



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**

# PUBLIC NOTICE

Applicant:  
Lourdes Gomez  
Miami-Dade County

Published: April 15, 2025  
Expires: May 15, 2025

**Jacksonville District  
Permit Application No. SAJ-2003-04229**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The Jacksonville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received an application for a Department of the Army permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §1344) **and** Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. §403). The purpose of this public notice is to solicit comments from the public regarding the work described below:

If you are interested in receiving additional project drawings associated with this public notice, please send an e-mail to the project manager by electronic mail at [Madison.J.Pollard@usace.army.mil](mailto:Madison.J.Pollard@usace.army.mil).

**APPLICANT:** Lourdes Gomez  
Miami-Dade County  
111 NW 1st Street  
Miami, FL 33128

**AGENT:** Sara Thanner  
Miami-Dade Co. Dept. of Regulatory and Economic Resources  
701 NW 1st Court  
Miami, FL 33136

**WATERWAY AND LOCATION:** The project would affect waters of the United States and navigable waters of the United States associated with the Atlantic Ocean. The project/review area is located on approximately 1.7 nautical miles east-northeast of Haulover Inlet between the middle and outer reefs (refer to coordinate table), in 65-69 feet of water, with a minimum vertical clearance of 40 feet in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Corner	Latitude N (DM)	Longitude W (DM)	Latitude N (DD)	Longitude W (DD)
Northwest	25 54.633	80 05.449	25.91055	80.09082
Northeast	25 54.633	80 05.316	25.91055	80.08860
Southwest	25 54.069	80 05.450	25.90115	80.09083
Southeast	25 54.069	80 05.317	25.90115	80.08862

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The Sunny Isles Artificial Reef Site (SIARS) is located approximately 1.7 nautical miles east-northeast of Haulover Inlet between the middle and outer reefs, in 65-69 feet of water, with a minimum vertical clearance of 40 ft. Artificial reef deployments began at this site in 1990 and have consisted of a variety of material including secondary use concrete, concrete modules, reef balls, limestone boulders, ships, and barges. Information on all material deployed within this site is available at <https://gisweb.miamidade.gov/artificialreefs/>. Artificial reefs will only be constructed on barren sandy substrate a minimum of 200 ft from any hardbottom, emergent biota, or rubble.

The federal permitting history includes an ongoing permit authorization since January 09, 2004, for the proposed activities that includes construction for ten (10) years within the previously permitted 57.3 acres of Sunny Isles Artificial Reef site; specifically, to strategically deploy and/or anchor approved artificial reef material (as acquired) into the existing artificial reef site.

## **PROJECT PURPOSE:**

**Basic:** The basic project purpose is the nourishment/renourishment of an existing artificial reef for marine habitat enhancement.

**Overall:** The overall project purpose is the nourishment/renourishment of an existing artificial reef for marine habitat enhancement, offshore mainland Miami-Dade County, Florida through artificial reef habitat placement on barren sandy substrate.

**PROPOSED WORK:** The applicant seeks reauthorization to create artificial reef by deploying approximately 1,000 cubic yards of calcium-carbonate based, such as limestone boulders, prefabricated artificial reef modules, or large concrete-based materials (i.e., connection/junction boxes, large sections of bridge decking or other construction demolition) material annually or 10,000 cubic yards (1.5 acres /65,340 square feet) over the life of a 10-year permit.

**AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION:** The applicant has provided the following information in support of efforts to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the aquatic environment:

At SIARS, the primary type of material deployed will be calcium-carbonate based, such as limestone boulders, prefabricated artificial reef modules, or large concrete-based materials (i.e., connection/junction boxes, large sections of bridge decking or other construction demolition). Vessels or barges may be considered for deployment at this site consistent with prior deployments provided they meet stability and permit conditions.

All artificial reef material deployments will be prepared as necessary to meet permit conditions and follow guidelines set forth in the following best management practice (BMP) documents:

- Guidelines for Marine Artificial Reef Materials 2nd Edition (Association of the Gulf and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commissions 2004)
- National Guidance: Best Management Practices for Preparing Vessels Intended to Create Artificial Reefs (US Environmental Protection Agency 2006)
- National Artificial Reef Plan: Guidelines for Siting, Construction, Development, and Assessment of Artificial Reefs (NOAA 2007)
- Guidelines and Management Practices for Artificial Reef Siting, Usage, Construction, and Anchoring in Southeast Florida (Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative, Lindberg and Seaman (editors), 2010)

All artificial reef deployments will be evaluated based on specific characteristics of a 25-year storm event to provide the necessary safeguard against material movement, consistent with the previous permit. Vessels/Barges will be further evaluated against a 50-year storm event. The Lin Stability model distributed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) and the Miami-Dade stability model developed by Coastal Systems International will be utilized to assess the stability of each individual artificial reef prior to deployment. If a proposed artificial reef is not indicated to be stable at the site depth, the material will not be deployed.

Artificial reef deployments will avoid areas with known benthic resources based on Laser Airborne Depth Sounder (LADS) data from 2003, NOAA side scan data from 2009, benthic habitat maps (Walker 2009), and the assessment by DERM Biologists in the fall of 2024. All deployments will maintain a 200 ft buffer to known natural resources consistent with previous permit conditions.

A biological survey will also be conducted immediately prior to the deployment of any materials. Biological surveys will be conducted by DERM marine biologists using SCUBA. Each survey will initially consist of the placement of a temporary marker buoy at the proposed target reef location. Divers will then conduct a survey for any resources within a 200 ft minimum radius of the marker buoy. If benthic resources such as hardbottom or seagrass are found during this survey, the target position will be altered to provide appropriate buffer distance from resources. If adequate buffer distances are not available, the initial target site will be abandoned, and another location evaluated.

Reef materials will be transported to the site via tugboat and/or barge. On site, the vessel transporting the materials will be positioned directly adjacent to the previously established buoy, and held in position either by anchoring/spudding, with dynamic positioning using tugboat(s), or combination of tugs and anchors. Once a stable configuration at the target buoy is achieved the material will be deployed. Concrete and boulder materials will be offloaded using heavy equipment such as cranes or loaders.

In water surveys will also be conducted immediately post deployment to verify that material was deployed where intended and does not exceed navigational clearance requirements. Adjustments to location or material height off the substrate are made if necessary. The dimensions and relief of the new artificial reef area are measured and, if the size of the reef allows, the perimeter is traced by divers towing a surface GPS unit. This information will be incorporated into a material placement report and submitted to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

**COMPENSATORY MITIGATION:** The applicant has provided the following explanation why compensatory mitigation should not be required:

A compensatory mitigation plan has not been submitted as unavoidable functional loss to the aquatic environment is not being proposed. All artificial reef deployments will occur on barren, sandy substrate a minimum of 200 feet from benthic resources based on the Benthic Resource Report and in accordance with the avoidance and minimization methodology plan. Should any unplanned impacts occur, Miami-Dade County will contact the Army Corps Engineers and other environmental permitting agencies to develop a specific mitigation plan.

**CULTURAL RESOURCES:**

The Corps is evaluating the undertaking for effects to historic properties as required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This public notice serves to inform the public of the proposed undertaking and invites comments including those from local, State, and Federal government Agencies with respect to historic resources. Our final determination relative to historic resource impacts may be subject to additional coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer, federally recognized tribes and other interested parties.

**ENDANGERED SPECIES:** The Corps has performed an initial review of the application, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Section 7 Mapper, and the NMFS Critical Habitat Mapper to determine if any threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species, as well as the proposed and final designated critical habitat may occur in the vicinity of the proposed project. Based on this initial review, the Corps has made a preliminary determination that the proposed project may affect species and critical habitat listed below. No other ESA-listed species or critical habitat will be affected by the proposed action.

**Table 1:** ESA-listed species and/or critical habitat potentially present in the action area.

<b>Species Common Name and/or Critical Habitat Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Federal Status</b>
Queen Conch	<i>Alger gigas</i>	Threatened
Boulder Star Coral and its critical habitat	<i>Orbicella franksi</i>	Threatened

Elkhorn Coral and its critical habitat	<i>Acropora palmata</i>	Threatened
Mountainous Star Coral and its critical habitat	<i>Orbicella faveolata</i>	Threatened
Pillar Coral and its critical habitat	<i>Dendrogyra cylindrus</i>	Threatened (Proposed Endangered)
Staghorn Coral and its critical habitat	<i>Acropora cervicornis</i>	Threatened
Rough Cactus Coral and its critical habitat	<i>Mycetophyllia ferox</i>	Threatened
Loggerhead Sea Turtle and its critical habitat	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	Threatened
Green Sea Turtle and its critical habitat	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	Threatened
Leatherback Sea Turtle	<i>Dermochelys mydas</i>	Endangered
Hawksbill Sea Turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	Endangered
Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle	<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>	Endangered
Giant Manta Ray	<i>Mobula birostris</i>	Threatened
Smalltooth Sawfish	<i>Pristis pectinata</i>	Endangered

Pursuant to Section 7 ESA, any required consultation with the Service(s) will be conducted in accordance with 50 CFR part 402.

This notice serves as request to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service for any additional information on whether any listed or proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or critical habitat may be present in the area which would be affected by the proposed activity.

**ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT:** Pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act 1996, the Corps reviewed the project area, examined information provided by the applicant, and consulted available species information.

This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Our initial determination is that the proposed action may adversely affect EFH and/or fisheries managed by Fishery Management Councils and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Implementation of the proposed project would directly impact approximately 1.5 acres of barren sandy habitat. The effects of the project are determined to be

minimal and permanent. These habitat(s) are utilized by the following species and their various life stages:

<b>Species</b>	<b>Life Stage</b>
Bluefish	Adult
Spiny Lobster	ALL
Bluefish	Larvae
Corals	ALL
Nurse Shark	Juvenile/Adult
Bluefish	Juvenile
Great Hammerhead Shark	ALL
Tiger Shark	Juvenile/Adult
Snapper Grouper	ALL
Skipjack Tuna	Adult
Bluefish	Eggs
Scalloped Hammerhead Shark	Juvenile/Adult
Bull Shark	Juvenile/Adult
Shrimp	ALL
Sandbar Shark	Adult
Blacktip Shark (Atlantic Stock)	Juvenile/Adult
Sailfish	Adult
Caribbean Reef Shark	ALL
Tiger Shark	Neonate
Lemon Shark	Neonate
Sailfish	Juvenile
Dolphin Wahoo	ALL
Skipjack Tuna	Juvenile

Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

**NAVIGATION:** The proposed structure or activity is not located in the vicinity of a federal navigation channel.

**SECTION 408:** The applicant will not require permission under Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 USC 408) because the activity, in whole or in part, would not alter, occupy, or use a Corps Civil Works project.

**WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION:** Water Quality Certification is required from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). The project has a permit (13-0180248-005) that expires August 23, 2026.

**COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT CONSISTENCY:** Coastal Zone Consistency Concurrence is required from FDEP. In Florida, the State approval constitutes compliance with the approved Coastal Zone Management Plan.

**NOTE:** This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This information has not been verified or evaluated to ensure compliance with laws and regulation governing the regulatory program. The geographic extent of aquatic

resources within the proposed project area that either are, or are presumed to be, within the Corps jurisdiction has not been verified by Corps personnel.

**EVALUATION:** The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including cumulative impacts thereof; among these are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historical properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food, and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people. Evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will also include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, EPA, under authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act. A permit will be granted unless its issuance is found to be contrary to the public interest.

**COMMENTS:** The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other Interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this determination, comments are used to assess impacts to endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

The Jacksonville District will receive written comments on the proposed work, as outlined above, until May 15, 2025. Comments should be submitted electronically via the Regulatory Request System (RRS) at <https://rrs.usace.army.mil/rrs> or to Madison Pollard at [Madison.J.Pollard@usace.army.mil](mailto:Madison.J.Pollard@usace.army.mil). Alternatively, you may submit comments in writing to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, Attention: Madison Pollard, 9900 SW 107th Ave #203 Miami, FL 33176. Please refer to the permit application number in your comments.

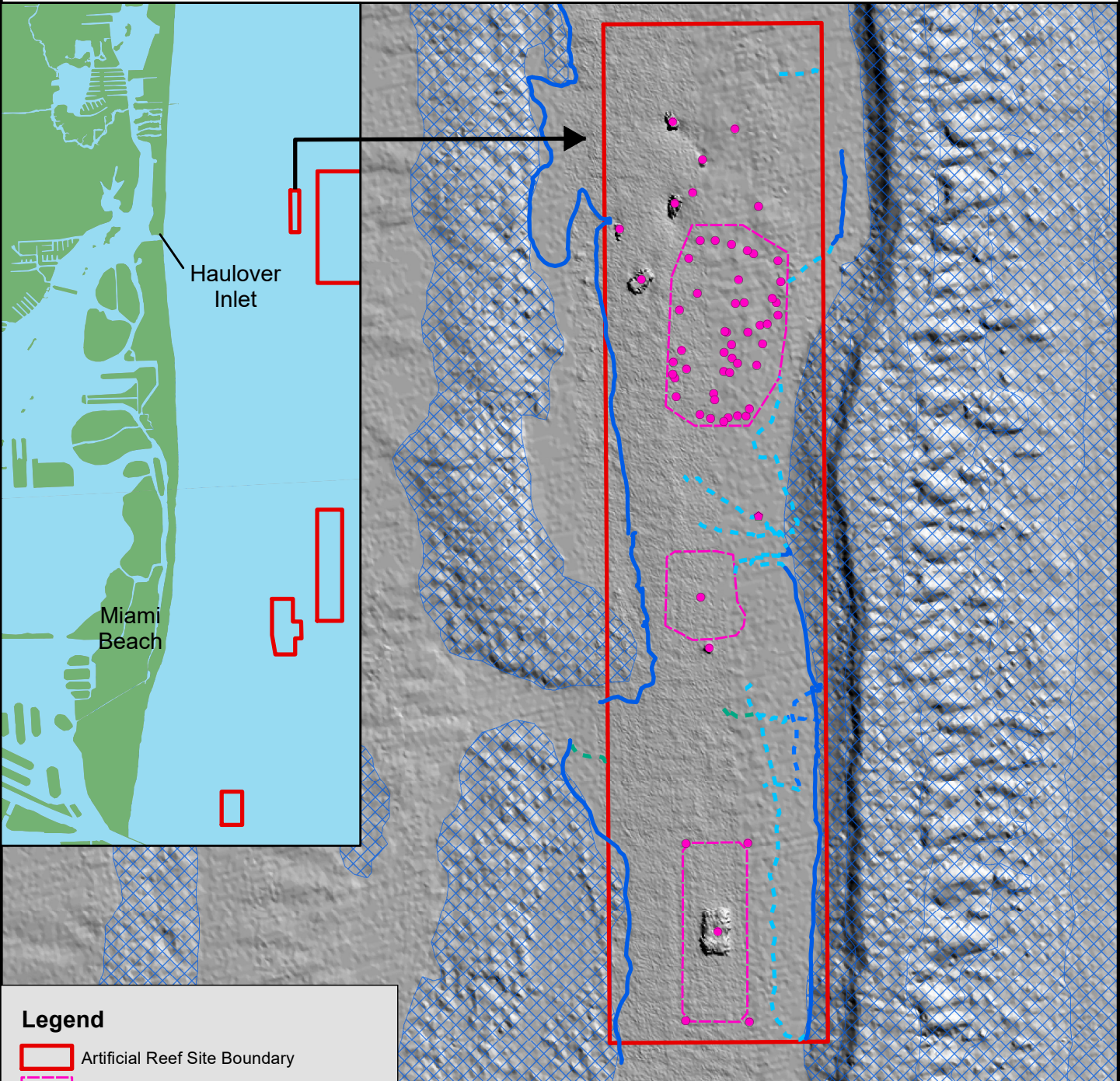
Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider the application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. Requests for a public hearing will be granted, unless the District Engineer determines that the issues raised are insubstantial or there is otherwise no valid interest to be served by a hearing.





# Sunny Isles Artificial Reef Site

## 2003 LADS Bathymetry



### Legend

- Artificial Reef Site Boundary
- Boundary of Low Profile Artificial Reefs
- Individual Artificial Reefs
- 2024 Benthic Resource Survey**
- Hardbottom
- Hardbottom - Patchy
- Emergent Biota
- Rubble
- Habitat Classification (Walker 2009)**
- Coral Reef and Colonized Hardbottom

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