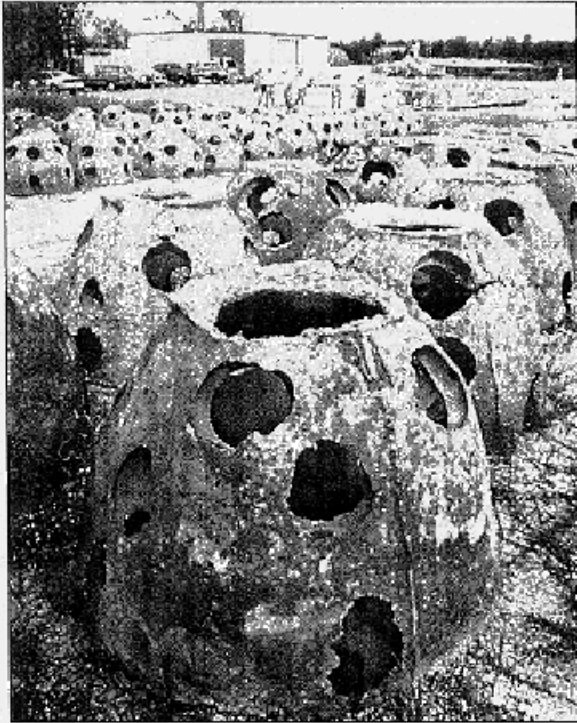


Great balls of reef



Times photo — ROBERT ROGERS

Florida Mining and Materials in Brooksville is casting 160 concrete modules for an artificial reef off the Hernando County coast. In early November, the modules, known as reef balls, will be dumped 18 miles due west of Hernando Beach in 28 feet of water. The reef balls, which mimic natural coral heads, feature different-sized holes to provide a habitat for marine life. Soon after their placement, the modules make interesting places for scuba divers and snorkelers to observe fish. Florida Mining and Materials received \$50,000 from the county, which secured a grant from the state Department of Environmental Protection, for the project.