

5th On the Water Poker Run

The Fort Pierce Yacht Club Foundation, together with its sponsors, presents the 5th community-wide On the Water Poker Run! This event is open to both power boats and kayaks/ paddle boats. Event takes place April 1, 2023.

This Event Benefits Local Marine Research, Educational and Environmental Programs

The coastal regions of St Lucie County, which include the Indian River Lagoon and the St Lucie Estuary, have an estimated economic impact of \$4 billion per year in the state of Florida. Not only do they provide economic value through tourism, but they are also home to a tremendous diversity of plants and animals. However, our coasts and oceans are particularly vulnerable to pollution, nutrient run-off, overfishing and climate change which affect ecosystem health and biological diversity on land and in the sea.

Consequently, we face major challenges in addressing these threats on a local, regional and even a global scale. The Fort Pierce Yacht Club Foundation has provided funds to various organizations which address our future through investment in our children:

Wesley Eco Camp Scholarships – This camp, managed by Stella Maris, is a summer camp for pre middle and middle school students held on Wesley Island in the Fort Pierce Inlet, and is aimed at familiarizing children with our waters from an environmental perspective. The Foundation funded two campers and provided a high school student an opportunity as a junior counselor in 2022.

Chart Your Course – A marine and maritime career expo introduced 100 middle and high school students to the industry that supports recreational use of the water and protects it with demonstrations and lectures by nearly 30 industry participants. The goal is to attract the next generation to work in this area.

FAU Harbor Branch Summer Internship - The Fort Pierce Yacht Club Foundation Undergraduate Internship, funded by the previous 4 *On the Water Poker Run*, provided 4 IRSC students with an opportunity to work alongside FAU Harbor Branch scientists to search for solutions to the challenges facing our local coasts. In many cases, this is the first opportunity for an undergraduate to perform a research project in a real-world setting, which can have a major impact on the

development of young scientists and their subsequent career tracks. The internships are open to students enrolled as IRSC undergraduates at the time of the internship and will take place over ten weeks in the summer, (40 hours per week for 10 weeks). The internship will take place as a part of the HBOI Summer Intern Program, encouraging interaction with other young scientists from both academic and social perspectives.

WILL YOU HELP US CONTINUE TO FUND PROGRAMS SUCH AS THESE THROUGH SPONSORSHIP OF OUR 5TH ANNUAL POKER RUN?

[Yes, I will be a sponsor](#)