

## Community-Based Oyster Restoration Effort on Sanibel

<b>Activity:</b>	Oyster Shell Bagging for Clam Bayou Habitat Restoration
<b>Lead By:</b>	Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF)
<b>When:</b>	Every Tuesday in March from 9am-Noon
<b>Where:</b>	Bowman's Beach on Sanibel Island (see directions below)

### Why bag and deploy shell in Clam Bayou?

Oysters form living reefs that provide nursery habitat for adult and juvenile fishes, shrimp and crabs, as well as feeding sites for many larger animals (fishes, birds, reptiles, mammals). Oysters also filter significant volumes of water, improving water clarity, stabilize sediment and shorelines. Adult oysters release millions of fertilized eggs (May to October) which then develop in our waters over 2-3 weeks. They then must attach (now called 'spat') to a hard substrate (ideally other oysters) or they die. By building reefs in the spring, we are providing critical settling material to continue the cycle.

Restoration of oyster and mangrove habitats will benefit many important fish species, including snook, gray snapper, mullet, spotted seatrout, red drum, tarpon, goliath grouper and numerous ecologically-important invertebrates that support the fishery resources. Enhanced habitats will provide feeding areas for endangered species such as wood storks, piping plovers, least terns, snowy plovers, Florida manatees, and smalltooth sawfish.

Clam Bayou was once connected to the Gulf of Mexico and Pine Island Sound. Storms and other human activities (road construction) isolated it from the above resulting in declining mangrove, seagrass and oyster habitats. In 2006, the City of Sanibel, with numerous funding partners began a restoration effort installing box culverts, reconnecting it with Pine Island Sound. The SCCF Marine Lab is continuing this effort having received 2009-2011 funding from NOAA, TNC and other partners such as the City of Sanibel.

**Over the year, activities will include:** Continued bagging and deployment of over 70 tons of reef-building materials using volunteers; reef construction; habitat and water quality monitoring, including seagrass and mangrove health and oyster reef development, employing SCCF Lab and City of Sanibel staff, along with numerous volunteers. A related project is collecting and planting red mangroves, along with seagrasses.



**Where:** Meet at Bowman's Beach, rear parking lot (free parking for volunteers).

**Note:** there is a Causeway toll of \$6 so we encourage carpooling (follow signs to Bowman's Beach).

**If interested, participants MUST register with:** SCCF Marine Lab, Sabrina Lartz, at 239-395-4617, [slartz@sccf.org](mailto:slartz@sccf.org)

