



## HERNANDO COUNTY ARTIFICIAL REEF PROGRAM

The Hernando County Port Authority is working with Hernando County to spearhead the development of artificial reefs along the Hernando County Coast. In the 1990's, Hernando County was active in artificial reef development and State grant money was obtained for developing offshore reefs. In 2008, Port Authority members Jim McFarlane and Captain Chuck Morton led the way in requesting the County to re-permit the Hernando Reefball and Bendickson Tank reef sites to continue to develop these areas.

The Hernando County Port Authority Board is unanimously in support of continuing to develop artificial reefs that will improve the fishery and water quality in the Gulf of Mexico, as well as adding to the recreational value of our coast. Please support this project and make a donation to the designated funds account to help this ongoing project.

The five year plan is:

- Re-permit the Hernando Reef Ball Reef.
  - We hope to get grant money to work with the community, schools and various groups to enhance and monitor the reef.
  - We believe that school involvement can be educational as well as giving the future leaders of the County an ownership interest in the reef projects.
  - We also hope to show community support, to rank us higher in the competitive process to obtain artificial reef development grants.
  - We would like to identify a corner of the Reef Ball Reef for an eternal reef. Eternal reefs [www.eternalreefs.com](http://www.eternalreefs.com) are a great way for a person to be remembered and memorialized as well as improve the existing reef.
  - Information on Reef Balls is available at [www.reefball.org](http://www.reefball.org)
  
- Re-permit Bendickson Tank Reef.
  - In the 90's the permit included a plan to connect the 10 tanks with approved reef materials. This would improve the migration of fish and make an exciting trail for offshore divers.
  - We currently have several new transfer boxes that would provide great habitat for grouper. We plan to deploy them in a pattern to expand the reef utilizing the full permitted area.

- Over the 10 year span of the permit we wish to complete the trail of reef material between each of the tanks.
  
- Locate a site for a snorkeling reef in approximately 6 feet of water within the next two years.
  
- Promote the development of under the dock reefs in the Hernando Beach canals to aid in the improvement of water quality and protect the shoreline from erosion.
  
- Enhance the inshore oyster reefs.

Funding for these ambitious projects depends on local support. Any business, association, group or resident is encouraged to help by contributing money and/or time, as well as learning about the values of artificial reefs.

The Hernando County Waterways Maintenance Division has established a fund to accept monetary donations to enable the Port Authority to proceed with this work. Checks should be made payable to the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners (HCOCC). Donations can be mailed to:

Hernando County Parks & Waterways Maintenance Department  
205 East Fort Dade Avenue  
Brooksville, FL 34601  
(352) 754-4027