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For Immediate Release

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Big Reds Tournament Set for Nov. 13: Broodstock for Conservation to Rebuild Florida Fish Populations

MELBOURNE, FLA.— Anglers and fishing guides are invited to enter the Big Reds Tournament in the Indian River Lagoon on Saturday, Nov. 13, from 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The event will establish and maintain East Coast Redfish broodstock at Florida Institute of Technology's Vero Beach Marine Laboratory (VBML). The goal is to produce millions of redfish fingerlings to help restore redfish populations in east coast habitats.

Florida Tech is conducting this effort in partnership with the Florida Marine Fisheries Enhancement Initiative, which aims to replenish fisheries populations through the efforts of a network of hatcheries around the state. Redfish are the first target. Snook, seatrout, snapper and other species will be brought into the program in the coming years.

In the Big Reds tournament, anglers will be provided with Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) waivers of current size limits so they can capture the Big Reds for use as broodstock. Chase boats in the tournament fishing areas near Sebastian Inlet and the Pineda/520 Causeways will pick up the fish and place them in onboard live wells or holding nets and transport them to the culture facilities in Vero Beach.

There will be a single Longest Fish Award for Redfish for an eligible fish more than 40-inches long. There will also be the Cumulative Brood Stock Length Award and Individual Brood Stock Awards.

The entry fee is \$1,250 per angler, with two anglers and one guide per boat. The tournament website, www.fmfei.org, has registration forms. All funds raised by this tournament will go toward maintaining the broodstock and the fingerlings that will be produced in late summer 2011.

The Anglers Gala, to be held Friday, Nov. 12, 6-8 p.m. at the VBML, is mandatory for the guide and at least one team member on the guide's boat. Attendance is necessary to pick up the special permit and banner for catching over-slot-limit redfish, to review fish handling techniques and to become familiar with the tournament format and guidelines. Dinner, beer and wine will be served. Anglers' family members are welcome to attend if they are listed on the tournament registration form.

The Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Wildlife Foundation of Florida, Florida Tech and Hubbs Sea World Research Institute are organizing the tournament. Florida Tech and the Florida Beer Co. are the sponsors of the Big Reds Tournament and the Florida Tech Office for Advancement is sponsoring the Anglers Gala. Other sponsorship opportunities are available.

For more information, visit: <http://fmfei.org/The%20Big%20Reds%20Tournament/>

About Florida Institute of Technology

Founded at the dawn of the Space Race in 1958, Florida Tech is the only independent, technological university in the Southeast. With 9,000 students enrolled on main campus, extended campuses and online, Florida Tech has been named a *Barron's Guide* "Best Buy" in College Education, designated a Tier One Best National University in *U.S. News & World Report*, and is one of just nine schools in Florida lauded by the *2011 Fiske Guide to Colleges*. The university offers undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs. Fields of study include science, engineering, aeronautics, business, humanities, mathematics, psychology, communication and education. Additional information is available online at www.fit.edu.

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