

2013 **SHALLOW WATER** ISSUE

FLORIDA SPORT FISHING

JOURNAL FOR THE **SHALLOW WATER** FISHER

**CROAKER
SAVE
THE DAY**
.....

**SARASOTA
SPRING
SLAM**
.....

**FISHING
DOCK
LIGHTS**
.....

**HIDDEN
COAST
SECRETS**

**GULF
COAST
COBIA
KILLER**
p.24

SEEING TRIPLE

TROLLING LURES • REELS • FIGHTING BELTS • SWIMMING PLUGS • MOORING LINES • SWIVELS
ALUMINUM TOWERS • GAFFS • CHUM • **MODERN MARINA** • ENCLOSURES • BRAIDED FISHING LINE...

MADE IN
FLORIDA
SERIES



MISSION OBJECTIVE: INVESTIGATE & REVEAL

TARGET ACQUISITION

Modern Marina

Anglers and boaters rarely consider the tremendous effort required to design and manufacture the countless components and accessories that enhance our on-the-water experiences. Skilled craftsmen design and assemble many of these essentials right here in Florida. We wanted to learn more about these companies and we are confident that you, too, will be fascinated with what we uncover.

[STAFF REPORT]



→ It is no secret that Florida is a boater's paradise that attracts visitors from all over the world. With thousands of miles of navigable inshore waters leading to expansive open oceans, Florida really is the best place to enjoy the outdoors. While the natural surroundings are impressive, they aren't invincible and are susceptible to habitat degradation and pollution from numerous sources. Thankfully, many enjoy the water with an underlying goal of helping promote the conservation and stewardship of critical inshore habitats.

Nestled along one of Florida's most biologically diverse estuarine systems, the Sunrise City is home to the world famous Indian River Lagoon. Spanning approximately 156 miles from Ponce Inlet to Jupiter Inlet, the IRL system is a shallow body of water that provides ideal habitat for a variety of highly desirable species that drive critical tourism dollars to the state. While offshore waters provide exciting opportunities with sailfish, dolphin, grouper and more, the inshore waters are heralded as some of the best for encountering jumbo seatrout. In fact, the state record seatrout—17 lb. 7 oz.—was pulled from the fertile shallows of the Indian River.

Only a short distance from the Inlet State Park, Fort Pierce City Marina provides a quiet, safe and friendly atmosphere with ample amenities for both transient and resident boaters. Owned by the City of Fort Pierce and established in 1938, this deep-rooted marina sits along the historic downtown riverfront and is an important symbol for the city, and for the state.

Unfortunately, the marina sustained serious damage during the 2004 tropi-

cal storm season when Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne destroyed 140 slips at the marina. Restoring the iconic facility and estimated \$15 million in damage wasn't going to be as easy as simply driving new

◀ After years of planning, construction crews could finally get to work.

pilings, nor was that the plan. The goal of the newly designed Marina was to build a safe harborage that

provides adequate protection from future storms, while simultaneously promoting the well being of the fragile surrounding ecosystem. The renovation would serve as a pilot project for the State of Florida, with two years of monitoring required after completion to deem the project a success.

After the storms passed, damaged boats and docks were removed while plans for construction of a new marina were already in the works. However, it wasn't until 2005



Because of the significance of the surrounding shallow water habitat, the entire construction project would have to follow stringent regulations.

when plans were developed to create a series of man-made islands in front of the marina to provide much needed protection from future storms. In addition, the new marina would feature two dock complexes. Once complete, the southern dock will contain 98 slips while the northern dock will contain 39 slips. The

▼ Slowly but surely, the islands began to take shape.





“ To further protect the frail ecosystem, all construction would be executed from shallow-draft barges that provide ample clearance from the bottom...

outer harbor entrance will also be moved from the south to the northern portion of the harbor to improve public access and navigation. Because of the significance of the surrounding shallow water habitat, the entire construction project would have to follow stringent regulations.

Before a single stone could be moved, city officials had to go through a lengthy permit process from the EPA, Marine Corps of Engineers, NMFS and U.S. Fish & Wildlife. Construction crews also needed Clean Water Act permits for the project, which require crews to utilize techniques that

minimize sediment turbidity in an effort to limit adverse impacts on the area's water quality.

▲ Marine construction crews meticulously placed each bucket of sediment.

To further protect the frail ecosystem, all construction would be executed from shallow-draft barges that provide ample clearance from the bottom without damaging the local substrate.

It wasn't until 2009 when the design of a breakwater featuring 12 man-made islands and one peninsular structure was approved by the Department of Environmental Protection, but city officials still needed approval from the Army Corps of Engineers. One of the major setbacks was making sure the area's essential seagrass beds weren't disrupted. Almost 7 years from the storm's damage to the area, the Army Corps of Engineers finally announced approval and since, construction crews have been working full time. While a tremendous amount of progress has been made, this isn't

◀ Near completion, the breakwaters will also provide essential habitat.

like any other marina project in the country. Expert contractors needed to incorporate





numerous eco-friendly measures to further protect the threatened and endangered species that call the Indian River home.

The finalized plans called for a 10.51-acre island, surrounded by 12 freeform breakwater islands. Constructed with sand filled Geotubes, the largest island is also anchored by T-groins and rock-filled marine mattress units. Furthermore, native vegetation was added to increase habitat diversity. While the main island features sand filled Geotubes, the smaller islands were covered with natural limestone to provide even greater storm protection. It's also important to note that construction crews utilized natural sediment with the same characteristics of the local sediment in an effort to promote growth and limit future erosion.

Hoping to enhance seagrass communities, bird stakes were added to the area to encourage roosting of wading birds and waterfowl, which add natural fertilizer for growing grass beds. Seagrass is one of the most important factors among inshore communities and the new islands will provide an estimated 8.12 acres of new seagrass recruitment areas. Additionally, The City of Fort Pierce deeded 26 acres of submerged land to the State. This 26-acre parcel is adjacent to the Inlet State Park

▲ A major change to the area's seascape is clearly in the works.

and contains pristine seagrass beds, tidal flats, and submerged mangrove habitat. An additional 30 acres were given to the State as proprietary public interest.

As of press date the revitalization project is nearing its final stages, with completion of the islands expected in May 2013. While protecting vessels in the marina is a priority, the environmentally friendly project will

result in 1.28 acres of new oyster habitat, 6.26 acres of artificial reef habitat, 2.22 acres of coastal dune habitat, 2.33 acres of shorebird habitat, 8.12 acres of seagrass beds and 1.54 acres of mangroves.

Home to numerous tournaments and within walking distance to the library, museum, shops, parks, art galleries and restaurants, The Fort Pierce City Marina will soon shine again. **F&F**

▼ Once complete, the Fort Pierce City Marina will be better than ever!

