



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S MOORING BUOY PROGRAM RECEIVES \$10,000
DONATION FROM A LOCAL ORGANIZATION TO HELP PROTECT OUR LOCAL
CORAL REEFS**

(MIAMI, September 28, 2012) The Miami-Dade County Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources (RER) received a \$10,000 donation in support of its Mooring Buoy Program. The Miami-Dade Reef Guard Association, a local not for profit organization, donated the funds to help with the maintenance of 42 mooring buoys at nine reef locations from offshore of Sunny Isles to Key Biscayne. The main purpose for these buoys is to allow boaters, divers, and fisherman to tie their vessels to a buoy instead of dropping their anchors onto the fragile coral reefs.



Assistant Director, Lee Hefty (left) accepts the \$10,000 donation towards the Mooring Buoy Program from Mike Beach, (right) President of the Reef Guard Association.

“Providing boaters with the option to tie up to a mooring buoy instead of dropping an anchor on the fragile reef below is an important step in protecting one of Florida’s greatest natural treasures,” said Lee Hefty, Assistant Director of the RER Division of Environmental Resources Management. “Thanks to the contribution from Reef Guard and other sponsors we will be able to maintain and continue to expand our Mooring Buoy Program,” added Mr. Hefty.

The Mooring Buoy Program was initiated in 2009 with grant support from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Initially, twenty-two of the planned 42 buoys were installed at five natural reef sites and one artificial reef site. Recently, with additional funding from FWC, and in partnership with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Coral Reef Conservation Program (FDEP CRCP), an additional 20 mooring buoys have been installed at the five original natural reef sites and the two additional natural reef sites, locally known as Rainbow Reef and RJ’s Ledge.

Funding for the current expansion of the program was provided in part through a grant from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s Boater Improvement Program. However, additional funds are still needed to assist with the on-going maintenance of the 42 buoys and possible expansion of the program. Corporations and residents alike can “Adopt-a-Buoy” by

making a donation to the program. For more information, please visit www.miamidade.gov/development/buoy/adopt-a-buoy.asp or call Ms. Sara Thanner at 305-372-6859 / thanns@miamidade.gov.

The County's Environmental Resources Management Division also offers an interactive Artificial Reef Locator on its website for those interested in exploring the locations of artificial reefs throughout the waters off Miami-Dade County. Through this web tool, residents can find specific reefs by name, site, or depth and material type. To view the Artificial Reef Locator, go to www.miamidade.gov/development/reef-locator.asp

While local, state and federal agencies are working together to protect Florida's coral reefs, residents and visitors alike can also help by implementing four simple tips:

1. Minimize the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides to reduce groundwater and coastal waterway contamination.
2. Dispose of household chemicals at designated hazardous waste facilities, which can be harmful to the environment if disposed of improperly.
3. Anchor boats in the sand or tie them up to mooring buoys to minimize damage to coral reefs.
4. Practice proper weighting and buoyancy when scuba diving to minimize contact with and damage of fragile coral reefs.

The Miami-Dade Reef Guard Association is a local not for profit corporation whose main goals are to provide collective assistance in promoting, funding and organizing of resources for the installation and maintenance of mooring buoys on the reefs adjacent to Miami-Dade County, to support artificial reef deployment and increase education and awareness of the need for natural reef conservation in coastal waters adjacent to Miami-Dade County. For more information, visit www.reefguard.org

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