



IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Minutes from the meeting of

May 12, 2023

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Sebastian City Hall; Council Chambers, 1225 Main Street, Sebastian, FL 32958

Attendance: Joseph Earman, Rob Feltner, Aaron Watkins, Stacey Hetherington, Doug Bournique, Jeff Brower, Chris Dzadoovsky

Guests: Tom Carey, Kathy LaMartina, Melanie Parker, Chuck Jacoby, John Maehl, Glen Torcivia, Ruth Holms

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance (Chris Dzadoovsky, Chair)

Mr. Dzadoovsky called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Introductions

Mr. Dzadoovsky led the introductions of Board members asking members to name any guests present. Mr. Brower noted Mr. Tom Carey in attendance from Volusia County.

3. Agenda Revisions (Chris Dzadoovsky, Chair)

Agenda item 8, The Consent Agenda, Appointments to the Management Conference include Keith Ramos, Project Leader for the Merritt Island NWR Complex, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the Management Board and Kris Kaufman, Restoration Center, Office of Habitat Conservation, NOAA Fisheries to the STEM Advisory Committee. Agenda item 10, Audit, has been pulled and moved to the August meeting.

4. Resolutions, Recognition, Letters and Awards (Chris Dzadoovsky, Chair)

None

5. Public Comment

None

6. Water Quality Reports

a. Northern and Central Lagoon (Dr. Charles Jacoby, SJRWMD)

Dr. Chuck Jacoby reported this quarter's six continuous data sondes did not report any significant figures, as there were no weather events to note. Salinity levels remained normal, but temperatures did experience some typical winter dips. Chlorophyll levels in the central lagoon were relatively low, while the Cocoa area showed a short-lived increase. Dissolved oxygen levels remained at an acceptable level throughout the entire quarter. 700 camera drops indicated some seagrass recovery.

b. Southern Lagoon (Dr. Melanie Parker, SFWMD)

Dr. Melanie Parker reported recent heavy rains caused the Tidal Basin to experience the highest freshwater inflows to the IRL, while Lake Okeechobee's releases took place from January 21 to

April 14. The past few weeks have seen a slight decrease in salinity levels at all three monitoring sites, but they have remained within the optimal range since December 2022. As usual, the juvenile oyster (spat) recruitment rates were low from November 2022 to March 2023 but started increasing in April, indicating the beginning of the spawning season. Live oyster densities have been stable over the past two years, with an increase in densities from April 2022 to April 2023. Sincere gratitude to Lauren Hall of SJRWMD for sharing the seagrass maps and data. Since 2009, there has been an overall loss of 25% of seagrass in the SFWMD portion of the IRL, with a decrease of about 9% in acreage from 2019 to 2021. This month, SJRWMD will conduct a large-scale seagrass monitoring effort, dividing the southern IRL into six segments with about 30 randomly selected stations each. The measurements will include percent cover, canopy height, and water quality.

7. IRLNEP Management Conference Committee Reports

a. Management Board Report (Tom Carey)

Mr. Carey reported during the Management Board meeting held on May 9, 2023, that 37 members were present along with nine guests. Dr. Kai Rains delivered a presentation titled "Update on How Knowledge of Land Use Can Inform Water Quality Restoration in the IRL". The Management Board recommended adopting the One Lagoon Monitoring Plan, the Long-term Strategy for use of BIL Funds, and the FY 2024 Final Budget, which was approved by the Finance Sub-committee. Additionally, they approved the CAC's ranked list of Small Grant proposals and Resolution 2023-03. The meeting was productive, with Management Board members sharing dynamic opportunities currently taking place. It commenced at 10:17 a.m. and concluded at 12:34 p.m. Mr. Carey thanked the Management Board members for attending and participating.

b. STEM Advisory Committee (Dr. Chuck Jacoby)

Dr. Jacoby reported that the STEM Advisory Committee had received a similar presentation from Dr. Kai Rains regarding the connection between land use and water quality restoration in the IRL. The committee discussed the tool's potential of preserving wetlands in St. Lucie County and utilizing this tool throughout the lagoon. Additionally, there was a panel discussion on the topic of seagrass, where the importance of sharing both successes and failures was emphasized. The committee suggested forming a local task force to complement the statewide task force and recommended approval of the new business agenda items, including the One Lagoon Monitoring Plan, the long-term strategy for BIL Funds, and the FY 2024 Final Budget. The committee also approved the ranked list of Small Grant proposals from the CAC and agreed to provide additional funding to accept all proposals ranked at 70 or higher. Finally, Resolution 2023-03 was recommended.

c. Citizens' Advisory Committee (Kathy Hill)

Ms. Hill reported that the Citizens Advisory Committee met on May 4, 2023, to discuss the submitted proposals for Small Grants. The IRLNEP expresses its gratitude to the CAC members for their responsible handling of the Small Grant process, including reviewing and updating the RFP and scoring the submissions. Additionally, the CAC recommended the approval of the New Business agenda items.

8. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of IRL Council Board of Directors Meeting Minutes from February 10, 2023

b. Board of Directors Appointments to IRLNEP Management Conference:

New Appointments

- Keith Ramos, Project Leader for the Merritt Island NWR Complex, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to the Management Board
- Kris Kaufman, Restoration Center, Office of Habitat Conservation, NOAA Fisheries, to the STEM Advisory Committee.

Requested Action: Approve Consent Agenda.

MOTION WAS MADE BY STACEY HEATHERINGTON TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. SECONDED BY AARON WATKINS. MOTION PASSED.

9. Old Business

None

10. New Business

- a. One Lagoon Monitoring Plan Final Draft (EPA Concurrence Document) (Duane De Freese)
[One Lagoon Monitoring Plan Draft](#)

Dr. Duane De Freese expressed his gratitude to Dennis Hanisak, David Heuberger, and their team for their outstanding work in completing the contract project. The plan underwent a thorough peer review process, resulting in six valuable recommendations and the identification of gaps. The capability to update monitoring maps was also noted.

Requested Action: Motion to adopt the One Lagoon Monitoring Plan and authorize staff to submit the plan to EPA for review and certification. If revisions are requested by EPA, the IRL Council Board of Directors authorizes staff to make recommended changes and finalize the document.

MOTION WAS MADE BY JOSEPH EARMAN TO ACCEPT THE IRLNEP MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADOPT THE ONE LAGOON MONITORING PLAN AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO SUBMIT THE PLAN TO EPA FOR REVIEW AND CERTIFICATION. IF REVISIONS ARE REQUESTED BY EPA, THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZES STAFF TO MAKE RECOMMENDED CHANGES AND FINALIZE THE DOCUMENT. MOTION SECONDED BY STACEY HEATHERINGTON. MOTION PASSED.

- b. Long-term strategy for use of BIL Funds (EPA Required Document) (Duane De Freese)

Dr. Duane De Freese outlined the methods employed to create the Priority Communities classification for the IRL Watershed included in the strategy. These methods involved the use of various tools and documents, including detailed maps. The directed RFP is under development and it is anticipated to be issued in early 2024.

Requested Action: Motion to adopt the long-term strategy for use of BIL funds and authorize staff to submit the strategy to EPA for review and certification. The EPA deadline is on or before June 1, 2023. If revisions are requested by EPA, the IRL Council Board of Directors authorizes staff to make recommended changes, finalize the document, and resubmit to EPA.

MOTION WAS MADE BY STACEY HEATHERINGTON TO ADOPT THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR USE OF BIL FUNDS AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO SUBMIT THE STRATEGY TO EPA FOR REVIEW AND CERTIFICATION. THE EPA DEADLINE IS ON OR BEFORE JUNE 1, 2023. IF REVISIONS ARE REQUESTED BY EPA, THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZES STAFF TO MAKE RECOMMENDED CHANGES, FINALIZE THE DOCUMENT, AN RESUBMIT TO EPA. SECONDED BY JOSEPH EARMAN. MOTION PASSED.

c. FY 2024 Final Budget (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Dan Kolodny noted some minor modifications, including an increase in administrative services to accommodate the extra workload undertaken by Special Services District due to an uptick in IRLNEP staffing. SDS negotiated a higher interest rate on behalf of the IRL Council.

Requested Action: Review and adopt the Final Budget for FY 2024 by Resolution 2023-02, pursuant to Florida Statutes.

MOTION WAS MADE BY STACEY HEATHERINGTON TO REVIEW AND ADOPT THE FINAL BUDGET FOR FY 2024 BY RESOLUTION 2023-02, PURSUANT TO FLORIDA STATUTES. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY DOUG BOURNIQUE. MOTION PASSED.

d. Small Grants (Kathy Hill)

Ms. Kathy Hill shared that 19 proposals were submitted. Nine scored 70 or higher. One proposal eligible for an award was withdrawn; this allowed five proposals to be awarded within the budgeted amount. During the meeting, the funding of the three proposals that scored above 70 was discussed, as well as one proposal that scored 69.9. The CAC supported funding all four proposals and recommended them to the Board of Directors.

Requested Actions: Motion to accept IRLNEP Management Conference recommendations, approve the final ranked list of proposals, and fund the top proposals contingent and consistent with available funds and budgetary authority. Authorize staff to negotiate and enter into contract agreements with those applicants.

MOTION MADE BY JOSEPH EARMAN TO ACCEPT IRLNEP MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS, APPROVE THE FINAL RANKED LIST OF PROPOSALS, AND FUND THE TOP PROPOSALS CONTINGENT AND CONSISTENT WITH AVAILABLE FUNDS AND BUDGETARY AUTHORITY. AUTHORIZE STAFF TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO CONTRACT AGREEMENTS WITH THOSE APPLICANTS. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY ROB FELTNER. MOTION PASSED.

e. Resolution to support East Central Florida Regional Planning Council in seeking funding from the Military Installation Resilience Review Program. (Duane De Freese)

Dr. Duane De Freese has noted that support resolutions are not commonly employed. Given the extensive growth and advancements at the Kennedy Space Center, it is imperative to address the vulnerability of coastal infrastructure, as it directly affects the IRL. The resolution grants the express permission of the Board for the Executive Director to pursue discussions and offer input as resilience plans move forward.

Requested Action: Motion to adopt Resolution 2023-03, supporting ECFRPC's efforts to seek funding from the MIRRP and other coastal resilience initiatives.

MOTION WAS MADE BY DOUG BOURNIQUE TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2023-03, SUPPORTING ECFRPC'S EFFORTS TO SEEK FUNDING FROM THE MIRRP AND OTHER COASTAL RESILIENCE INITIATIVES. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY ROB FELTNER. MOTION PASSED.

11. IRLNEP Staff Reports:

a. Community Engagement Update (Kathy Hill)

Ms. Kathy Hill reported a significant increase in social media engagement thanks to the efforts of the three Community Engagement Coordinators. Brevard County has been ranked highly with cities with the most engagement, based on the metrics. Facebook followers are largely

individuals aged 45 and above, while Instagram followers are mostly under 45 years old.

b. Information Technology and Delivery Update (KJ Ayres-Guerra)

Ms. KJ Ayres-Guerra discussed the completed Maps & Database for Equity Plan to identify priority communities in the IRL watershed. A standard for publishing all Metadata has been established. Past Project Information has been organized and posted. The ArcGIS Online Data Hub has been successfully developed, and multiple datasets have been integrated. Future tasks will include Internal & External Project Map, an editorial in ECO – Environmental, Coastal & Offshore Magazine, and reorganizing the website.

c. IRL Project Update (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Daniel Kolodny reported that at the end of Quarter 2 of FY 2023 had 49 CCMP Projects/Activities in progress. Additionally, there was one CCMP Project pending, but no projects were completed during the quarter. Mr. Kolodny announced his recent completion of a TEDx event focused on seagrass recovery.

d. Executive Director Report (Duane De Freese)

Dr. Duane De Freese reported the EDC Space Coast feasibility study has gained significant momentum and support. The Florida Legislative budget has been released, and it includes funding requests for various projects aimed at improving the Indian River Lagoon. Ms. Kathy Hill and Mr. Dan Kolodny recently represented the IRLNEP in Washington, D.C. at the EPA Transformational Coastal Management Event. Ms. Hill delivered a presentation and participated in a panel discussion. Both the House and Senate Appropriation letters have been submitted with bipartisan support seeking funding for NEPs. Although the IRLNEP did not receive the NOAA funding grant, the proposal was ranked in the highest tier. An analysis of the project funding breakdown was presented, and it has been determined that future proposals should align with NOAA's traditional historic priorities, which focus on designated habitats.

12. IRL Council Member Reports

Kathy LaMartina, for SFWMD, reported that the C44 Reservoir and STA are close to completion and in the testing phase. Tours of this project are available. Ribbon cutting event was recently held for Taylor Creek dredging. SFWMD staff recently visited MRC in the hope of working together. Requests are welcome for presentations of the SFWMD Resiliency Plan.

Aaron Watkins reported on a successful Florida legislative session and acknowledged the efforts of the comprehensive Environmental Protection bills passed unanimously. House Bill 1379 and Senate 1632 supports the goals of the governor's executive order 23-06; this legislation specifically enhances protections for the Indian River Lagoon with funding aligned with BMAs and it expedites and dedicates funding to land conservation efforts.

Rob Feltner shared Virginia Barker's news that the city of Titusville has completed the Osprey Water Reclamation upgrade; it was mostly funded by the Brevard County Save our Indian River Lagoon. The pre-project concentrations of nitrogen were 13 milligrams per liter, and the post-project level was 3 milligrams per liter which is remarkable.

Joe Earman reported that the Jones Pier Conservation Area recently held the opening presentation. This property has a significant historical background. IRLNEP funds were used. The Jones homestead will become a museum in the future.

Jeff Brower reported that hurricane recovery is ongoing. The biorock project is progressing. Reports include water clarity in Mosquito Lagoon, and water quality data is being collected. The Southeast Regional Water reclamation facility has been upgraded to an advanced wastewater

treatment system. Indian Harbor Estates sanitary sewer retrofit will transfer 260 single-family homes. Urged members to view RioVation's website, a less expensive alternative to wastewater advanced septic systems. Encouraged expanding the wildlife corridor due to wetlands and watersheds water recharge areas.

Doug Bournique advised county commissioners and water management districts to acquire significant portions of the remaining agricultural land in the IRL region. The aim is to secure as much land as possible to prevent it from being developed into residential areas.

Stacy Heatherington recognized Martin County's Ecosystem Director John Maehl in attendance. Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM) will not take effect this spring. NOAA has initiated a formal consultation to investigate relationships between nutrient loading, red tide and impacts on sea turtles in the gulf. This is a positive thing. Gratitude was bestowed on all Martin County staff for their efforts on the LOSOM project. Septic to sewer work continues, and grants have been obtained. The bid for these projects has increased and additional grants will be sought. Funds had been received for the East Fork Creek water quality treatment. C 23/24 Stormwater Treatment Area is proceeding, looking for contracts to be issued.

Chris Dzadovsky stated that the removal of the wastewater treatment plant on South Beach is now underway. The North Beach septic to sewer program is close to completion. One HOA community must agree by a 60% margin to create an easement to place sewer; this is the last septic area. Other project considerations include Taylor Creek dredging, derelict vessel removal, erosion of the west bank and continuing with stormwater plans for development.

Glen Torcivia thanked Stacey Heatherington for the kind words said about Ruth Holmes, former Martin County attorney, Ms. Holms has a passion for the lagoon and will be working with the IRLNEP.

13. IRL Council – Next Meeting Announcement (Chris Dzadovsky, Chair)

The IRL Management Board meeting will be held on: Friday, August 11, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. at Sebastian City Hall, Council Chamber, 1225 Main Street, Sebastian, FL

14. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 p.m.

NOTE: If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes (2014).

Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in this workshop/meeting is asked to advise the agency at least 48 hours before the workshop/meeting by contacting: Erin Bergman at (314) 347-5854. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the agency using the Florida Relay Service, 1(800) 955-8771 (TDD) or 1(800) 955-8770 (Voice). For more information, you may contact: Erin Bergman, IRL Council, 1235 Main St, Sebastian, FL 32958, (314)347-5854, or by email at bergman@irlcouncil.org.