

Coastal Zone Management of Collier County

Solid Waste Department

DIVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

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2,000 TON ARTIFICIAL REEF TO OPEN TO DIVERS

Anglers searching for new and exciting ways to experience the water, will look forward to the opening of a 2,000-ton artificial reef that opens off the Collier County coastline the week of June 11.

The Collier County Coastal Zone Management Department will complete installation of the artificial reef pieces on Monday. Media members are invited to ride on a boat and watch the final pieces be dropped early in the morning on Sunday, June 10. The barge will leave from the north east side of the Marco Island bridge south of the 951 Boat Ramp. Launch time is around 7 a.m.

Coastal Zone Management partnered with Collier County's Solid Waste Management Department on this project. Solid Waste Management Director Dan Rodriguez said, "The fact that Solid Waste partnered with Coastal Zone Management on this project is benefiting divers, fishermen and the environment, because we are reusing construction materials to enhance the natural habitat for wildlife and preserve our environment."

The reef site is nine miles off the coast located near Caxambas Pass. The first pieces were deployed on Monday, June 4. All the material is made up of clean concrete materials such as old culverts, telephone poles and junction boxes.

The project cost \$100,000 to move the materials from the landfill to the drop site, paid for by the Solid Waste Management Department in an effort to recycle unusable items. Solid Waste receives the materials free from construction companies. **The project provides a critical reef habitat for fish in the area and our ecosystem.**

"Artificial reefs provide hard surfaces to allow barnacles, corals and oysters to attach, this in turn provides intricate structure and food for fish," Pamela Keyes, a Coastal Zone Management Environmental Specialist said.

A Mitigation Reef, completed earlier this year in May, established a benchmark for the artificial reef program in Coastal Zone Management. It is Collier County's first engineered reef project. An engineered reef is a reef comprised of clean materials that are required to be placed exact distances. The Mitigation Reef is made up of limestone rock and is located off the coastline of fourth avenue north in Naples.

Collier County is able to charter a boat for the media, if reporters are able to contact Pamela Keyes by Saturday 12 p.m. Call Ms. Keyes at (239) 601-1130.