

REEF BALL DEPLOYMENT: THE BEGINNING OF A NEW AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY ARTIFICIAL REEF PROGRAM FOR EAST CENTRAL FLORIDA

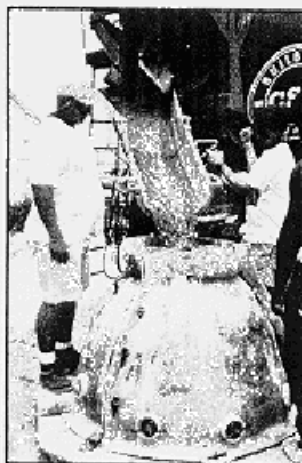
By Wilson Love



Workers preparing the molds
(see our bladder in top photo)
and pouring the concrete mix.
Finished Reef Balls are shown
in the bottom picture.

Construction Photos by Wilson Love

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Thursday, May 4, 1995 will be remembered by many of the folks around Port Canaveral as the day that our artificial reef program took a huge step forward. A day that had been planned for over a year and was finally realized with great effort from a group of involved people who get the job done.

Without a doubt, the person most responsible for this, the first of many planned Reef Ball deployments over the next several years, was Larry Beggs.

I met Larry some months back and right from the get-go it was obvious that he was a man dedicated to improving the reef system off the East Coast of Florida, and improving it quickly. Hard working seems somehow a lack luster way of describing Larry. This guy is a shaker and a mover in the truest sense of the words. Many countless hours have been spent by Larry and his *small* contingent of volunteers getting this first placement of Reef Balls on the bottom in about 80 feet of water due east of Port Canaveral. Larry is a self-employed contractor who put his business on the back burner to pursue this worthwhile endeavor for our environment. More later about Larry Beggs and his tremendous efforts toward organization and deployment in East Central Florida of Reef Balls.

It never fails, start talking about improving our fishing and doing positive deeds for this area, and up pops none other than Captain Ryan Moore. Ryan has participated in more reef building projects than anyone I know in this area of the state. If everyone who fishes or dives this new Reef Ball Project would put in a tenth of the time that Captain Ryan Moore and his crew at International Towing and Salvage do, I'll guarantee you that this 7 mile long by 1 mile wide project would take shape faster than any of us could imagine. Captain Ryan was ably assisted by another captain that most of you in the Port know, Captain Chris O'Connor. Here's hoping that in the future when you arrive at this Reef Ball site you can say to the others on board your vessel, "I am taking fish from a site that once was nothing more than an ocean desert, and I participated in building this reef." Our project is non-profit, all volunteer -- so get involved.

It would be impossible to continue this article without mentioning Keith Graffing. Keith works at Cape Marina and is the type of person that does not stand on the side lines when it comes to lending a helping hand.

Keith is the person that initially came up with the idea to have the Beau Franklin Memorial Tournament. Not only did Keith start what many of us think will be a top tournament, year after year, but he also had the foresight to suggest to the rest of us that maybe we could take ten dollars of each entry fee and put it towards the Reef Ball Project. The good news is that the inaugural Beau Franklin Memorial Dolphin Tournament was a great success and raised \$1200 toward the manufacture and deployment of Reef Balls.

Jean Kinzalow, Brevard County Special Projects Coordinator is in charge of issuing reef building permits. It was really something to go to Rinker Concrete (where the Reef Balls are being made) located just across the street from the Canaveral Port Authority, and watch this lady in jeans and work shirt, pitching in with the assembly of the molds for the Reef Balls and with the various other duties that need to be