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### **Community Comes Together To Build Artificial Reef**

Eighty additional Reef Ball artificial reefs were recently added to an existing 70 modules located 16 miles due east of Port Canaveral in 80 feet of water. The construction of the reef was a joint project of Brevard County, the Central Florida NAUI Chapter and *Saltwater News*. Reef Balls are specially designed concrete structures that are cost efficient, proven to mimic natural reefs, and safe for the environment. Reef Balls are unique in that the concrete that forms them is poured into a mold that contains a removable, inflatable bladder which allows the modules to float to their drop sites.

With the leadership of NAUI member Larry Beggs, of the Central Florida NAUI Chapter, Artificial Reef Coordinator Jean Kinzalow of Brevard County and Alana and Wilson Love of *Saltwater News*, the project has been successful in involving many members of the community, including several government agencies, local fishing and diving clubs, residents, businesses and youth groups.

Grant money from saltwater license revenues was earmarked to produce the artificial reefs by the Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Marine Resources, Office of Fisheries Management. Jean Kinzalow from the Brevard County Solid Waste Department secured a grant of \$30,000 from the DEP which was used to purchase concrete, to lease molds, and to secure a barge for the deployment. The national NAUI office provided an additional gift to get the project rolling. Other costs were met by several fishing tournaments which donated a portion of entrance fees to the project. The fishing tournaments were organized by *Saltwater News*.

Larry Beggs led the construction of the modules that were built by NAUI members, volunteers, and students from the Space Coast Marine Institute. Both the Canaveral and Lake Buena Vista Rinker Concrete Plants donated space, equipment and left over concrete for the Reef Balls to be constructed.

Several business donated labor and materials. Brownie's Third Lung provided the use of air equipment for lift bag work. Local charter boat captains provided transportation to the reef site. Epcot divers and the Manta Ray Sub Crew volunteered diving assistance. Ron Jon's and other dive shops helped with air donations. Atlantic Boat Repair and the Boat Doctor assisted in the repair of fiberglass molds when necessary. The site for the reef was surveyed by the Florida Institute of Technology professor Lee Harris and his students.

All in all, the Port Canaveral Reef Ball Project has been successful because of the involvement of so

many community members. The Port Canaveral Port Authority has two additional artificial reef sites for the volunteers to use, and the consideration of future sites is already underway. By creating awareness and excitement about the ocean environment and the need for artificial reefs, the Reef Ball Development Group Ltd., hopes to help sustain one of our nation's greatest assets-marine life.

For more information, contact (404) 840-8389 .

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