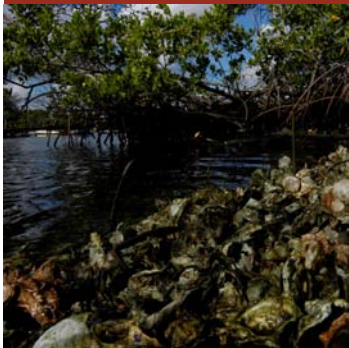


Happy Halloween



White Cane Day

Awareness for the Visually Impaired



October 15th was White Cane Day and to raise awareness for the visually impaired, the River Center hosted an event for the Lighthouse Center for the Blind and the Division of

Blind Services in Palm Beach County.

During the program, guests were encouraged to touch, smell, taste, and listen to gain more understanding about the wildlife and habitats on the Loxahatchee River. They touched sea urchins and mangrove propagules. Seagrape jelly and salty black mangrove leaves were at the "tasting station". Visitors smelled wax myrtle, citrus leaves, and pungent mangrove mud. Busch Wildlife Sanctuary provided some animals to touch such as a snake, skunk, and alligator. They also brought a barred owl

that "talked" to the guests.

It was a great experience and a wonderful opportunity to expand our programs.



LOXAHATCHEE RIVER ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

RIVER TIDINGS

Featured Exhibit— Seagrass

Seagrasses are an essential fish habitat because they serve as nursery habitat for so many species. During their juvenile stage, snappers, grunts, parrotfish, and even grouper, live in and among seagrass beds, where both food and shelter are readily available. As individuals mature, they leave seagrass beds in the estuary and take up residence on offshore coral reefs.

Visitors to the River Center can inspect our seagrass exhibit to see a miniature seagrass ecosystem. Turtle grass, manatee grass, and shoal grass along with several important macroalgae species can be seen in this exhibit. Also, you can watch file fish, grunts, and herrings foraging in the rich habitat



You Can Help the River Center

We Need:

- 2 Liter Bottles
- Old CDs or DVDs
- Digital Video Camera
- Volunteers for Saturdays

Special points of interest:

- *Would you like to volunteer? Please contact Jocelyn at 561-743-7123 or jocelyn@loxahatcheeriver.org*
- *Friends of the Loxahatchee River meetings are regularly held at the River Center at noon on the 1st Friday of the month. Visit our website for details on speakers and topics.*

Restoring the Reefs

Oyster Reef Restoration on the Loxahatchee River

Why Restore Reefs?

Oyster reefs provide important benefits to the overall health of the Loxahatchee River by cleaning water, stabilizing shorelines and providing essential fish habitat. Oyster reefs have declined in the river due to a lack of hard surfaces where oyster larvae can attach.

The Loxahatchee River District and The Nature Conservancy are working in partnership with cooperating agencies and the local community to restore oyster reefs in the river. The newly created reefs will provide habitat and food for fish, crab, shrimp and other important estuarine species.

What We Are Doing

The goal of the project is to create artificial reefs in areas of the river known to have the right conditions for oysters. On the river's northwest fork, ReefBalls™ and bags of recycled oyster shell will be

placed under the docks of willing homeowners. These materials will create the foundation for healthy living oyster reefs.

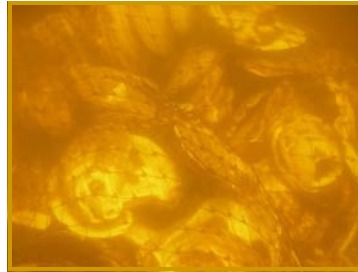
The first artificial reef was deployed on October 10th. Staff from the Loxahatchee River District's Wildpine Lab placed 150 mesh bags of oyster shell collected from local



restaurants, and 15 ReefBalls™ were positioned in the deeper water under the dock.

Next Steps

Because of funding provided by a national partnership between the NOAA Community-based Restoration Program and The Nature Conservancy's Global Marine Initiative scientists



from LRD and FIU will closely monitor the project to measure oyster recruitment on the new reefs. Regular surveys will track the number and



variety of fish and invertebrate species inhabiting the

restored reefs.

Scientists will also assess the value of the new reefs as critical fish habitat. Using ultrasonic transmitters and receivers, fish movements will be tracked to study the importance of oyster reefs as a food source for gray snappers.



Oyster Reefs

- Filter and clean water
- Stabilize and protect shorelines
- Provide habitat for wildlife, including shrimp and crabs
- Serve as feeding grounds for fish species, such as the gray snapper

Arts & Crafts – It's a Hoot!



Something special happens the second Tuesday of every month. River Totters Arts &

Crafts. This month children made Dancing Spiders for Halloween. Made of black yarn, pipe cleaners and googly eyes, these spiders were more funny than frightening.

For more information about "River Totters" Arts



& Crafts or Story time— "Starfish & Coffee", please call 561-743-7123.



Volunteer of the Month



Cheryl Hicks

Cheryl spends two and half days per week at the River Center greeting guests and managing the gift shop. She also helps with arts & crafts and other projects at the River Center. She spent many hours decorating for Halloween!

THANK YOU CHERYL!