IRL COUNCIL
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This meeting is open to the public

May 1, 2025

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

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

Remote Access: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87054557595

The order of items appearing on the agenda is subject to change during the meeting and is at the presiding officer's discretion. Anyone wishing to speak on any item is requested to complete a speaker's card.

1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** (Frank Catino, Chair)
2. **Introductions** (Frank Catino, Chair)
3. **Agenda Revisions** (Frank Catino, Chair)
   Note any known changes and inquire if any members have suggested revisions.
4. **Minutes Approval** (Frank Catino, Chair) **Minutes**

   Requested Action: Approval of Minutes from CAC meeting on February 13, 2025.
5. **Public Comment**
6. **Presentation**

   My Plastic Diet

   Heather Stapleton, Central Community Engagement Coordinator for the IRLNEP
7. **Old Business**

   None
8. **New Business** **Audit**

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

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

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

   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.

c. 2025 Small Grants (Daniel Kolodny) **Small Grants**

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.

d. Fiscal Year 2026 Final Budget (Daniel Kolodny) **Final Budget**

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.

9. IRLNEP Staff Reports

a. Community Engagement Update (Kathy Hill)
b. Information Technology and Data Science Update (KJ Ayres-Guerra)
c. IRL Project Update (Daniel Kolodny)
d. Executive Director Report (Kathy Hill) **Exe Dir Report**

10. Final Comments (Committee, Staff, Public)

11. Next Meeting

Citizens' Advisory Committee meeting: August 21, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.
Historic Sebastian Elementary School, 1235 Main Street, Sebastian, FL 32958

12. Adjourn

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.

IRL COUNCIL
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes from the meeting of

February 13, 2025

1:00 PM

Historic Sebastian Elementary School, 1235 Main Street Sebastian, FL 32958
Remote Access: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87054557595

Member In-person Attendance: Christine Bamberger, Greg Braun, Frank Brownell, Frank Catino, Thomas Heller, Tess Sailor-Tynes

Member Online Attendance: Nikie Munroe, Doug Patterson, Linda Roberts, Suzanne Scheiber, Steven Schlitt

Guest In-person Attendance: Olivia Redding, Kendra Bergman

Guest Online Attendance: None

1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** (Frank Catino, Chair)

   Captain Catino called the meeting to order at 1:02 P.M. and led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Introduction** (Frank Catino, Chair)

   Captain Catino led the group in introductions.

3. **Election of Officers** (Kathy Hill)

   It was noted that the attendance did not meet the threshold for quorum, this topic was held until attendance increased.

   Ms. Hill presented the slate of candidates, Frank Catino, Chair, and Tess Sailor-Tynes, Vice Chair. The floor was open for other nominees.

   Requested Action: Motion to elect nominated Chair and Vice Chair for Calendar Year 2025.

   MOTION WAS MADE BY FRANK BROWNELL TO ELECT FRANK CATI NO AS CHAIR. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY TESS SAILOR-TYNES. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
   MOTION WAS MADE BY FRANK CATINO TO ELECT TESS SAILOR-TYNES AS VICE CHAIR. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY GREG BRAUN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **Agenda Revisions** (Frank Catino, Chair)

   Move the Election of Officers later in the meeting once quorum is reached.

   MOTION WAS MADE BY FRANK BROWNELL TO MOVE THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS LATER IN THE MEETING ONCE QUORUM IS REACHED. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY THOMAS HELLER. PASSED BY CONSENSUS.

5. **Approval of Minutes** (Frank Catino, Chair)

Minutes from the Citizens Advisory Committee on November 14, 2025

Requested Action: Approve Minutes from the CAC Meeting on November 14, 2025.

MOTION WAS MADE BY GREG BRAUN TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 14, 2025. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY FRANK BROWNELL. MOTION APPROVED BY CONSENSUS.

6. **Public Comments** (Frank Catino, Chair)

   No public comments were made.

7. **Presentation**

   Let's Tackle Fishing Line Debris

   Olivia Redding, the Rescue and Research Coordinator at Coastal Connections, presented on "Let's Tackle Fishing Line Debris." The Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program is a statewide initiative managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, while Coastal Connections, Inc. focuses specifically on Indian River County. The presentation highlighted the environmental impacts on wildlife and the volunteer efforts in collection and sorting. Collection tubes are placed throughout the county along the lagoon and beach. The monofilament is sorted for recycling, and the fishing tackle is donated to children's programs. Data is collected and reported regularly. Additional opportunities for recycling and reuse of the braided line are needed.

8. **Old Business**

   None

9. **New Business**

   a. Fiscal Year 2026 Water Quality Restoration RFP (Daniel Kolodny)

      Mr. Kolodny presented the scoring and ranking Water Quality Restoration proposals. Two of the three proposals were deemed eligible, with the total funding amount applied to the top proposal.

      Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors accept the IRLNEP Citizens' Advisory Committee recommendations and approve the final ranked list of FY 2026 Water Quality Restoration proposals; fund the top proposals contingent and consistent with available funds and budgetary authority; and authorize staff to negotiate and enter into contracts with those applicants.

      MOTION WAS MADE BY THOMAS HELLER TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE IRLNEP CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND APPROVE THE FINAL RANKED LIST OF FY 2026 WATER QUALITY RESTORATION PROPOSALS; FUND THE TOP PROPOSALS CONTINGENT AND CONSISTENT WITH AVAILABLE FUNDS AND BUDGETARY AUTHORITY; AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO CONTRACTS WITH THOSE APPLICANTS. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY FRANK BROWNELL. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

   b. Fiscal Year 2026 Habitat Restoration RFP (Daniel Kolodny)

      Mr. Kolodny presented the scoring and ranking of the two Habitat Restoration proposals. Both were deemed eligible, and both met the funding threshold.

DRAFT

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors accept the IRLNEP Citizens' Advisory Committee recommendations and approve the final ranked list of FY 2026 Habitat Restoration proposals; fund the top proposals contingent and consistent with available funds and budgetary authority; and authorize staff to negotiate and enter into contracts with those applicants.

MOTION WAS MADE BY FRANK BROWNELL TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE IRLNEP CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND APPROVE THE FINAL RANKED LIST OF FY 2026 HABITAT RESTORATION PROPOSALS; FUND THE TOP PROPOSALS CONTINGENT AND CONSISTENT WITH AVAILABLE FUNDS AND BUDGETARY AUTHORITY; AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO CONTRACTS WITH THOSE APPLICANTS. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY SUZANNE SCHEIBER. MOTION PASSED. THOMAS HELLER ABSTAINED.

c. Fiscal Year 2026 Community-Based Restoration RFP (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny presented the scoring and ranking of the Community-Based Restoration proposals. One of the two proposals was deemed eligible and met the funding threshold.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors accept the IRLNEP Citizens' Advisory Committee recommendations and approve the final ranked list of FY 2026 Community-Based Restoration proposals; fund the top proposals contingent and consistent with available funds and budgetary authority; and authorize staff to negotiate and enter into contracts with those applicants.

MOTION WAS MADE BY THOMAS HELLER TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE IRLNEP CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND APPROVE THE FINAL RANKED LIST OF FY 2026 COMMUNITY-BASED RESTORATION PROPOSALS; FUND THE TOP PROPOSALS CONTINGENT AND CONSISTENT WITH AVAILABLE FUNDS AND BUDGETARY AUTHORITY; AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO CONTRACTS WITH THOSE APPLICANTS. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY FRANK BROWNELL. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

d. Fiscal Year 2026 Science and Innovation RFP (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny presented the scoring and ranking of the four Science and Innovation proposals. Two proposals were deemed eligible and met the funding threshold; the remaining Section 320 funds cannot be transferred to the reserve fund.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors accept the IRLNEP Citizens Advisory Committee recommendations and approve the final ranked list of FY 2026 Science and Innovation proposals; fund the top proposals contingent and consistent with available funds and budgetary authority; and authorize staff to negotiate and enter into contracts with those applicants.

MOTION WAS MADE BY TESS SAILOR-TYNES TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE IRLNEP CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND APPROVE THE FINAL RANKED LIST OF FY 2026 SCIENCE AND INNOVATION PROPOSALS; FUND THE TOP PROPOSALS CONTINGENT AND CONSISTENT WITH AVAILABLE FUNDS AND BUDGETARY AUTHORITY; AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO CONTRACTS WITH THOSE APPLICANTS. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY FRANK BROWNELL. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

e. Fiscal Year 2026 Tentative Budget (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny reviewed the Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2026.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors review and adopt the tentative budget for FY 2026 by Resolution 2025-01, pursuant to Florida Statutes.

MOTION WAS MADE BY TESS SAILOR-TYNES TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS REVIEW AND ADOPT THE TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR FY 2026 BY RESOLUTION 2025-01, PURSUANT TO FLORIDA STATUTES. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY FRANK BROWNELL. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

f. Fiscal Year 2026 EPA Workplan (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny explained the need to complete this item in a timely manner.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors authorize staff to finalize and submit the FY 2025 EPA Workplan by June 1, 2025.

MOTION WAS MADE BY GREG BRAUN TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZE STAFF TO FINALIZE AND SUBMIT THE FY 2025 EPA WORKPLAN BY JUNE 1, 2025. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY FRANK BROWNELL. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

g. Fiscal Year 2026 EPA BIL Workplan (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny explained the need to complete this item.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors authorize staff to develop and submit the FY 2026 EPA BIL Workplan to EPA.

MOTION WAS MADE BY THOMAS HELLER TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZE STAFF TO DEVELOP AND SUBMIT THE FY 2026 EPA BIL WORKPLAN TO EPA. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY TESS SAILOR-TYNES. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

h. Invitation to Bid 2024-01: One 2025 Tidewater 2210 Carolina Bay Boat with motor and trailer

Mr. Kolodny explained this item is a FY 2023 budgetary line item.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors authorize staff to enter into negotiations and contracting with the lowest bidder in accordance with established procurement procedures.

MOTION WAS MADE BY FRANK BROWNELL TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZE STAFF TO RAISE BUDGET AND ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS AND CONTRACTING WITH THE LOWEST BIDDER IN ACCORDANCE WITH ESTABLISHED PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY TESS SAILOR-TYNES. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. IRLNEP Staff Reports

a. Engagement Report (Kathy Hill)

Ms. Hill noted that the top social media post was "muck," which reached a broader audience than other posts. The highlights from the three Community Engagement Coordinators were reviewed, and the first quarter engagement statistics were disclosed.

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

Ms. Ayres-Guerra outlined the tasks completed in the first quarter and emphasized several items to be addressed in FY 2025.

c. IRL Project Update (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Kolodny reported that 57 CCMP projects and activities are currently in progress, while no projects or activities were completed during the first quarter.

d. Executive Director Report (Duane De Freese)

Dr. De Freese provided an update on the current status of federal funding and submitted a summary of activities in the Agenda Package that outlined upcoming scheduled activities.

11. Final Comments (Committee, Staff, Public)

Erin Bergman invited all members to participate in the Small Grant review process, materials will be sent in March.

12. Next Meeting

Thursday, May 1, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.
Historic Sebastian Elementary School, 1235 Main Street, Sebastian, FL 32958

13. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:52 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).

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Agenda Return

The Audit information is in draft.

The information will be presented in the Board of Directors packet posted on the website on Friday: OneLagoon.org

Agenda Return

CATEGORY 5: PRIORITY COMMUNITIES										Funding Amount	Category Total Remaining
Rank	**Applicant**	**Project**	**Requested Funding**	**Cost Share Match**	**Match %**	**Total Project Cost**	**Score**	**Percentage**	**Eligible (Above 75%) ?**		**$1,180,400.00**
1	Education Foundation of St. Lucie County	Marine & Oceanographic Academy (MOA) Discovery Magnet at Frances K Sweet	$200,000	$131,800	39.6%	$331,800	123.6	88%	Y	$200,000	$980,400
2	Brevard Zoo	Empowering High School Students in Priority Communities to Restore Vital Indian River Lagoon Habitats	$79,279	$12,478	13.6%	$91,757	119.6	85%	Y	$79,279	$901,121
3	Boys and Girls Clubof St. Lucie county	Indian River Lagoon Defenders	$22,177	$9,026	29.0%	$31,203	116.8	83%	Y	$22,177	$878,944
4	Clean Water Coalition of Indian River County	Assisting Priority Area Homeowners in Area 11 of the City of Vero Beach Utility Service Area	$255,000	$458,450	64.0%	$713,450	114.0	81%	Y	$255,000	$623,944
5	Little Growers, Inc.	Indian River Lagoon Resilience and Restoration Project	$267,050	$332,508	55.5%	$599,558	109.9	79%	Y	$267,050	$356,894
6	The PEACE Project	Coastal Restoration of All Shorelines and Beaches	$350,000	$72,470	17.2%	$422,470	94.0	67%	N	$0	$356,894

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Project Title: Marine & Oceanographic Academy (MOA) Discovery Magnet at Frances K Sweet

Lead Organization and Partners: St. Lucie County Education Foundation, Thomas Jones, President SLEF, 9461 Brandywine Lane, Port St. Lucie, Fl 34986, 772-429-5507, thom.jones@efslc.org, www.efslc.org
St. Lucie Public Schools, Frances K. Sweet Elementary School, FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute.

Key CCMP Vital Sign(s) Addressed: Citizen Engagement and Education, Trash-Free Waters, Distinctive Lagoon Communities, Spoil Islands

Funding Amount Requested from IRLNEP: $200,000
Total Project Cost: $331,800

Project Description:

The Marine & Oceanographic Academy (MOA) Discovery Magnet at Frances K. Sweet Elementary (FKS) is designed to educate, engage, and empower students and their families in the restoration and management of the Indian River Lagoon (IRL). Through a hands-on, science-based curriculum, interactive lab experiences, and immersive field studies, the program will cultivate a new generation of informed environmental stewards from priority communities.

The program will establish the MOA Discovery Lab, an interactive learning space featuring touch tanks, microscopes, and water quality testing equipment. Students will participate in grade-specific field experiences, including boat tours, seining, and citizen science projects where they will collect and analyze real-time data on the lagoon's health.

Community engagement is a key component, with students leading education and restoration initiatives, including community clean-ups, habitat restoration efforts, and conservation awareness campaigns. The MOA Discovery Student Ambassador Group will encourage students to take on leadership roles in promoting Lagoon-Friendly™ behaviors.

This program aligns with IRLNEP goals to report on the lagoon's needs, engage citizens in its restoration, and rebuild the community-lagoon connection. With a focus on long-term behavior change and advocacy, the project will ensure that students, families, and the wider community become active participants in protecting and restoring the IRL.

Key Outputs (Deliverables):

- MOA Discovery Lab Creation – Establish a marine science lab with touch tanks, microscopes, water quality testing equipment, educational resources and inquiry-driven/hands-on activities for all ages.
- Hands-On STEM Curriculum – Implement a grade-specific, lagoon-focused curriculum aligned with Florida State Science Standards for FKS students, in partnership with FAU Harbor Branch experts.
- Field-Based Learning Experiences – Conduct 10+ field trips for students, including boat tours (FAU Harbor Branch and Ed Foundation boats), seining, and citizen science projects including ORCA Day in the Life.
- Community Engagement Events – Host Family & Community Night and participate in the Indian River Lagoon Science Festival to promote environmental education and broader community participation.
- MOA Discovery Student Ambassador Group – Train 50+ students in leadership roles to lead at least two community service projects.
- Conservation & Restoration Efforts – Organize two community clean-ups and expand the school's native plant garden to support lagoon restoration.

Key Outcomes (Benefits to priority communities and the IRL):

- Educate Lagoon Champions: 430+ elementary students, along with their teachers and families educated about IRL natural resources, benefits, challenges, and what they can do to restore and protect them.
- Empowered Community Engagement – Encourages families and students to take an active role in conservation through clean-ups, restoration projects, and advocacy events.
- Environmental Stewardship – Trains 50+ student ambassadors to lead community initiatives promoting Lagoon-Friendly™ behaviors.
- Hands-On Conservation Impact – Reduces pollution through community clean-ups, expands native plant gardens, and engages students in water quality monitoring.

Project Title: Empowering High School Students in Priority Communities to Restore Vital Indian River Lagoon Habitats

Lead Organization:
East Coast Zoological Society, Inc. d/b/a Brevard Zoo
8225 N. Wickham Rd., Melbourne, FL 32940

Partner Organization:
Brevard Public Schools
2700 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Viera, FL 32940

Key CCMP Vital Signs Addressed:
Citizen Engagement and Education under One Lagoon, Filter Feeders and Seagrass under Habitat Quality

Funding Amount Requested from IRLNEP: $79,278.93

Matching Funds: $12,478.42

Total Project Cost: $91,757.35

Project Description: East Coast Zoological Society, Inc. (ECZS) requests funding for a new program that will engage high school students from priority communities in Cocoa, Melbourne, Palm Bay, and Titusville to encourage a deeper connection to the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) and improve water quality conditions through community involvement. Each participating school will receive two classroom-based workshops, a hands-on environmental science kit featuring tools used in IRL restoration, and a field trip with ECZS's Restore Our Shores (ROS) team at a restoration site in the IRL. Science kits can be utilized for future hands-on, classroom, or place-based science education related to the IRL. The field trip will demonstrate conservation work firsthand, exhibiting lagoon restoration techniques. Additionally, ECZS will provide work experience to six students through paid internships with ROS for summer 2026. Interns will gain valuable conservation work experience, building an oyster reef and monitoring restoration projects that reduce or offset the impacts of nutrient pollution. To ensure the program is accessible, the proposed budget includes funding for substitute teachers and transportation for field trips and students during internships. This program will educate our next generation of residents, encourage the adoption of lagoon-friendly practices, and help protect the IRL while providing students with vital science education and employment skills, inspiring careers in conservation.

Key Outputs (Deliverables):

- Creation of supplemental classroom activities developed in partnership by ECZS and Brevard Public Schools
- Creation of environmental science kits to be used at 6 high schools in priority communities
- 225 high school students engaged in two hands-on classroom workshops and one field experience per school
- 6 high school students hired for a paid summer internship with ROS
- Assessments of the program using a post-program assessment for the school workshops and an exit assessment for intern

Key Outcomes (Benefits to priority communities and the IRL):

- Enhance IRL restoration by empowering high school students from priority communities to take more active roles
- Inspire environmental science careers by providing conservation work experience, a better understanding of career goals, and an in-depth understanding of the IRL as a natural resource to students and interns
- Remove 400 lbs. of nitrogen and 10 lbs. of phosphorus per year (Brevard County, 2025) through the construction of 10,000 square feet of oyster reef with student interns

Executive Summary
Indian River Lagoon Defenders

Lead Organization: Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Lucie County
Partners: FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute; Manatee Research and Observation Center; Ocean Research & Conservation Association; Environmental Learning Center

Key Vital Signs Addressed: Healthy Communities: Trash-free Waters; 21st Century Communities; Distinctive Lagoon Communities. Communicate-Collaborate-Coordinate: Citizen Engagement; Habitats: Living Shorelines

Amount Requested: $22,177; **Total Project Cost:** $31,203

Description: Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Lucie County (BGCSLC) proposes BGC Lagoon Defenders, a program to teach members in grades 3-12 about the crucial role the Indian River Lagoon plays in their community. Participants will clean up a portion of a Lagoon tributary, Moore's Creek in Fort Pierce, and will take part in activities provided by partner organizations.

Most of the 50 participants live in Lincoln Park, one of Fort Pierce's most underprivileged neighborhoods. Lagoon Defenders' academic exercises will help students improve STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) knowledge. This is important because more than half of students score below grade level in English/language arts, math, and science.

Supervised by an educator from Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, students will learn about the ecology of Moore's Creek and the ways the creek and its surroundings relate to the lagoon. The program will bring the story of environmental protection to more than just those 50 students. Learning sessions will be open to all Club members, and participants will bring family and friends to clean-up sessions, further publicizing program themes. Participants will keep a photographic record of their activities and create presentations, a podcast and newsletter targeted to the community. The program culminates with an event at the Environmental Learning Center.

Deliverables: 1. Four cleanup days at Moore's Creek and Moore's Creek Linear Park, Fort Pierce. 2. Members gain knowledge of key topics. When the project is completed, members will demonstrate their knowledge in presentations. 3. Students maintain a photographic record of the program, along with presentations, a newsletter and a podcast describing their activities. 4. BGCSLC uses news releases and the students' photographs, presentations, and newsletter to create interest and maximize the number of people who learn about key issues.

Outcomes: 1. Moore's Creek and the Moore's Creek Linear Park in Fort Pierce will be in better condition than when the Lagoon Defenders first visited, as shown in photos taken by members. **2.** Each participant learns the basics of environmental science. Through discussions with members, we will determine how much each knew at the start of the program and the amount of new knowledge they gain. In addition, their work on the clean-up allows all to become better connected to their community and recognize the value of community service. 3. By publicizing program activities, the program increases community awareness of the Lagoon's problems and the ways each citizen can help. Members also will photograph activities and create presentations and podcasts to educate their peers and the overall community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Title:

Assisting Priority Area Homeowners in Area 11 of the City of Vero Beach Utility Service Area

Lead Organization and Partners:

Clean Water Coalition & partners: City of Vero Beach (COVB), Economic Opportunities Council (EOC)

Key CCMP Vital Sign(s) Addressed:

Water Quality – Wastewater – reduce OSTDS on or near IRL and tributaries to IRL
Impaired Waters – reduce the nutrient and pollutant load to meet BMAP targets
Healthy Communities – rebuild infrastructure to improve resilience to sea level rise

Funding Amount Requested from IRLNEP: $255,000

Matching Funds (Optional but not required):	**$188,450 w/o FDEP grant**
COVB will waive impact fees ($3,390 x 50)	$169,500
CWC will provide additional promotion/ project management	$11,000
EOC will provide volunteer hours for applicant screening and processing	$ 7,950

*If FDEP grant is received, an additional $5,400 x 50 = $270,000 match will be applied to project.

Total Project Cost (Requested IRLNEP funding plus Matching Funds, if any): $713,450

Project Description: **Provide a brief description of the project, not to exceed 250 words.**

The CWC will partner with COVB and EOC to identify and recruit homesteaded (owner occupied), priority area residents of Area 11 to connect to the STEP sewer system.

- COVB provides a list of homesteaded addresses on septic within the priority area.
- CWC will develop outreach materials (Spanish also) for use in the new area.
- CWC will speak at COVB-sponsored neighborhood meeting to educate about environmental issues and advantages of connecting. EOC will attend to facilitate the sign-up process.
- Meetings will be sponsored by EOC with CWC participation to build applicant trust.
- CWC solicits bids from 5 plumbers in groups of 5 qualified residences.
- After final COVB inspections, CWC pays the low-bid plumber and submits to Lagoon Council for reimbursement.
- This is an extension of proven and successful projects funded by IRLNEP, COVB, CWC, EOC, the Indian River Land Trust and the Indian River Community Foundation.

Key Outputs (Deliverables):

- 50 septic to sewer connections will reduce the nutrient and contaminate loading to the Lagoon.
- Stabilizing a priority neighborhood of affordable housing that is owner occupied.
- Providing nutrient reduction credits to achieve BMAP targets.

Key Outcomes (Benefits to priority communities and the IRL):

- The area is comprised of older homes with homestead exemptions, indicating owner occupation. The project would help to stabilize a neighborhood of affordable housing by assisting 50 residents connect to sewer before a mandate comes into effect requiring connection costing $15,000-$17,000
- The priority area is located near a primary drainage canal with no stormwater treatment. It flows directly into the Main Relief Canal a short distance from the Lagoon. The area has older septic systems, constructed with little separation between the drain field and groundwater that could be impacted by high water levels associated with sea level rise. Reducing the number of septic systems will decrease the nutrient/contaminate loading to the Lagoon.

Executive Summary

Project Title: Indian River Lagoon Resilience and Restoration Project

Lead Organization: Little Growers Inc. (LGI)

Partners: East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC)
Florida Institute of Technology (FIT)

Key CCMP Vital Signs Addressed: Seagrasses, Filter Feeders, Living Shorelines, Biodiversity, HABs, Forage Fishes, Fisheries, Contaminants of Concern, Stormwater, Living Resources and Healthy Communities, Citizen Engagement and Education Land Conservation, Monitoring and Data, Distinctive Lagoon Communities

Funding Amount Requested from IRLNEP: $267,050
Matching Funds: $332,507.60

Project Description

The Indian River Lagoon Resilience and Restoration Project addresses environmental justice, climate resilience, and food security in priority communities in Melbourne and Palm Bay, FL. The project will implement nature-based solutions to mitigate flooding, restore critical habitats, and provide job training in sustainable food production and environmental restoration. Little Growers Inc. (LGI), in partnership with Florida Institute of Technology (FIT) and East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC), will establish an integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA) system, and native tree plantings to improve ecological, social, and economic resilience. Further, educational workshops, citizen-science programs, and job training will be provided by LGI and partners.

Key Outputs Deliverables

- **Number of Native Trees and Plants Installed** – Reducing stormwater runoff and nutrient pollution
- **Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) System Implemented** – Promoting sustainable food production & lagoon restoration
- **Workforce Training Program Curriculum Created** - Equipping local residents, especially those from priority communities, with skills in sustainable aquaculture and nature-based solutions.
    - Additional Metric: Number of People reached through training program, number of training sessions
- **Number of educational workshops held** - educating community members on reducing pollution and improving water quality.
    - Additional Metric: Numbers of community members in attendance
- **Number of Public Outreach campaigns** - to inform and involve local residents in coastal adaptation strategies and estuary conservation efforts.
- **Board Development & Resource Development** - to expand LIGI's ability to support long-term environmental initiatives
    - Metrics: Number of trainings, update to LGI Board of Director By-Laws, Number of Support Personnel

Key Outcomes & Benefits

- **Environmental Benefits**: Improved water quality, habitat restoration, and stormwater management
- **Community Resilience**: Food security, disaster preparedness, and training in blue-green careers
- **Economic Development**: Job creation in green industries and aquaculture

C.R.A.B.S (Coastal Restoration of All Shorelines and Beaches)

The Peace Project Inc (New Smyrna Beach, Florida)

Partners: The City of New Smyrna Beach, New Smyrna Beach Housing Authority, U- Will Grow Inc, Marine Discovery Center, The Housing Authority of Daytona Beach, Kale Café, C.A.T.A.L.Y.S.T., Levi Long Sickle Cell Foundation, Stetson University, Women Empowered Cross N Paths, Joy Jones, Daytona Beach Permaculture Guild, Dream Green Volusia

CCMP Vital Signs Indian River Lagoon Vital Signs Addressed are:
Health Communities- Distinctive Lagoon Communities, Trash Free Waterways, Habitats: Land Conservation, Living Shorelines, Seagrass, Water Quality: Contaminants and Storm Water, Communicate, Collaborate and Coordinate: Citizen Engagement.

Funding Amount: $350,000.00

Project Summary: The PEACE Project prioritizes hands-on community engagement, ensuring local voices shape environmental solutions. Our youth-centered engagement supports C.R.A.B.S. Explorers and Youth Environmental Team (YET) programs, training local youth in environmental science, restoration, and green business skills. Youth ambassadors lead community outreach and conduct restoration projects to improve their environment.

An intergenerational network of community partnerships co-develops workshops and training sessions for families, elders, and stakeholders, which foster a shared responsibility for the Indian River Lagoon's health. Partners and sponsors co-lead initiatives, guide priorities, and assure cultural relevance while community outreach welcomes churches, local businesses, and schools to strengthen the impact.

The project prioritizes job creation and workforce development ensures long-term sustainability. Youth (ages 15-21) gain environmental skills like rain garden building, rain barrel installation, and upcycled art creation. Community members are trained in native plant nursery entrepreneurship, connecting them to local landscaping and conservation efforts. Stipends and paid internships ensure underserved youth participation without financial barriers, offering pathways into green careers.

The PEACE Project improves infrastructure by creating green spaces, rain gardens, and coastal restoration sites, reducing flooding and pollution that disproportionately affect low-income communities in New Smyrna Beach. The project creates access to clean green spaces, improving mental health and the environment. BIPOC and low-income communities have been underrepresented in environmental careers. This project provides leadership pathways for marginalized youth, ensuring future representation in conservation and climate resilience work. By integrating community-led solutions, the PEACE Project empowers residents to be part of the change rather than recipients of aid.

Agenda Return

2025 Small Grants

Project Title	Organization	IRLNEP Share	Match Share	Total Project Cost	Project County	Education/ Restoration /Both	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Sum	Normalized Score	Funding Amount	Category Left
																			$25,000.00
One Health Fish Monitoring Citizen Science Project	ORCA	$4,515.00	$1,060.00	$5,575.00	All	Education	96	100	82	86	87	81	95	81	85	793	**87**	$4,515.00	$20,485.00
Saving the Indian River Lagoon One Child at a Time through Ecosystems Education	Smithsonian Marine Ecosystems Exhibit	$5,000.00	$3,480.00	$8,480.00	St. Lucie	Education	98	100	56	81	80	77	87	88	78	745	**84**	$5,000.00	$15,485.00
Expanding Nutrient Pollutant Testing for Citizen Scientists	MRC	$3,890.90	$24,905.80	$28,796.70	All	Education	43	100	90	89	75	N/A	75	70	97	639	**83**	$3,890.90	$11,594.10
Lagoon Quest Environmental Education Program	Brevard Zoo	$5,000.00	$70,796.00	$75,796.00	Brevard	Education	28	100	72	82	85	79	85	77	91	699	**82**	$5,000.00	$6,594.10
5th Grade Deep Dive into the Lagoon	ELC	$5,000.00	$1,500.00	$6,500.00	IRC	Education	96	100	68	79	84	65	72	83	N/A	647	**80**	$5,000.00	$1,594.10
Support for critical public outreach needed to reduce the harmful impacts of entanglement on Indian River Lagoon dolphins and wildlife health	HSWRI	$4,004.00	$7,333.00	$11,337.00	Brevard Volusia	Education	98	100	73	78	78	75	60	71	73	706	**78**	$4,004.00	-$2,409.90

2025 Small Grants

Project Title	Organization	IRLNEP Share	Match Share	Total Project Cost	Project County	Education/ Restoration /Both	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Score (0-100)	Sum	Normalized Score
Project Plankton	MDC	$4,999.61	$3,298.20	$8,297.81	Volusia	Education	36	100	75	77	89	67	N/A	N/A	78	522	**77**
The Stella Maris Citizen Science Initiative	Stell Maris Environmental Research	$5,000.00	$9,080.00	$14,080.00	Brevard IRC	Education	39	100	67	76	83	60	77	73	69	644	**72**
Indian River Lagoon Eco-Tours for Fort Pierce Students	Friends of the Manatee Center	$5,000.00	$2,600.00	$7,600.00	St. Lucie	Education	98	N/A	67	81	63	57	80	64	77	587	**72**
Lagoon Coordinated Communication Technical Enhancement	BIRLC	$5,000.00	$28,600.00	$33,600.00	Brevard	Education	37	80	54	79	71	76	76	66	74	613	**71**
Little Growers, Inc. Summer Earn and Learn - Get Energized	Little Growers	$4,988.39	$9,385.00	$14,373.39	Brevard	Both	38	60	64	63	94	67	75	90	69	620	**70**
BIMS Swims	Black in Marine Science	$5,000.00	$4,400.00	$9,400.00	Brevard	Education	34	65	33	57	87	55	85	82	75	573	**65**
IR Lagoon Exploration: The Great Citizen Science Adventure at the Jones Pier Conservation Area	Indian River County Parks, Recreation, and Conservation	$4,140.00	$12,049.00	$16,189.00	IRC	Education	30	90	38	82	36	54	80	81	76	567	**64**
IRLNSB, Educational Kiosk Program	IRLNSBC	$4,300.00	$1,250.00	$5,550.00	IRC	Education	26	65	69	77	53	58	83	61	N/A	492	**64**

Agenda Return

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-02

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE IRL COUNCIL ADOPTING THE FINAL BUDGET FOR THE 2026 FISCAL YEAR

WHEREAS, the IRL Council was created via Interlocal Agreement to carry out the goals of the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program; and

WHEREAS, the IRL Council held a public hearing on February 14, 2025 and adopted a Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2025; and

WHEREAS, the IRL Council held a public meeting on May 9, 2025 to consider the Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2025

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE IRL COUNCIL, THAT:

Section 1. The Fiscal Year 2026 Final Budget is attached as Exhibit "A".

Section 2. The Fiscal Year 2026 Final Budget is hereby adopted.

Section 3. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon passage.

DONE at_____, Florida, this_____day of_____,2025.

By: _____
Joe Earman, IRL Council Chair

ATTEST:

_____
Kim Adkinson, IRL Council Secretary

Approved as to legal form and sufficiency:

_____
Glen J. Torcivia
IRL Council, Legal Counsel

IRL Council
FY 2026 Final Budget
Exhibit A

REVENUES	
Federal Section 320	$ 850,000
Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Law Final Year	$ 909,800
IRL License Plate	$ 125,000
Member Contributions	$1,500,000
NOAA Transformational Habitat Year 2	$2,484,320
TOTAL REVENUES	$5,869,120
EXPENDITURES	
Other Expenditures	$4,981,148
IRL Council Strategic Program, IRLNEP 2026 EPA 320 Work Plan, IRLNEP 2026 Infrastructure Work Plan, 2026 NOAA Workplan, 2026 Revenue Unencumbered	
Salaries & Benefits	$ 657,762
Facilities Expenses	$ 38,000
Rent, Utilities, Equipment Maintenance, Communications	
Administrative Costs	$ 79,000
Postage, Office Supplies, Insurance, Printing, Travel, Licenses & Subscriptions, Dues, Professional Development	
Administrative Services	$ 113,210
Legal, Accounting, Auditing, IT Services, Legal Ads	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$5,869,120
Agency Balance Beginning of Year	$ 0
Fund Balance - Beginning of Year	$ 0
Fund Balance – End of Year	$ 0

FY 2026 Tentative Budget	Approved 2/14/25	**FY 2026 Final Budget**	Pending	Higher / Lower	(Notes)
REVENUES		**REVENUES**			
Federal EPA 320	$ 850,000	Federal EPA 320	$ 850,000		
Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Law Final Year	$ 909,800	Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Law Final Year	$ 909,800		
IRL License Plate	$ 125,000	IRL License Plate	$ 125,000		
Member Contributions	$1,500,000	Member Contributions	$1,500,000		
NOAA Transformational Habitat Year 2	$2,484,320	NOAA Transformational Habitat Year 2	$2,484,320		
TOTAL REVENUES	$5,869,120	TOTAL REVENUES	$5,869,120		
EXPENDITURES		**EXPENDITURES**			
Other Expenditures	$4,996,148	Other Expenditures	$4,981,148	$15,000	(1)
IRL Council Strategic Program, IRLNEP FY2026 EPA 320 Work Plan, IRLNEP FY2026 EPA Infrastructure Work Plan, 2026 NOAA Workplan, 2026 Revenue Unencumbered		IRL Council Strategic Program, IRLNEP FY2026 EPA 320 Work Plan, IRLNEP FY2026 EPA Infrastructure Work Plan, 2026 NOAA Workplan, 2026 Revenue Unencumbered			
Salaries & Benefits	$ 657,762	Salaries & Benefits	$ 657,762		
Facilities Expenses	$ 38,000	Facilities Expenses	$ 38,000		
Rent, Utilities, Equipment Maintenance, Communications		Rent, Utilities, Equipment Maintenance, Communications			
Administrative Costs	$ 79,000	Administrative Costs	$ 79,000		
Postage, Office Supplies, Insurance, Printing, Travel, Licenses & Subscriptions, Dues, Professional Development		Postage, Office Supplies, Insurance, Printing, Travel, Licenses & Subscriptions, Dues, Professional Development			
Administrative Services	$ 98,210	Administrative Services	$ 113,210	$15,000	(2)
Legal, Accounting, Auditing, IT Services, Legal Ads		Legal, Accounting, Auditing, IT Services, Legal Ads			
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$ 5,869,120	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$ 5,869,120		
Agency Balance Beginning of Year	$ 0	Agency Balance Beginning of Year	$ 0		
Fund Balance Beginning of Year	$ 0	Fund Balance Beginning of Year	$ 0		
Fund Balance – End of Year	$ 0	Fund Balance – End of Year	$ 0		

FY 2026 Final Budget Expenditure Detail (Narrative)

(1) Decrease "OTHER EXPENDITURES" by $15,000 from $4,996,148 to $4,981,148. "OTHER EXPENDITURES" based on decisions made at the February 14, 2025 IRL Council Board of Directors meeting now consists of the following:

1. IRL Council Strategic Program ($623,452) includes the following:
    a. Water Quality Restoration Project(s) - $350,000 (no change)
    b. Habitat Restoration Project(s) - $134,169 (reduction of $15,831 based on RFPs)
    c. Community-Based Restoration Project(s) - $35,650 (reduction of $104,350 based on RFPs)
    d. Small grants program - $25,000 (no change)
    e. IRLNEP Technical Support of Conferences and Workshops - $25,000 (no change)
    f. USF Technical Support Year 3 - $53,633 (no change)
2. IRLNEP FY2026 EPA Workplan ($850,000) includes the following:
    a. FIT: Suffocating Sands Phase 4 - $78,260 (New based on RFP)
    b. Hubbs Seaworld Research Institute: HAB Toxins in Marine Mammals - $61,968 (New based on RFP)
    c. Communication Support: Service contracts for web/graphics/design support, scientific and other publications, other contract support as needed, and expanded social media and support for communication intern. Includes service contracts with IDEAS, Brandt Ronat, Firefly, and O'Hara - $160,498 (increase of $57,772)
    d. Biodiversity Inventory - $25,000 (no change)
    e. 3 Atmospheric Deposition Monitoring Stations - $128,765 (no change)
    f. 3 Community Engagement coordinators (Salary Only) - $227,509 (no change)
    g. Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring Contracts - $150,000 (no change)
    h. EPA Travel (mandatory) - $20,000 (increase of $2,000)
3. IRLNEP FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS LAW Workplan ($909,800)
    a. Priority Communities Restoration Project(s) - $409,800 (no change)
    b. Seagrass Nursery Network - $500,000 (no change)
4. NOAA Transformational Habitat FY2026 Workplan ($2,484,320) includes the following:
    a. Personnel - $124,000 (no change)
    b. Contractual - $187,490 (no change)
    c. Other - $2,136,181 (no change)
    d. Supplies - $5,000 (no change)
    e. Indirect - $31,649 (no change)
5. FY 2026 Revenue Unencumbered - $113,576 (increase of $105,181)

(2) Increase "ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES" by $15,000 from $98,210 to $113,210. This increase brings Legal services up to a level with built in contingency. "ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES" now consists of the following:

1. Legal - $50,000 (increase of $15,000)
2. Accounting - $42,000 (no change)
3. Auditing - $20,210 (no change)
4. IT Services and Compliance - $500 (no change)
5. Legal Ads - $500 (no change)

Duane De Freese, PH.D.
Executive Director Activity Summary (February – May 2025)

Administrative Activities at Federal and State Level

- Washington, DC, March 24-27
  - Washington DC legislative office briefings March 24-27. Senators Moody and Scott; Representatives Haridopolos and Steube)
  - Speaker and panelist at US House of Representatives briefing to House Estuaries Caucus (March 20, 2025)
  - Coastal Communities in the Capitol event, Rayburn Foyer (March 24)
  - Association of National Estuaries Program Board of Directors dinner and annual meeting and dinner (March 25)
- The Capitol, Tallahassee, FL March 30 – April 3)
  - FL Oceans Day at the Capitol (Hand-delivered 25 IRLNEP 2024 Annual Reports to Offices)
  - FL Ocean Alliance Board of Directors meeting (March 31)
  - Introductory meeting with FDEP Secretary Lambert (March 31)
  - Mote Marine Lab Reception in Old Capitol Bldg
- Invited "VIP Guest" at Governor DeSantis's ribbon cutting for the new manatee rehab center at Brevard Zoo (April 4)

Leadership Activities

- Association of National Estuary Programs board and member of Government Affairs Committee
- Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association Advisory Board.
- Southeast and Caribbean Disaster Recovery Partnership Advisory Board.
- Florida HAB Task Force meetings to develop and edit the HAB Task Force Consensus #3 document (2025). Final report available online at https://myfwc.com/research/redtide/taskforce/
- Florida Ocean Alliance Board member; participated in regular meetings

Water Quality and Habitat Restoration

- Monthly intergovernmental IRL HAB water conditions Zoom calls
- Continued development of One Lagoon Habitat Restoration Plan
- Working on scientific paper for Frontiers in Marine Science special IRL research topic

Science/Technical Support to Stakeholders and Partners

- Continuing communications with Space Florida staff re: KSC growth; East Coast Zoological Foundation - Brevard Zoo Aquarium Project founders; advisory support to Space Coast EDC re: regional wastewater treatment plant to serve central Brevard and KSC complex; and multiple water technology industry representatives.

Media and Community Engagements

- Palmer PB magazine feature article has been published and released (https://palmerpb.com/).
- Speaker at 1st Friday IRL Music and Arts Festival, EGAD (April 4th).

Agenda Return