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FAU Harbor Branch to Host Public Forum on Algal Blooms in Indian River Lagoon

FORT PIERCE, Fla. (February 7, 2017) – Rampant green algae blooms in the St. Lucie Estuary – part of the Indian River Lagoon – that were caused in part by discharges from Lake Okeechobee this summer placed the Treasure Coast in the national spotlight. FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute researchers have a long history of studying the lagoon, and were called upon to serve as experts and provide scientific insight into the science behind that toxic algae crisis, as well as others that have occurred throughout the years in various parts of the 156-mile long estuary of national significance. This week, Harbor Branch will talk more about the impacts of algal blooms in the lagoon during the public outreach day of the 2017 Indian River Lagoon Symposium.

The public is invited to attend the forum on Friday, Feb. 10 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Harbor Branch’s Johnson Education Center Auditorium, 5600 U.S. 1 North, Fort Pierce.

The forum, “Engaging the Public: An Estuary in Peril,” is centered on presentations and panel discussions on the wide impacts of the recent algal blooms, as well as how citizens can participate in scientific research and restoration in the lagoon. The event is free and open to the public. Registration is required and closes Wednesday, Feb. 8. To register, visit <https://fauf.fau.edu/irls2017>.

The Indian River Lagoon (IRL) spans 40 percent of Florida’s east coast and has an annual economic impact of \$3.7 billion, supporting an estimated 15,000 full- and part-time jobs while providing recreational opportunities for more than 11 million people per year.

For more information, contact Carin Smith at 772-242-2230 or carinsmith@fau.edu, or visit www.fau.edu/hboi.

About Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute:

Founded in 1971, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute at Florida Atlantic University is a research community of marine scientists, engineers, educators and other professionals focused on Ocean Science for a Better World. The institute drives innovation in ocean engineering, at-sea operations, drug discovery and biotechnology from the oceans, coastal ecology and conservation, marine mammal research and conservation, aquaculture, ocean observing systems and marine education. For more information, visit www.fau.edu/hboi.

About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU's world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of critical areas that form the basis of its strategic plan: Healthy aging, biotech, coastal and marine issues, neuroscience, regenerative medicine, informatics, lifespan and the environment. These areas provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU's existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.