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SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH

Florida Oyster Reef Restoration Workshop

Opening Remarks

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The Nature Conservancy's Mission

"To preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive."

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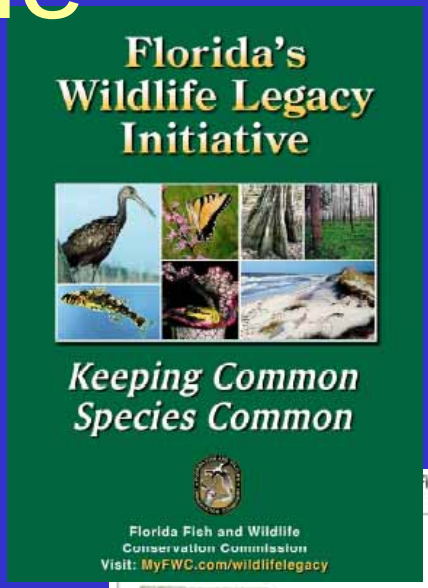
TNC's Interest in Marine Conservation

- Recognized need to expand from terrestrial land preservation & stewardship to succeed at mission;
- Florida Keys marine program, 15+ years;
- Last several years active expansion of our marine program and conservation activities world-wide & in Florida;
- Florida-wide: Site prioritization, FL-CWCS – problems & actions;
- Place-based: NE FL, IRL, FL Keys & SE FL reef tract; Big Bend, Apalachicola, NW FL



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TNC's Interest in Oyster Reef Conservation

- Oyster reefs represent an important component of Florida's marine ecosystem;
- Provide a variety of ecosystem and socio-ecosystem services;
- Significant declines from known historic distributions;
- Would like to work with partners to reverse this trend.

Species known to be associated with oyster reef in Florida, from Florida CWCS

Mammals	
• *Procyon lotor auspicatus*	Key Vaca Raccoon
• *Procyon lotor incautus*	Key West Raccoon
• *Trichechus manatus latirostris*	Florida Manatee
• *Tursiops truncatus*	Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin
Birds	
• *Haematopus palliatus*	American Oystercatcher
• *Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*	Whimbrel
• *Limosa fedoa*	Marbled Godwit
• *Calidris canutus rufa*	Red Knot
• *Calidris mauri*	Western Sandpiper
Reptiles	
• *Malaclemys terrapin*	Diamondback Terrapin
• *Caretta caretta*	Loggerhead
• *Lepidochelys kempii*	Kemp's Ridley
Fish	
• *Negaprion brevirostris*	Lemon Shark
• *Sphyrna tiburo*	Bonnethead
• *Albula vulpes*	Bonefish
• *Opsanus beta*	Gulf Toadfish
• *Opsanus pardus*	Leopard Toadfish
• *Opsanus tau*	Oyster Toadfish
• *Centropomus undecimalis*	Common Snook
• *Epinephelus itajara*	Goliath Grouper
• *Lutjanus griseus*	Gray Snapper
• *Archosargus probatocephalus*	Sheepshead
• *Pogonias cromis*	Black Drum
• *Sciaenops ocellatus*	Red Drum
• *Prognathodes aculeatus*	Longsnout Butterflyfish
• *Stegastes partitus*	Bicolor Damselfish
• *Lachnolaimus maximus*	Hogfish
• *Stathmonotus hemphilli*	Blackbelly Blenny
Invertebrates	
• *Crassostrea virginica*	Eastern Oyster
• *Fasciolaria lilium*	Banded Tulip

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Workshop Desired Outcomes

Through this workshop & other fora, better understand:

- How Florida oyster reefs have changed & why;
- The historic & continuing threats to reef health;
- Where reefs & restoration activities are located;
- Human use patterns;
- Value added to Florida's ecosystem by reefs; and
- Best places to focus reef restoration & the criteria for doing so.

Establish continuing web-based forum for sharing information on oyster reefs in Florida.