation, used in public materials and amendments and frameworks, reinforce the confusion about FES converted allocation values and should be better articulated to reduce the confusion.

4. The Council should separate the FES conversion process from allocation decisions. The FES conversion should include the recalibrated historic data, OFLs, ABCs, ACLs and the recalibrated allocation. The recalibrated allocation should be the new base allocation.

5. With the FES base allocation, the Council should either determine that no further action is required, and allocation will be evaluated as scheduled in current policy or that an allocation review is needed and initiate the allocation review process as adopted by the Council. If changes from the base-line allocation are warranted, the allocation process should result in a separate allocation amendment.

6. A Policy should be developed for the FES conversions, including the FES allocation conversion and that Policy should include other similar conversions (ie. State data conversions, SEFHIER, future improvements to MRIP FES).

7. For allocations based on historical landings, consider setting allocations as a formula in which current BSIA landings currencies are inserted to arrive at allocations rather than codifying allocations as fixed percentages.

Council members, thank you for your consideration of our concerns and recommendations.

Sincerely,

Martha Guyas, *American Sportfishing Association*

Ken Haddad, *American Sportfishing Association*

Ted Venker, *Coastal Conservation Association*

Chris Horton, *Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation*



More Opportunities

The 2023 CCA Florida STAR competition presented by Yamaha will offer more opportunities to win than ever before.

The 100-day, summer-long competition begins Saturday of Memorial Day weekend and invites CCA Florida members, non-members, anglers and non-anglers to take a shot at winning their share of prizes valued at OVER \$500,000 including boats, motors, electronics, tackle, scholarships and more. The winning begins even before the competition as all early registrants will receive a free raffle entry to win a Hewes Redfisher, 25% discount from T-H Marine and com-

plimentary access to the Redfish Mastery course from Salt Strong.

But STAR is not just about anglers winning, but it is for the fishery too. Not only can participants become winners, they will become citizen biologists and citizen garbologists by submitting photos in the STAR app of their catch or garbage collected during the competition. In order for participants to win, they must also include the 2023 CCA FL STAR Official Measuring device in their entry photo. Measuring devices can be picked up for free after May 20 at STAR's preferred distribution location,

West Marine, or at any other of STAR's distribution locations throughout Florida.

"In the past eight years, it has been heartwarming to see STAR participants support conservation by embracing the 'Catch, Photo, Release' format as well as picking up garbage during the annual competition" said the CCA Florida STAR Director Leiza Fitzgerald. "The best aspects of the competition are the wonderful works Florida STAR has helped support but we cannot overlook the \$2.4 million in prizes awarded, with \$800,000 specifically awarded in youth scholarships."



Michelle Frady

es Than Ever!

The CCA Florida STAR competition presented by Yamaha has a division for everyone, from the non-angler to the experienced angler. It is comprised of 15 divisions targeting 12 inshore and offshore species plus the Costa Kick Plastic Trash Division presented by Papa's Pilar, which encourages trash cleanup from Florida's coastal waters. STAR's signature Tagged Redfish Division offers seven winners, five adults and two youth, the choice of a Contender Boats 22 Sport, Pathfinder Boats 2200 TRS and STAR would like to welcome back Carolina Skiff offering the 162 JLS. STAR has additional

new Tagged Redfish sponsors, with Dek Kat Boats offering a 27 Flat Kat, and BRP offering a fun package of a Sea-Doo FishPro Trophy and the Can-Am Defender. Each boat will be powered by a Yamaha, the competition's presenting sponsor. The first winner in the Tagged Redfish division will have his or her choice of prize package.

For the first two youth anglers who win in the Tagged Redfish division, prizes include a tiller boat powered with Yamaha Outboard, trailer, Minn Kota trolling motor and Humminbird electronics. And once again,

(continued on page 16)

Yamaha
Contender
Pathfinder
Dek Kat Boats
Carolina Skiff
Sea-Doo
Can-Am
Duke Energy
Realtree Fishing
ALTA Equipment Company
West Marine
Tigress Outriggers & Gear
Engel Coolers
Humminbird
Minn Kota
TH Marine
Power Pole
Discover Crystal River
Pure Florida Engelwood
Beach Punta Gorda
Florida Sports Coast
Academy Sports + Outdoors
Costa
Cannon
Bonafide Watercraft
Papa's Pilar
Florida Marine Tracks
Tin Cup Whiskey
Bull Bay Tackle
Florida Cracker Invitational Tournament
Southeast Environmental Solutions, Inc.
Plantation Inn Crystal River
Tailin Toads
Flagler Sportfishing Club
Florida Sportfishing Association
Strike Zone Melbourne

SPONSORS

STAR

SPONSORS

STAR

Phillips & Jordan

Miller Boating
Center

Sodium Fishing Gear

SKANU

Mac Rae's Resort
Homosassa

iAngler Tournament
App

Road King

Power Tech
Propellers

Florida Fishing
Products

AFTCO

Deck Gear

STAR Brite

Mud Hole
Rod Building
& Tackle Crafting

Elemental Methods

Stream 2 Sea

Stealth Quick release
Rod Holders

Reliable Fishing Bags

Kahuna Wagons

Barnes & Thornburg

Boaters Exchange

Hydro Glo

Rod Runner

Florida Insider Fishing Report

Reel Animals Television

Guidelines TV

Blair Wiggins Outdoors

Florida Sportsman Radio

Beyond the Surface

Ocean Tamer Bean Bags

Anisa Stewart Jewelry

Talon

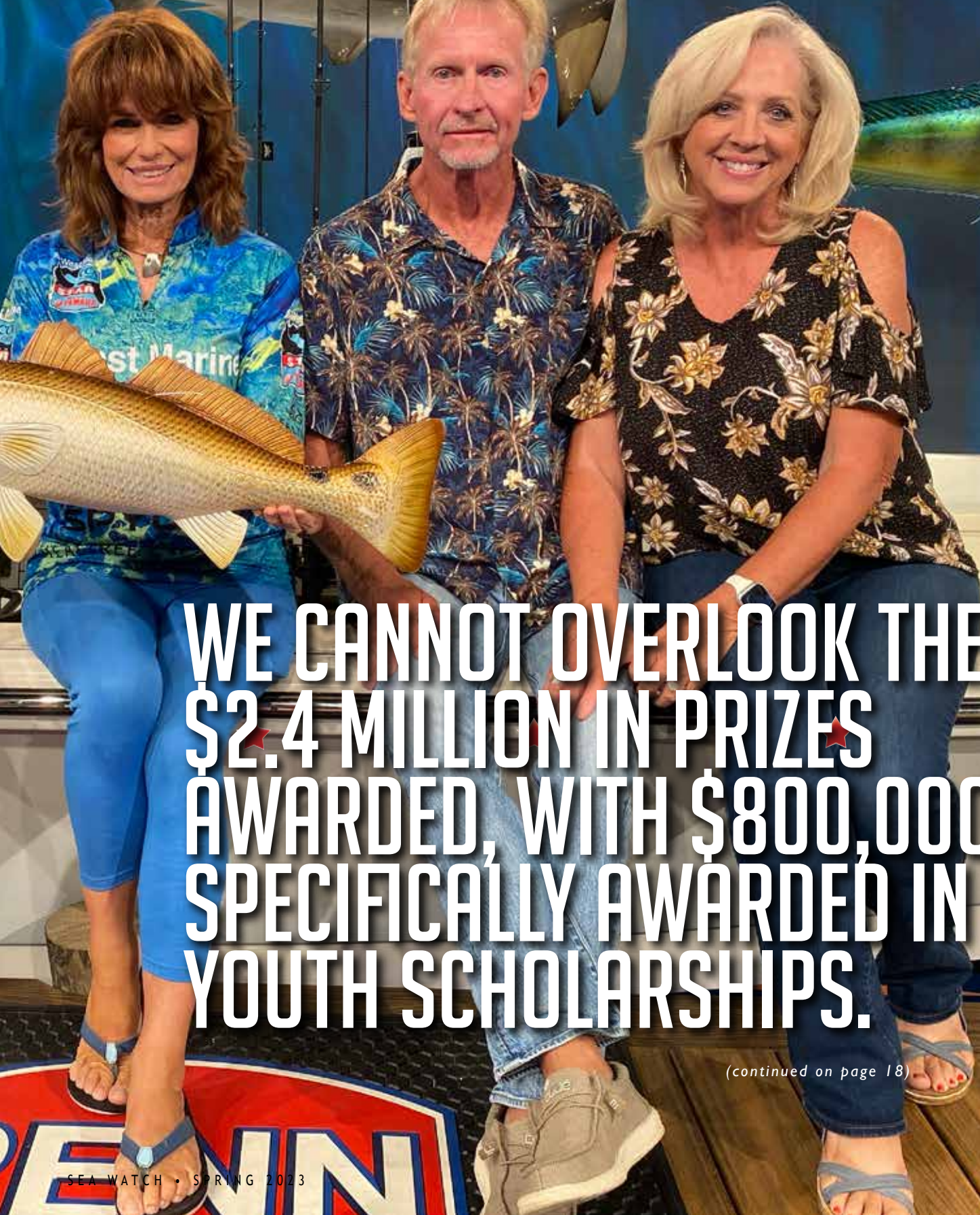
Fish Bites

Thrash Can Bucket Topper

REGISTER NOW FOR STAR 2023



23.



**WE CANNOT OVERLOOK THE
\$2.4 MILLION IN PRIZES
AWARDED, WITH \$800,000
SPECIFICALLY AWARDED IN
YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS.**

(continued on page 18)

2023 STAR



WIN A CAN-AM DEFENDER



WIN A SEA-DOO FISHPRO TROPHY

STAR will have the ALTA SUPER STAR tagged redfish swimming in Florida waters, and if it is recaptured, the winner will receive \$50,000 cash!

Each of Florida's coastal counties will have on average four tagged redfish for a total of 160 prize-winning fish. The best opportunity to catch one of this year's tagged redfish will be in Citrus and Charlotte Counties, STAR's 2023 Destination Counties which will have eight tagged redfish in their coastal waters.

For the offshore anglers, the Tigress

Outriggers and Gear Tagged Dolphin Division offers one winner a \$10,000 cash prize. The first STAR registrant and CCA Florida member who catches one of the tagged dolphin will win. Twenty dolphin (Mahi Mahi) will be tagged and released for STAR in the lower keys of Florida.

STAR is a family-friendly competition, and CCA Florida youth members (ages 6 to 17) can participate for free. Kids are encouraged to submit entries in the Youth Scholarship Division presented by Realtree

Fishing for an opportunity to win one of twelve scholarships totaling \$100,000. To date, the Florida STAR competition has awarded \$800,000 in scholarships to youth from all over the state. Another great component of STAR for youth participants is they can earn 30 minutes of community service for every five-gallon bucket of trash they pick up from Florida's coastal waters and submit via the STAR app.

Other divisions include the Power Pole
(continued on page 21)

ANGLER DRIVEN. CONSERVATION MINDED.

PATHFINDER AND CCA FLORIDA
EDUCATION, ADVOCACY & HABITAT CONSERVATION



PATHFINDER
ANGLER DRIVEN

2023
STAR



INGMAN Marine



Conservation Division, Bonafide Kayak Division and Ladies Division as well as the Yamaha Guides which allows guides to participate when they are not on a charter for hire.

Since most division winners are determined by a random drawing, it is not about catching the biggest fish as any size fish can win. Remember, STAR is very simple, every fish you catch between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day offers the STAR registrant and CCA Florida member the opportunity to win his or her share of nearly \$500,000 in prizes and scholarships. But, you cannot win if you are not registered.

Not only is the STAR competition a wonderful way for participants to win amazing prizes it is a tool to gather catch data, it creates awareness for conservation, our sponsors and CCA Florida. Launched in 2015, the competition has set the bar for other fishing tournaments to follow by implementing conservation-friendly alternatives such as a catch-photo-release format and a trash division. Florida STAR focuses on conservation with its technology-based, CPR format and dedicated smartphone app, which promotes the proper handling of species and allows participants who

are members of CCA and registered in the competition to upload photos of their catch or trash buckets in the STAR competition and be rewarded for their efforts. This eliminates the requirement that some traditional tournaments have to harvest or capture and transport fish to win. CCA Florida also provides access to the data collected from the app to other conservation organizations and universities to help educate the public on the importance of protecting Florida's marine resources and for use in their studies on conservation, habitat and stock assessments.

For more information on STAR visit our website. www.ccaflstar.com.

P O W E R Y O U R P U R S U I T

ABYSS BATTERY

ABYSS (ə'-bis) comes from the Greek word ábyssos meaning "Bottomless, Boundless, and Immeasurable". The Unfathomable Depths of the Ocean are the world in which we are deeply rooted and from where we draw our name and our inspiration.

What sets us apart?

- More capacity and amp hours
- Smaller case size without sacrificing performance
- Proprietary software and design construction
- Pre-programmed AI
- Ability to learn and adapt, becoming more efficient over time

Discover the best Trolling Motor Lithium Batteries

that match the depth of your needs

DRAMATIC WEIGHT SAVINGS,
PERFECT FOR SMALLER BOATS.

24V Lithium Batteries

These lightweight marine batteries charge faster than traditional lead acid solutions while also providing longer run time between charges.



POWER YOUR BOAT LONGER,
FASTER, AND MORE EFFICIENTLY.

36V Lithium Batteries

Ideal for deep cycle applications in diverse marine environments, seasons, and temperatures, from calm weather to heavy winds!

855-719-1727 | www.abyszbattery.com



2023 STAR

REGISTRATION FOR THE 2023 CCA FLORIDA STAR COMPETITION PRESENTED BY YAMAHA IS OPEN

STAR 2023 runs Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day, giving participants 100 days of fishing and the opportunity to win more than \$500,000 in prizes and youth scholarships.

Register Now: \$40 for current CCA Florida Members | \$80 for 18+
(includes one-year CCA Florida membership)

FREE for current, youth CCA Florida Members | \$10 for youth, ages 6 to 17
(includes New Tide Membership)

STAR is Florida's largest family-friendly fishing competition giving anglers of all ages endless summer-long fun!

For more information on STAR, please visit www.CCAFLSTAR.com



COASTAL
CONSERVATION
ASSOCIATION
FLORIDA

CONSERVATION | HABITAT | RESTOCKING | ADVOCACY

CONTRIBUTED
\$9



MILLION

SINCE 2010, CCA FLORIDA, CCA'S BUILDING CONSERVATION TRUST AND ITS PARTNERS HAVE CONTRIBUTED \$9 MILLION TO REBUILD FLORIDA'S MARINE HABITAT

90 TONS OF OYSTERS



WERE SAVED FROM WASTE BY CCA FLORIDA IN THE LAST THREE YEARS. THUS FAR, 30 OF THE 90 TONS HAVE BEEN RECYCLED AND REDEPLOYED TO CREATE ARTIFICIAL REEFS



**MORE THAN 17,000 MEMBERS
ACROSS FLORIDA'S 67 COUNTIES**

**ADVOCATED
GAMEFISH**

STATUS FOR REDFISH

ADVOCATES AND CREATES
AWARENESS
FOR IMPROVING
STATEWIDE WATER QUALITY

WORKED WITH FWC TO
ENSURE MAXIMUM
ANGLER ACCESS
FOR RED SNAPPER

PROTECTING FLORIDA'S MARINE
RESOURCES AND ANGLERS'
ACCESS FOR MORE
THAN 35 YEARS

INITIATED NET BAN
CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENT

HELPED CONGRESS
INTRODUCE DESCENDING
DEVICE BILL AND FORAGE FISH
CONSERVATION ACT

HELPED BAN LONGLINES
FOR BILLFISH
AND PELAGIC SPECIES

IN LAST 10 YEARS

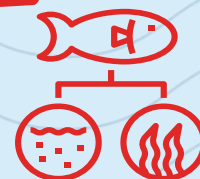
42

ARTIFICIAL
REEFS



70

HABITAT
PROJECTS



5,000 SNOOK
RESTOCKED AND RELEASED

235,000 REDFISH
RESTOCKED AND RELEASED

40,000 SEA TROUT
RESTOCKED AND RELEASED



**\$800,000 IN CCA FLORIDA YOUTH
COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS HAVE BEEN AWARDED SINCE 2015**



\$25 FROM EACH TAG GOES
DIRECTLY TO CCA FLORIDA'S STATEWIDE
WATER QUALITY, HABITAT AND
RESTOCKING INITIATIVES

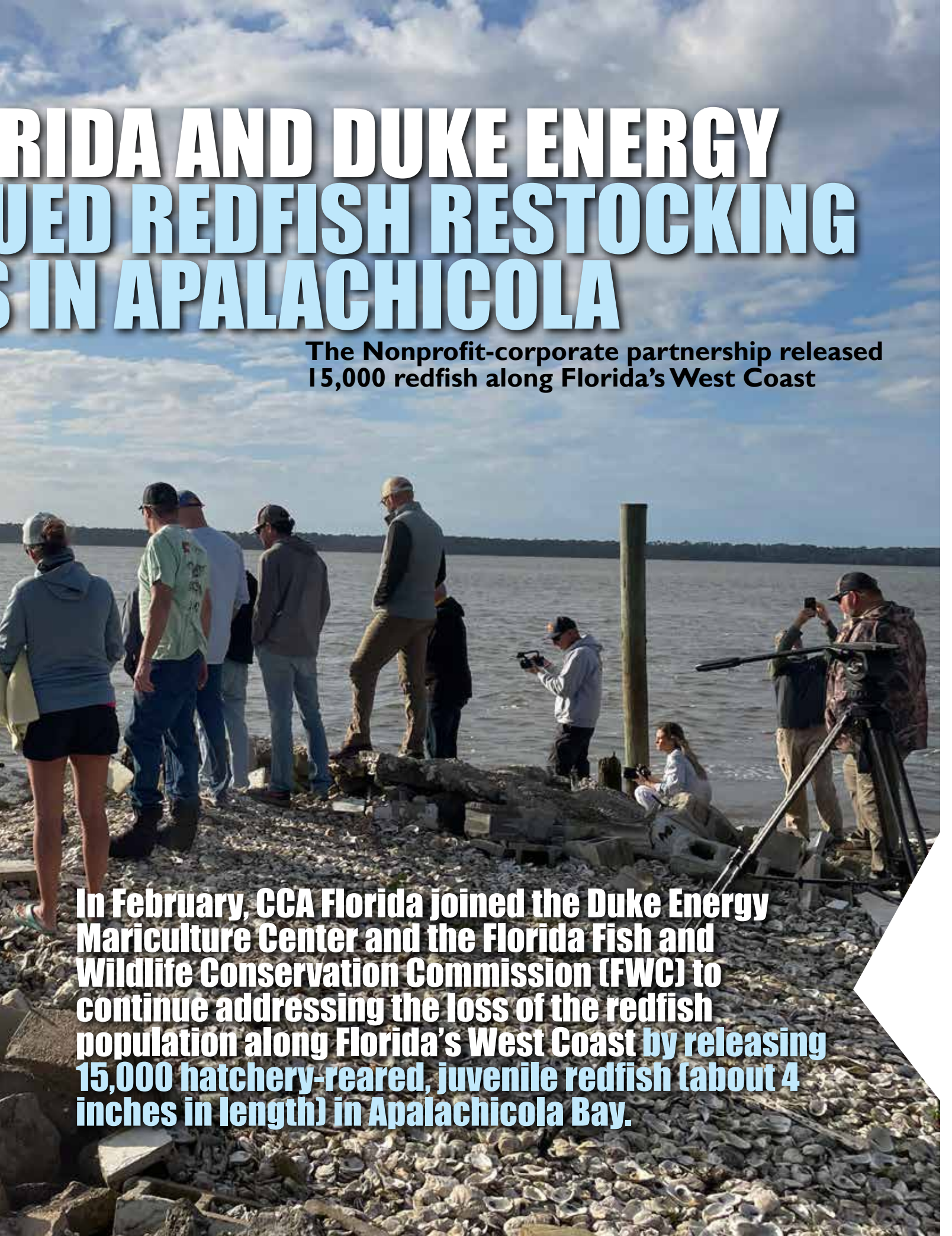
**CCA FLORIDA WORKED
WITH THE FLORIDA
LEGISLATURE TO CREATE
THE CONSERVE FLORIDA'S
FISHERIES FLORIDA
LICENSE PLATE**

**ACCOMPLISH YOUR GOALS FOR FLORIDA'S FISHERIES. CONTACT
ENDOWMENT@CCAFLORIDA.ORG TO LEARN MORE**



FLORIDA AND DUKE ENERGY JOINED REDFISH RESTOCKING IN APALACHICOLA

The Nonprofit-corporate partnership released
15,000 redfish along Florida's West Coast



In February, CCA Florida joined the Duke Energy Mariculture Center and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to continue addressing the loss of the redfish population along Florida's West Coast by releasing 15,000 hatchery-reared, juvenile redfish (about 4 inches in length) in Apalachicola Bay.

A photograph of four men standing on the deck of a boat. The boat has a white hull with a logo that reads "CCA FLORIDA" and "TAR" with "PRESENTED BY YAMAHA" below it. Two large, rectangular, translucent blue panels are mounted on the boat's structure. In the background, there are two green gas cylinders and a yellow light. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The men are dressed in outdoor work clothes, including hats, sunglasses, and vests. One man in the center is holding a long, clear cylindrical container.

"This was our first redfish release of 2023 and we are proud to continue our restocking efforts with FWC and the Duke Energy Mariculture Center in the Panhandle," CCA Florida Executive Director Brian Gorski said.

“Together, our commitment to protecting and preserving Florida’s marine resources is helping revitalize the redfish population in the Bay – and we couldn’t be more excited to be play a small part in creating a solution.”



RELEASE THEM FOR TOMO
#CCAFLORIDA | #DUKI



In recent years, Florida's redfish population has drastically declined as a result of water quality issues and loss of habitat. To counteract these effects, CCA Florida and the Duke Energy Mariculture Center have taken a proactive approach to habitat restoration as well as restocking one of Florida's most sought-after inshore fish, the redfish.

This latest release is part of a multifunctional and multiyear strategy to rebuild and maintain game fish stocks. Since 2018, CCA Florida and Duke Energy will have released more than 275,000 redfish and spotted seatrout across Florida's coasts to help provide abundant recreational fishing opportunities.



MARICULTURE CENTER SUPPORT FWCS AQUACULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM PROGRAM

In the past two years, CCA Florida and the Duke Energy Mariculture Center have supported FWC's Aquaculture in the Classroom, a program designed for students from fifth grade through college that teaches the basic principles of aquaculture, marine research and how stock enhancement plays a role in supporting Florida's marine fisheries. To support the program, CCA Florida and the Duke Energy Mariculture have donated hatchery-reared red drum fingerlings to several participating schools in Pasco County.

Through this innovative partnership, hatchery-reared red drum fingerlings, starter feed and technical advice on how to raise fingerlings in the classroom are

provided to schools participating in the Aquaculture in the Classroom program. Information on system development and grant opportunities are also provided. At the end of the school year, the fingerlings are harvested and transferred to another facility or returned to the FWC to be used for outreach and education exhibits.

Since this program began in 2001, more than 25 Florida schools from Miami to Pensacola have successfully reared red drum in the classroom. Currently, seven schools are participating statewide, and 500 red drum fingerlings were distributed.





THE CONSERVE FLORIDA'S FISHERIES LICENSE PLATE



- Show your support for Florida's fisheries, coastal habitats and marine resources on the road with a "Conserve Florida's Fisheries" specialty license plate!
- To order the specialty plate, visit RedfishTag.com and complete the online form or visit your local tax collector's office
- Online orders will be processed by our partners at the Indian River County Tax Collector's office. A representative will contact each purchaser to complete the transaction.
- Personalized (vanity) plates orders can also be purchased online or in person
- Funds from the sale of this license plate support protecting and enhancing saltwater marine resources, expanding habitat restoration efforts and promoting coastal environmental education

For additional information, please visit REDFISHTag.com



REDFISHTag.com

MUD HOLE CUSTOM TAP PROGRAM & CCA FLOW MULTIYEAR SCHOLARS



CKLE EDUCATION RIDA PARTNER FOR SHIP PROGRAM



**COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS
DONATED IN REMEMBRANCE
OF FORMER MUD HOLE EMPLOYEE**

With the success of the inaugural CCA Youth Scholarship Program in 2022, the Mud Hole Custom Tackle Education Program and Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) Florida have announced a three-year partnership, bringing college funding opportunities to environmentally conscious high schoolers through the 2025/2026 school year. As in 2022, this year's program offers \$11,000 in college sponsorships to Florida students that will compete in a five-day, immersive educational experience this June and then into the 2023/2024 school year.



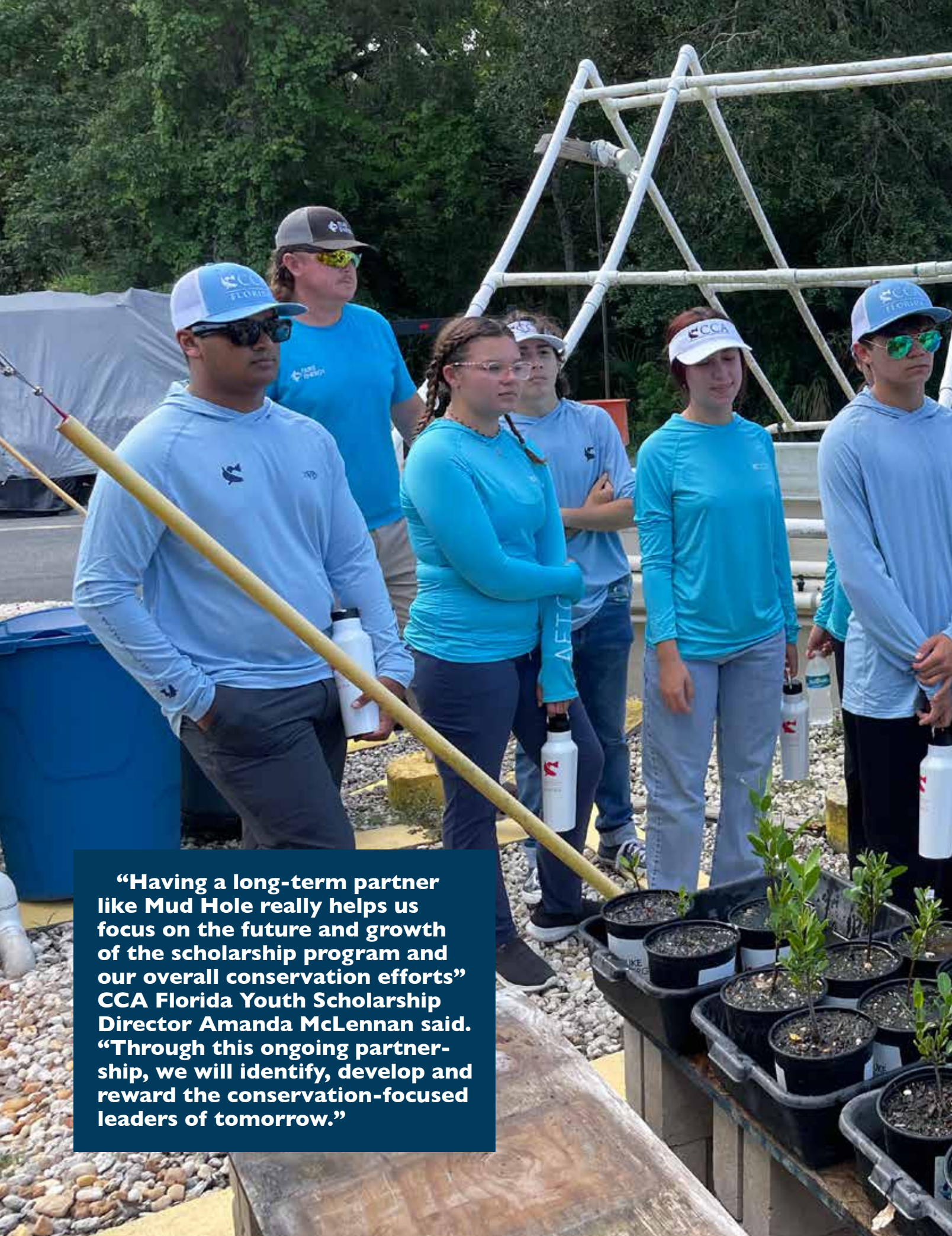


“The impact of the CCA Youth Scholarship initiative last year was so positive that we wanted to continue our investment into the future of Florida high schoolers. It’s a great way to reach and reward deserving students and it aligns perfectly with our larger Education Program efforts, bringing custom rod building to schools and youth groups around the world” said Brook Oliva, Mud Hole Custom Tackle President. “In addition, the \$6,000 in scholarship awards we provide each year will be designated as the “Matt McGuffee College Scholarship Initiative,” in honor of beloved former employee, and Mud Hole family member, Matt McGuffee, who passed away in 2022.”





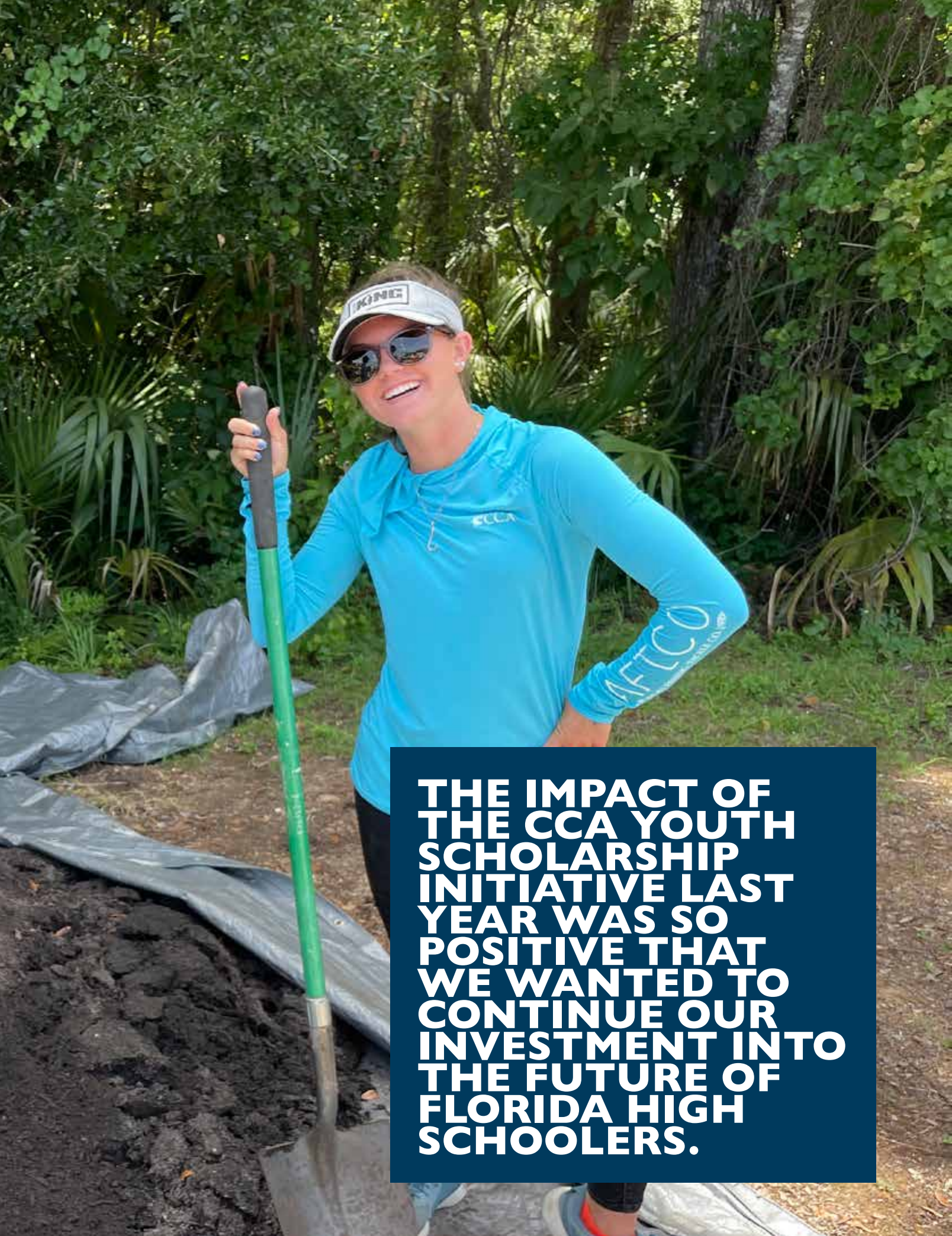
Florida high school sophomores and juniors can apply to the program through April 15. Ten students will be chosen to participate in June's competition, with the top three students earning \$3,000, \$2,000 and \$1,000 in college scholarships. Winners of the Matt McGuffee College Scholarship Initiative funds will be chosen based on merit, attention, focus, creativity, speeches and more, during the five days of hands-on activities in June. Following the June program, all ten participants will then have the opportunity to compete for one \$5,000 Grand Scholarship by starting CCA programs in their own communities.



“Having a long-term partner like Mud Hole really helps us focus on the future and growth of the scholarship program and our overall conservation efforts” CCA Florida Youth Scholarship Director Amanda McLennan said. “Through this ongoing partnership, we will identify, develop and reward the conservation-focused leaders of tomorrow.”







**THE IMPACT OF
THE CCA YOUTH
SCHOLARSHIP
INITIATIVE LAST
YEAR WAS SO
POSITIVE THAT
WE WANTED TO
CONTINUE OUR
INVESTMENT INTO
THE FUTURE OF
FLORIDA HIGH
SCHOOLERS.**



REALTREE
FISHING™

WWW.REALTREE.COM



WE ARE FISHING



**PARTNERS IN
CONSERVATION**

REALTREEFISHING.COM | [@REALTREE.FISHING](https://www.instagram.com/REALTREE.FISHING)



©2019 Jordan Outdoor Enterprises, Ltd. 1783-186

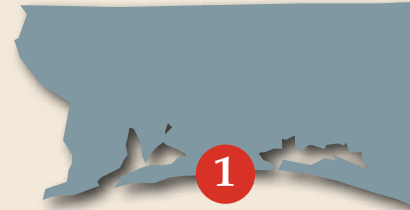




Applications for The CCA Youth Scholarship Program presented by the Mud Hole Education Program are currently being accepted. For a program overview, FAQ, and instructions on how to apply, click below.

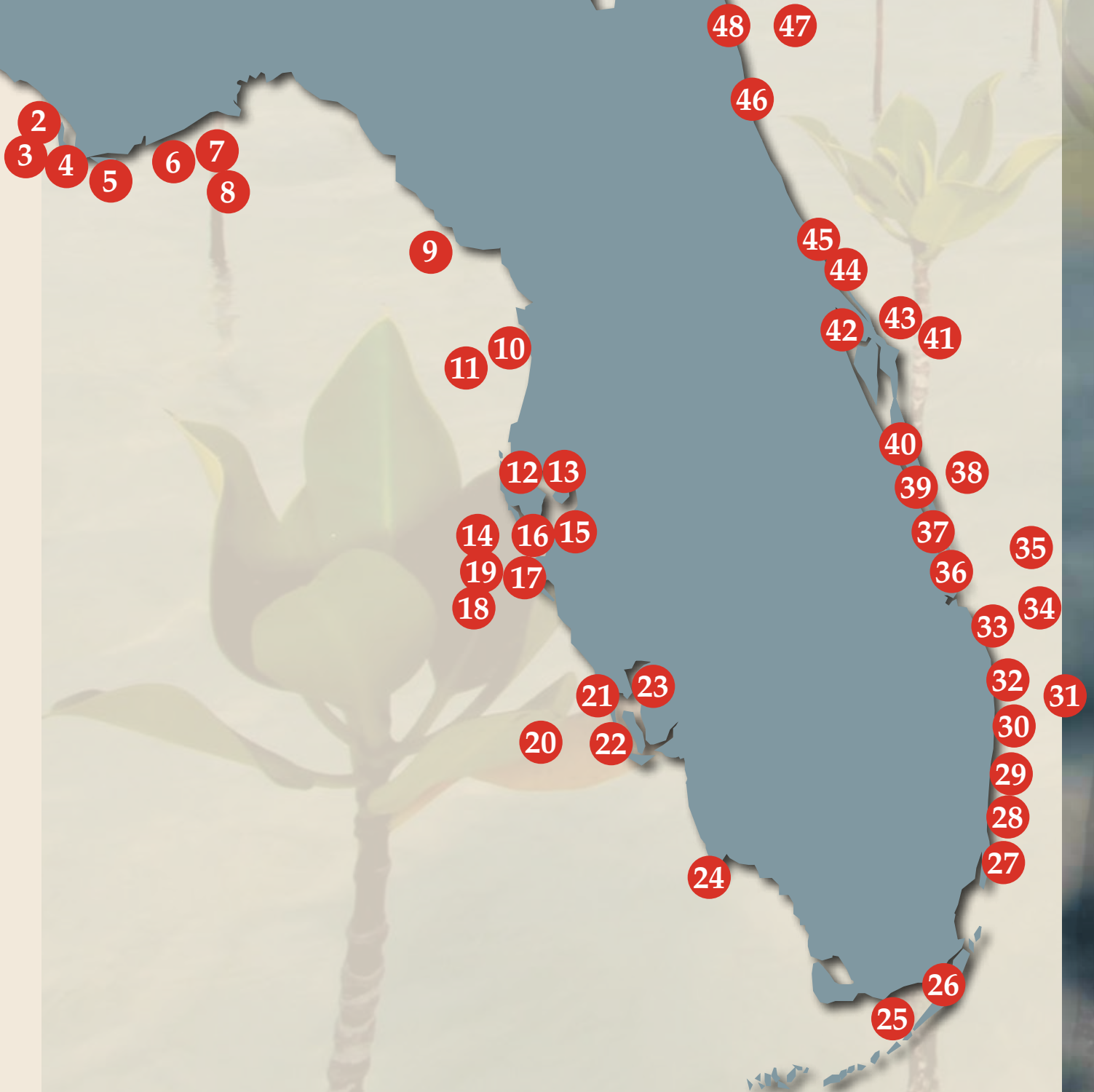
[MORE ON SCHOLARSHIPS](#)

COMPLETED HABITAT PROJECTS

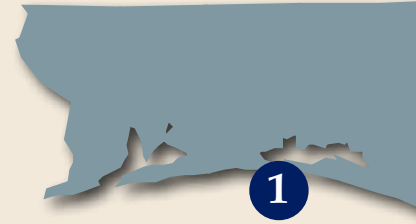


Since 2010, and in collaboration with the Building Conservation Trust, CCA has contributed over \$1.2 million, which has been leveraged with our partners, to over \$9 million in habitat projects statewide. Join us in these efforts!

1. CCA/South Walton Artificial Reef Association, Inc. Reefs
2. CCA Reef/MBARA
3. CCA/Duke Energy Reef – Mexico Beach
4. CCA/Ocean Aid 360 Apalachicola Ghost Trap Rodeo
5. CCA/FDEP/Duke Spartina Grass Replanting
6. CCA/BCT Billy's Barge Artificial Reef
7. CCA Dr. Bart Carey Memorial Reef
8. CCA R.Z. "Sandy" Safley Reef
9. CCA NCBS Lone Cabbage Reef Fish Monitoring
10. CCA/UF/IFAS Centipede Bay Oyster Reef Restoration
11. CCA/Hernando Co. Ghost Ship Reef
12. CCA/BCT/Tampa Bay Watch Fantasy Island Oyster Restoration
13. CCA/BCT/Tampa Bay Watch 2D Island Oyster Restoration
14. CCA Duke Energy Red Tide Research Project
15. CCA/FWC Suncoast Youth Conservation Center Saltwater Pond
16. CCA/Ocean Aid 360 Tampa Bay Ghost Trap Rodeo
17. CCA/UCF De Soto National Memorial Living Shoreline Stabilization
18. CCA/BCT Sean Gucken Memorial Reef
19. CCA/Manatee County Larry Borden Artificial Reef
20. CCA/Lee County USS Mohawk CGC Reef – Veterans Memorial Reef
21. CCA/BCT/Lee County Punta Rassa Oyster Restoration
22. CCA/BCT/Lee County San Carlos Bay Oyster Restoration
23. CCA/LBHS Seagrass Restoration Project
24. CCA/Naples Bay Oyster Restoration Project
25. CCA Florida Bay Seagrass Restoration
26. CCA/UNF Florida Bay Turtle Grass Research Project
27. CCA/Eagle Scout Andrew Hall Dragon Reef
28. CCA Broward Chapter Pilot Oyster Project
29. CCA/No Shoes Reef 4
30. CCA/BCT Goggle Eye Reef
31. CCA/BCT Andrew "Red" Harris Foundation Reef
32. CCA/BCT Andrew "Red" Harris Foundation "No Shoes" Reef
33. CCA/Florida Oceanographic Society Seagrass and Oyster Restoration
34. CCA/MCAC Brause Girls Reef
35. CCA Curtis Bostick Reef
36. CCA/Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Seagrass Restoration
37. CCA Indian River Lagoon RISSA Seagrass Buoys and Oyster Restoration
38. CCA Treasure Coast Chapter Revegetation Project
39. CCA/BTT/IRL Land Trust Tarpon and Snook Impoundment Tagging
40. CCA Spotted Seatrout Acoustic Study
41. CCA/BCT Lady Philomena Cargo Ship - Volusia County Reef Site No. 12
42. CCA/UCF/NPS Canaveral Nat'l Seashore Indian Midden Living Shoreline Restoration
43. CCA/BCT Starship II Reef
44. CCA/UCF Tomoka State Park Indian Midden Living Shoreline Restoration
45. CCA/Heineken/UCF Tomoka State Park Indian Midden Living Shoreline Restoration
46. CCA/City of Fernandina Living Shoreline Oyster Restoration
47. CCA/BCT Starship Reef
48. CCA/BCT Jacksonville River Reef

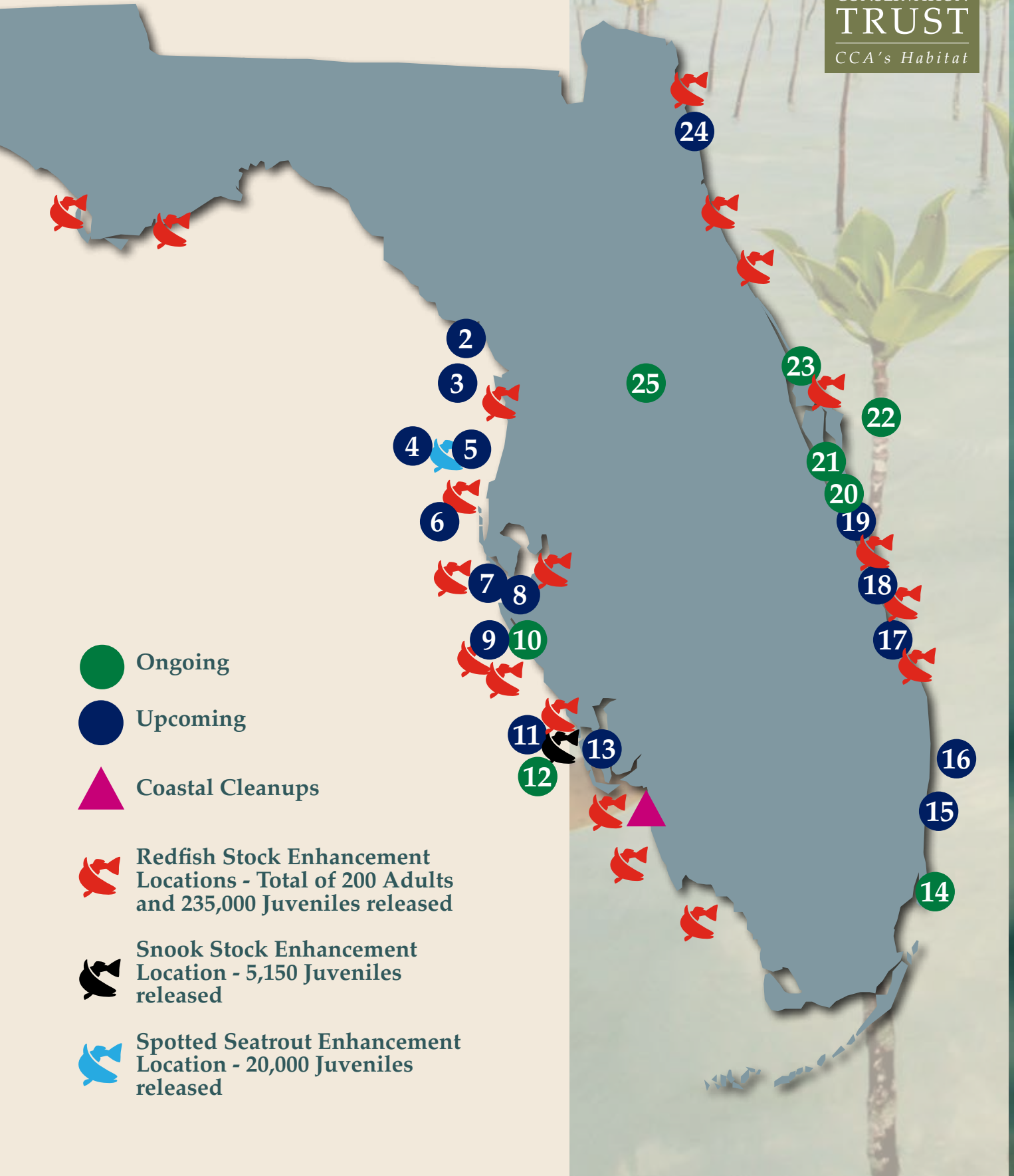


ONGOING & UPCOMING HABITAT PROJECTS



Since 2010, and in collaboration with the Building Conservation Trust, CCA has contributed over \$1.2 million, which has been leveraged with our partners, to over \$9 million in habitat projects statewide. Join us in these efforts!

1. CCA/Okaloosa County Artificial Reef
2. CCA/Duke/UF Living Shoreline
3. CCA/Duke Energy/Reef Innovations/Citrus County Inshore Reef
4. CCA/Hernando County Bendickson Reef
5. CCA/Hernando County Jenkins Creek Living Shoreline
6. CCA/Pinellas County Reef
7. CCA Tampa Bay Reefs Project
8. CCA/Manatee County Oyster Habitat Restoration Project
9. CCA Sarasota Bay Artificial Reef
10. CCA/Sarasota Bay Watch Clam Restoration
11. CCA/Charlotte County Artificial Reef
12. CCA/Lee County Phoenix Reef
13. CCA Turtle Bay Oyster Reef Restoration
14. CCA John Michael Baker Memorial Reef - Broward County
15. CCA Bob Burton Memorial Reef
16. CCA/Impact 100 PBC/PBC Vessel "Alois" Deployment
17. CCA/Wildlife Florida/FWC Eelgrass Restoration Project
18. CCA/IRL Land Trust Impoundment Solar Aeration Project
19. CCA/Brevard Zoo Habitat Restoration Project
20. CCA/Additive Fishing/FWC/UF Indian River Lagoon Clam Restoration
21. CCA/City of Satellite Beach Samsons Island Submerged Lands Restoration
22. CCA/Brevard County Artificial Reefs
23. CCA/UCF Mosquito Lagoon Oyster Restoration
24. CCA/University of North Florida Living Shoreline Restoration Project
25. CCA Oyster Shell Recycling Program



Ongoing



Upcoming



Coastal Cleanups



Redfish Stock Enhancement
Locations - Total of 200 Adults
and 235,000 Juveniles released



Snook Stock Enhancement
Location - 5,150 Juveniles
released



Spotted Seatrout Enhancement
Location - 20,000 Juveniles
released



FWC Thanks CCA Florida for its Continued Sponsorship

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) would like to thank Coastal Conservation Association Florida for its contribution to the FWC School Fishing Club Program. Through the partnership, FWC funded five additional schools this year, helping more students learn about ethical angling, conservation, Florida's aquatic habitats, basic fishing gear and fishing basics to help create confident and responsible anglers.

"We are proud to work with a great conservation organization like CCA on this important fishing initiative," said Tom Graef, FWC's director for the Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management. "Encouraging the next generation of anglers to take part in activities that help their communities and our Florida fisheries at the same time is a win for all involved."

"Youth anglers are the future of Florida's fishing," said CCA Florida Executive Director Brian Gorski. "We are proud to support the FWC School Fishing Club Program and provide students the foundational teachings for marine conservation and best fishing practices too. Program participants will learn the importance of protecting Florida's marine resources, so it will be here for the next generation to enjoy."

CCA Florida is a non-profit organization and its purpose is to advise and educate the public on conservation of marine resources. Through habitat restoration projects, water quality initiatives and fisheries advocacy, CCA Florida works with its more than 18,000 members, including recreational anglers and outdoor enthusiasts, to conserve and enhance marine resources and coastal environments.



FWC's School Fishing Club Program welcomed 50 student angling clubs in Florida to the program in 2022, offering funding for clubs committed to complete the provided FWC curriculum, as well as pre- and post-tests, and at least one conservation project. Club mentors work with their club to provide support and hands-on training in knot-tying and fishing gear assembly, as well as assistance with the clubs' local events, to increase student anglers' confidence in the sport of fishing.

Where would you like to fish today?

AT MAVERICK, WE THINK THERE ARE NO BETTER WORDS TO START A MORNING. THAT'S WHY WE'VE BEEN A PROUD SUPPORTER OF CCA FLORIDA FROM THE BEGINNING. BECAUSE WE WANT ALL FUTURE FISHING PARTNERS TO BE ABLE TO ASK EACH OTHER THIS VERY QUESTION.



Maverick®

Fish the Legend.

OYSTER LAKE

A RESTORATION SUCCESS STORY

Coastal dune lakes are an incredibly rare natural wonder that only occur in a few places around the world including in the Florida panhandle. Florida's dune lakes are estimated to be over 10,000 years old and as beautiful as they are, these estuarine dune lakes aren't there just for looks. Rather, they play an important ecological

role for fish and wildlife while serving as transition areas between the Gulf of Mexico and the upland areas. Coastal dune lakes are endangered and at risk of extinction which is why restoration efforts are critical to their future.

Oyster Lake, a 22-acre dune lake located on the west end of Scenic Highway 30A in South Walton County, is aptly named because its shoreline resembles the shape of an oyster shell. This natural dune lake was reportedly once full of trout,



1941 Historical Aerial Photograph

Oyster Lake

redfish, flounder, blue crabs and mullet but it was choked off from the Gulf of Mexico after Hurricane Eloise in September 1975. Winds in excess of 120 miles per hour and heavy rains washed away an old timber bridge on the lake and numerous Gulf front homes went into the lake.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) first got involved with Oyster Lake in 2002-2003 while studying turtles on the lake. The FWS wildlife biologist working with the turtles reached out to Chris Metcalf, a Project Leader with FWS, and encouraged him to come visit the lake. Chris did just that and immediately saw potential to restore the lake. He reached out to several agencies and individuals, including Cliff Knauer, a long-time resident and Profes-

sional Engineer. At the time, Oyster Lake was a freshwater system and had not been connected to the Gulf for a long time. An FWS summary report said it was suspected that Oyster Lake was historically a saline system with regular seawater exchange between the Gulf of Mexico.

According to Cliff Knauer, "the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) first "restored" the lake by having the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) install 6-foot x 8-foot concrete box culverts where the bridge used to be located. The box culverts had concrete bottoms that were three feet higher than Mean High Tide so the lake essentially became a stormwater pond for the 140-acre basin and only discharged to the Gulf when the water got very high - after all the septic tanks around the lake were in-

undated. Flooded homes and the road that crossed the lake (Oyster Lake Causeway) being under water all the time prompted complaints from two very well-known residents that have lived on the lake since the mid 1950's. Ms. Pat Potter and Mrs. Allen (Dune Allen is named after her) complained to Commissioner Tim Pauls and he invited me to meet with them," he said.

Ms. Potter and Mrs. Allen both said that their children grew up catching redfish, trout, and mullet in Oyster Lake. Cliff lived on the same street and fished with both of his children since they were born. However, once the connection to the lake changed and the estuarine lake flipped to a freshwater lake, Cliff and his children only caught bass and bluegills. They never once saw a mullet, crab, or any other saltwater species in 10 years of fishing. Cliff has a skin mount of his daughter's first bass out of the lake and felt like some research

(continued on page 52)

Oyster Lake

continued from page 51

needed to be done to see if the historic connection could be re-established. Historical aerials that he reviewed in archives showed that there was a huge connection to the Gulf prior to 1975. He put together a Florida Forever application for Walton County at Commissioner Tim Pauls direction and included the aerials that he found from 1950's and 1960's. He was immediately awarded \$800,000 from Northwest Florida Water Management District (NWFWM), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the US Army Corps of Engineers, along with FWS who loved the idea of restoring the lake.

Eventually FWS awarded another

\$250,000 under their Fish Passage Program from Chris Metcalf. The Walton County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) used the \$1 million in funding from NW-FWMD to completely remove the Oyster Lake Causeway (roadway) from the lake. A Cul-de-Sac was also built with a pedestrian bridge, clogged culverts were removed on Seahorse Circle, and a 40' concrete bridge was installed. Additional funding from the BOCC was used to remove the concrete box culverts at the outfall and replace them with a 70' concrete bridge on CR-30A. The final and most critical component of the restoration efforts created an outfall channel using the Fish Passage grant funds from FWS so that fish from the Gulf could make it back into the lake and use it as an estuary.

The overall project cost for the Oyster Lake Restoration project was approximately \$3 million.

All the work took about 10 years to complete and the outfall was finally opened up in April 2014. FWS (Chris Metcalf) performed fish surveys prior to the opening and found that there was a lack of forage fish for the bass and bluegills and some of the bass that they shocked were severely malnourished. Highly invasive torpedo grass (*Panicum repens*) mats 20-foot wide floated on the entire perimeter of the lake choking out the cattails (*Typha* spp.) and other natural vegetation. Nitrogen and phosphorus levels in the lake were much higher than any of the other dune Lakes and there was no flushing from 1975 until 2011. Within 3 months of the opening of the lake the salinity went up to 6 parts

(continued on page 55)



THE FINAL AND MOST CRITICAL COMPONENT OF THE RESTORATION EFFORTS CREATED AN OUTFALL CHANNEL USING THE FISH PASSAGE GRANT FUNDS FROM FWS SO THAT FISH FROM THE GULF COULD MAKE IT BACK INTO THE LAKE AND USE IT AS AN ESTUARY.



**START
RUN
STORE**

**Start up
with ease.
Every time.**

**Run faster,
cleaner,
smoother.**

**Store with
confidence
between use.**



WWW.STARTRON.COM
PROTECTION + PERFORMANCE

Oyster Lake

continued from page 53

per thousand (PPT) and crabs and mullet were in the lake. Within a year the salinity went up to 8 PPT and all the torpedo grass was dead and gone.

Over the last few months, something amazing was observed in the lake. "My nephew and his buddies started catching tarpon off the shore and I didn't believe the stories until he brought by pictures," Cliff said. "I told Chris Metcalf with US Fish and Wildlife and he is planning to do

a new fish study and report that will go out to all the funding agencies to show the success of the project. I'm really proud to be a part of it and plan to get pictures of my daughter with a tarpon to go next to her bass on the wall. I consider Ms. Pat Potter and Ms. Allen to be the masterminds of the project since we had no idea that it used to be a functional coastal dune lake for thousands of years before FEMA and FDOT installed their "solution" to the Hurricane," he said.

This rare natural wonder right here in

Florida deserves the accolades it is receiving for the time, cost and effort that was put into the restoration. And aside from the important ecological and environmental benefits, the big payoff is the opportunity for kids to catch saltwater species from the shore. "The big story really was restoring the lake from the lowest water quality out of all the 16 local coastal dune lakes to one of the best water quality lakes. And I would have never guessed it would take 17 years from the time I met with Ms. Potter and Ms. Allen, but the pictures of kids holding tarpon for the first time really tells a much bigger story!" Cliff said.





PICTURE

day





Ingredients

- 15 oz whole cherry tomatoes
(I used 1 pint plus ½ pint)
- 4 fresh garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ c extra virgin olive oil
- 2 medium salmon fillets
(I used 10 oz fillets)
- 1 8 oz block feta cheese
- 1 tbsp Italian herb seasoning
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 c fresh basil, chopped
- ½ lb dry pasta of choice
(I used an 8.8 oz bag of DeLallo egg pappardelle)

Salt and pepper

Feta Tomato-Basil Salmon Pasta

RECIPE & PHOTOS BY HEATHER PETEREK JOINCCA.ORG/RECIPES

Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F.

To a medium size baking dish, add tomatoes, olive oil, salt, pepper, Italian seasoning, garlic and block of feta cheese. Gently toss all together until seasoning is evenly distributed and tomatoes and cheese are coated in oil. Place in the oven uncovered and bake for 20 minutes.

Season salmon fillets with a sprinkle of salt and pepper. Remove dish from oven and place salmon fillets directly on top of tomatoes, on either side of the block of feta. Return dish to oven and bake an additional 10-15 minutes or until salmon is cooked to your liking.

While salmon is cooking, boil your pasta according to package directions. Drain and reserve about ½ cup of the pasta water for later. Return pasta back to the pot used for boiling and cover.

Remove dish from the oven and using a fork, mash together the tomatoes and cheese, making the sauce. Next, with the fork, carefully combine the salmon fillets into the sauce, taking care not to break apart too much, leaving larger chunks intact.

Once your salmon and sauce are combined, pour mixture into pot with cooked pasta. Add the fresh basil and fold all together gently. If your dish needs more liquid, add in some reserved pasta water until you get consistency to your liking. Add salt and pepper to taste and serve immediately. Serves 4.



 **CCA FLORIDA**
ccaflorida.org

VACATION HOME SITTING EMPTY?

Let CCA Help Fill Your Unused Weeks

We host events
throughout the year
and can keep your
property full.

Our members are your
target audience.

Whether you need
to fill one week or 50,
we can help.

Contact Adam Miller at (941) 270-0895



CCA SOLIDO SUN MASK



UPF 40 BLOCKS 97.5% OF THE
SUN'S HARMFUL UV RAYS.



MOISTURE WICKING FABRIC KEEPS
YOU CALM, COLLECTED AND DRY.

\$5 FROM THE SALE OF EVERY CCA BY AFTCO PRODUCT IS DONATED
TO FUND CCA CONSERVATION EFFORTS. AVAILABLE NOW AT AFTCO.COM.



Rhineland Cutlery

===== ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ =====
X50 CR MOV 15 High Carbon German Steel



A Cut Above

Rhineland Cutlery founded in 1995

Industry experts worldwide consulted on all stages of design and development to create the ultimate line of cutlery

Growing reputation and international recognition for our exquisite, high performance culinary knives and accessories

Perfectly balanced, ergonomic and beautiful – our distinct handle with tapered bolster sets us apart

Dominant in personalized, luxury, corporate and every day gifting

Thousands of fans and partnerships across North America and beyond

Probably the best knife you'll ever use!

Use our engraving services to promote your business, impress your friends or create that perfectly unique gift!

rhinelandcutlery.com | 321-725-2101

SPRING EVENTS SAVE THE DATE

May

5/4 Homestead Banquet and Auction

5/11 Big Bend Banquet and Auction

5/18 Northeast BBQ and Auction

June

6/11- 2023 Youth Scholarship Program presented

6/15 by Mud Hole Custom Tackle Education Program

For additional information, please contact
Amanda Krpan at
akrpan@ccaflorida.org.

Looking For A Guide?



Visit ccaflorida.org and choose from our regionalized directory of Florida guides who support CCA's conservation initiatives.

CCA FLORIDA PET CLUB

By joining the CCA Florida Pet Club*, your pet will support Florida's marine fisheries, habitat, waterways, coasts and more. Join us as we continue to work toward enhancing these resources and Florida's fishing future.

Invest in the CCA Florida Pet Club and your pet will receive:

AN EXCLUSIVE CCA FLORIDA PET BANDANA

THE OFFICIAL CCA FLORIDA PET CLUB CERTIFICATE

**Please Include Name of Pet in "Order Notes" upon Checkout*

The CCA Florida Pet Club for Florida's four-legged fish friends!

<https://ccaflorida.org/product/petclub/>





Maverick

Fish the Legend.

PATHFINDER
ANGLER DRIVEN

MBG MAVERICK
BOAT GROUP

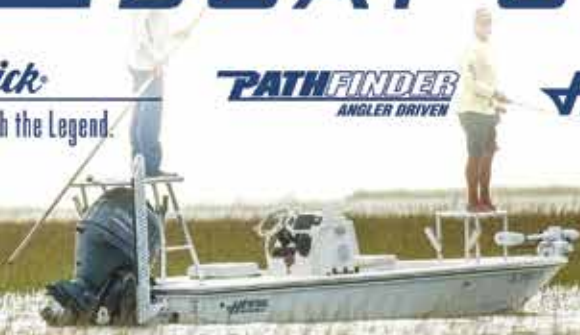
Maverick

Fish the Legend.

PATHFINDER
ANGLER DRIVEN

HEWES.

COBIA



HEWES

COBIA



PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE CCA FOR OVER THREE DECADES!

don't miss it

INTRODUCING VARIETY RAFFLE PACKAGES

CCA FLORIDA RAFFLES

THE \$100 TICKET PACK
5 TICKETS - YOU SAVE \$40

BUY NOW

INTRODUCING VARIETY RAFFLE PACKAGES

CCA FLORIDA RAFFLES

THE \$250 TICKET PACK
13 TICKETS - YOU SAVE \$100

BUY NOW

INTRODUCING VARIETY RAFFLE PACKAGES

CCA FLORIDA RAFFLES

THE \$500 TICKET PACK
18 TICKETS - YOU SAVE \$110

BUY NOW

INTRODUCING VARIETY RAFFLE PACKAGES

CCA FLORIDA RAFFLES

THE \$1000 TICKET PACK
28 TICKETS - YOU SAVE \$280

BUY NOW

NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE!

Shop CCA Florida's Raffle Packages!

Choose from the Grand, \$500, \$250 or \$100 Raffle Package and receive the best variety of CCA Florida's ticket offerings!

SALES END MAY 12!

SHOP NOW

USA GOLF CART RAFFLE

TICKETS ARE \$20 EACH OR SIX FOR \$100 • DRAWING HELD ON MAY 13!



GET TICKETS NOW

This stylish, white golf cart with red, white and blue accents is the ultimate vehicle your garage has been craving! The ICON i40L has a maximum speed of 28 mph, seats four and includes side mirrors with built-in turn signal displays. Purchase your tickets online or in person at the Sunshine ACE Hardware in Downtown Naples TODAY!

CONTENDER

ALWAYS IN THE GAME



COASTAL
CONSERVATION
ASSOCIATION

FLORIDA

28_T

POWERED BY



CONTENDERBOATS.COM