

RESOLUTION
2015-41

**RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF WALTON
COUNTY ADOPTING AN ARTIFICIAL REEF MANAGEMENT PLAN; AND
SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

WHEREAS, the Florida Panhandle has abundant and productive estuarine habitats for marine and estuarine species, but limited natural hardbottom or "reef" habitats in the Gulf of Mexico waters.

WHEREAS, most anglers learn that fish congregate around offshore man-made structures on the Gulf bottom.

WHEREAS, the general goal of artificial reef development in the state and federal waters off the coast of Florida is to create and enhance marine resources and create new sportfishing opportunities.

WHEREAS, the objective of the Artificial Reef Program is to create and maintain a network of marine artificial reefs for the long-term well-being of the marine resources in the Gulf of Mexico offshore from Walton County and for the benefit of Walton County and its visitors.

WHEREAS, the goal of the Walton County Artificial Reef Management Program is to provide the framework for a high quality, sustainable, and long-term artificial reef program for the benefit of Walton County citizens, visitors, and marine habitat.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Walton County, Florida, that:

1. **Authority; Intent**

The Artificial Reef Program Management Plan for Walton County, Florida has been created to achieve the following objectives:

1. Create stable and durable artificial reefs that provide valuable habitat for fish and wildlife and maintain and increase the regional abundance of marine life to levels found on or exceeding the natural reefs off Walton County.
2. Increase recreational and eco-tourism opportunities off Walton County for both residents and tourists.
3. Increase the economic health and resiliency of South Walton County through increased tourism resulting from the use of artificial reefs.
4. Improve knowledge and understanding of artificial reef biology and performance measures.

It is the intent for Walton County to work cooperatively with South Walton Artificial Reef Association (SWARA), Inc., a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit group, to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the Artificial Reef Program Management Plan dated May, 2015.

2. **Adoption of Plan**

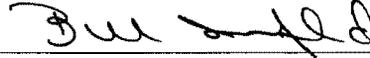
Therefore, the Board hereby adopts the Artificial Reef Program Management Plan for Walton County, Florida and the foregoing recitals which are incorporated into this Resolution and adopted as findings of fact. A copy of the adopted Plan will be posted on the County's website and available upon request from the Walton County Environmental Department at 117 Montgomery Circle, Defuniak Springs, FL 32435, (850)892-8108.

3. **Effective Date**

This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED and ADOPTED on June 9, 2015.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA



Bill Imfeld, Chairman

Attest:



Alex Alford, Clerk of Circuit Court
and County Comptroller

