

Comments to Coral Reef Task Force
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Cry of the Water
August 11, 2017



Will this coral be the next to die?

What's Killing Our Reefs

- 1. Diseases**
- 2. Army Corps Projects – Ports and Beach Projects**
- 3. Storm Water Discharges, Lake Okeechobee, Everglades and Agriculture Area releases**
 - **Water Quality and Toxic Algae Blooms**
 - Sewer Ocean Outfall pipes
 - Outdated leaking sewer infrastructure
 - Urban run-off
- 4. Bleaching and Diseases**
- 5. Ocean Acidification**

- Because of the destructive impacts that Lake Okeechobee releases have had on the estuary's in Port St. Lucy and effort is being made to store more water south. This combined with heavy June rains has lead to the emergency order to:
 - Maximizing discharges from Water Conservation Area 1 to tide through the Hillsboro Canal in Palm Beach County.
 - Maximizing discharges from Water Conservation Area 2A to tide through the C-14 Canal in Broward County.
 - Maximizing discharges from Water Conservation Area 2A to tide through the North New River Canal in Broward County.
 - Maximizing discharges from Water Conservation Area 3A to tide through the Miami Canal in Dade County.

We fear that these major releases will cause algae blooms on our reefs. All this is added to an already stressed coral reef ecosystem that is currently undergoing an massive disease outbreak.



We have seen these pulse releases cause major algae blooms in the past.

We fear that we are becoming the new waste gate of Everglades Restoration.

And if all this wasn't enough stress on our reefs there is the proposed Port Everglades dredging project that will put 4-5 years of silt and sediment raining down on our reefs.



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.

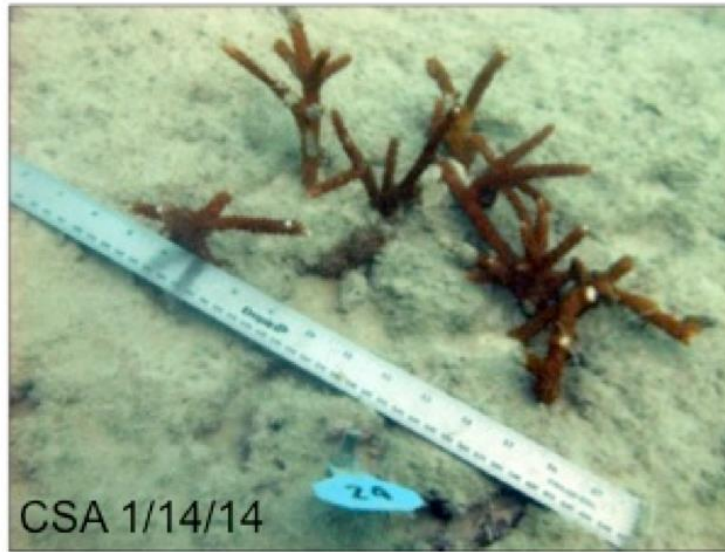


Photo C-24c. *Acropora cervicornis* colony #24 immediately post-reattachment.



BBWK photo 1/30/15

B.

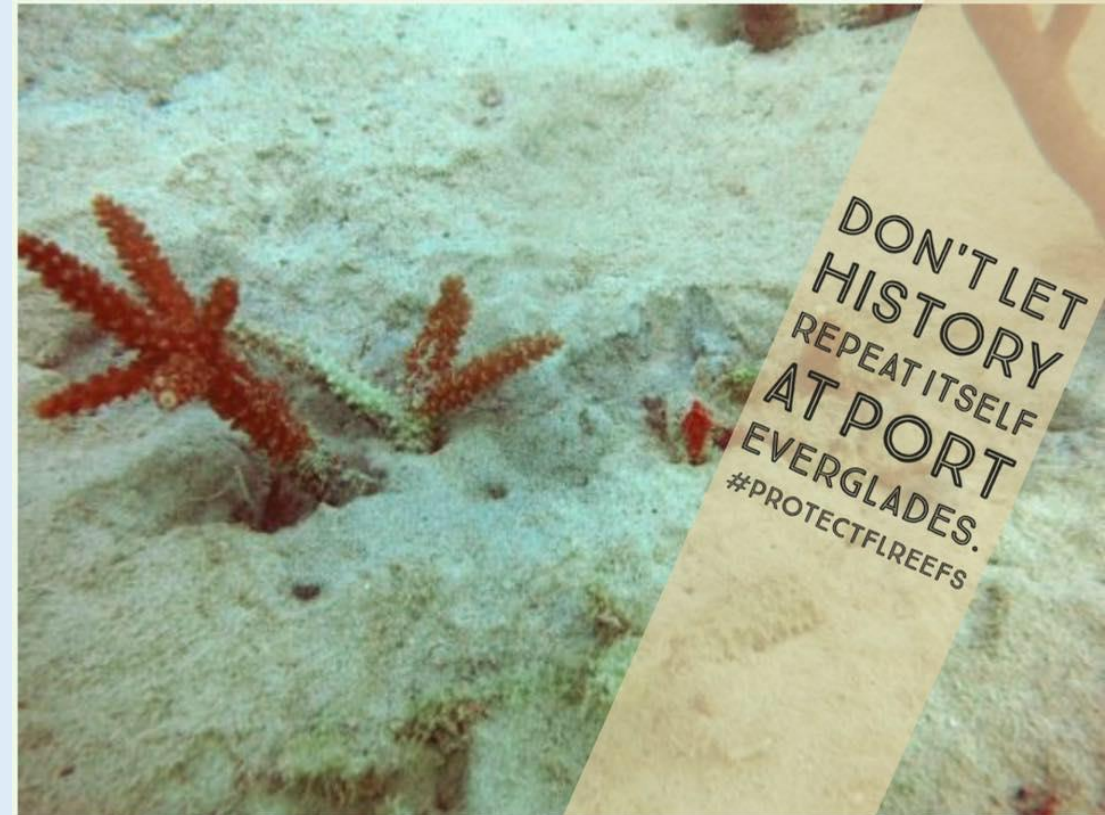


Photo C-34d. *Acropora cervicornis* colony #34 30 days post-reattachment. CSA 1/14/14



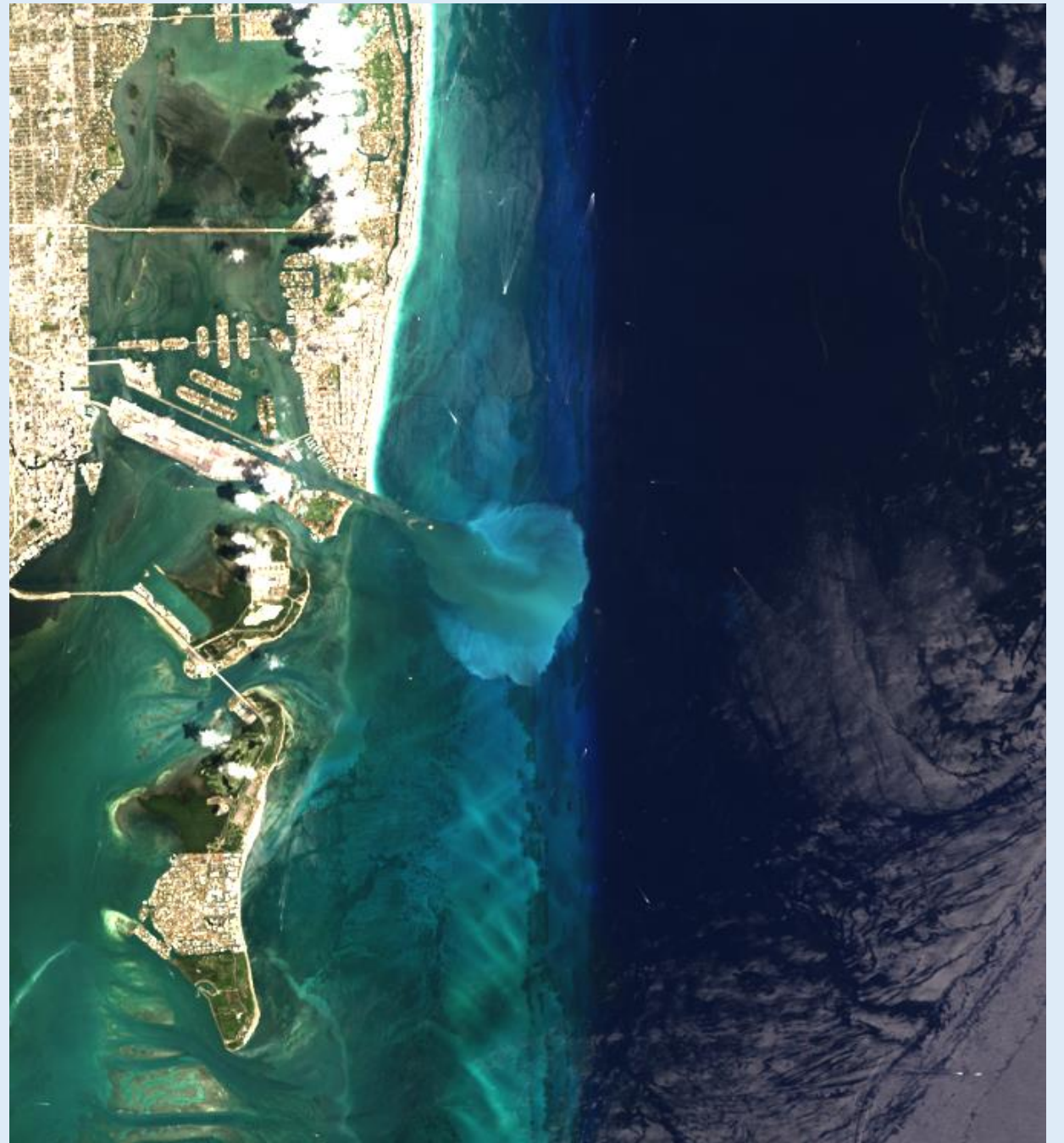
BBWK photo 1/30/15

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.

Is there really enough post panamax cargo to justify the destruction of what is left of our coral reefs to have 2 large deep water ports within 40 miles from each other?

Our corals are in no conditions to handle the chronic silt sediment and turbidity from the project.

Therefor we ask that Port Everglades project be halted.

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