

Ecoart Treasure Coast to Participate in FOS Earth Day Celebration

Stuart, Florida, April 18, 2010--As part of its philosophy that we should make Earth Day an "Earth Decade," Ecoart Treasure Coast will install two floating islands on Saturday, April 24 in the saltwater lagoon at the Florida Oceanographic Institute on Hutchinson Island. The islands will be installed between noon and 5 p.m.

The islands were designed by the project's [six apprentices](#) and mentor Betsy Damon, along with the assistance of several volunteers from the community, including Jim Moir of the Marine Resources Council. Key support was also provided by the Environmental Studies Center and the Florida Oceanographic Society.

"This project truly underscores the collaborative, community-based nature of Ecoart Treasure Coast," says Jennifer Sylvia, one of the project's apprentices. "It marks the beginning of a new era in Martin County's history where artists are working alongside scientists and citizens to remediate the local ecosystem."



Both islands are made of 100% natural, biodegradable materials, and will be lined with plants native to these parts of Florida. One island consists of glass bottles, coir (a coarse fibre derived from the outer shell of a coconut) and bamboo. The second island will be made entirely out of coconut shells. Later in the spring, the apprentices will install two additional islands. Each island will average roughly ten square feet.



In keeping with the project's belief that ecoart should both generate community awareness about environmental problems and improve the environment, the project's floating islands will help provide shade, nutrients and habitat to the lagoon's life systems.

"These islands will help connect the coastal upland systems with the aquatic environment," says Sylvia.

Ecoart Treasure Coast launched the project to illustrate how floating islands can be used to clean and maintain water quality in a variety of waterways, including rivers, streams, lakes, stormwater ponds, and even in golf course ponds. Through a microbial process, floating islands can help remove destructive pollutants from these waterways. In addition, the islands provide shade for the fish, can serve as a nesting habitat for ducks and other birds, and even be a food source for small fish.

Ecoart Treasure Coast is a joint collaboration between the Arts Council, Inc. and the South Florida Environmental Art Project. It is the first ever community eco-art education and apprenticeship in the state of Florida. The project is led by ecoartist Betsy Damon, the executive director of Keepers of the Waters, which was launched in order to inspire and promote projects that combine art, science and community involvement to restore, preserve and remediate water sources. Ecoart Treasure Coast is funded by the State of Florida (Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs), the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties, and private donations.

[To learn more about Ecoart Treasure Coast](#) and floating islands, or to have Ecoart Treasure Coast design and construct a floating island, please contact David Vaina at 772.224.4166.



About the Arts Council, Inc.

The Arts Council is the designated local arts agency for Martin County. The Arts Council provides services to visual and performing artists, arts organizations, students and the public and strives to instill a passion for and participation in the arts. The Arts Council is sponsored in part by the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, the City of Stuart, Martin

County Board of County Commissioners, and private contributions. For more information, please call 772.287.6676 or visit www.martinarts.org.

About the South Florida Environmental Art Project

The South Florida Environmental Art Project's primary role is to educate the general public, and leaders of key environmental and cultural stakeholder organizations in South Florida, regarding the significant role eco-art can play to enhance responsible stewardship of environmental resources in the region. To learn more, please call 202.255.8769 or visit www.sfeap.org.