US Army Corps of Engineers®

PUBLIC NOTICE

Applicant:
Lourdes Gomez
Miami-Dade County

Published: September 26, 2025
Expires: October 27, 2025

Jacksonville District
Permit Application No. SAJ-2003-04744

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.

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 Intracoastal Waterway. This artificial reef site is located on the north side of the Julia Tuttle Causeway, east of the Intracoastal Waterway. Consistent with the existing permit, the site dimensions requested for reauthorization are approximately 892 yards (east-west) and 295 yards (north-south) with depths ranging from approximately 15-feet to 28-feet throughout with a minimum vertical clearance of -12 feet in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Central coordinates: 25.813949, -80.167432.

Corner	Latitude N (DM)	Longitude W (DM)	Latitude N (DD)	Longitude W (DD)
Northwest	25 48.912	80 10.289	25.81520	80.17148
Northeast	25 48.909	80 09.801	25.81515	80.16335
Southwest	25 48.765	80 10.290	25.81275	80.17150
Southeast	25 48.762	80 09.802	25.81270	80.16337

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The Julia Tuttle (JT) Artificial Reef is located on the north side of the Julia Tuttle Causeway, east of the Intracoastal Waterway. Consistent with the existing permit, the site dimensions requested for reauthorization are approximately 892 yards (east-west) and 295 yards (north-south) with depths ranging from approximately 15-feet to 28-feet throughout with a minimum vertical clearance of -12 feet. The total footprint of the JT is 54.7 acres. Since the 1990's, artificial reefs have only been placed on approximately 16.4 acres. Over the course of a 10-year permit, new artificial reef construction is expected to occur on approximately 3.5 acres. Consistent with prior permit conditions, new deployments will occur a minimum of 150 ft from seagrass or emergent biota resources

A subset of artificial reefs within the JTAR have been surveyed annually since 2008. Surveys from 2008 through 2018 involved recording structural observations along with documenting fish and benthic species based on a simple abundance scale. During the 2019 annual survey, a new methodology was employed with the intent to standardize search effort in the low visibility conditions typically found at the inshore artificial reef sites and provide quantitative data to identify large-scale changes over time. Due to fieldwork limitations imposed in response to the COVID19 pandemic, surveys were not completed in 2020. The survey methodology was again modified in 2021 to specifically include estimates of octocoral cover. Methodological differences make direct comparison to data from prior to 2021 difficult. Thus, the 2021 survey serves as the baseline dataset for comparisons to current and future surveys.

Macroalgae, octocorals, and sponges have consistently been the dominant benthic functional groups at JTARS since 2021. During the 2025 annual surveys, macroalgae was a dominant benthic functional group at all 10 surveyed reefs, octocoral at eight, and sponges at six (Table 14 below). In 2024, macroalgae was dominant at six surveyed reefs, octocoral at nine, and sponges at 10. Macroalgal cover increased at nine reefs from 2024 to 2025 with the largest absolute increase of 29% happening at Dinner Key Pier –Phase 1. The clionid sponge, *P. lampa*, was observed at eight reefs in 2025 with the maximum cover being 3% at Larson Barge Complex. It had only previously been observed at two reefs - 5th Street Bridge and Latitude Mitigation (since 2021) and Larson Barge Complex (since 2022). During the 2025 annual surveys, seven reefs were noted to have an accumulation of drift red algae around the artificial reef material.

Table 14. Estimated percent cover of benthic functional groups observed at each biologically surveyed reef within the JTAR during the 2025 surveys compared to estimated percent cover of the top benthic functional groups recorded during baseline (2021) and 2024 surveys. "P" indicated benthic functional group was present with estimated percent cover <1%. "X" indicated biological survey was not conducted before 2024.

Functional Group	Year	Met Wreck Barge	5th St. Bridge & Latitude Mit.	2010 School Steps	POM Wharf Mit.	Elliot Pier & 2015 Concrete	Venetian Demo	Monty' s Pier	Larson Barge Complex	FDOT – SW 1st Bridge – Phase 1*	Dimmer Key Pier – Phase 1*	Bentley Bay & Fisher Island
Macroalgae	Baseline	50	5	1	0	P	1	0	51	0	0	X
	2024	30	15	0	0	3	1	2	40	2	1	40
	2025	40	25	10	8	10	10	5	40	20	30	40
Sponge	Baseline	2	3	5	2	3	P	1	1	1	1	X
	2024	5	10	10	15	10	2	5	8	8	5	40
	2025	8	10	10	20	10	5	5	12	15	15	15
Octocoral	Baseline	1	1	0	0	P	P	1	5	1	1	X
	2024	5	5	3	P	5	1	3	40	5	2	15
	2025	7	20	10	P	15	5	3	35	30	20	20
Hydroid	Baseline	0	P	P	P	0	0	P	20	0	P	X
	2024	0	0	P	P	1	P	P	P	1	P	1
	2025	0	P	P	P	2	P	0	1	2	P	5
Tunicate	Baseline	P	P	P	P	P	0	P	1	P	P	X
	2024	P	P	0	P	0	0	P	P	P	P	1
	2025	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	1	1	P	1

Two genera of scleractinians were observed at the site during the 2025 survey, *Phyllangia* and *Siderastrea*. *Siderastrea* was the most numerous scleractinian at JTAR, with colonies of both size classes (<4 cm or =4 cm) during the 2025 timed roving surveys. Most scleractinian colonies appeared to be healthy at the time of the surveys with only one *S. siderea* colony at Venetian Demo showing signs of partial bleaching. Two octocoral species were documented at the site in 2025, *C. riisei* and *L. virgulata*. Estimated *C. riisei* cover ranged between <1-34%. Maximum *C. riisei* cover at a single reef in 2024 was 39%. Larson Barge Complex had the highest *C. riisei* cover in both 2024 and 2025. In 2025, estimated cover of *L. virgulate* was no more than 1% at eight reefs, similar to 2024 when nine reefs had no more than 1% cover. The remaining two reefs had 2% cover in 2025, while only one reef had 2% cover in 2024.

No Spiny Lobster *(P. argus),* Stone Crab *(M. mercenaria),* Long-spined Sea Urchin *(D. antillarum)* or Queen Conch *(A. gigas)* were observed at JTAR in 2025. Since current methodology began in 2021, only Spiny Lobster and Stone Crab have been seen in 2022 at a single reef each.

The Julia Tuttle Artificial Reef Site (JT) is located north of the Julia Tuttle Causeway in a historic dredge hole. The area was not dredged to a uniform depth and the site ranges in depth from -17 ft to -32 ft. Artificial reef placement began at JT in the mid-1990's with the deployments of secondary use concrete, barges, limerock boulders, and steel bridge material. The most recent federal permitting history includes a Standard Permit issued on June 16, 2015, for the proposed activities that includes construction for ten (10) years within the previously authorized 54.7 acres of Julia Tuttle (JT) 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 1,500 cubic yards of calcium-carbonate based, such as secondary use concrete and steel material, limerock boulders, and prefabricated modules annually or 15,000 cubic yards (3.5 acres /152,460 square feet) over the life of a 10-year permit.

All material will be deployed on barren sandy bottom with a 150-foot buffer from existing resources.

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 the Julia Tuttle (JT) Reef Site, only natural or calcium-carbonate based materials will be deployed at this time such as limestone boulders, prefabricated artificial reef modules, or large concrete-based materials such as connection/junction boxes, large sections of bridge decking or other construction demolition. Vessels or barges may be deployed at this site but will be processed through a modification at a later date.

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 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 current permit. 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 20091), and the assessment by DERM Biologists in the fall of 2024. All deployments will maintain a 150 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 150 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 is not required 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 150 ft from natural benthic resources. Should any unplanned impacts occur, Miam-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.

Species Common Name and/or Critical Habitat Name	**Scientific Name**	**Federal Status**
Queen Conch	*Alger gigas*	Threatened
Loggerhead Sea Turtle	*Caretta caretta*	Threatened
Green Sea Turtle and its critical habitat	*Chelonia mydas*	Threatened
Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle	*Lepidochelys kempii*	Endangered
Giant Manta Ray	*Mobula birostris*	Threatened
Smalltooth Sawfish	*Pristis pectinata*	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 3.5 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:

Species	***Life Stage***
Spiny Lobster	ALL
Lemon Shark	
Nurse Shark	
Great Hammerhead Shark	ALL
Tiger Shark	
Lemon Shark	Juvenile
Snapper Grouper	ALL
Whale Shark	ALL
Skipjack Tuna	
Spinner Shark	Neonate
Scalloped Hammerhead Shark	
Bull Shark	
Shrimp	ALL
Coastal Migratory Pelagics	ALL
Sandbar Shark	
Blacktip Shark (Atlantic Stock)	
Sailfish	
Caribbean Reef Shark	ALL
Tiger Shark	Neonate
Lemon Shark	Neonate
Sailfish	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 an ERP permit 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 October 27, 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. 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.

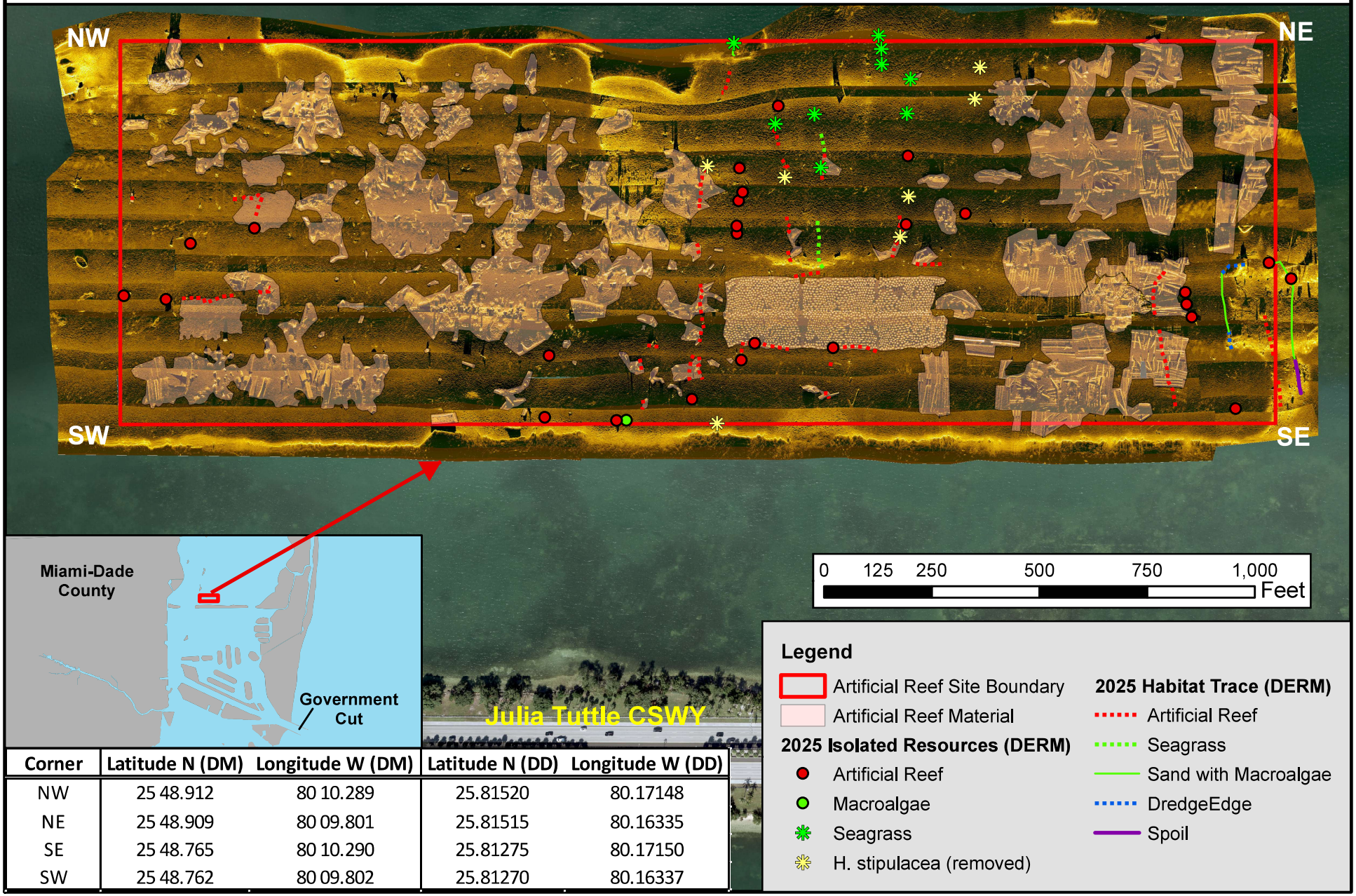
Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider the application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. Requests for a

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.

Attachment 1

Julia Tuttle Artificial Reef Site

2025 Reauthorization (2019 Bathymetry)



Corner	Latitude N (DM)	Longitude W (DM)	Latitude N (DD)	Longitude W (DD)
NW	25 48.912	80 10.289	25.81520	80.17148
NE	25 48.909	80 09.801	25.81515	80.16335
SE	25 48.765	80 10.290	25.81275	80.17150
SW	25 48.762	80 09.802	25.81270	80.16337