Oyster Reef Monitoring and Potential Enhancement Activities on the Florida Springs Coast

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The Florida Springs Coast
“The Land of Mermaids & Manatees”
Springs Coast
Oysters in the Springs Coast

- Dominated by *Crassostrea virginica*
- Larger oysters near the river mouths
- Mostly intertidal
- Low sediment input from rivers
- Landward migration due to sea-level rise
Mapping Efforts


Oysters were added as a new coverage class in 2014

Oyster Bars (6450)- Dense collection of sessile mollusks found as linear or oval shaped substrates. Hash or dead oyster shell is not differentiated from live oysters and can be included in this class.
Lower Withlacoochee River

2016
Oyster Mapping Efforts

Minimum flows and levels

- Water-supply planning
- Protect salinity-based habitats
Lower Withlacoochee River
Chassahowitzka River
Oyster Habitat Restoration & Monitoring Efforts

2018: Feasibility study in Crystal and Homosassa rivers

Part of larger restoration efforts to create a mosaic of estuarine tidal habitat and water quality
- Reduced Water Clarity
- Changing Salinity
- Potential Decrease in Historic Flows
- Altered Aquatic Vegetation
- Nitrate Enrichment
Summary

• SWFWMD seagrass mapping every 4 years; new maps in 2020
  - https://data-swfwmd.opendata.arcgis.com

• Oyster data collected during development of MFLs for tidally-influenced rivers

• Feasibility study for oyster restoration and habitat improvement