

0

Receive Updates 

DEP OFFERS FIRST EVER IN-WATER TRAINING SESSION FOR SEAFAN BLEACHWATCH PROGRAM

Florida Department of Environmental Protection sent this bulletin at 09/13/2016 04:08 PM EDT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 13, 2016

CONTACT: DEP Press Office, 850.245.2112, DEPNews@dep.state.fl.us

DEP OFFERS FIRST EVER IN-WATER TRAINING SESSION FOR SEAFAN BLEACHWATCH PROGRAM

~Community partnerships support Florida's Coral Program~

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. – Following several months of development, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) presented its first ever Southeast Florida Action Network (SEAFAN) BleachWatch course field component. The information presented in the traditional classroom course was applied through in-water training, putting SCUBA divers into the water to practice BleachWatch surveys on the reef.

The BleachWatch program was first developed in the Great Barrier Reef and was adopted in the Florida Keys in 2002. In 2013, the SEAFAN BleachWatch program was implemented in the northern portion of the Florida Reef Tract by DEP's Coral Reef Conservation Program in order to create an early warning network to better understand coral bleaching events.

"After many requests for an in-water component, I'm thrilled to finally be able to take people into the water and work with them one-on-one to learn the necessary skills to document coral bleaching," said Kristi Kerrigan, CRCP's Reef Resilience

Coordinator. "This was a significant opportunity to expand our citizen science network."

The BleachWatch training consists of a brief lecture on coral and coral bleaching, how to assess coral condition, record observations and submit reports. In addition, participants will now have the opportunity to engage in approximately two hours of in-water training. The opportunity for in-water training, coupled with the classroom training, increases the accuracy of reports, encourages participation and expands the program.

To provide this practical experience, CRCP joined Friends of Our Florida Reefs (FOFR), and the Sea Experience, to secure field support for the course. CRCP and FOFR will continue to engage members of the community through SEAFAN BleachWatch and other future opportunities.

"FOFR is grateful to Sea Experience for being so closely involved and making it possible to take a dedicated boat to a nearby impacted area for pragmatic training," said Scott Sheckman, FOFR co-founder and president. "Witnessing the culmination of this multi-partner effort was extremely rewarding."

Recreational, commercial and scientific divers are encouraged to become part of the BleachWatch Observer Network by participating in a training session. To sign up, contact Kristi Kerrigan at 305-795-1204 or Kristi.Kerrigan@dep.state.fl.us. For more information on BleachWatch or to file a report, visit www.SEAFAN.net.

About the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Florida Coastal Office

The Florida Coastal Office (FCO) is responsible for oversight of the state's 41 Aquatic Preserves, three National Estuarine Research Reserves, the Coral Reef Conservation Program, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, the Florida Coastal Management Program and the Outer Continental Shelf Program. FCO's mission is to conserve and restore Florida's coastal, ocean and aquatic resources for the benefit of people and the environment. For more information, visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/>.

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/FLDEP/bulletins/1639c0f>



SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:

[Manage Preferences](#) | [Delete Profile](#) | [Help](#)

CHECK OUT DEP'S [ONLINE NEWSROOM](#)

Powered by **GOVDELIVERY**