IRL COUNCIL
MANAGEMENT BOARD

Minutes from the meeting of

May 6, 2025

10:15 AM - 1:00 PM

Historic Sebastian Elementary School, 1235 Main Street, Sebastian, FL 32958

Remote Access: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89060418395

Member In-person Attendance: Terri Breeden, Tom Campenni, Tony Catanese, Amy Eason, Stu Glass, Carter Henne, Chuck Jacoby, George Jones, Chandler Keenan, Mike McCabe, Sherry McCorkle, Melissa Meisenburg, Jim Moir, Judy Orcutt, Beth Powell, Keith Ramos, Garry Ritter, Jennifer Thera, Laurilee Thompson, Laura Wilson

Member Online Attendance: Brian Benton, Jennifer DiMaio, Jake Fojtik, David Fuss, Kelli McGee, Matthew Mitts, Robert Musser, Kevin Shropshire, Jennifer Spain, James Sullivan, Janet Zimmerman

Guest In-person Attendance: Tess Sailor-Tynes, Mike Johannsen, John Than, Mike McMunigal, Nick Linehan, Lauren Hall, Moria Homann, Tiffany Simpson, Diana Turner, Thomas Heller, Tyler Provoncha, Ed Garland

Guest Online Attendance: Mariana Payne, Krista McCoy, Caitlin Butler, Pete Egert, Richard Mulroy

1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** (Beth Powell, Chair)

   Ms. Powell called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. and led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Introductions** (Beth Powell, Chair)

   Ms. Powell led the committee in the introductions.

3. **Agenda Revisions** (Beth Powell, Chair)

   No agenda revisions were made.

4. **Minutes Approval** (Beth Powell, Chair)

   Requested Action: Approval of Minutes from Management Board meeting on February 11, 2025.

   MOTION WAS MADE BY TOM CAMPENNI TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING ON FEBRUARY 11, 2025. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY TONY CATANESE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. **Finance Sub-Committee Report** (Stu Glass, Chair, Finance Sub-Committee)

   Mr. Stu Glass reviewed the actions of the Finance Sub-Committee.

Requested Action: Accept Committee Report.

MOTION WAS MADE BY TOM CAMPENNI TO ACCEPT THE COMMITTEE REPORT. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY JIM MOIR. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Public Comment

No public comment was made.

7. Water Quality Reports

a. Northern IRL (Lauren Hall, SJRWMD)

Ms. Lauren Hall, SJRWMD, presented the rainfall data from February through April, noting that it was very dry and relatively similar to last year's amounts. The location of the monitoring sondes was reviewed, and the data was reported to be collected hourly and made available on the St. Johns River Water Management District website. Water depths have remained stable. Salinity has increased due to dry conditions, and water temperature is rising. The Banana River and Cocoa sites showed dips in dissolved oxygen but quickly recovered. Turbidity spikes were attributed to wind events. Fluorescent Dissolved Organic Matter (FDOM) fluctuated with rain events and tended to be higher in areas of freshwater tributaries; lack of rain caused declines. Chlorophyll-*a* showed an increase, especially in southern Mosquito Lagoon, where Aureoumbra has been reported. Water clarity from February to April declined in the northern IRL.

Lagoon mapping has begun; the 2025 mapping will include Caulerpa throughout the lagoon. *C. prolifera, C. racemosa, C. cupressoides, C. sertularioides* and C. *verticillate* have all been recorded. A new record of finding *Caulerpa ashmeadii* had not been reported; according to the World Register of Marine Species, it has not been reported on the east coast of Florida. This species is being investigated; it is mentioned in a document from the 1980s. A video was shown of a *C. prolifera* bed with the sea slug, *Elysia subornata* and egg sacs. The slug extracts the chlorophyll from the leaves, causing plant decline. The preliminary seed distribution data is being reviewed. *Halodule wrightii* and *Ruppia maritima* are present throughout the lagoon, with the least amount in the Cocoa to Melbourne area.

b. Southern IRL (Sherry McCorkle, SFWMD)

Sherry McCorkle, SFWMD, reported that the data was through April 27, and weekly averages cover April 21-27. Lake Okeechobee Recovery Operations to the SLE ended on March 29, 2025. Releases to the estuary were stopped at the end of March due to drier weather patterns and to allow salinities to increase before the oyster spawning season. Total inflow into the SLE averaged 81 cfs, all coming from the Tidal Basin. Due to drier conditions, salinities have been higher at all sites over the past month. Salinity at HR1 in the North Fork was 16 on the surface and 19 on the bottom. At the US1 Bridge, salinity was approximately 22 on the surface and bottom; at the A1A Bridge, salinity was 30 on the surface and 32 on the bottom. Salinities at HR1 and US1 were in the optimal range of 10-25 for oysters. Salinity at A1A was in the upper stressful range (>25) for oysters. Salinities have remained within the optimal range for oysters at US 1.

In 2024, spawning and larval settlement began in late March/early April (1.3 spat/shell) and continued at moderate rates through June. April data indicates that the new spawning season hasn't started as of early March, but spat settlement rates are expected to increase in the next month. SLE and areas in the Loxahatchee Estuary both increased in acreage by 4% and 8%, respectively.

Seagrass survey indicates that all segments, starting at the St. Lucie County line, are dominated by shoal grass *(Halodule wrightii*), except for Hobe Sound, which is dominated by paddle grass (*Halophila decipiens*). Wet season percent cover increased in all segments from 2023 to 2024, except for the area above the SLE. The most significant increase in percent cover occurred from the Fort Pierce Inlet to the Martin County line in 2024. This was due to an increase in shoal grass (*Halodule wrightii*) cover from approximately 3% in 2023 to 16% in 2024.

8. **Presentation**

Update on the IRLNEP Seagrass Nursery Network and Planning for Future Needs

An update on the IRLNEP Seagrass Nursery Network and planning for future needs was presented by Tyler Provoncha, Conservation Manager at Restore Our Shores, Brevard Zoo; Krista McCoy, Director of Conservation and Research at Florida Oceanographic Society; Richard Mulroy, Research Technician at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute; Tess Sailor-Tynes, Conservation Science Coordinator at Marine Discovery Center; and John Than, Director of Marine Aquaculture at Sea & Shoreline. Each representative provided an update on the status, progress made, and future plans for the seagrass nurseries funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

9. Old Business

None

10. New Business

a. Independent Audit Report for Fiscal Year 2024 (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny gave an overview of the audit results. Three findings that dealt with federal grant controls were reported, as these controls had not been in place for the majority of the fiscal year. Two of these have been corrected. The third is being implemented

Required Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors accept the IRLNEP Management Conference recommendation to adopt the audit report.

MOTION WAS MADE BY TOM CAMPENNI TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE IRLNEP MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATION TO ADOPT THE AUDIT REPORT. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY STU GLASS. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Fiscal Year 2025 Priority Communities RFP (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny reviewed the scoring and ranking of the Priority Communities proposals. Ten Letters of Intent were submitted, and nine were invited to submit a full proposal. Six proposals were submitted for review. Five proposals were scored above the 75% eligibility threshold. Staff suggested two options for the allocation of the remaining funds.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors 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 MADE BY TOM CAMPENNI TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS 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, WITH THE BALANCE OF FUNDS RECOMMENDED TO BE APPLIED TO THE PURCHASE OF THE IRLNEP REPLACEMENT VESSEL, WITH ANY REMAINING BALANCE TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE SEAGRASS NURSERY NETWORK. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY STU GLASS. MOTION PASSED. CARTER HENNE AND JUDY ORCUTT RECUSED.

c. 2025 Small Grants (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny revealed the scores and rankings of the Small Grants proposals, noting that the Citizens' Advisory Committee recommended fully funding the proposals ranked sixth and seventh, which will require an additional $7409.51 to be added to fully fund all recommended projects.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors 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 MADE BY TOM CAMPENNI TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE 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 AND TO FULLY FUND THE SIXTH-RANKED PROPOSAL AND THE SEVENTH-RANKED PROPOSAL. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY LAURILEE THOMPSON. MOTION PASSED. GEORGE JONES, JIM MOIR, LAURILEE THOMPSON AND LAURA WILSON RECUSED.

d. Fiscal Year 2026 Final Budget (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny reviewed the changes in budget allocations.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors accept the IRLNEP Management Conference recommendation to approve the Fiscal Year 2026 Final Budget by Resolution 2025-02, pursuant to Florida Statutes.

MOTION WAS MADE BY STU GLASS TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE BUDGET BY RESOLUTION 2025-02, PURSUANT TO FLORIDA STATUTES. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY TOM CAMPENNI. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

11. IRLNEP Staff Reports

a. Community Engagement Update (Kathy Hill)

Ms. Hill noted the top social media posts and the reach. The highlights of the three Community Engagement Coordinators were reviewed, and the second quarter engagement statistics were presented.

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

Ms. Ayres-Guerra conducted a review of the completed tasks for the second quarter. Creating a portal for IRLNEP – NOAA Monitoring Forms topped the list.

c. IRL Project Update (Dan Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny reported that 55 CCMP projects and activities are currently in progress. Two projects were completed in the second quarter: "Stella Maris Environmental Research: Stella's

Eco Stars Outreach" and "Surfrider Foundation Space Coast: Ballard Park, Native Plants Buffer Gardens."

d. Executive Director Report (Kathy Hill)

Ms. Hill provided a report on behalf of Dr. De Freese. A summary of the activities undertaken by the Executive Director was included in the meeting packets. The highlights from February to May, along with accompanying photographs, were reviewed.

12. **Final Comments** (Management Board, Staff, Public)

Tiffany Simpson announced three BMAPP meetings: Banana River at Cocoa UF/IFAS, May 7th at 9:00 am; North IRL at Titusville City Hall Council Chambers, May 8th at 9:00 am; Central IRL at Sebastian City Hall Council Chambers, May 7th at 2:00 pm.

13. Next Meeting

Management Board meeting: August 19, 2025, at 10:15 a.m.
Historic Sebastian Elementary School, 1235 Main Street, Sebastian, FL 32958

14. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:28 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 at 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.