

March 31, 2025

City of Key West  
1300 White Street  
Key West, FL 33040

Re: Year 2 Reporting

In 2023, Mote Marine Laboratory entered into an agreement with the City of Key West, for \$100,000, for the purpose of science-based coral reef restoration and maintenance. In 2024, the City approved a one-year (\$100,000) extension to the agreement, which brings us to “year 2” reporting in 2025.

In February 2025, the coral restoration team, led by Dr. Jason Spadaro, successfully completed outplanting under this funding award. Mote’s Coral Reef Restoration Research Program staff outplanted a total of 1,101 new corals at Higgs Heads, with the City of Key West plot under the 2025 funding agreement.

The team is currently finalizing reporting data, to follow, regarding survival rates of past outplantings, funded by City of Key West. (Expected to be ~68%.) The bulk of this effort involves processing and analyzing the large area imagery/Structure-from-Motion (SfM) photogrammetry monitoring products, which allow us to track live coral cover (%) and living coral tissue area (cm<sup>2</sup>) through time including the change in these metrics between pre- and post-outplant monitoring intervals. Looking at current data, the survival of previously outplanted corals looks, qualitatively, quite high. Despite the substantial thermal stress experienced by these outplants during the marine heatwaves of 2023 and 2024, our team has seen substantial growth among multiple species and specific genotypes in these outplanting events over the past ~1.5 years.

A \$100/coral rate is set to include husbandry, propagation, outplanting, and monitoring of these corals. However, Mote outplanted 1,101 corals at a flat rate of \$100,000. This funding support from the City of Key West offset the cost of staff salaries, fringe benefits, and indirect costs for work conducted in the nurseries and in the field, materials and supplies, as well as vessel and scuba operations support. This funding also supports outreach and education events and activities to disseminate the work and results among the local community and visitors to the Key West community.

Ending year 2, we look forward more than ever, to the continued partnership with the City of Key West. We are proud of the progress made thus far and excited to continue monitoring and reporting on future lasting impacts of the local coral reefs.



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