

Stuart, Fla. – Congressman Tom Rooney (R-Fla.) and Martin County announced a grant allocation for oyster bed restoration in the Indian River Lagoon. The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will allocate \$4,024,969 to the Martin County Board of County Commissioners. Congressman Rooney has worked closely with Martin County officials to secure the funding for this project.

“I am pleased to announce Martin County will be receiving funding for this project for the Indian River Lagoon restoration,” said Rooney. “The Indian River Lagoon is a key component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and oyster bed restoration is vital to the health of the lagoon. The revitalization and survival of the Indian River Lagoon is essential for the economy of the Treasure Coast.”

“Martin County is honored to have been chosen as one of four projects in Florida out of over 800 habitat restoration projects applications submitted to NOAA,” said Martin County Commission Vice-Chairman Doug Smith. “This Indian River Lagoon Restoration project will create over 100 local jobs in the marine-related industry, a critical economic driver that is essential to the livelihood of Martin County and its workers. As a part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), the project will be completed in cooperation with the South Florida Water Management District, Florida Oceanographic, and Loxahatchee River District. It is a great day for Martin County’s rivers and estuaries, for the local economy, and for the community, at large.”

The funding will go towards restoring oyster reefs in the Indian River Lagoon, providing improved coastal resiliency and biotic diversity. The proposed patch reef structure will spread across over 200 acres of river bottom and intertidal areas, coupled with new mangrove plantings, will serve to protect the shoreline as well as allow for increased water filtration, and rapid regeneration of the oyster population. In addition to the environmental benefits of the restoration, oysters are an important commercial and recreation resource to the lagoon.