

Comments to Coral Reef Task Force
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Cry of the Water
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Will this coral be the next to die?

I was shocked that there is nothing on the agenda about the ongoing disease outbreak that has caused a mass die off of corals in South Florida, we are seeing a mortality of 80% or more in some species.

In the past we have seen these outbreaks in seasonal episodes, however this current outbreak has been going on for the past 2 years.

We cannot transplant our way out of this mass die-off unless we address what is killing corals in the first place.

What's Killing Our Reefs

1. Diseases

2. Army Corps Projects – Ports and Beach Projects

3. Water Quality and Toxic Algae Blooms

- Sewer Ocean Outfall pipes
- Outdated leaking sewer infrastructure
- Storm Water Discharges
- Lake Okeechobee and
- Everglades Agriculture Area (EAA) releases
- Urban run-off

4. Bleaching

5. Ocean Acidification

Port of Miami dredging project has been completed and the damage from the project was much greater than anticipated. Some corals were directly buried and others were killed by clinic silt, sediment and turbidity.



Likely colonies of *Meandrina meandrites* smothered by fine sediment from the Port of Miami expansion dredging. NOAA Report photo

Much of the transplanted mitigation corals were buried from this project.

These reefs will see long term impacts from the huge amount of silt that was released into the system.

A.



Photo C-24c. *Acropora cervicornis* colony #24 immediately post-reattachment.



BBWK photo 1/30/15

B.



Photo C-34d. *Acropora cervicornis* colony #34 30 days post-reattachment. CSA 1/14/14



BBWK photo 1/30/15

The lesson we should have learned from the Port of Miami is that you cannot dredge for years next to a reef without destroying it.



This is of particular concern because the proposed Port Everglades project may require dredging for up to 5 years to complete.

Landsat image accessed April 24, 2014 Showing an immense plume of turbidity at Port of Miami



To justify the impacts for the Port Everglades project, the plan is to transplant some corals from the impacted area to a nearby reef and out plant 113,000 (staghorn) corals from a coral nursery. Many of these nursery corals may harbor diseases and the out-planting could have a great potential to spread the diseases. The survival rate of out-planted staghorn corals has not been very high.

Also the chronic silt and turbidity from the project will stress our already stressed reefs. Is there really enough post panamax cargo to justify 2 large deep water ports within 40 miles from each other?

I have seen the reefs that I learned to dive on buried and destroyed from past beach dredge and fill projects.

The long practice of stacking millions of cubic yards of sand on our beaches has had a devastating effect on our reefs, both from burial, and chronic silt and turbidity.

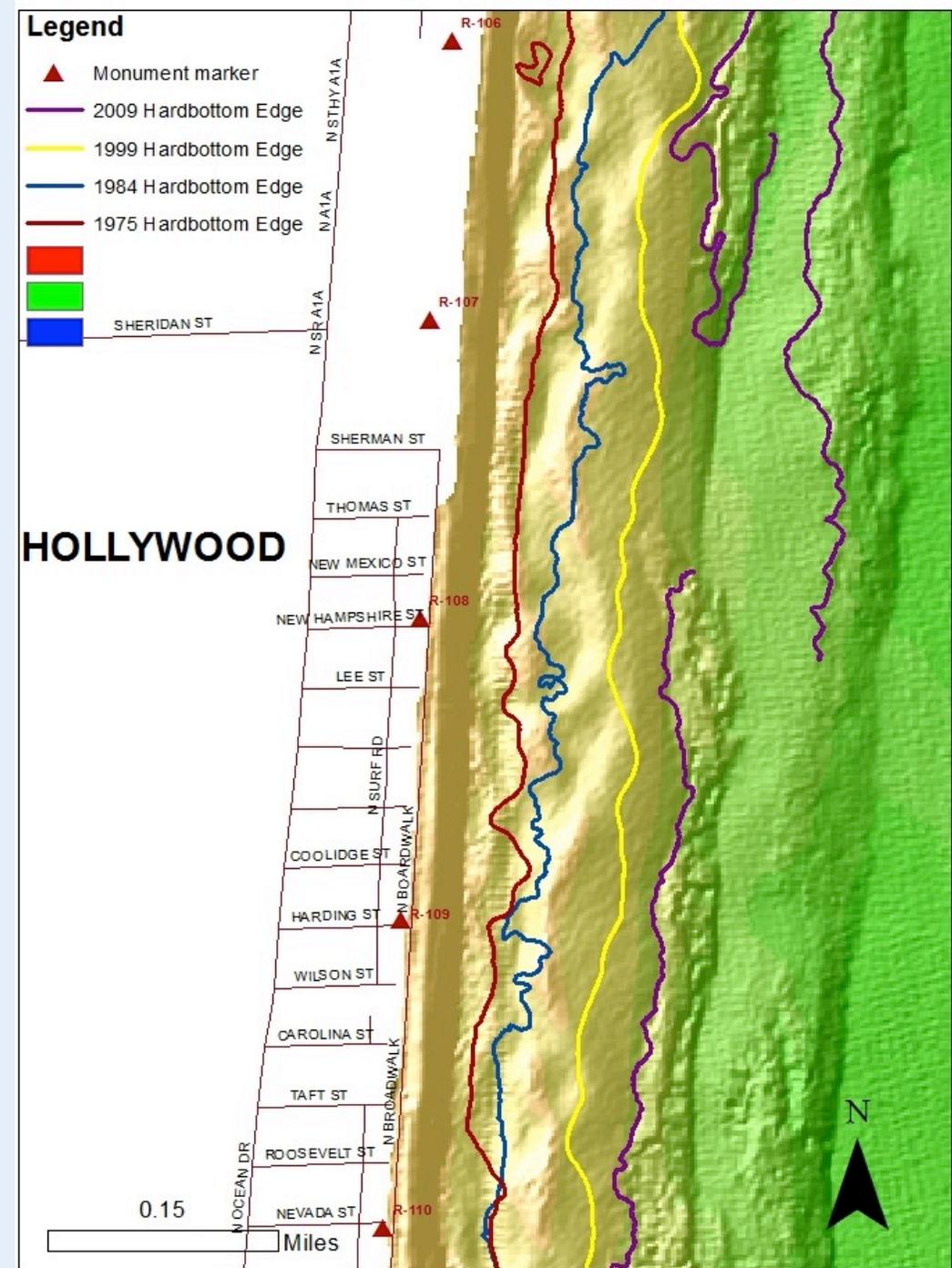
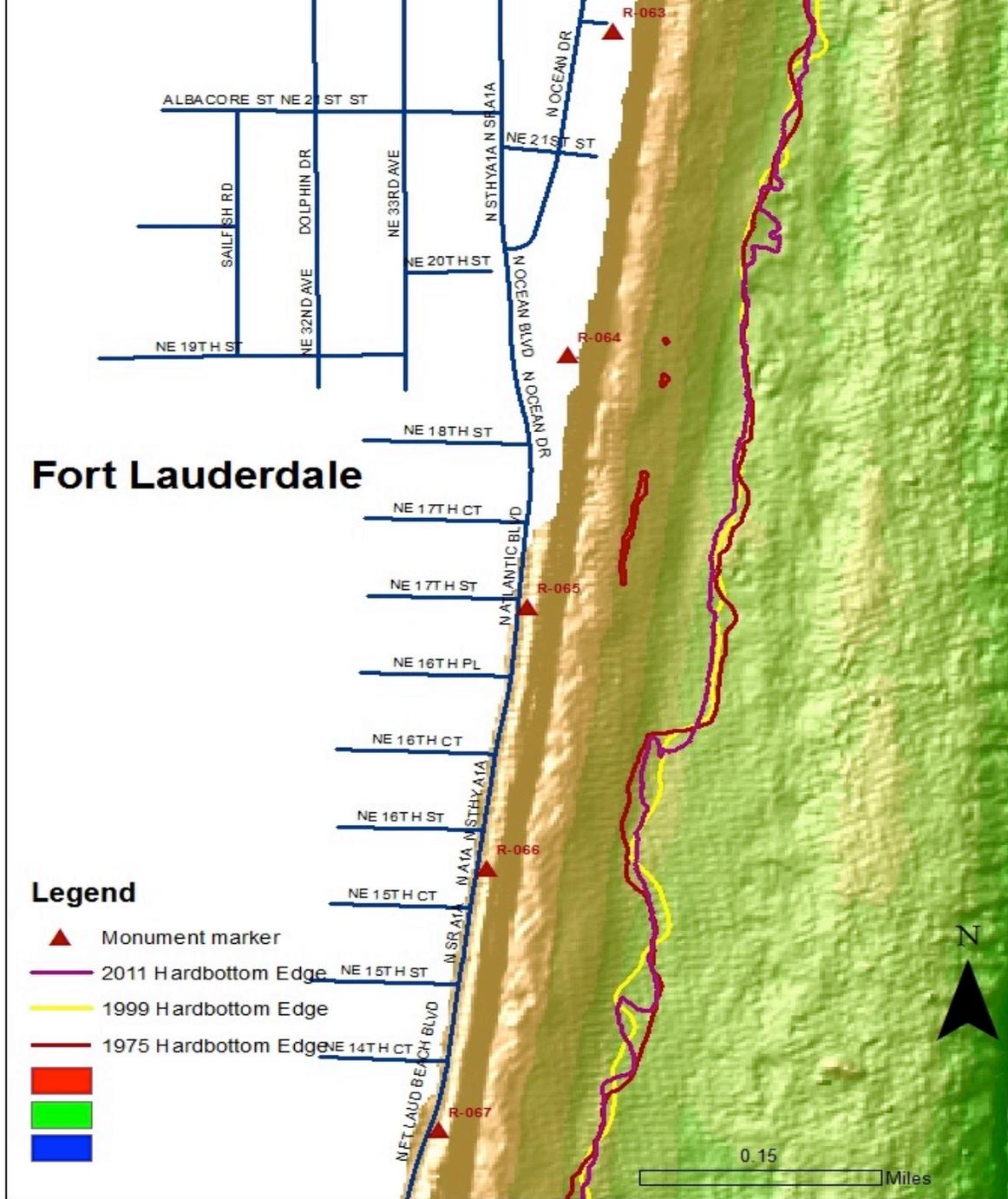


Dan Clark

I have created 2 maps from Broward County's files that show the extensive impacts of reef burial from Beach projects.

The map of the Hollywood segment that has had multiple beach projects shows the contained burial of the reef after each project.

The map of the Ft. Lauderdale segment show the stability of the nearshore reef edge where beach projects have not been done.



We fought to stop the 1999 Ft. Lauderdale dredge and fill project that would have buried the reefs in Ft. Lauderdale as well. Unfortunately recently a 1.5million cubic yard truck haul beach project was done in this area. Terri Jordan-Sellers from the Army Corps of Engineers claimed that the truck haul sand would perform better than the dredge material. Although truck haul material may contain less silt then the dredge material used in past projects it still continues to migrate off the beach and bury the reef.

We also have questions of possible contaminants in this material that have not been tested for. We raise this question because of disease outbreaks that have occurred after this truck haul material has been placed on this beach and other beaches. These are the same nearshore reefs that help protect the beaches are now being buried.

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