IRL COUNCIL
MANAGEMENT BOARD

Minutes from the meeting of

August 19, 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, Jeffrey Collins, Melisa Diolosa, Amy Eason, Stu Glass, James Gray, Chuck Jacoby, Mike Johannsen, George Jones, John Leslie, Mike McCabe, Jim Moir, Judy Orcutt, Kevin Shropshire, Laurilee Thompson, Charles Vogt, III, Laura Wilson

Member Online Attendance: Brian Benton, Jennifer DiMaio, Jake Fojtik, Dave Fuss, Keenan Chandler, Dale Ketchum, Kelli McGee, Melissa Meisenburg, Robert Musser, Keith Ramos, Jennifer Spain, James Sullivan, Jennifer Thera, Janet Zimmerman

Guest In-person Attendance: Caitlin Butler, Lauren Hall, Gary Framarlin, James Beams, Josh Mills, Mariana Payne

Guest Online Attendance: Tiffany Simpson, A. Klaproth, Cass Ponds, Mike McGungial, Tom Heller, Pete Eggert, Alex Brission

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1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** (Terri Breeden, Vice Chair)

   Ms. Terri Breeden called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

2. **Introductions** (Terri Breeden, Vice Chair)

   Ms. Breeden led the group in introductions.

3. **Agenda Revisions** (Terri Breeden, Vice Chair)

   No agenda revisions were made.

4. **Minutes Approval** (Terri Breeden, Vice Chair)

   Requested Action: Approval of Minutes from Management Board meeting on May 6, 2025.

   MOTION WAS MADE BY TONY CATANESE TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES FROM MAY 6, 2025. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY TOM CAMPENNI. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

   Mr. Glass presented the Committee Report for acceptance.

   MOTION WAS MADE BY TOM CAMPENNI TO ACCEPT THE FINANCE SUB-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 May through July, noting that the May total was double that of last year. June was half the previous amount, and July was slightly more; amounts varied across the watershed. The locations of the continuous monitoring sondes were identified, and collected data was made available on the St. Johns River Water Management District website. Water depths remained stable across all stations. Salinity varied between sites; a few sites experienced increased salinity, while others saw a slight decrease, but all remained above 20 parts per thousand. Water temperature had increased. As the temperature rises, it becomes increasingly difficult for water to retain dissolved oxygen. Significant fluctuations in dissolved oxygen levels occurred throughout the area, particularly in the Banana River, with dips over the past week below the hypoxia threshold of two milligrams per liter. Turbidity conditions followed normal patterns, with higher levels observed in the shallow Mosquito Lagoon. Fluorescent Dissolved Organic Matter (FDOM) exhibited greater fluctuations in areas with freshwater inputs. It was noted that phytoplankton blooms had occurred in the past three months. The Mosquito Lagoon experienced a consistent phytoplankton bloom of *Aureoumbra* and *Pyrodinium bahamense* throughout. Bloom activity had occurred in other lagoon locations due to the presence of the *Pyrodinium* species, which appears annually at this time of year. Rainfall pulses provided nutrients that the blooms utilized. Water clarity declined in the northern Indian River Lagoon (IRL).

Seagrass presence was discussed; northern IRL has remained stable. The central IRL continues to struggle with recovery. Sites south of the Fort Pierce Inlet showed noticeable growth. Species included *Syringodium filiforme* and *Thalassia testudinum.* Monitoring continues for *Caulerpa ashmeadii*, with the collection of nutrient data and collaboration with partners to understand the nutrient cycling associated with this species. The seed distribution study will continue for an additional year. *Ruppia maritima* and *Halodule wrightii* were noted; however, the central IRL did not have *H. wrightii* seeds present, only *R. maritima.*

b. Southern IRL (Sherry McCorkle, SFWMD)

Ms. Terri Breeden read the report for SFWMD, reported that the data covered was through August 10, 2025, and the weekly averages spanned from August 4 to August 10. Freshwater inflow data showed that there had been no releases from Lake Okeechobee since March 29. Over the most recent 7-day period, total inflow into the St. Lucie Estuary (SLE) averaged 898 cfs, with much of the flow originating from the Tidal Basin.

Salinity monitoring at HR1, US1 Bridge, and A1A Bridge revealed increased salinity levels at all locations. Specifically, HR1 recorded surface salinity at eight and bottom salinity at 14. The US1 Bridge had a surface salinity of 15 and a bottom salinity of 18. The A1A Bridge displayed the highest readings, with surface salinity at 24 and bottom salinity at 28. The average daily salinity levels had risen due to drier conditions. At the US1 site, salinities briefly reached the stressful range for oysters in mid-July but quickly rebounded and remained within the optimal range.

Oyster recruitment data at the Rio station shows that the 2025 spawning season began later than in previous years, with the first spat detected in May. By June, the spawning season was in

full swing, with an average recruitment rate of 17.7 spat per shell, the highest rate recorded in the SLE over the past two years.

Seagrass surveys in June mapped percent cover across the Southern Indian River Lagoon. The results indicated that seagrass cover increased in areas north of the St. Lucie Inlet, including Fort Pierce, Jensen Beach, and the lower portion of the SLE. However, cover decreased in southern regions such as Hobe Sound, Jupiter Sound, and Loxahatchee Estuary. *Halodule wrightii* was present at most sites, while *Halophila ovalis* dominated in the SLE, and *Halophila decipiens* was most prevalent in Hobe Sound.

8. Old Business

None

9. New Business

a. Request for Qualifications (RFQ) NOAA Professional Engineering Services (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny explained that NOAA personnel emphasized the need for construction drawings for each of the 15 habitat sites and allocated the necessary funding. It was determined that a Request for Qualifications was required under the Competitive Consultants Negotiation Act. The scope of services was posted, resulting in four responses. Tetra Tech and Dredging and Marine Consultants ranked above the funding threshold. Additionally, it was noted that Management Conference members can piggyback if the scope of services matches their needs.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors accept Management Conference recommendation to identify the most qualified Engineering Services contractor(s); authorize staff to enter into negotiations and contract with firm(s) selected.

MOTION WAS MADE BY MIKE MCCABE TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATION TO IDENTIFY THE MOST QUALIFIED ENGINEERING SERVICES CONTRACTOR(S); AUTHORIZE STAFF TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS AND CONTRACT WITH FIRM(S) SELECTED. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY TOM CAMPENNI. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Fiscal Year 2025 Final Budget Amendment (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny reported that the change involves the funds in reserve for Fiscal Year 2026.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors accept the IRLNEP Management Conference recommendation to approve the Fiscal Year 2025 Final Budget Amendment by Resolution 2025-03, pursuant to Florida Statutes.

MOTION WAS MADE BY TOM CAMPENNI TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE IRLNEP MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 FINAL BUDGET AMENDMENT BY RESOLUTION 2025-03. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY JIM MOIR. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

c. Fiscal Year 2026 Final Budget Amendment (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny discussed the budget changes, noting that any unencumbered funds were carried forward to the fund balance and that a 1% correction was applied to one staff member's compensation. The updates also include a lease for a vessel storage facility and an increase in insurance costs.

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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 Amendment by Resolution 2025-04, pursuant to Florida Statutes.

MOTION WAS MADE BY TOM CAMPENNI TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE IRLNEP MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 FINAL BUDGET AMENDMENT BY RESOLUTION 2025-04. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY JAMES GRAY. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

d. Fiscal Year 2027 Request for Proposals (RFPs) (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny explained that, due to funding uncertainties for Fiscal Year 2027, a cautious approach to funding each grant category is being proposed. This will help manage grantees' expectations and allow the Council to explore opportunities and options if federal funding is not decreased.

Required Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors accept the IRLNEP Management Conference recommendation to authorize staff to develop and release RFPs for FY 2027, arrange Management conference review and ranking of proposals, with return to the Management Conference for funding approval.

MOTION WAS MADE BY TOM CAMPENNI TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE IRLNEP MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATION TO AUTHORIZE STAFF TO DEVELOP AND RELEASE RFPS FOR FY 2027, ARRANGE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE REVIEW AND RANKING OF PROPOSALS, WITH RETURN TO THE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR FUNDING APPROVAL. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY TONY CATANESE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

e. Habitat Restoration Plan (Duane De Freese)

Dr. De Freese clarified that the Habitat Restoration plan is an EPA concurrence document. The 36-page draft will stay on the website because scientific information is constantly evolving.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors approve the IRLNEP Management Conference recommendation to approve the Habitat Restoration Plan and authorize staff to submit the plan to EPA.

MOTION WAS MADE BY TONY CATANESE TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE THE IRLNEP MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE THE HABITAT RESTORATION PLAN AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO SUBMIT THE PLAN TO EPA. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY JIM MOIR. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

f. Fiscal Year 2026 Legislative Priorities (Duane De Freese)

Dr. De Freese highlighted legislative priorities at both the federal and state levels and asked the Board for guidance on their collective priorities. He also requested members to notify him if a legislative project is in progress in case a response request is received.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors accept the IRLNEP Management Conference recommendation to review and adopt IRL Council Legislative Priorities for 2026 and authorize the Executive Director to represent the IRL Council in legislative policy discussions and appropriations.

MOTION WAS MADE BY JAMES GRAY TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF

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DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE IRLNEP MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATION TO REVIEW AND ADOPT IRL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2026 AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO REPRESENT THE IRL COUNCIL IN LEGISLATIVE POLICY DISCUSSIONS AND APPROPRIATIONS. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY KEVIN SHROPSHIRE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. **IRLNEP Staff Reports**

a. Community Engagement Update (Kathy Hill)

Ms. Hill highlighted the top social media posts and their reach. The accomplishments of the three Community Engagement Coordinators were reviewed, and the third-quarter engagement statistics were shared. The new One Lagoon website was also presented.

b. Information Technology and Data Science Update (Kathy Hill)

Ms. Hill reported on behalf of K.J. Ayres-Guerra. Congratulations on the birth of Dylan Guerra; both mother and son are doing well. A review of completed tasks was conducted, and K.J. was also recognized as Volunteer of the Year by the Master Gardener AgriLife Extension.

c. IRL Project Update (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny reported that 47 CCMP projects and activities are currently underway. Eight projects were completed in the third quarter: Brevard Zoo: *Lagoon Quest,* Marine Discovery Center: *Project Plankton,* SWIRL - *Analysis of Contaminating Organic Compounds in IRL Stormwater,* UCF: *Atmospheric Deposition in the IRL*, IRLNEP: *Restoration Support Vessel*, FAU: *Building Seagrass Capacity through Infrastructure Investments Year 1*, FAU: *Building Seagrass Capacity through Infrastructure Investments Year 2,* and City of Port St. Lucie*: Septic to Sewer Conversions to Reduce Nitrogen Pollution in Known Hotspots in the City of PSL*.
It was also announced that Mr. Kolodny would participate in the Sea Trout Symposium in Daytona.

d. Executive Director Report (Duane De Freese)

Dr. De Freese announced that the OIG audit is complete and awaiting public release. Non-IRLNEP Funding opportunities links can be found in the Board of Directors' packet on the OneLagoon.org website. Thanks were given to Dan Kolodny for the amount of work he completed for the OIG audit.

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

Duane De Freese thanked Laurilee Thompson, Keith Winsten, and Kelly McGee for their time and efforts as caregivers during his cancer treatment.

Melissa Diolosa, SJRWMD, announced the completion of the M1 Crane Creek Canal project, which redirects water away from the lagoon and back into the St. Johns River. The C10 Water Management project, which aims to redivert water from the lagoon to the river, is currently in the design phase. The updated 2017 Feasibility Study has identified two projects, and water quality will be monitored for one year to determine whether to proceed with these projects.

Mike McCabe, Melbourne-Tillman WCD, attended a conference in New Hampshire and gained insights into pollutants and aquatic vegetation.

Heather Stapleton, Central Community Engagement Coordinator, announced that the International Coastal Cleanup will take place throughout the watershed on September 20th. The IRLNEP will host the cleanup at Riverview Park in Sebastian.

Terri Breeden, Brevard County National Resources Management Office, announced the SORIL grant application is open, and installation of the largest baffle box in the U.S. is underway in Melbourne.

12. Next Meeting

Management Board meeting: November 4, 2025, at 10:15 a.m.
Historic Sebastian Elementary School, 1235 Main Street, Sebastian, FL 32958

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

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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.