

Press Release

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OVER 43,000 TIRES RECOVERED FROM THE SEAFLOOR DURING THE 2008 FIELD SEASON

Army and Navy divers and boats work together to conduct salvage training and
remove coral killing tires from the ocean

Federal, State and Broward County governments have begun a monumental project to remove hundreds of thousands of tires from the Osborne Reef in the Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of Fort Lauderdale Florida.

It's estimated that nearly two-million tires were placed into the ocean in the 1970's by private organizations hoping to create an artificial reef. Over the years, the successful formation of an artificial reef did not occur; the tires loosened and moved, damaging the nearby natural coral reefs. The tires cover more than 34 acres on the seafloor in 60-70 feet of water about 1.3 miles off the coast of Fort Lauderdale beach.

In 2008 divers from the U.S. Army and Navy conducted salvage training in 70' of water off the coast of Broward County recovering tires from the seafloor. The goal is to ultimately remove an estimated 700,000 tires from the seafloor.

As part of the Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) program, this project allows these military divers and Army LCU crew members real-world training.

To accomplish the failed tire reef cleanup, a host of agencies with a diverse expertise were brought together to accomplish a cleanup job that has languished for over 30 years. The military is providing the salvage expertise. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is addressing the transportation and processing of the recovered tires. Broward County's Environmental Protection Department's marine biologists and Port Everglades' donated dock space are ensuring all the pieces come together at the local level. Coastal America, a federal process that brings together multiple agencies to tackle complex environmental restoration and protection projects, spearheaded the effort. Will Nuckols, Principal, W.H. Nuckols Consulting, said "We're saddled with a number of large environmental cleanup projects around the nation. It is important that we look to the

resources we have to determine the efficient mix that solves these seemingly insolvable environmental challenges.”

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's contractor addresses the waste tire processing. Currently, the tires salvaged from the seafloor have been trucked to Georgia, chopped up into tire chips when they become tire-derived fuel (TDF) which is used to power industrial boilers in at a recycled paper plant. TDF is burnt to produce energy, offsetting the need for burning fossil fuels such as coal. Governor Charlie Crist was instrumental in securing a \$2 million funding stream to address the waste tire processing costs. All other costs of the project are addresses through in-kind donation of facilities and expertise already funded by the county, state and federal partners.

As the cleanup continues, Nova Southeastern University (NSU) Oceanographic Center scientists from its National Coral Reef Institute will evaluate recovery of the injured reef. The NOAA-funded NSU study will provide resource managers valuable information on restoration effects and reef recovery times.

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For additional information or to schedule an interview contact Will Nuckols 443-994-1493 cell