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

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

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/