



REEF BALL FOUNDATION

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Eco-Rap Living Seawall Completed at OLeary's Tiki Bar & Grill in Sarasota *City of Sarasota Gets Its First Living Seawall*



[SARASOTA, FLORIDA OCTOBER 12TH]

The Living Seawall commissioned by the City of Sarasota and made up of Eco-Rap modules has been completed at OLeary's Tiki Bar and Grill on the Sarasota waterfront. Both human and marine life are encouraged to visit. OLeary's customers now have the opportunity to watch marine and littoral wildlife colonize

the new living seawall. Our first official visitor was an anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga* - also called snakebird, darter, American Darter, or water turkey) that swam the length of the seawall like a seal, caught a meal, blew bubbles of air underwater and enchanted a group of OLeary's customers on the evening of October 11th. The visit was captured on high definition video and is going viral on social media.

<https://www.facebook.com/todd.r.barber/videos/10156355957377631/>

The Reef Ball Foundation, a global non-profit organization that creates marine habitat, is excited to announce the completion of the second generation Eco-Rap "living seawall." The City of Sarasota funded the project with local claim funds from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. "This project is an excellent example of supporting local business and innovation," says Tom Barwin, Sarasota City Manager. "Built by Reef Innovations, based in Sarasota, the seawall is comprised of 35 marine-friendly concrete modules designed to slow and absorb wave action and reduce shoreline erosion. The reef-like modules are created with crevices and holes carved into them to attract a variety of fish." As Sarasota recovers from the devastating effects of red tide on marine life, it is envisioned that the living seawall will improve water quality, prevent erosion and help restore and enhance fish populations along the bayfront. The 250-foot seawall is a first for Sarasota County. It is similar to the one designed by the Reef Ball Foundation and built by Reef Innovations in Manatee County (Palmetto) in 2016.



"These modules are one way to improve traditional seawalls," said Stevie Freeman-Montes (above left), a Sustainability Manager with the City of Sarasota, "The Eco-Rap units go in front of traditional seawalls to help provide critical habitat by attracting sea life while also deflecting wave energy." She hopes the living seawall helps the city better understand alternative shoreline options as it looks at rising sea levels and long-term climate resiliency projects.

"We wanted the seawall to look as natural as possible," said Vera Cole (above right) the project's artistic designer, "So every rock was hand-picked, local shells collected and each tidal pool built individually to fit the module it was made for."

Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium is studying the biology, water quality, sediment structure and wave energy of the seawall compared to baseline readings taken before installation. They are also comparing it to other nearby shoreline types, such as traditional seawalls, natural shorelines, and mangrove forests. This research will help better understand the impact and performance of the living seawall and guide future shoreline protection projects, especially as the city considers options for adaptation to climate change.

The Living Seawall is a result of the partnership between Sarasota's Sustainability program and the Public Works Department - special thanks to Stevie Freeman-Montes, Mike DelRossi, and Bob Heggan. Vera Z Cole, littoral artist, designed the modules. Larry Beggs of Reef Innovations headed up the construction and deployment teams. Permitting services were provided by ESA Scheda and engineering services by Humiston

and Moore Engineers. Abbot Construction provided barge services for deployment. For more information contact Todd Barber, Chairman of the Reef Ball Foundation.

The Reef Ball Foundation is a 501(c) 3 publicly supported non-profit and international environmental NGO. Our mission is to rehabilitate our world's ocean reef ecosystems and to protect our natural reef systems using Reef Ball artificial reef technologies. Reef Balls are artificial reef modules placed in the ocean to form reef habitat. www.reefball.org. You can contribute to this and other Reef Ball Foundation projects in a number of different ways through <http://rbfdevsite.com/donate/>

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