

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 pick-up line (or pennant) that boaters attach to their bow lines. This illustration shows how a modern mooring secures vessels and protects the sea floor.

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.

Why are mooring fields beneficial for the Town of Fort Myers Beach?

The natural beauty of the environment and unique destinations coupled with accessibility to major waterways make Fort Myers Beach a prime destination for boater's year-around. 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. Due to the exceptional holding capacity of moorings, the vessels are well-secured, protecting vessels as well as shore-side infrastructure. These are the substantial benefits of managed mooring fields:

- **To the environment:** Pumpout 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/documentation and insurance are authorized in the mooring 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 Fort Myers Beach where tourism is a major contributor of the local 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. Boats can be tied up and swing with the wind and the tide without impacting other boats. Boaters also have access to amenities like restrooms, showers and land-based activities.

Where will the proposed mooring field expansion be located?

The Town of Fort Myers Beach currently operates a 70-slip mooring field east of Matanzas Pass Bridge. The expansion the Town is seeking authorization to provide an additional 19 moorings west of Matanzas Pass Bridge accommodating vessels up to a length of 85 feet.

What rules will govern tenants to keep the field clean and squatters out?

The Mooring Field Management Plan contains rules that must be followed by every vessel within the mooring field. Customers are required to show proof of pump-out and/or be pumped out every three days. The moorings will not cause more waste to be dumped into the waterways.

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 to 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. Actually, they will 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 in good operational condition, capable of maneuvering under their own power and with current registration/documentation and insurance requirements, 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 the first 24 hours of taking a mooring. Any vessel left unattended for more than 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 management plan could result in the ejection of the vessel from the facility.

Who is spearheading the Mooring Field Expansion Project?

The Town of Fort Myers Beach is responsible for applying for and obtaining all permits and funding authorizations for the proposed expansion of the Mooring Field and for selecting the contractor and construction oversight.

Are 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 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 also be 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.

How much will this project cost? Who will pay for it?

The total cost, including construction, engineering, bidding and permitting, is based on an Engineer's Estimate at \$200,000. The funding source will come from the Town's General Fund which includes revenues from the Town's existing mooring field operations. The additional moorings will generate additional revenue to cover operating and maintenance costs.

When will construction start and how long will it take?

The expansion still has to complete the permitting process with various governmental agencies, which may take up to a year to complete. First, all necessary permits and funding must be in place prior to soliciting a bid for construction which would then select a contractor. Once construction has begun, it usually takes 6 weeks to complete.

How can citizens of the Town of Fort Myers Beach keep up to date on the progress of the expansion and existing Mooring Fields?

The Town's website will update timelines, alert citizens of public meetings and add photos and illustrations about the project in the news section so that everyone can stay informed. Citizens who wish to keep up to date on progress are encouraged to sign themselves up to receive notice when content is

posted. This is the link to follow to sign up: <https://www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov/list.aspx>. Updates will also be regularly posted on the Town's social media outlets.