



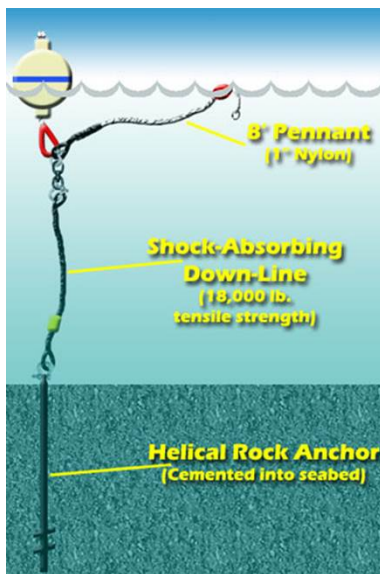
1. What are mooring fields?

A mooring field is a legally defined area within a body of water. In Florida a mooring field is established by local ordinance, codifying a management plan that regulates activity within the mooring field. Customers of the mooring field are assigned a mooring, and can then secure their boat to the mooring buoy which is attached to permanent anchors. Mooring buoys provide an organized and secure way to protect both boats and the environment.

2. How do moorings work?

Advances in the design and construction of moorings have improved methods for securing vessels while protecting the environment. A mooring buoy is connected to a downline with a shock absorber component that is connected to an anchor securely installed in the sea floor. Unlike older versions, modern systems have eliminated chain as a component of the downline. The chain had been shown to drag along the bottom as the boat swings, uprooting vegetation and scouring the bottom.

Most modern arrangements include a pickup line (or pennant) that boaters attach to their bow lines.



This illustration shows how a modern mooring secures vessels and protects the sea floor. And, if some of the terms we're using are not familiar to you, check out our "Definitions" section on the website.

3. What else is part of a mooring field other than a place to securely tie up a boat?

The mooring field usually includes an on-land facility where boaters can use showers and restrooms. Very importantly, managed mooring fields require sewage pump-out services for the safe and appropriate disposal of waste. By docking their dinghy at the facility, boaters can gain access to other land-based services like grocery stores, restaurants, shops, services and activities. A Harbormaster manages the mooring field operation, ensuring proper upkeep of all facilities and enforcing regulations



4. Why are mooring fields beneficial for Martin County?

The natural beauty of the environment and unique destinations coupled with accessibility to major waterways make Martin County a prime destination for boaters year round. Both locals and cruisers often welcome the opportunity to be responsible stewards of the environment. Through the use of mooring facilities, boaters don't unintentionally harm sea grass beds with their anchors, and due to the exceptional holding capacity of moorings, the vessels are well secured, protecting vessels as well as shore side infrastructure.

With managed mooring fields there are substantial benefits:

To the environment: pump-out services are required for boats in the mooring field, and the illegal discharge of solid or liquid waste into the waterway can be substantially curbed. The use of mooring buoys helps to protect sea grass and the sea floor from anchor dragging. Derelict boats can be identified and removed.

To safety: moorings offer much greater holding strength than anchors and allow for fewer break-away vessels. Boats are kept out of illegal or inconvenient places in the waterway. At night, vessels are required to display anchor lights for greater safety. Only boats that are in good operational condition, capable of maneuvering under their own power and displaying current registration or documentation, are authorized in the moorings fields. Boats are able to swing with the wind and the current without hitting other boats.

To the local economy: well-run mooring fields attract tourists to an area like Martin County, where tourism is a major contributor to the economy. They also benefit the marine industry, a significant component of the local economy. The mooring field itself generates revenues, which go back into the operations and maintenance of the facility. Mooring field patrons use local services and products, such as boat repairs, groceries, shopping, dining, medical supplies, and entertainment venues.

To the boating community: boaters can stay on their own boat in a mooring field at less cost than at a marina slip, can tie up and let their boat swing with the wind and the tide without impacting other boats, and have access to amenities like restrooms, showers, and land-based activities.

5. Where will the proposed mooring fields be located in Martin County:

Jensen Beach: The proposed mooring field for Jensen Beach is located on the south side of the Jensen Beach Causeway, west of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (AIW).

Manatee Pocket: A study is currently underway to determine suitability and best location(s) for proposed Mooring Fields in Manatee Pocket. There are basically two areas where vessels congregate in the Manatee Pocket area. The larger of the two areas is just offshore of the Pirates Cove Marina and Resort, and the smaller sits at the back of the Pocket near the Hinckley Yacht repair facility, the Fishing Fleet docks, and the Twisted Tuna restaurant.



6. How many boats would be able to moor at each facility?

Jensen Beach: Under the latest proposed configuration, a mooring field could accommodate over 50 vessels with a maximum length of 50 feet.

Manatee Pocket: This mooring field is currently in the conceptual design phase and the number has not yet been determined.

7. Aren't there some downsides to the project? Will this mean more wastewater going into our waterways? Will it attract unlawful tenants and squatters?

No, the moorings will not cause more waste to be dumped into the waterways. The Mooring Field Management Plan contains rules that must be followed in the mooring field. The mooring field customers are required to show proof of pump out. The Plan specifically stipulates that the discharge of any solid or liquid waste (human or pet) into the waters within the facility is prohibited and regular pump-out is required for occupied vessels. Violators are subject to immediate ejection from the facility, loss of security deposit, and can be turned over law enforcement. Management provided by the Harbormaster will create consistent oversight and monitoring to prevent illegal anchoring, dumping and other undesirable activities, which could further adversely impact water quality, aesthetics, and seagrasses.

The moorings will not attract unlawful tenants; they will actually eliminate them. The Mooring Field Management Plan states that no vessel shall occupy any mooring without the approval of the Harbormaster. Additionally, the Management Plan states that only vessels in compliance with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) environmental and safety standards and only vessels in good operational condition, capable of maneuvering under their own power and with current registration or documentation, are authorized to moor at the facility.

The Management Plan also states that boaters arriving by vessel or dinghy must register at the Harbormaster's Office within twelve (12) hours of landing. Any vessel left unattended for more than twenty-four (24) continuous hours, without the prior approval of the Harbormaster, will be considered abandoned and will be removed from the *facility*. Any violation of the rules and regulations stipulated within the proposed Management Plan could result in the ejection of the vessel from the facility.

8. Who is spearheading this project?

The Martin County Board of County Commissioners is responsible for applying for and obtaining all permits and funding authorizations for the proposed project and for selecting the contractor and construction oversight.

The County expects that a public-private partnership will be established for the long-term operation of each of the facilities.



9. Are there other governmental agencies involved in the project?

Numerous state and federal agencies are consulted throughout the process at each level of government. Environmental permits must be obtained from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Additionally, authorization for the exclusive use of the sea bed must be also obtained from FDEP. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) then permit the navigational/informational markers and mooring buoys. The Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) has assisted with project funding.

10. How much will this project cost? And who will pay for it?

The total cost, including construction and permitting, is still only an estimate because public input is still being sought and permits are still in process. Typically funding comes from state and federal grant programs. The remaining funding source would come from county funds. Once the mooring fields have been constructed, they will generate revenue to cover operating and maintenance costs.

11. When will construction start, and how long will it take?

Each of the two proposed mooring fields will have its own timetable for starting and completing construction. First all necessary permits and funding must be in place and a contractor selected. Once construction has begun, it usually takes 3 months to completion.

12. How can citizens of Martin County keep up to date on the progress of these projects?

This website will update timelines, alert citizens of public meetings, and add photos and illustrations about the project so that everyone can stay informed.

www.martin.fl.us/mooringfields