



# Angler Action Foundation

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ANGLER ACTION FOUNDATION SEAGRASS INITIATIVE CONTINUES IN CALOOSAHATCHE RIVER, RESTORING HABITAT AND CLEANING WATER  
*Funds recently awarded by Florida Department of Environmental Protection will allow AAF to expand previously planted 20+ acres, a much needed step towards restoring thousands of acres of functional, healthy habitats*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Angler Action Foundation (AAF) was recently awarded more than \$1.1 million from Florida’s Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), for the purpose of continuing its restoration efforts in the Caloosahatchee River.

The funding will help to continue a nearly two-year old project in which 20 acres of submerged land was revitalized by planting two different types of seagrass. The goal is to replace the nearly 2,000 acres of seagrass that have been lost in that area due to freshwater outflows from Lake Okeechobee. The Seagrass Initiative was carried out in partnership with Sea & Shoreline, LLC, who farmed and planted the grasses as well as built and installed their trademark exclusion devices. Sea & Shoreline continues to maintain and clean the exclusion devices, a labor intensive but highly effective approach. Biological monitoring of the project has been carried out by Johnson Engineering, Inc, who continues to report findings to AAF, a critical component of the successful project.

The current funds will allow AAF to significantly expand the footprint of the project, which is critical when restoring habitats that have been completely degraded over large expanses of areas.

“At one time, there was enough grass in this area of the river to support manatees, turtles, birds and ducks, crabs and a variety of fish, including forage and game fish. They all enjoyed a bountiful salad, but once all of that grass was wiped out, we have learned through other’s experiences in Florida that any successful project would require a large footprint, and temporary protection of the plants – we felt, and still do, that many mouths with unprotected grass would lead to a failed project,” said Mike Readling, Chairman of AAF.

“The funding is very timely,” said Brett Fitzgerald, Executive Director of AAF. “With a push to ensure Everglades Restoration projects like the C-43 Reservoir are completed on schedule, the grasses we plant and protect now have a very high chance of not only surviving, but thriving and becoming self-sustaining like it used to be.”



Research



Education



Conservation

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The Angler Action Foundation improves angler access, fisheries science and marine habitat through collaborative Research, Education and Conservation programs.

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Florida House of Representatives member Heather Fitzenhagen (District 78) was instrumental in moving the project forward.

“The project expansion will be very important for this area,” Readling concluded. “The benefits will include improved water quality, increased biomass and biodiversity, and of course improved angling opportunities, which will benefit the local economy.”