

3rd Annual *On the Water Poker Run*

The Fort Pierce Yacht Club Foundation, together with its sponsors, presents the 3rd annual community-wide *On the Water Poker Run*! This event is open to both power boats and paddle boats. Event takes place March 22, 2020 from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

This Event Benefits Local Marine Research Fort Pierce Yacht Club Foundation Undergraduate Student Internship

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, 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. FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute is at the forefront of research in these topics. Harbor Branch scientists are studying the effects of pollution in our waterways, the health and diversity of the plants and animals, and the impacts of change on the local population.

The Fort Pierce Yacht Club Foundation Undergraduate Internship, funded by the *On the Water Poker Run*, provides 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. Internships will serve as the Capstone project for each recipient's degree. At the end of the internship, the student will prepare a written report and present their research in a public forum.