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## **FAU Harbor Branch Launches Public Website with Real-Time Indian River Lagoon Water Quality Data**

**FORT PIERCE, Fla. (July 17, 2013)** – FAU’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute has launched a new website to provide real-time water measurements concerning the Indian River Lagoon. The information comes from the first of Harbor Branch’s Land/Ocean Biogeochemical Observatory (LOBO) units placed in the lagoon to measure important environmental parameters including temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, water color, chlorophyll that is indicative of algae in the water column, and nutrients such as nitrates and phosphates. The website, <http://fau-hboi.loboviz.com/>, is accessible 24 hours a day.

FAU Harbor Branch has a long history of conducting research and monitoring in the lagoon, which is one of the most biodiverse estuaries in North America. Its research includes relating seagrass status with water quality; determining the causes of macroalgae and harmful algal blooms; studying marine mammal health; and population and mercury in the food web and ecosystem change. The LOBO units, and the accompanying website with high quality, freely accessible, real-time data, will transform these long-standing research efforts while providing this information to all who wish to see or use it.

“This real-time data will allow us to determine critical baselines for the lagoon’s environment and its relationships to its plants and animals,” said research professor Dennis Hanisak, Ph.D., who leads FAU Harbor Branch’s LOBO efforts. “We also will be able to study significant events, such as water discharges, algal blooms, and storm events and how these events relate to ecosystem changes in the lagoon, as they happen. This LOBO technology will provide researchers, colleagues, governmental agencies, students of all levels, and the general public unprecedented IRL environmental data, real-time.”

The LOBO units were developed by leading chemical oceanographers and estuarine researchers, have been tested, proven and improved over time, as well as have a national and international presence in Canada, California, Oregon, Delaware, Maine and the west coast of Florida. FAU Harbor Branch’s LOBO units will integrate into the National Ocean Observatory Data System, allowing comparative studies both within the state and on a national scale.

A new public outreach video also was released to educate the community on the Indian River Lagoon and the research that is conducted by FAU Harbor Branch scientists in the lagoon - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSxeDCtsOZc&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSxeDCtsOZc&feature=youtu.be).

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### **About Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute:**

*Founded in 1971, Florida Atlantic University's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute 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.hboi.fau.edu](http://www.hboi.fau.edu).*

### **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 three signature themes – marine and coastal issues, biotechnology and contemporary societal challenges – which provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU's existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit [www.fau.edu](http://www.fau.edu).*