

Updates for our flagship programs and additional projects are as follows:

## **Flagship Programs**

### **FLOOR**

- Our shell recycling program is back up and running! We are currently collecting shell from 13 of our 15 restaurants. Shell production has dropped over the last two weeks from roughly 20-25 buckets per collection, to now 10-15 buckets per collection.
- Oyster spat monitoring in the St. Lucie Estuary and Indian River Lagoon has been increased from 3 sites to 5 sites in an effort to capture greater variability across the estuary and lagoon due to fluctuations in salinity. We have also been working to obtain a *Special Activity License* (SAL) with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) so we can collect adult oysters for more detailed health monitoring.
- Oyster bagging with volunteers is still on hold due to COVID-19, but staff have been busy behind the scenes bagging shell.

### **FOSTER**

- Seagrass nursery volunteers are lending a helping hand in the nursery again! Everyone is diligently maintaining social distance.
- We have been updating our informational seagrass signs for visitor engagement. New signs will be enlarged and mounted in various locations around the seagrass nursery and wet lab.

### **Water Quality**

- Water quality monitoring at public locations has begun again. Individuals that are comfortable with testing at public sites are doing so while maintaining social distancing and following CDC guidelines. The only site currently not being tested by a volunteer is FOS (staff are doing it).
- Refill kits are being dropped off to testers homes (when needed) while maintaining social distancing.
- Weekly water quality reports are being published each week.
- We are working on revamping the Water Quality handbook that it currently given to volunteers. The update will allow us for a more streamlined program with detailed protocols and expectations.

### **Additional Projects and Activities:**

*Research Lab Replacement* – Carport installation, which will provide shade while working outside, has been put on hold while Operations works on the nature trail boardwalk.

*Summer Interns* – Our summer intern will start on July 7<sup>th</sup>. He is from Williams College and has a degree in Geosciences. The structure of the summer internship has been refined this year and requires the intern to complete a mini research project under the guidance of staff scientists. The goal of the internship project is to gain experience in collaboration, experimental design, data collection, and dissemination of results. As they near the end of their internship, they will be expected to present a fifteen-minute research project presentation to colleagues and guests and submit a written report to the research department. We hope that the updated internship structure will be both beneficial to the students career goals and the department's objectives.

*Clam Restoration Workshop Proposal* – We are still waiting to hear back from CERF.

*Clam Restoration in the IRL* – We have partnered with the Whitney Laboratory for Marine Biosciences in St Augustine in clam restoration in the IRL. They have been actively restoring clams in the Northern IRL and our partnership hopes to bring the cause south. On June 26<sup>th</sup>, FOS in conjunction with numerous partners, deployed 60,000 clams in the northern IRL, bringing the projects total number of clams released up to almost 2 million! We are working towards the next restoration stop being the southern IRL!

*Teen Ambassadors* – We have been working hard with Rosemary to facilitate a meaningful virtual summer Teen Ambassadors program. We want to push the students to think like a scientist by lecturing each week on a different ecosystem (e.g. mangroves, oysters, seagrass) and how the systems are intricately connected and affected by water quality. By the end of the program, we hope the students walk away with an understanding of how water quality can affect the delicate balance of our ecosystems.

*Website* – Check out our new website structure! It highlights our many project avenues (monitoring, restoration, and research) and creates a forum for our work within the IRL.

[Click here to learn more!](#)

*Sediment Elevation (SET) Project* – Still in data collection phase.

*Summer camp* – We are working with the education department on a short “Meet the Scientists” program with the children. Each week, one of the research staff is highlighted. They introduce themselves and talk about why they are a scientist and what they study, then they field questions. The best question from last week was “Do scientists all wear the same outfits”? Staff also help with an activity (either oyster bagging or an educational quadrat game) and provide general support to the education departments goals.



## Research and Conservation June 2020

*Hagan Family Foundation proposal* – We recently submitted a proposal to the Hagan Family Foundation for living shoreline funding. The small proposal will help supplement the 2019 Impact 100 funding and better facilitate our objective of making FOS the go-to organization for living shoreline restoration in the southern IRL and St. Lucie Estuary.

*Living Shorelines* – Homeowners in the area are interested in living shorelines! We made two site visits this month (to determine site suitability, etc...). One is feasible, while the other was not. We are currently working with Martin county to see what we can do to help the project/process.

Further details on all projects and programs are available by contacting Dr. Simpson at: [simpson@floridaocean.org](mailto:simpson@floridaocean.org) or 772.225.0505 x 114