

Good for You

College students build oyster reef

Recently, a group of students from George Mason University in Washington, D.C., volunteered during their spring break to help the local estuary by building an oyster reef as part of the Oyster Reef Restoration Project.

Through the alternative spring break program, small groups of George Mason students travel to locations in the United States to participate in several service-oriented projects.

"Martin County has been hosting our alternative spring break program for several years. We enjoy coming here and making a difference for the environment," said Charles Coats, Alternative Spring Break site leader.

During their break, students filled more than bags with 20-30 pounds of oyster cultch (fossilized shell and limestone rock, which are hard materials designed to provide points of attachment for oysters) and deposited the bags into river at Flagler Park.

The oyster bagging event is part of the near-shore component of the Oyster Reef Restoration Project in collaboration with Florida Oceanographic Society. This phase of the project entails collecting used oyster, clam and mussel shells from local restaurants which will be bagged by volunteers and used to create inshore oyster reefs. New mangrove and other suitable shoreline plantings also will be placed inshore of some of the restored reefs, reducing shoreline erosion and resulting in less sediment deposits in the estuaries.

The public is invited to participate in the following Oyster Reef Restora-

Oyster bagging: 9 a.m. April 30 at Britt Point located on the North side of the old Roosevelt Bridge.

Oyster deployment: 9 a.m. May 14 at Flagler Park in Stuart.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A group of students from George Mason University in Washington, D.C., volunteered their spring break to help the estuary by building an oyster reef as part of the Oyster Reef Restoration Project.