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THE ENVIRONMENT

Smart Sponge Technology at Work in Duval Street Storm Drains

Financed by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the City of Key West installed 33 debris-trapping inserts in storm drains along Duval Street. That new technology, called Smart Sponge, came in handy not long ago, when there was a grease spill from a local restaurant.

Operations Management

International (OMI) conducted the grease spill cleanup for the city and reported that four gallons of grease was captured by the filters—which means that it did not end up in the near-shore waters.

The installation of the Smart Sponge filtration system is part of a stormwater management project aimed at blocking

oil, bacteria and trash from entering the nearby offshore reef community and coastal waters.

"The Duval Street stormwater system is heavily impacted by tourists and recreational activities that leave excessive trash and debris on our streets, sidewalks and storm drains," said Annalise Mannix, the city's Environmental Programs Man-

ager. "It was just a matter of time before an accident of this nature was bound to occur."

In addition to blocking trash and absorbing oil, the Smart sponge system contains an antimicrobial agent that destroys E Coli and other bacteria and fungi.

The technology was developed by AbTech Industries, based in Scottsdale, Arizona.

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