



Collier County Government

Public Services Division
Coastal Zone Management Department
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COUNTY TO DEPLOY FIRST ARTIFICIAL REEF OF THE YEAR

Artificial reefs are a critical component in building a healthier environment for Southwest Florida's marine life. On Thursday, June 25, the Collier County Coastal Zone Management Department will begin deploying the first artificial reef of 2009, which will provide 950 tons of underwater habitat.

In January, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation and Commission (FFWCC) awarded Coastal Zone Management \$60,000 in grant funds to pay for implementing this artificial reef project along the Gulf coast.

The \$60,000 grant covers the cost of deploying approximately 950 tons of concrete culverts, junction boxes and other acceptable secondary concrete materials that will be placed 4.5 miles off Doctors Pass.

"The materials will be placed thirty feet below water level and will not only create a healthy habitat for our very important marine life, but will also be an exciting diving site for recreationists," said Coastal Zone Management Environmental Specialist Pamela Keyes.

FFWCC is writing a grant contract agreement, which will require the project to be completed by Aug. 31. This deadline will be met with deployment occurring Thursday, June 25 and Monday, June 29.

Bryan Fluech, Collier County Sea Grant Extension Agent, said, "This grant is allowing us to provide resources for reef fish habitat growth in the Gulf and will improve our local ecosystem."

Currently, Collier County boasts more than 100 offshore artificial reefs. CZM recently launched an interactive web map located at www.colliergov.net/coastalzonemanagement, which interested parties may search to view artificial reef locations. This map, a joint project between CZM and Parks and Recreation, shows the latitude and longitude of reef locations as well as beaches and boat ramps.

To learn more about the many water opportunities Coastal Zone Management is providing, visit www.colliergov.net/coastalzonemanagement.

Media is invited to cover the final day of deployment on Monday, June 29 and should meet at Port'O'Call Marina located at 550 Port O Call Way (6 seats available). For more information, media may contact Camden Smith at (239) 252-5326.