

Michael Shields Memorial – Fishing For Our Future



Tanya Windecker, Tournament Rules Director with Team Tom Foolery - Captain Max McKinley (and son), Kevin Hawken and Geoff Mayfield

This past September, the Michael Shields Memorial Tournament Series partnered with the Council for the Environmental Studies Center and directed its proceeds to the operations of the Environmental Studies Center in Jensen Beach. Hosted by River Palm Cottages, the tournament series kicked off with a Captains Reception on Friday, September 27.

The Invitational consisted of 30 professionally guided teams that fished for snook, tarpon, redbfish and trout with the option to stay at River Palm Cottages for the weekend to safely enjoy the Captains Reception and the family friendly Award BBQ on Saturday. The Open, an online, statewide tournament was run simultaneously, where individual anglers targeted the same species.

River enthusiasts were happy with the result. Many fish were caught, especially snook, a local favorite. Even more noticeable was the number of trout catches, which was

significantly greater than in years past. The return of the trout bite may be a signal that river health is on the rise.

The first-place team of the Invitational, the Mattdaddies, included Matt Radar, Jacob Radar and Makenzi Brown, and was led by the 2024 Top Guide, Captain Adam White. The Mattdaddies accumulated 321 points by maxing out their scorecard in the snook and sea trout categories, logging 3 of each including the largest trout at 24.5 inches, and topping it off with a 36 inch tarpon. The biggest fish of the Invitational was a 72.5 inch tarpon caught by Kevin Hawken of Team Tom Foolery, guided by Captain Max McKinley. The biggest snook was logged by Hutch Gumbinner of Blue Eagle AG, guided by Captain Austin Funk. The only redbfish of the Invitational was logged by Kim Kelly of Team Ferraro Law Group, guided by Captain Jon Earhart.

The first-place angler in the Open was Denton Potter. He logged 327.5 points all by himself filling the card with 3 snook and 3 tarpon.

The Michael Shields Memorial Tournament Series has contributed over \$500,000 to local charities supporting children in Martin County since its inception in 2009. This year's funds will go to general operations of the Environmental Studies Center, with a focus on operating and maintaining the River Scout.

"All of us on the Michael Shields Committee have gone through the Environmental Studies Center's camps and field trips growing up, and our children have done the same," said Chairman Shaun Plymale. "To us, there is no better fit for our tournament series than supporting the Environmental Studies Center, which teaches our children through science and immersion, the importance of preserving one of our most valued natural resources – the Indian River Lagoon."

Interested in participating next year? Check out www.fishforthekids.org for more information.

***Please consider leaving a legacy by naming the
Environmental Studies Council in your estate plans.***



The Environmental Studies Council, Inc.

2900 NE Indian River Drive
Jensen Beach, FL 34957
Council Office: (772) 219-1887 x 121
Center Office: (772) 219-1887

Mission Statement

To protect and enhance the education programs of the Environmental Studies Center and to promote and extend environmental awareness through community education.

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From the desk of the President

Happy New Year! I hope this message finds you refreshed and recharged after a joyful winter holiday season with family and friends. As we step into the new year, I'm filled with excitement about all the incredible opportunities and activities awaiting us at the Environmental Studies Council.

We have an action-packed year ahead, full of engaging programs, educational events, and meaningful ways to connect with nature and our community. Be sure to keep an eye on our social media channels for announcements, updates, and important dates—you won't want to miss a thing!

This year, we're encouraging everyone to become a member of the Environmental Studies Council. Your membership plays a vital role in supporting the programs, resources, and conservation efforts that make the Center a true cornerstone of environmental education and engagement. By joining, you'll not only help sustain our mission but also gain access to exclusive benefits and a vibrant community of like-minded individuals passionate about making a difference.

For those who are considering getting more involved, we're always looking for new faces and fresh perspectives to join us. Whether it's through volunteering, sharing ideas, or contributing in other ways, we'd love to welcome you to the team. Together, we can make this year one of our most impactful yet.

Thank you for your continued support of the Environmental Studies Council. Here's to a year of growth, discovery, and collaboration. Let's make 2025 unforgettable!

Sincerely,
Coltin Radabaugh

Did Your Membership Expire?

Have you renewed your membership to the Environmental Studies Council? We need your support!

To sign up, log on to www.escmc.org or call (772) 219-1887 x 121

One Health Fish Monitoring Project

The Environmental Studies Center was excited to host a fish monitoring workshop with the Ocean Research and Conservation Association (ORCA). ORCA's "One Health Fish Monitoring Project" examines how toxins and pollutants from local waterways including the Indian River Lagoon, St. Lucie Estuary, and various freshwater canals, are transferred into fish commonly consumed by people. Using the data collected, ORCA aims to assess potential human health risks, if any, associated with eating these fish. ORCA currently analyzes fish fillets for bio toxins, heavy metals, PFAS, micro plastics, pharmaceuticals and controlled substances within Martin County. In order to fulfill the requirements of their Impact100 Martin grant, they need fish from Martin County waterways. They are seeking 120 more fish to meet that goal.

Specimens must be:

- Legal and in-season
- Whole (unless otherwise discussed)
- Frozen or kept on ice until dropped off
- Must be caught within Martin County

Please include the location of where the fish was caught, the date, and your name. The fish samples can be delivered to Snook Nook, Mrs. Peter's Smokehouse, or ORCA's Vero Beach Headquarters. To learn more about the project you can visit www.teamorca.org or email mweiss@teamorca.org for more details.

Meet Saylor!

On November 15, Millie the Sea Turtle was released to Sam Clark of the Sea Turtle Conservation Group who orchestrated the release with the Coast Guard. Enjoy that big beautiful ocean, Millie!

We welcome our new sea turtle SAYLOR! Mrs. Burns' class from Warfield Elementary gave her the perfect name! Saylor was hatched on July 28th and comes to us all the way from FAU. She was part of an exciting incubator experiment. As an egg, she and 24 of her siblings were collected from a freshly laid nest on June 8th and brought to FAU's Boca campus to study their development. We are excited to watch you grow, Saylor!



VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to our Volunteers of the Year, Kathrine Rogers, Misty Aydelotte and River Palms Cottages. Thank you for your time and generosity in supporting the ESC! We appreciate you!

Save the Date!

Grandparents Day is Feb. 8, 2025 from 9 am - noon. Bring your grandparents or guardian for a fun day of learning and exploring at the center! Guy Harvey Foundation will be there leading the arts and crafts along with the touch tanks, snacks and the new sea turtle Saylor!

Wish List

The Environmental Studies Center needs your support! The Center has a current need for:

- Batteries- various sizes
- Paper Towels
- Kleenex
- Quart size plastic ziploc bags
- Dawn Dish Soap

If you are interested in supporting any of the above opportunities, please contact us at info@escmc.org or by calling 772-219-1887 x121. Or stop by the Center - we'd love to see you!

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WINTER 2025

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Earthsavers Crew and Michael Shields Memorial



High school students from the Environmental Studies Council Earth Savers are diving into their second Sea Grass survey. Well done, team—you're learning by doing real science with a purpose. Keep making waves for the environment!



Shaun Plymale presents a check to the council from the 16th annual Michael Shields Memorial Inshore Fishing Tournament held this past September at River Palms Cottages. The event was a huge success and lots of fun, something you won't want to miss next year!

GO GREEN! JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST! FIND US ON FACEBOOK!

<http://www.facebook.com/escmc>