



## County receives \$25,000 reef grant

### YVANN COWIN

At a special meeting Mar. 21, the Walton County Board of County Commissioners learned the county has received a \$25,000 grant to build an artificial reef in waters off of the county, near Seagrave Beach. The grant was funded by the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund through the Office of Fisheries Management and Assistance Services.

The grant project started nearly a year ago with volunteer scuba divers surveying bottom sites for a location. Of the sites surveyed, several were rejected because of a lack of bedrock beneath the sand to support the reef material.

The material will be six-foot wide and four feet high hollow concrete balls, each weighing about 500 pounds. Over a five-year period, the county hopes to place 270 of the concrete balls to form the reef. They will be placed in groups of 20 with each group at least 100 feet apart.

The grant the county received is for one year. County Administrative Supervisor Ronnie Bell said the county will have to reapply each year for additional funds under the program. Bell and District 5 Commissioner Ho Cochens noted Grayson Beach resident Van Ness Butler was instrumental in assisting the county with the grant.