April 2020 Project Status Report
Department of Environmental Resources Management

Jupiter/Carlin Beach Nourishment: To better understand how the project is performing post-construction and fulfill permit requirements, ERM is joining with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to monitor the project area. The monitoring includes upland and hydrographic surveys, sediment quality analysis, and sand compaction monitoring.

JUPITER/CARLIN

Shoreline Characterization Study: ERM staff are conducting a study of the Lake Worth Lagoon shoreline as part of a regional effort to characterize estuary shorelines all along Florida's east coast. The study is led by the University of Central Florida. A primary goal of the study is to determine what percentage of the Lagoon's shoreline is armored by seawalls versus lined with vegetation that provides habitat for fish and wildlife. Seawalls reflect waves and boat wakes, causing an increase in wave energy that reduces habitat quality in a body of water. The data will be used to inform management and conservation efforts and to identify and prioritize areas for future shoreline restoration projects.

SHORELINE CHARACTERIZATION STUDY

SOUTH JUPITER

South Jupiter Dune Restoration: In order to provide natural erosion resistance and native habitat, the staging area was re-vegetated with native dune vegetation. The plants are being watered to ensure survivability until the rainy season begins in earnest. Coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency is ongoing to receive reimbursement funding for repair of damages resulting from Hurricane Irma.

BONEFISH

Fisheries Monitoring: The first Lake Worth Lagoon fisheries sampling event for 2020 was conducted by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission in partnership with ERM. In total, 35 sites were sampled: 14 in the central Lagoon and 21 in the northern Lagoon. Catches for the first quarter of 2020 included an impressive 63 taxa (59 fish and 4 invertebrates). Economically important taxa collected included juvenile shrimp, bonefish, sheepshead, snook and permit. A relatively uncommon finetooth shark was collected, among other interesting species. The crew also collected and released three juvenile green sea turtles within John D. MacArthur Beach State Park.

Volunteer Planting Event: Lake Worth Waterkeeper and their volunteers transplanted smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) to the Lake Worth Golf Course shoreline. In the morning, three volunteers dug up cordgrass tufts at Jewell-Steinhardt Cove. Later that afternoon the cordgrass tufts were planted by volunteers at the golf course to help control erosion.

In addition, roughly 70 pounds of litter was picked up! While collecting plants, the volunteers were treated to a rare site of mating horseshoe crabs on the beach, a great sign for the shoreline's success. Horseshoe crabs only reproduce on sandy beaches, and they are known to be picky about environmental conditions.
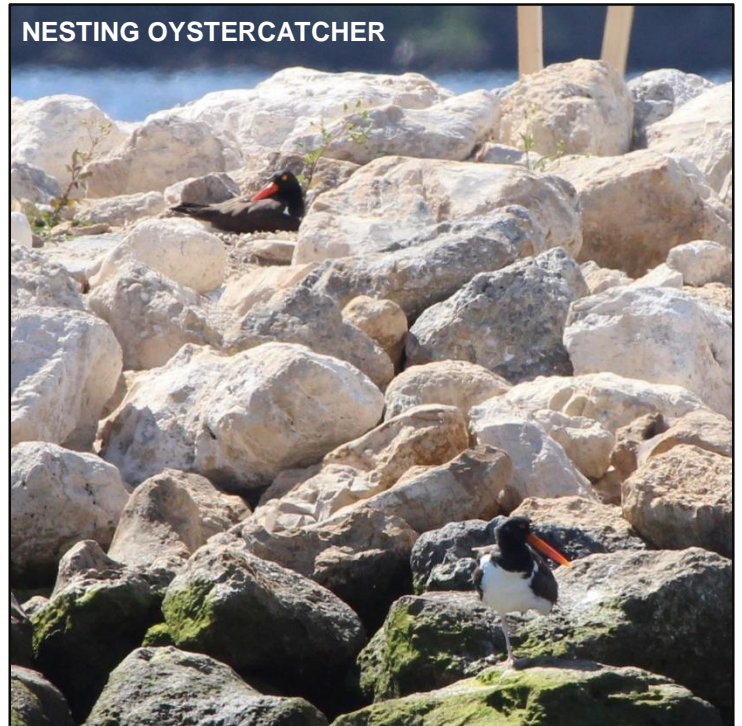

VOLUNTEER PLANTING EVENT

HORSESHOE CRABS

Oystercatchers: American oystercatcher pairs at Snook Islands II, Bryant Park and Tarpon Cove islands are nesting. These birds are designated threatened within the State of Florida and we are excited to see the local population continue to grow!

NESTING OYSTERCATCHER

Based on Palm Beach County (PBC) Emergency Order No. 2020-005, all PBC Natural Areas have been reopened to the public. Such areas shall be open for the safe, responsible enjoyment of passive and limited active use. Such activities shall be done in accordance with CDC Guidelines and in compliance with the requirements set forth in Attachment 4 of the Emergency Order.

ERM will continue to monitor the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in our area and will communicate any changes in the status of our PBC Natural Areas as those changes are made.

Please be safe and continue to monitor our social media (@PBCERM on Facebook and Instagram) and website (www.pbcerm.com or www.pbcnaturalareas.com) for updates on the status of our PBC Natural Areas. For updates on other PBC operations and services, please visit the county's dedicated COVID-19 page: http://discover.pbcgov.org/coronavirus/Pages/default.aspx.