



# Florida Oceanographic Coastal Center

## Oyster Restoration Volunteer

**Job Title:** Oyster Restoration Volunteer

**Department:** Research

**Department Supervisor:** Vincent Encomio

**Direct Supervisor:** Research Staff – Vincent Encomio, Pam Hopkins, Hilde Zenil

**Purpose:** To involve volunteers in monitoring of oysters in the St. Lucie River estuary and the southern region of the Indian River Lagoon. Volunteers will be directly responsible for gathering scientific data on oyster survival, growth and recruitment; water quality data, and assistance with ongoing research projects that aim to restore oyster populations in the St. Lucie River. Training will be provided by the Research Specialist through group workshops and/or individual training sessions.

Please note that there are several distinct duties (oyster gardening, oyster recruitment monitoring and field and lab assistant) that comprise being an Oyster Restoration Volunteer. Several of these job duties require a regular ongoing commitment and some on an as needed basis. A volunteer can choose to participate in one of these activities, a combination of several, or all of them if he/she desires. *Please carefully consider your available time when deciding which volunteer activity to choose.*

### **Oyster Gardener**

Please note changes to oyster gardener duties. We are looking for gardeners that can commit to collecting data on oyster survival and growth as well as maintaining the cages and recording water quality.

### **Responsibilities (on-going commitment)**

- Maintain oyster cages deployed at a dock site (weekly washing). (15-20 min./week)
- Record weekly water quality data (temperature, salinity, water clarity). (15-20 min./week)
- Record monthly survival and growth data. (2-3 hrs/month)
- Submit data to FOS Research Department via computer.

### **Requirements**

- Year-round resident, or if seasonal, partner responsibilities with a year-round resident.
- Must have a computer, or access to a computer.
- Must be able to lift up to 20 lbs.
- Must be comfortable in bending over and lifting cages.
- Time commitment may be up to 4-5 total hours/month.
- Working with one or more volunteers at one site is highly recommended.

## **Field and Lab Assistant**

Volunteers will assist in construction of artificial reefs, seeding of reefs, monitoring of reefs, construction and deployment of oyster cages and sampling equipment, assisting with native plant restoration projects and collection of data in both the field and the lab. Responsibilities will vary with the assigned tasks, but training will be provided. Some general requirements/considerations are listed below.

- May require lifting up to 30 pounds.
- May involve walking and work in shallow water.
- May involve bending at the waist for extended periods of time.
- May involve exposure to the elements (heat, humidity, rain, etc.)
- Must wear closed-toe shoes
- Full or half-day availability on a consistent (weekly basis).
- Must be student in good standing
- Familiarity with basic computer software (Microsoft Office)

We have several ongoing projects that require help on a weekly and/or on an as needed basis:

- Monitoring of oyster recruitment in the lower St. Lucie River and IRL
  - Monthly collection and deployment of spat recruitment collectors
  - Identifying and enumerating collected spat
  - Construction and maintenance of spat collectors (light PVC construction and preparation of oyster shell)
- Monitoring of constructed oyster reefs in the St. Lucie and IRL (Fort Pierce)
  - Monthly to quarterly collection of oysters and associated species
  - Counting and measurement of collected oysters
  - Setting up and maintaining live aquaria (feeding, monitoring basic water quality, water changes).
  - Collecting, sorting and identification of reef-associated species
  - Assistance with construction and deployment of sampling equipment
  - Light construction projects and maintenance
- New oyster reef construction projects in the St. Lucie and IRL
  - Collecting shell from area restaurants as part of an on-going shell recycling program
  - Assisting with preparation of reef materials (i.e. bagging shell)
  - Assisting with field surveys to determine suitability of restoration sites
  - Assisting with deployment of reef materials and logistics (preparing supplies) associated with reef restoration
- Mangrove/native plant restoration projects
  - Assisting with planting preparation, planting and maintenance (watering/irrigation, weeding, herbicide application)
  - Maintenance of mangrove nursery
  - Invasive species identification and removal (will train)
- Other duties as assigned by the Research Scientist and Research Associate

**Responsibilities:**

- Monitor created and natural oyster reef structures in the St. Lucie River Estuary and the Indian River Lagoon
- Collect scientific data on oyster survival, growth and recruitment
- Record water quality data
- Assist with ongoing research projects that aim to restore oyster populations in the SLRE and IRL
- Assist with exhibits and daily programs as needed
- Represent Florida Oceanographic at special events and outreach events to showcase research efforts
- Public speaking to small and large audiences
- Work with the education department to create programs and materials on research activities
- Assist with volunteer coordination as needed for the department

**Intern Requirements:**

- Junior or senior level college student with an interest in marine biology, environmental education, natural resource management or recreation/outdoor education.
- Must be a student in good standing
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Computer proficiency with outside access to a computer
- Must be able to lift 30 lbs
- Must be comfortable in bending over and lifting cages
- Ability to walk, wade and work in shallow water with exposure to the elements
- Ability to communicate clearly
- Maintain cleanliness of work area, equipment and facility
- Background check

**Time Commitments:**

- Minimum of 6 month commitment
- Includes weekends
- 16-20 hours per week

**Project Examples:**

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  - Identifying and enumerating collected spat
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  - Monthly to quarterly collection of oysters and associated species
  - Counting and measurement of collected oysters
  - Setting up and maintaining live aquaria (feeding, monitoring basic water quality, water changes).
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  - Maintenance of mangrove nursery
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**Benefits:**

- There is no housing or monetary compensation with this position
- May be eligible to receive college credit – please check with your internship advisor

**Florida Oceanographic's Core Values:**

- We believe in learning and understanding all we can about Florida's ocean and coastal ecosystems.
- We believe in teaching children and adults about Florida's environments in an exciting and interactive way.
- We believe in helping the visitors to enjoy and learn from their experiences at the Florida Oceanographic Coastal Center.
- We believe that our approach to work is built on respect for one another and teamwork, including all employees and volunteers, creating a good workplace and allowing work to be exciting and fun.
- We believe in providing the best possible care for all living plants and animals within our exhibits.
- We believe in being good stewards of all the material and financial resources made available to us.
- We believe that our activities and actions should encourage others to be better stewards of Florida's ocean and coastal ecosystems.

**Mission Statement:**

Florida Oceanographic's mission is to inspire environmental stewardship of Florida's coastal ecosystems through education and research.

**Intern Agreement:**

I commit to fulfilling the above responsibilities to the best of my abilities. I further acknowledge there may be changes to this position overtime and that it is my responsibility to stay current with changes as they pertain to my role at the Coastal Center. I also understand that policies and procedures are set in place are for the safety and well-being of the animals, visitors, volunteers, staff and the organization as a whole. Updates to policies and procedures are posted in the volunteer station. I acknowledge it is my responsibility to

review changes to policies and procedures at the beginning of each scheduled shift. I commit freely to working with Florida Oceanographic, to uphold its core values and strive to fulfill its mission.

Volunteer Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_