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**TCRF AND BIG BLUE LIMITED COMPLETE THE INSTALLATION OF 18 NEW SNORKEL BOAT MOORINGS**

9 June 2015, Providenciales, TCI – The Turks & Caicos Reef Fund (TCRF) with a great deal of assistance from Big Blue Limited, has completed the installation of 18 new snorkel boat moorings. Twelve of the moorings are located on the outside of the coral reef east of Leeward Cut used daily by snorkel boat operators, two are on the inside of the reef and four are located off shore from Fort George Cay. The moorings consist of a sea floor anchor that is a rock pin epoxied into rock on the sea floor, a nylon mooring line leading to the surface white buoy with a blue stripe and a yellow or yellow/black polypropylene pick up line.

“First, we would like to thank Big Blue Limited for their generous donation of boat and staff time over the four days it took to complete the work and the volunteers that also helped to make it happen,” said Don Stark, Chairman of the TCRF. “We also want to thank all the local watersports operators who support our efforts to install permanent moorings, thereby eliminating the need to drop anchors on our fragile coral reefs.”

Each mooring costs approximately \$2,000 to install and all the funding for this effort came solely from funds raised by the TCRF – no funding was provided by the TCI Government (the work was, however, approved by DEMA and done under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding between DEMA and TCRF). “We invested approximately \$36,000 into this effort,” said Mr. Stark, “all of which came from donations, memberships and the sale of our retail merchandise. We

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would like to encourage all the businesses who benefit from these moorings to contribute financially so we can maintain them over the long term.”

Anchoring near a coral reef frequently causes damage to the reef, even when the boat operator is extremely careful where and how they anchor. Given that there can be a dozen or more boats out in the area where the moorings were installed and visiting the same sites twice a day, a lot of damage has already been done to these coral reefs. Using the moorings will greatly reduce future damage to these reefs.

“It is also important for the boat captains using these moorings to use them properly,” said Mr. Stark. “They are designed to be used with a dock line run through the loop on the end of the pick up line (see the illustration). The pick up line should not be attached directly to a cleat on the vessel, as this will place too much pressure on the sea floor anchor. Adding the dock line provides a bit more scope and will help the moorings last much longer.”

#### About TCRF

Founded in 2010, the Turks & Caicos Reef Fund is an all volunteer-run organization that provides funding for education, research and conservation programs to individuals, organizations and agencies that help to preserve and protect the environment of the Turks & Caicos Islands. Our goal is to have at least 85% of all funds raised through voluntary contributions from divers and snorkelers visiting the Turks & Caicos Islands directed to the Fund’s programs.

Anyone wishing to donate or assist the TCRF in any way can contact them through their website, [www.TCReef.org](http://www.TCReef.org). Scuba divers visiting the islands are encouraged to make a \$10 donation through the purchase of a dive tag that can be attached to their dive gear to show their support. Snorkelers visiting the islands can show their support through the \$5 purchase of a pink or blue silicone wristband. A complete list of outlets for TCRF merchandise can be found on the organization’s website.

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