

For the surfing community from Surfrider Foundation Miami:

## The Reefline and Protecting the Wave

The Reefline is an amazing project, and we encourage you to educate yourself about it [here](#). Great art, science, culture, and design minds have come together to collaborate on this creative coral ecosystem restoration. Amazing aside, we are obviously concerned about our iconic South Beach surf break and have been working diligently behind the scenes to make sure it is not impacted in any way.

This project hit our radar when it came up at the Oct '20 City of Miami Beach Sustainability Committee meeting. Surfrider volunteer leader, Mike Gibaldi serves on the Committee and immediately called out the surf break issue. Then the Chapter began talks with Reefline to discuss and remedy our concerns. While this is an awesome project for Miami, and we want to support and see it succeed, there is no way we could NOT step up to protect the wave.

We've been on several Zoom meets and more recently in person with BlueLab Society [leads](#) and the Reefline [experts](#) to learn more about the project and share the expertise we bring as surfers who have surfed South for decades, as water people, and as a NOAA marine forecaster and coastal expert in the case of volunteer leader Scott Stripling.

Why was the area south of 5<sup>th</sup> Street was selected by the Reefline team? This area was previously designated an artificial reef area around 2000 and permitted for such structures by the county. The City of Miami Beach passed a municipal resolution in 2003 designating 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street specifically for artificial reef deployment. A major motivation for this was that sand from beach expansion and renourishment projects covered existing coral so it was felt that artificial reef structures could make up for lost natural habitat. In more than 2 decades Miami-Dade County DERM successfully deployed 13 artificial reefs (each has a much smaller footprint than this project) between the Jose Cuervo Artificial Reef and the South Pointe Jetty. This designation for that specific area and the time and resources the Reefline team has already sunk in surveying for their permit application make moving the project elsewhere very undesirable for them. It would likely add more than a year to the start date of the project and be quite expensive.

As our talks with the Reefline team progressed, we had three key asks along the way, and are happy to say they granted our wishes!

- 1) Original depth of proposed placement was in the 16' range a bit East of the Cuervo Bar. We asked that it be moved deeper. They adjusted it further East in the 20' range.
- 2) We asked them to conduct wave modeling so we would have more science telling us if the wave would be affected. They agreed to do the modeling before proceeding to make sure no negative impact on the wave is predicted. Additionally, they've agreed to do this for different orientations, such as with a more northeast-southwest angle, of the structures.

We have been invited to observe the modeling and will keep all posted as it plays out in the [RSMAS wave tank](#) in August.

- 3) We asked if they could move the location of the structure to the extreme North end of the area permitted for artificial reefs from the proposed original location around 1<sup>st</sup> street, to just South of 5<sup>th</sup> street. They have agreed to this request.

(See map below)

As is our standard procedure for these types of projects, we've been following the permit application very closely. Formally, it is a request to modify Class I permit 2011-CLI-PER-00185 since this area was previously permitted by the county as an artificial reef area. Public records for this can be accessed by visiting <https://ecmrer.miamidade.gov/>.

We've got your back! We're optimistic about this, but, of course, we need to rely on scientific modeling. We'll be providing regular updates and information on social media and will also add a page for more detailed information on this to our website. Naturally, we're happy to discuss this further. So please reach out if you have questions or concerns.

Our chapter is entirely volunteer run. The team working on this are guys you see in the water often. We thank them for the time & effort they are dedicating to protecting the iconic surf break that is dear to all of us. They include:

Jesse Bull, Ph.D.: Associate Professor of Economics at FIU, past Chapter Chair.

Mike Gibaldi: Brickell Energy – EV Charging Stations, Treasurer and past Chapter Chair.

Scott Stripling: NOAA-National Hurricane Center Marine Forecaster, Lab Director Blue Water Task Force and past Chapter Chair.

Seth Bloomgarden: Realtor with Berkshire Hathaway Home Services /EWM Realty in Miami Beach, Chapter Chair.