



## FLORIDA KEYS WATER QUALITY, SAFETY AND RESOURCE PROTECTION VESSEL ANCHORAGE / MOORING FIELDS

**ISSUE:** Unmanaged anchorages and illegal moorings in Florida Keys' waters pose significant safety and environmental hazards.

**SOLUTION:** New mooring fields will safeguard fragile resources and public safety, and comply with new state law (SB 1432, 2022) requirements for Monroe County.

- The new moorings will mitigate the significant environmental impacts associated with illegal anchoring such as extensive damage to the benthic habitat, including seagrass.
- The new moorings will be in managed mooring fields that will provide mobile pump out and shoreside services that ensure compliance with water quality protection regulations and reduce abandonment and dereliction.
- New moorings will provide safe, secure harbor for vessels, improving safety and security for recreational boaters and the local live-aboard community, many of whom are members of our workforce.

**CHALLENGES:** Mooring field development in Florida Keys' waters remains especially challenging due to significant spatial constraints: federal navigation channels, military exclusion areas, deeded bay bottom parcels, and prolific areas of sea grass. A further challenge is posed by the requirement that managed mooring fields be provided an associated upland shore side support facility. In the Keys' upland sites are extremely limited and costly.

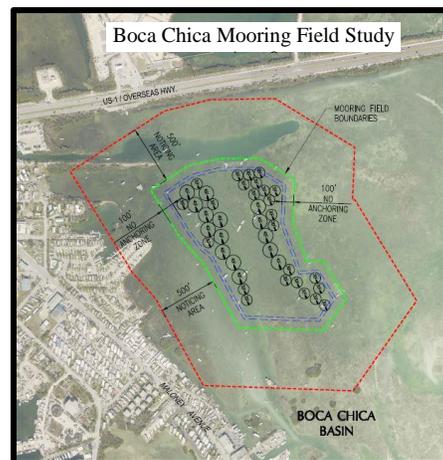
**PROGRESS/ACTIONS:** Monroe has identified two appropriate mooring sites.

- 1) **Boca Chica Mooring Field:** In 2017, Monroe County commissioned a feasibility study to use the **Boca Chica Basin** as a site for a publicly managed mooring field (with 40 moorings).

The primary obstacle to moving ahead was securing a site for a shoreside facility. We have since acquired a site, but it requires upgrades before it can be utilized as an appropriate support facility.

Boca Chica Mooring Field current estimate of costs (40 new moorings):

- Design and permitting: **\$150,000** (timeline 12-18 months)
- Implementation/Construction: **\$350,000** (\$8K per mooring, plus 10 boundary markers @ \$3K per)
- Shoreside Facility upgrades: Estimate currently underway.



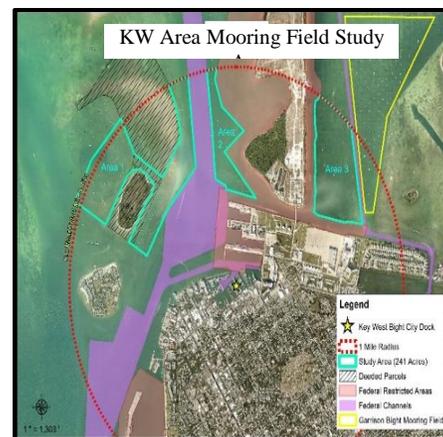
- 2) **Key West Area Mooring Field:** In 2022, new State law requires Monroe County to implement **100 new moorings (within 1-mile City of Key West Bight Dock)** before we can enact the State's new 90-day anchoring limits.

In response, Monroe County moved expeditiously to meet the State's requirements by immediately commissioning a feasibility study for this new mooring field. Completed in October 2022, the study:

- Provided preliminary benthic and bathymetric data
- Identified suitable locations for moorings
- Identified and evaluate shore side services
- Evaluated regulatory and proprietary permitting and mitigation needs

Key West area Mooring Field current cost estimates (100 new moorings):

- Design/Permitting: **\$250,000** (timeline: 12-18 months)
- Implementation/Construction: **\$860,000** (\$8K per mooring, plus 20 boundary markers at \$3,000 each; timeline: 6-9 months.)



**Total Estimated Costs for the design, permitting and implementation of 140 new moorings: \$1.6M**

Contact: Roman Gastesi, County Administrator, 305-292-4441, [Gastesi-roman@monroecounty-fl.gov](mailto:Gastesi-roman@monroecounty-fl.gov)  
Brittany Burtner, Sr. Administrator, Marine Resources Office, 305-289-2805, [burtner-brittany@monroecounty-fl.gov](mailto:burtner-brittany@monroecounty-fl.gov)  
Lisa Tennyson, Legislative Affairs Director, 305-292-4441, [tennyson-lisa@monroecounty-fl.gov](mailto:tennyson-lisa@monroecounty-fl.gov)