Developing an Internet-Based Anchorage Guide For Florida's Emerald Coast Region

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Rationale

Boating is "BIG Business" in Florida.

Some FL Facts…

- **Recreational boating has a $10.35 billion annual economic impact.**
- **The boating industry supports 83,000 jobs.**
- **In 2014, 899,635 boats were registered in Florida – the highest number in the nation. There were 71,045 registered in the Emerald Coast Region.**
- **In addition, an estimated 400,000 vessels registered to out-of-state owners transit Florida's waterways each year.**

Emerald Coast Issues …

- **Increasing numbers of transient boaters are cruising Florida's waterways looking for safe (storm protection), less expensive anchorages as opposed to paying a fee at a tie-up marina.**
- **Interviews with the general public, local, and transient boaters revealed anchoring and boating issues covering eight general categories:**
  - **Derelict Vessels**
  - **Environmental Protection/Restoration**
  - **Anchoring**
  - **Moorings**
  - **Congestion**
  - **Regulations**
  - **Navigation Maintenance**
  - **Live-Aboards/Vessel Storage**

Derelict vessel

Seagrass prop scar

Photos: MyFWC.com

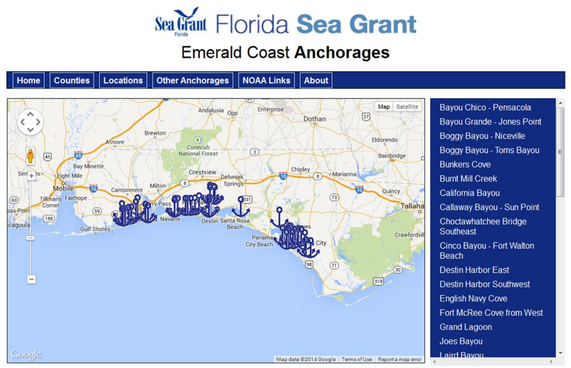
Photo: FL Sea Grant Program

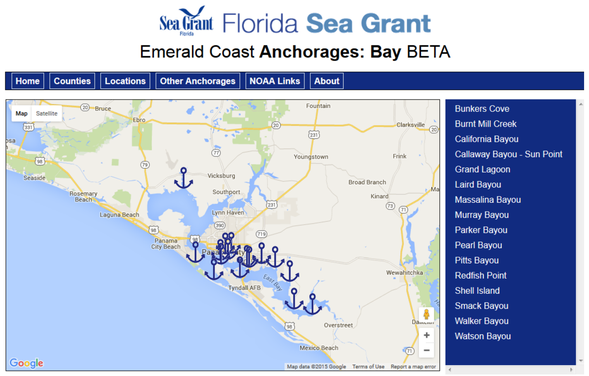
Goal

Design and produce the framework for a web-based version of Florida Sea Grant's (FSG); "A Guide to Anchorages in SW Florida," for the Emerald Coast Region (Bay, Walton, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, & Escambia Counties).

Objectives

- **Identify and characterize anchorages in the Emerald Coast Region as safe harbors (storm protection) and destinations for transient boaters.**
- **Design and develop a new website platform identifying and characterizing anchorages as safe harbors and destinations for boaters.**

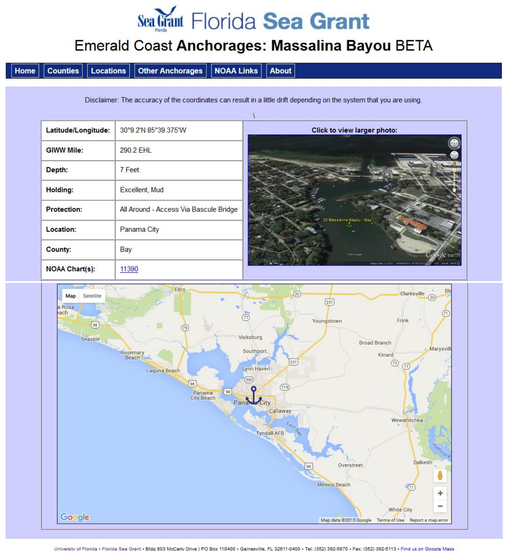




Summary

Data collected:

- **Identified 166 anchorages: 43 anchorages listed on website***
- **Developed evaluation criteria: e.g. – 13 anchorages rated good or better for storm protection (depth, wind/wave protection, holding)**
- **Identified anchorage characteristics**
- **Coordinated design and programming of new generation web-based anchorage guide based on Google Maps technology for FSG**



Future Plans

Seek funding to:

- **Survey and ground truth anchorage data.**
- **Identify additional anchorage sites.**
- **Survey and rank derelict vessels for removal.**

Incorporate additional anchorage characteristics; identify and rate:

- **recreational activities and uses**
- **recreational facilities**
- **recreational qualities**
- **shore-side profiles**
- **quantify anchorage size and restrictions**
- **train anchorage volunteers**

Incorporate additional spatial data:

- **biophysical features (seagrass, reefs, etc.)**
- **anchorage approaches**
- **navigational aids, marinas & services**
- **wrecks and obstruction information**

Develop partnerships to identify data and funding:

- **NOAA**
- **U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary/Power Squadrons**
- **FL Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission**
- **FL Department of Environmental Protection**
- **County Tourist Development Councils**
- **RESTORE**
- **US military – Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force**

*** Beta Site (unpublished): http://anchorages.flseagrant.org/emerald-coast/**