

Phipps SEIS Public Meeting - Comment Sign Up Sheet

Name:

Judy Schragoff

Address:

Coast Reef Society

325 Crescent Dr.

PB

Would Like to Make an Oral Statement Tonight:  Yes  No

Please Include this Statement/Comment in the Record:

Attached



THE CORAL REEF SOCIETY  
FOR THE  
PROTECTION AND STUDY OF THE CORAL WORLD

September 12, 2002  
Address at Palm Beach  
Town Hall to U.S. Army  
Corps of Engineers

Judy Schrafft - Chairman of the Coral Reef Society

Ever since the first Boca Raton beach renourishment project in the early 90's, and continuing through similar plans for Delray Beach and Ocean Ridge, the Coral Reef Society has objected actively to these abuses to the undersea environment. Our point of view is the ongoing damage of siltation from any downstream project where the sediment is carried north on the Gulf Stream which is closest to the shoreline right off Palm Beach itself. Naturally, projects off our own beaches have an even greater impact. The northernmost reef systems in America are found off Palm Beach, and then, as the Gulf Stream swings eastward and eventually reaches Bermuda, coral reefs again appear.

The sediment from these projects settles out on our three parallel reef systems and smothers bottom dwelling organisms on which animals higher in the food chain rely as a food source, which in turn feed other animals higher in the chain than they. The constant building up of silt and sand has caused a noticeable decline in the numbers and species of life which once were found here in abundance.

I speak personally from over 30 years' experience as a scuba diver who has made thousands of dives locally and watched the continual degradation of our offshore environment. As an example, these are the sorts of dead shells which we used to find on our reefs and in the sandy areas, where they had served as a meal for other creatures. It has probably been three years since we have found any shells even close to these, as their habitat has been smothered by siltation. Their disappearance can be equated with the canary in the coalmine.

A further result is the decline in fish stocks and the toll on commercial and sports fishermen and our former lobster industry, thereby depriving many of a chosen livelihood.

The Coral Reef Society and local environmentalists feel that any beach building plan for Palm Beach's shoreline will be one more nail in the coffin of our once healthy marine ecosystem. We ask you as the final arbitrator to deny this project.