Reef Injury Prevention and Response (RIPR) Specialist
2021 Position Scope of Work

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection
Coral Reef Conservation Program

*This position will be based in DEP’s West Palm Beach Office (3301 Gun Club Rd, West Palm Beach, FL 33406).

Task 1 (15%) – With the guidance of the Reef Injury Prevention and Response (RIPR) Coordinator, respond to and assist in the management of coral reef and hard bottom injury incidents in southeast Florida. Support the RIPR goals and objectives of the CRCP 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. Assist the RIPR Coordinator and RIPR Technician with the following tasks:

• Assist with logistical coordination and provide technical assistance to support the documentation and assessment of reef resource injury incidents. Assist with injury response protocols and GIS mapping products for each incident. Participate in resource trustee meetings and site visits, as directed. Assist with RIPR-related general/administrative office work, as requested. Investigate, develop, and implement improvements of offshore marine events to reduce anchoring incidents on coral reef resources.

Task 2 (15%) – Assist the RIPR Coordinator and RIPR Technician with vessel salvage, injury site assessments, restoration, and monitoring planning and implementation, including providing administrative and field support, as assigned.

• Help maintain files for all incidents in southeast Florida, including the Southeast Florida Damage Incident Summary Tracker & Grounding History Tracker. Assist with drafting warning letters and incident assessment reports and maintain records of photo and video files, GPS track files, and data sheets – following evidence procedures for electronic data. Conduct dives at damage incidents to assess reef injuries and/or monitor/conduct triage and restoration, as needed. Participate in annual CSI for Coral Reefs training and protocol review.

Task 3 (15%) – In coordination with the Reef Resilience Coordinator and Associate Coordinator, implement the Marine Debris Reporting and Removal program including coordination of marine incident response to reports of marine debris, vessel groundings, anchor damage, and other incidents, as needed:

• Implement incident response protocols, as necessary, for reports of marine debris, vessel groundings, anchor damage, and other incidents. Assist the coordination and execution of the Annual Southeast Florida Reef Cleanup throughout the 4-county region in SE Florida. Maintain communication with dive shops and dive charter companies throughout the region. Coordinate delivery of supplies for reef cleanups throughout the region. Develop an annual summary document containing an analysis of the reported and removed marine debris, including classification of data into categories by type and source, calculation of volunteer hours and cleanup effort, and illustration of the distribution of marine debris. Lead the coordination with local, state, and federal agencies and other partners, as needed, to successfully plan, develop and implement the Southeast Florida Marine Debris Rapid Response Program, including developing protocols, coordinating the Southeast Regional Response Team, identifying and securing funding for large-scale debris removal, and coordinating removal, as needed and appropriate.

Task 4 (15%) – RIPR Program Educational Outreach Campaign & Anchor Damage Prevention:

• Maintain inventory, distribution, and ordering of RIPR printed materials: Mooring Buoy Brochure and Southeast Florida Coral Reef Locator Map Instruction Card. Update outreach and educational materials as needed. Coordinate outreach and partnership efforts with the US Coast Guard Auxiliary, local dive shops, and other stakeholders. Increase outreach with local stakeholder industries, with the primary goal of reducing anchor impacts to coral reefs. Duties may include creating presentations or other tailored educational materials and presenting to various user groups. Assist in the creation and implementation of a PSA campaign in southeast Florida, with a target focus on anchor damage prevention during marine events. Work with CRCP’s Awareness and Appreciation Coordinator to support Florida’s Coral Reef Protection Act (CRPA) by creating and implementing an educational campaign to spread awareness about the Act. Promote CRPA via social media and explore other outreach avenues.

Task 5 (10%) – Mooring Buoy Support:

• Continue the NOAA co-operative agreement project RIPR 3: Mooring Buoy Support. Place supplies orders, manage delivery, check deliverables, and ensure invoice is paid in a timely manner. Oversee the progress of the MICCI 30 LAS (OFR S-2) project, with associated stakeholder working group. Plan and facilitate meetings to discuss and improve local county mooring buoy programs.
Task 6 (10%) – Assist the CRCP Office and Maritime Industry and Coastal Construction Impacts (MICCI) Coordinator with environmental permitting reviews, contractor oversight, contract management, and financial tracking for all projects, as assigned.

- Assist with coral-related environmental permit review; permits may involve artificial reef installations, mitigation proposals, coral relocation projects, marine event permits, etc. Help develop scopes of work and specifications for proposals, for solicitations and contracts to be issued by the DEP for RIPR projects. Help develop and manage proposals and contracts for RIPR projects. Set up and attend RIPR meetings/conference calls to complete and implement RIPR projects.

Task 7 (5%) – Help analyze data, develop and update databases, prepare progress and financial reports, and facilitate annual review and revisions, where necessary, of the RIPR LAS. Support RIPR Program and CRCP Office with general/administrative office work, as needed.

- Maintain electronic files of all resources, information compiled, and reports generated. Record and file all paper and computer data, reports and relevant information. Ensure electronic files are backed up according to DEP policies. Assist in writing project scopes and purchase requisitions, requesting invoices, and approving deliverables. Assist with filing, handling purchasing card transactions, mailings, entering data, as assigned. Attend DEP/FCO/CRCP meetings and functions, as appropriate or directed.

Task 8 (10%) – Assist the RIPR Program and work collaboratively to exchange information with CRCP staff, Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI) Team members, and all interested stakeholders. Where appropriate, represent the DEP Coral Reef Conservation Program and SEFCRI Team.

- Schedule and attend workshops/meetings, as appropriate. Prepare meeting agendas and summaries or record minutes for workshops/meetings, as needed. Support stakeholder activities related to SEFCRI and the RIPR Program, as needed. Participate in monthly CRCP staff meetings and quarterly BBEC staff meetings. Contribute to the DEP Quarterly Measures Report and NOAA Progress Reports. Attend external meetings and functions related to the SEFCRI, RIPR, and coral reef issues in southeast Florida. Travel locally and throughout southeast Florida and occasional long-distance travel as needed to attend meetings, conferences and trainings. Maintain and establish new partnerships with a variety of stakeholder groups including resource users, NGO’s, educational institutions, and government agencies.

Task 9 (5%) – Support field operations by assisting with the operation and maintenance of DEP vessels, vehicles, sampling, photographic, and scuba equipment, as assigned.

- Maintain DEP Diver qualification as defined by the DEP’s Underwater Operations Manual, including current medical approval for diving in accordance with DEP medical examination standard requirements. Assist with day to day gear maintenance and purchasing of needed supplies. Assist with the maintenance of scuba equipment, the dive shed, and service of scuba tanks. Submit equipment maintenance logs as requested. Assist with annual benthic and fish survey field work, as needed. SCUBA dive, snorkel, act as a diver standby, or boat captain as needed to support DEP field operations.

Qualifications

Minimum:

- Bachelor’s degree in marine biology or related field, plus 1 year of experience
- Advanced open water SCUBA certification
- Nitrox gas specialty SCUBA certification
- Minimum 50 open water dives
- GIS mapping and ArcPro software experience
- Identification knowledge of southeast Florida corals; familiarity with SE FL reef habitat and fish

Preferred:

- Master’s degree in marine biology or related field
- Rescue Diver SCUBA certification or higher
- Experience as a scientific diver
- Microsoft Access database experience