IRL COUNCIL
STEM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This meeting is open to the public

May 6, 2025

1:30 PM – 4:30 PM

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

Remote Access: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87313385768

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** (Dr. Chuck Jacoby, Chair)
2. **Introductions** (Dr. Chuck Jacoby, Chair)
3. **Agenda Revisions** (Dr. Chuck Jacoby, Chair)
   Note any known changes and inquire if any members have suggested revisions.
4. **Consent Agenda** (Dr. Chuck Jacoby, Chair)

   Consent Agenda

   a. Approve the Minutes from the STEM meeting held on February 11, 2025.
   b. Approve Fiscal Year 2026 Final Budget
   c. Approve Independent Audit Report for Fiscal Year 2024

   Requested Action: Motion to approve the consent agenda.
5. **Public Comment**
6. **Water Quality Reports**
   a. Northern IRL (Lauren Hall, SJRWMD)
   b. Southern IRL (Melanie Parker, SFWMD)
7. **Presentation**

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

   Tyler Provoncha, Conservation Manager, Restore Our Shores, Brevard Zoo
   Krista McCoy, Director of Conservation and Research, Florida Oceanographic Society
   Richard Mulroy, Research Technician, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute
   Tess Sailor-Tynes, Conservation Science Coordinator, Marine Discovery Center
   John Than, Director of Marine Aquaculture, Sea & Shoreline

8. **Old Business**
9. **New Business**
   a. 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.

   b. 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.

10. **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)
11. **Final Comments (Committee, Staff, Public)**
12. **Next Meeting**

    Tuesday, August 19, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.
    Historic Sebastian Elementary School, 1235 Main Street, Sebastian, FL 32958
13. **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
STEM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes from the meeting of

February 11, 2025

1:30 PM

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

Remote Access: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87313385768

Member In-person Attendance: Aaron Adams, Kyle Bartow, Bob Day, Tiare Fridrich, Lauren Hall, Chuck Jacoby, Emily Ralston, Mitch Roffer, Loraé Simpson, Holly Sweat, Wendy Swindell, Chad Truxall, Charlie Venuto, Kelly Young,

Member Online Attendance: J. Cho, David Cox, Elizabeth Kelly, Lisa Krimsky, Erin McDivitt, Malcolm McFarland, Dale McGinnis, Wendy Noke-Durden, Melanie Parker, Linda Walters

Guest In-person Attendance: Stacy Cecil, Tessa Roberts, Doug Scheidt, Kevin Kacperowski, Jeff Elbe, Lauren Kleiman, Caitlin Lusic, Matthew Burge, Thomas Heller, Jennifer Carpenter, Matt Rae, James Byrne, Valerie Strassburg

Online Guests: Tiffany Simpson, Taylor Lang, Carolyn Vanzo, Maegan Wettlaufer, Lori Morris, Heather Roundtree

1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** (Chuck Jacoby, Chair)

   Dr. Jacoby called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Introductions** (Chuck Jacoby, Chair)

   Dr. Jacoby led the group in introductions.

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

   Ms. Hill presented the slate of candidates, Chuck Jacoby, Chair, and Chad Truxell, Vice Chair. The floor was open for other nominees.

   MOTION WAS MADE BY BOB DAY TO ACCEPT THE SLATE OF CANDIDATES FOR CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY WENDY SWINDELL. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **Agenda Revisions** (Chuck Jacoby, Chair)

   No agenda revisions were brought forward.

5. **Consent Agenda** (Chuck Jacoby, Chair)

   a. Approve November 11, 2024, STEM minutes

DRAFT

b. Approve Fiscal Year 2026 Tentative Budget
c. Approve Fiscal Year 2026 EPA Workplan
d. Approve Fiscal Year 2026 EPA BIL Workplan

Requested Action: Motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Lauren Hall noted errors in the Northern and Central IRL Water Quality Report to be corrected in the minutes.

MOTION WAS MADE BY CHARLIE VENUTO TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY EMILY RALSTON. MOTION PASSED. ERIN MCDIVITT ABSTAINED.

6. Public Comment

No public comment was made.

7. Water Quality Reports

a. Northern and Central IRL (Lauren Hall, SJRWMD)

Ms. Lauren Hall presented the rainfall data from November through January, noting relatively dry conditions throughout the lagoon. The location of the monitoring sondes was reviewed, and the data was reported to be collected hourly and available on the St. Johns River Water Management District website. The water depth declined as expected for the season; the lower rainfall increased the salinity. The decline in temperature is typical for this season and remains as mild. The dissolved oxygen level has remained above 2 mg/L, and low chlorophyll-a concentrations were reported. A few short-lived spikes occurred with no widespread, long-lasting blooms. Short turbidity spikes were associated with wind events in shallower areas of the lagoon at the end of January and declined quickly. Dissolved Organic Matter (FDOM) changes were recorded at the Vero site, an area of freshwater intake. A decline in Secchi depth was recorded in Melbourne and the northern region of the lagoon. This data was collected during the first week of every month and represents a snapshot of water clarity. The February data shows a return to normal.

Although no new seagrass data was available, a video recorded in the Titusville area showed increased grass since the summer data collection.

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

Dr. Parker reported the data was through February 2, while the weekly averages covered January 27 through February 2, 2025. Lake Okeechobee Recovery Operations began on December 7, with releases of up to 1,400 cfs to the St. Lucie Estuary (SLE). In this reporting period, the total inflow in the SLE averaged 1,389 cfs, most of which came from the lake. Salinity at HR1 in the North Fork increased to 6 on the surface, stressful range for oysters and 10 on the bottom, optimal. At the US1 Bridge, salinity was optimal at 10.5 on the surface and 12 on the bottom. At the A1A Bridge, salinity was optimal at 18 on the surface and 23 on the bottom. The good news is that the releases for Lake Okeechobee did not drop salinities below the optimal range of 10 -25 for oysters. Salinities were relatively stable in January. Salinities decreased into the lower stressful range (5-9) for two brief periods in December but otherwise have remained within the optimal range for oysters since.

DRAFT

In 2024, spawning and larval settlement started in late March and early April (1.3 spat/shell) and continued at moderate rates through June. Settlements rates decreased sharply in September when salinities fell below the optimal (≤10) for oysters and remained low for the rest of the year. The spawning season ends when water temperatures cool; new larval recruitment is not expected until April or May.

8. Presentation

Runoff to Resilience – Smart Watersheds

The Nature Conservancy's Brightstorm project members, including Matt Rea, Director of Technical Partnerships, and Jennifer Carpenter, Deputy Executive Director of Conservation and Government Relations, shared details about a pilot project. The Smart Watershed Network Management pilot study aims to integrate new technologies into water management strategies through broad partnerships, making them open-source and replicable. Following a multi-year modeling and design phase, the project will proceed to pilot implementation and real-world testing. The Indian River Lagoon was selected due to its numerous stormwater ponds and the openness of regulators, policymakers, and the public to adopt technological solutions. Funding for modeling development is provided by private philanthropy.

9. Old Business

None

10. New Business

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

Mr. Kolodny presented the scoring and ranking of 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 STEM 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 OLIVIA ESCANDELL TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE IRLNEP STEM 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 DAVID COX. MOTION PASSED. ERIN MCDIVITT ABSTAINED.

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.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors accept the IRLNEP STEM Committee recommendations and approve the final ranked list of FY 2026 Habitat Restoration proposals; fund the top proposals contingent and consistent

DRAFT

with available funds and budgetary authority; and authorize staff to negotiate and enter into contracts with those applicants.

MOTION WAS MADE BY BOB DAY TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE IRLNEP STEM 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 LORAÉ SIMPSON. MOTION PASSED. WENDY NOKE-DURDEN AND ERIN MCDIVITT 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 STEM 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 LORAÉ SIMPSON TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE IRLNEP STEM 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 HOLLY SWEAT. MOTION PASSED. ERIN MCDIVITT ABSTAINED.

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 STEM 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 LAUREN HALL TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE IRLNEP STEM 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 WENDY SWINDELL. MOTION PASSED. WENDY NOKE-DURDEN, EMILY RALSTON AND ERIN MCDIVITT ABSTAINED.

DRAFT

e. 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 BOB DAY 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 LORAÉ SIMPSON. MOTION PASSED. ERIN MCDIVITT ABSTAINED.

11. IRLNEP Staff Reports

a. Community Engagement Update (Kathy Hill)

Ms. Hill noted that the top social media post was muck," which reached a broader audience than other posts. The highlights of 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.

12. Final Comments (Committee, Staff, Public)

None

13. Next Meeting

Tuesday, May 6, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.
Historic Sebastian Elementary School, 1235 Main Street, Sebastian, FL 32958

14. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:32 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.

DRAFT

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)

IRL Council

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Year Ended September 30, 2024

IRL Council
Table of Contents
For the Year Ended September 30, 2024

Table of Contents 1

FINANCIAL SECTION

Independent Auditor's Report 3
Management's Discussion and Analysis 7
Basic Financial Statements:
Government-wide Financial Statements:
Statement of Net Position 15
Statement of Activities 16
Fund Financial Statements:
Balance Sheet – Governmental Fund 17
Reconciliation of the Governmental Fund Balance Sheet to the Statement of Net Position 18
Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances – Governmental Fund 19
Reconciliation of the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances of the Governmental Fund to the Statement of Activities 20
Notes to Financial Statements 21
Required Supplementary Information:
Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in General Fund Balances – Budget and Actual 45
Budgetary Notes to Required Supplementary Information 46
Schedule of Proportionate Share of Net Pension Liability 47
Schedule of Contributions 48
Schedule of Changes in Total OPEB Liability and Related Ratios 49

COMPLIANCE SECTION

Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with Government Auditing Standards 51
Independent Auditor's Report on Compliance for the Major Program and on Internal Control Over Compliance Required by the Uniform Guidance 53
Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs 56
Expenditures of Federal Awards 61
Independent Auditor's Management Letter 63
Independent Accountant's Report on Compliance with Local Government Investment Policies 67
Corrective Action Plan 68

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

CARR, RIGGS & INGRAM, L.L.C.

Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C.
7506 Lynx Way
Suite 201
Melbourne, FL 32940

321.255.0088
386.336.4189 (fax)
CRIadv.com

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Directors
IRL Council

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinions

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities and the major fund of IRL Council, as of and for the year ended September 30, 2024, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise IRL Council's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities and the major fund of the IRL Council as of September 30, 2024, and the respective changes in financial position for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the IRL Council and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the IRL Council's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of IRL Council's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about IRL Council's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the management's discussion and analysis, budgetary comparison information, the defined benefit pension plan information and the other postemployment benefits information, as listed in the table of contents be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the

information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Supplementary Information

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming opinions on the financial statements that collectively comprise IRL Council's basic financial statements. The schedule of expenditures of federal awards, as required by Title 2 U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards*, is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements or to the basic financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the schedule of expenditures of federal awards is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole.

Other Reporting Required by *Government Auditing Standards*

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated May 2, 2025, on our consideration of the IRL Council's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of IRL Council's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering IRL Council's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C.

Melbourne, Florida
May 2, 2025

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

As management of the IRL Council (the "Council"), we offer readers of the Council's financial statements this narrative overview of the financial activities of the Council for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024. We encourage readers to consider the information presented herein in conjunction with additional information furnished in the Council's financial statements following this narrative.

Financial Highlights

- The Council's net position at year end September 30, 2024 is $1,946,176. Last fiscal year, **September 30, 2023**, the Council's net position was $2,734,443. This is a decrease in net position of $788,267 from last year and is due mostly to projects completing that were budgeted in prior fiscal years. Net position includes both restricted funds to be used for specific projects and expenses, and unrestricted funds to be used for any lawful project or expense of the Council.

- During the current year, total expenses were $3,591,568 versus total revenue of $2,803,301. In the prior year, total expenses were $3,201,776 versus total revenue of $3,581,605.

- At the close of the current fiscal year, the Council's governmental fund reported a combined ending fund balance of $2,523,968, an decrease of $737,122 in comparison with the prior year. The decrease is due utilizing reserves for the septic to sewer conversion project.

- The Council's total non-current liabilities (excluding pension and OPEB liabilities) increased by $11,847 during the current fiscal year. The increase is due to current year fluctuation in compensated absences.

Overview of the Financial Statements

The report consists of three components: 1) government-wide financial statements providing information about the activities of the Council as a whole; 2) fund financial statements providing information about the significant funds of the Council; 3) notes to the financial statements providing supplementary and explanatory information.

Government-wide financial statements – The government-wide financial statements are designed to provide readers with a broad overview of the Council's finances, in a manner like a private-sector business. All the Council's activities are reported as governmental activities in the government-wide financial statements.

The statement of net position presents information on all the Council's assets, deferred outflows of resources, liabilities, and deferred inflows of resources, with the difference between the elements reported as net position. Over time, increases or decreases in net position may serve as a useful indicator of whether the financial position of the Council is improving or deteriorating.

The statement of activities presents information showing how the Council's net position changed during the most recent fiscal year. All changes in net position are reported as soon as the underlying event giving rise to the change occurs, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Thus, revenues

and expenses are reported in this statement for some items that will only result in cash flows in future fiscal periods.

Fund financial statements – A fund is a grouping of related accounts that is used to maintain control over resources that have been segregated for specific activities or objectives. The Council, like other special districts, uses fund accounting to ensure and demonstrate compliance with finance-related legal requirements. All of the funds of the Council are included in one category: governmental funds. All activities of the governmental funds are included in one fund: the General Fund.

Governmental funds. Governmental funds are used to account for essentially the same functions reported as governmental activities in the government-wide financial statements. However, unlike the government-wide financial statements, governmental fund financial statements focus on near-term inflows and outflows of spendable resources, as well as on balances of spendable resources available at the end of the fiscal year. Such information may be useful in evaluating a government's near-term financing requirements.

Because the focus of governmental funds is narrower than that of the government-wide financial statements, it is useful to compare the information presented for governmental funds with similar information presented for governmental activities in the government-wide financial statements. By doing so, readers may better understand the long-term impact of the government's near-term financing decisions. Both the governmental fund balance sheet and the governmental fund statement of revenues, expenditures and changes in fund balances provide a reconciliation to facilitate this comparison between governmental funds and governmental activities.

Notes to the financial statements. The notes provide additional detail concerning the financial activities and financial balances of the Council. Additional information, if applicable, about the accounting practices of the Council, investments of the Council, long term debt, and pension plan are some of the items included in the *notes to the financial statements*.

Government-wide Financial Analysis

As noted earlier, net position may serve over time as a useful indicator of a Council's financial position. In the case of the Council, assets and deferred outflows of resources exceeded liabilities and deferred inflows of resources by $1,946,176 at the close of the most recent fiscal year.

The following table reflects the condensed statement of net position:

September 30,	2024	2023
Current and other assets	**$ 3,695,090**	$ 4,366,107
Capital assets	**7,155**	9,476
Total assets	**3,702,245**	4,375,583
Deferred outflows of resources	**292,762**	302,719
Long-term liabilities outstanding	**770,558**	799,819
Other liabilities	**1,171,122**	1,105,017
Total liabilities	**1,941,680**	1,904,836
Deferred inflows of resources	**107,151**	39,023
Net position:		
Net investment in capital assets	**7,155**	9,476
Restricted	**410,765**	364,035
Unrestricted	**1,528,256**	2,360,932
Total net position	**$ 1,946,176**	$ 2,734,443

By far the largest portion of the Council's net position reflects its unrestricted net position. These funds can be used by the Council's Board may budget for use of these funds at their discretion to further the purposes of the Council.

The following table shows condensed revenue and expense data:

For the fiscal year ended September 30,	2024	2023
Program revenues:		
Charges for services	**$ 516**	1,083
Operating grants and contributions	**2,658,560**	3,474,186
General revenues:		
Investment earnings	**140,340**	103,281
Miscellaneous	**3,885**	3,055
Total revenues	**2,803,301**	3,581,605
Program expenses:		
Physical environment	**3,591,568**	3,201,776
Change in net position	**(788,267)**	379,829
Net position - beginning	**2,734,443**	2,354,614
Net position - ending	**$ 1,946,176**	$ 2,734,443

Revenues for the Council's activities in this fiscal year totaled $2,803,301. These revenues represent an decrease of $778,304 from the previous year total of $3,581,605. This decrease over the prior year is due to decrease in amount received from state grants.

In the current year, there was $134,728 of State specialty license plate revenue. This revenue is restricted to activities that support water quality improvement, habitat restoration, and public awareness and education of the economically significant Indian River Lagoon. The amount of this revenue in the prior year was $117,700. This is a increase of $17,028. Since this revenue is solely based on the voluntary purchase of the specialty license plate by the public, this amount is expected to fluctuate. $88,718 were expensed during the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024 for those

restricted activities noted above. The amount of this expense in the prior year was $204,474. This is an decrease of $115,756.

Expenses totaled $3,591,568, an increase of $389,792 from the previous year total of $3,201,776. This increase in expenditures is primarily the result of the completion of strategic projects which is one of the main functions of the Council.

Financial Analysis of the Council's Funds

As noted earlier, the Council uses fund accounting to ensure and demonstrate compliance with finance-related legal requirements.

Governmental funds. The focus of the Council's governmental funds is to provide information on near-term inflows, outflows, and balances of spendable resources. Such information is useful in assessing the Council's financing requirements. In particular, unassigned fund balance may serve as a useful measure of a Council's net resources available for spending at the end of the fiscal year.

As of the end of the current fiscal year, the Council's General Fund – the Council's only governmental fund – reported combined ending fund balances of $2,523,968, a decrease of $737,122 in comparison with the prior year. The fund balance classified as restricted indicates that it is not available for new spending because it is obligated for specific purposes related to the specialty license plate revenue received. Unrestricted, unassigned fund balance was $2,113,203 at year end.

The net change in the fund balance of the Council's General Fund was a decrease of $737,122 during the current fiscal year. The decrease is primarily due to the decrease in state grant funding in the current fiscal year.

Budgetary Highlights

An operating budget was adopted and maintained by the governing board for the Council pursuant to the requirements of Florida Statutes. The budget is adopted using the same basis of accounting that is used in preparation of the fund financial statements. The legal level of budgetary control, the level at which expenditures may not exceed budget, is at the program level. Any budget amendments that increase the aggregate budgeted appropriations must be approved by the Board of Directors. The budget for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024, was amended to increase appropriations by $2,304,150. This was due to anticipated projects that were expected to begin in the current year. Actual General Fund expenditures did not exceed appropriations during the current fiscal year.

The Council performed unfavorably regarding net revenues compared to the budget. Total actual revenues came in $581,499 under the final budgeted total revenues. This was due to anticipated grant revenues that were not received in the current year.

There was a positive variance in total annual expenditures. Actual fiscal year expenditures were $2,098,527 less than final budgeted expenditures, primarily due to anticipated projects which will carry into the next fiscal year.

Capital Asset Administration

The Council's investment in capital assets as of September 30, 2024 amounts to $7,155 (net of accumulated depreciation). This investment in capital assets represents a vehicle. The total decrease in the Council's investment in capital assets for the current fiscal year was approximately 20 percent. Additional information on the Council's capital assets can be found in Note 2.

Economic Factors and the 2024-2025 Budget

Fiscal Year 2024 represented another evolution for the IRL Council. The IRL Council, for the 2nd consecutive time in its history and third overall, triggered a federal single audit for having expended and received greater than $750,000 in federal funds. More lessons were learned through this process with regards to federal regulation and specifically to subrecipient monitoring that will only help the IRL Council continue to mature as an effective recipient and administrator of federal funds. A new IRL specialty plate design is available at all Florida Tax Collectors' offices and revenue is expected to increase as a marketing campaign is implemented. Since 2015 when the IRL Council became the host agency for the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program (IRLNEP), Council member contributions have increased local and state matching funds of the Program by an additional $1.5 million per year. Prior to 2015, the IRLNEP was funded solely by annual EPA Section 320 grant funds. Those funds were used for local cost-share projects in support of the Indian River Lagoon Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). Those revenues were approximately $600,000. Incremental increases in annual Congressional appropriations over the past several years have brought the current appropriation to $850,000 for FY 2025. In addition to the Section 320 increases, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Law funding has expanded the number of CCMP projects in the IRL watershed and greatly enhanced the capacity of the program to implement IRL restoration and stewardship. Late in Fiscal Year 2024, NOAA announced a recommendation of award to the IRL Council for $9.4M over a 3-year period beginning in Fiscal Year 25.

Contacting the Council's Financial Management

This financial report is designed to provide our citizens, taxpayers, customers, and investors and creditors with a general overview of the Council's finances and to show the Council's accountability for the money it receives. If you have questions about this report or need additional financial information, contact the IRL Council Main Office, at Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, 1235 Main Street, Sebastian, Florida 32958.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

IRL Council
Statement of Net Position

September 30, 2024		Governmental Activities
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	$	2,605,825
Due from other governments		678,500
Restricted assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents		400,760
Due from other governments		10,005
Capital assets:		
Depreciable (net)		7,155
Total assets		3,702,245
DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES		
Deferred outflows related to pensions		290,113
Deferred outflows related to OPEB		2,649
Total deferred outflows of resources		292,762
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable		1,129,565
Accrued liabilities		7,054
Due to other governments		34,503
Non-current liabilities:		
Due within one year:		
Compensated absences		50,166
Due in more than one year:		
Compensated absences		5,574
Total OPEB liability		4,063
Net pension liability		710,755
Total liabilities		1,941,680
DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES		
Deferred inflows related to pensions		105,979
Deferred inflows related to OPEB		1,172
Total deferred inflows of resources		107,151
NET POSITION		
Net investment in capital assets		7,155
Restricted for:		
Specialty license plate related expenses		410,765
Unrestricted		1,528,256
Total net position	$	1,946,176

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.

IRL Council
Statement of Activities

Year ended September 30, 2024

Functions/Programs	Expenses	Program revenues: Charges for Services	Program revenues: Operating Grants and Contributions	Program revenues: Capital Grants and Contributions	Net (Expense) Revenue and Changes in Net Position
Physical environment	$ 3,591,568	$ 516	$ 2,658,560	$ -	$ (932,492)
Total governmental activities	$ 3,591,568	$ 516	$ 2,658,560	$ -	(932,492)

General revenues:	
Investment earnings	140,340
Miscellaneous	3,885
Total general revenues	144,225
Change in net position	(788,267)
Net position, beginning of year	2,734,443
Net position, end of year	$ 1,946,176

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.

IRL Council
Balance Sheet – Governmental Fund

September 30, 2024	General Fund
ASSETS	
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 2,605,825
Due from other governments	678,500
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	400,760
Restricted due from other governments	10,005
Total assets	$ 3,695,090
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES	
Liabilities:	
Accounts payable	$ 1,129,565
Accrued expenses	7,054
Due to other governments	34,503
Total liabilities	1,171,122
Fund Balances:	
Restricted for:	
Specialty license plate related expenditures	410,765
Unassigned	2,113,203
Total fund balances	2,523,968
Total liabilities and fund balances	$ 3,695,090

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.

IRL Council
Reconciliation of the Governmental Fund Balance Sheet to the Statement of Net Position

September 30, 2024

Total fund balance of governmental funds		$ 2,523,968
Capital assets used in governmental activities are not financial resources and, therefore, are not reported in the funds.		
Governmental capital assets	$ 23,209	
Less accumulated depreciation	(16,054)	7,155
Deferred outflow of resources related to pension earnings are not recognized in the governmental funds; however, they are recorded in the statement of net position under full accrual accounting.		290,113
Deferred outflow of resources related to OPEB earnings are not recognized in the governmental funds; however, they are recorded in the statement of net position under full accrual accounting.		2,649
Deferred inflow of resources related to pension earnings are not recognized in governmental funds; however, they are recorded in the statement of net position under full accrual accounting.		(105,979)
Deferred inflow of resources related to OPEB are not recognized in governmental funds; however, they are recorded in the statement of net position under full accrual accounting.		(1,172)
Long-term liabilities, including total OPEB liability, net pension liability and compensated absences are not due and payable in the current period and, therefore, are not reported in the funds.		
Net pension liability	(710,755)	
Compensated absences	(55,740)	
Total OPEB liability	(4,063)	(770,558)
Net position of governmental activities		$ 1,946,176

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.

IRL Council
Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances - Governmental Fund

Year ended September 30, 2024		General Fund
Revenues		
Member contributions	$	950,000
Federal grants		1,573,832
State specialty license plates		134,728
Miscellaneous		144,741
Total revenues		2,803,301
Expenditures		
Current:		
Physical environment		3,540,423
Total expenditures		3,540,423
Net change in fund balances		(737,122)
Fund balances, beginning of year		3,261,090
Fund balances, end of year	$	2,523,968

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.

Reconciliation of the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances of the Governmental Fund to the Statement of Activities

Year ended September 30, 2024

Net change in fund balances - total governmental fund	$ (737,122)
Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of activities are different because:	
Governmental funds report capital outlays as expenditures. However, in the statement of activities, the cost of those assets is allocated over their estimated useful lives as depreciation expense. This is the amount by which depreciation exceeds capital outlay in the current period.	(2,321)
Compensated absences are reported in the statement of activities when earned. As they do not require the use of current financial resources, they are not reported as expenditures on governmental funds until they have matured. This is the amount of compensated absences reported in the statement of activities in the prior year that has matured in the current year.	(11,847)
Other postemployment benefit obligation reported in the statement of activities does not require the use of current financial resources; therefore, is not reported as an expenditure in governmental funds.	(438)
Cash pensions contributions reported in the funds were less than the calculated pension expense on the statement of activities and therefore decrease net position.	(36,539)
Change in net position of governmental activities	$ (788,267)

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.

Note 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The IRL Council (the "Council") is a tax-exempt association of counties and other non-federal agencies, which is organized to achieve the goals adopted in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Indian River Lagoon Estuary Program through detailed action plans prepared by each member agency of the association. The Council was established by interlocal agreement on February 19, 2015, pursuant to the authority of Section 163.01, *Florida Statutes*. The basic operations of the Council are financed primarily through grants from state and from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, contributions from the member counties, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and two water management districts.

Reporting Entity

The Council is a special district governed by an appointed eight-member governing Board of Directors (the "Board"). The accompanying financial statements present the Council and its component units, entities for which the Council is considered to be financially accountable. Blended component units are, in substance, part of the primary government's operations even though they are legally separate entities. Thus, blended component units are appropriately presented as funds of the primary government. Each discretely presented component unit is reported in a separate column in the government-wide financial statements to emphasize that it is legally separate from the Council. In evaluating the Council as a reporting entity, management has considered all potential component units in accordance with Section 2100: *Defining the Financial Reporting Entity* of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Codification. The Council has no component units.

The accounting policies of the Council conform to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) as applied to governmental units. The more significant accounting policies used by the Council are described below.

Government-Wide Financial Statements

While separate government-wide and fund financial statements are presented, they are interrelated. The governmental activities column incorporates data from the governmental fund. Separate financial statements are provided for the governmental fund.

The government-wide financial statements (i.e., the statement of net position and the statement of activities) report information on all of the nonfiduciary activities of the Council. Governmental activities, which normally are supported by taxes, intergovernmental revenues, and other nonexchange transactions, are reported separately from business-type activities, which rely to a significant extent on fees and charges to external customers for support. The Council has no business-type activities.

Note 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

The statement of activities demonstrates the degree to which the direct expenses of a given function are offset by program revenues. Direct expenses are those that are clearly identifiable with a specific function. Program revenues include 1) charges to customers or applicants who purchase, use, or directly benefit from goods, services or privileges provided by a given function or segment, and 2) grants and contributions that are restricted to meeting the operational or capital requirements of a particular function. Taxes and other items properly excluded from program revenues are reported instead as general revenues.

Fund Financial Statements

The fund financial statements provide information about the Council's major fund. The emphasis of fund financial statements is on the major governmental fund.

The Council reports the following major governmental fund:

The *General Fund* is the Council's primary operating fund. It accounts for all financial resources of the Council that do not require the establishment of any other type of fund.

Measurement Focus, Basis of Accounting, and Financial Statement Presentation

The accounting and financial reporting treatment is determined by the applicable measurement focus and basis of accounting. Measurement focus indicates the type of resources being measured such as *current financial resources* or *economic resources*. The basis of accounting indicates the timing of transactions or events for recognition in the financial statements.

The government-wide financial statements are reported using the *economic resources measurement focus* and the *accrual basis of accounting*. Revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when a liability is incurred, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Grants and similar items are recognized as revenue as soon as all eligibility requirements imposed by the provider have been met.

The governmental fund financial statements are reported using the *current financial resources measurement focus* and the *modified accrual basis of accounting*. Revenues are recognized as soon as they are both measurable and available. Revenues are considered to be available when they are collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to pay liabilities of the current period. For this purpose, the government considers revenues to be available if they are collected within 60 days of the end of the current fiscal period, with the exception of grant and contract fees for which the period is nine months. Expenditures generally are recorded when a liability is incurred, as under accrual accounting. However, debt service expenditures, as well as expenditures related to compensated absences, and claims and judgments, are recorded only when payment is due. General capital asset acquisitions are reported as expenditures in governmental funds. Issuance of long-term debt, financed purchases and acquisitions under leases are reported as other financing sources.

Note 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Measurement Focus, Basis of Accounting, and Financial Statement Presentation (Continued)

License plate revenue and interest associated with the current fiscal period are all considered to be susceptible to accrual and so have been recognized as revenues of the current fiscal period. Entitlements are recorded as revenues when all eligibility requirements are met, including any time requirements, and the amount is received during the period or within the availability period for this revenue source (within 60 days after year-end with the exception of grant and contract fees for which the period is nine months). Expenditure-driven grants are recognized as revenue when the qualifying expenditures have been incurred and all other eligibility requirements have been met, and the amount is received during the period or within the availability period for this revenue source. All other revenue items are considered to be measurable and available only when cash is received by the Council.

Budgetary Information

The annual budget is prepared on a basis consistent with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. A tentative budget is adopted by the Board after appropriate public hearing of each year covering the proposed operations and requirements for the ensuing fiscal year. By September 30, the Board, after the appropriate public hearing, adopts the final budget. Budgetary control is maintained at the program level. The governing body may, at any time within a fiscal year or up to 60 days following the end of the fiscal year, amend a budget for that year by resolution.

Cash and cash equivalents

The Council's cash and cash equivalents are considered to be cash on hand, demand deposits, and short-term investments with original maturities of three months or less from the date of acquisition.

Receivables and payables

Allowance for doubtful accounts - At September 30, 2024, there was no allowance for doubtful accounts since all receivables were deemed collectible by management.

Restricted Assets

Certain assets of the Council are classified as restricted assets on the statement of net position because their use is limited by law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation; or by restrictions imposed externally by creditors, grantors, contributors or laws or regulations of other governments. Special restricted asset accounts have been established to account for the sources and uses of these limited use assets as follows:

Indian River Lagoon specialty license plate accounts – The proceeds from the sale of the specialty license plates can only be spent on projects that enhance the Indian River Lagoon.

Note 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Capital Assets

Capital assets, which include property, plant, equipment, right-to-use assets, and improvements other than buildings are reported in the applicable governmental activities column in the government-wide financial statements. Capital assets, are defined by the Council as assets with an initial, individual cost that equals or exceeds $5,000 and an estimated useful life of over one year are recorded as capital assets. Capital assets are recorded at historical cost or estimated historical cost, if purchased or constructed. Contributed assets are recorded at acquisition value as of the date received. The cost of normal maintenance and repairs that do not add to the value of the asset or materially extend asset lives are not capitalized.

Land and construction in progress are not depreciated. The other capital assets are depreciated using the straight line method over the following estimated useful lives:

Assets	Years
Buildings and improvements	30 - 50
Improvements other than buildings	3 - 20
Machinery and equipment	3 - 20

Deferred Outflows/Inflows of Resources

In addition to assets, the statement of net position will sometimes report a separate section for deferred outflows of resources. This separate financial statement element, deferred outflows of resources, represents a consumption of net position that applies to a future period(s) and so will not be recognized as an outflow of resources (expense/ expenditure) until then.

The Council has two (2) items that qualify for reporting as deferred outflows of resources, the *deferred outflows related to OPEB* and the *deferred outflows related to pensions*, both reported in the government-wide statement of net position. The *deferred outflows related to other postemployment benefits (OPEB)* are an aggregate of items related to OPEB as calculated in accordance with GASB Codification Section P52: *Postemployment Benefits other than Pensions – Reporting Benefits Not Provided through Trusts That Meet Specified Criteria*. The deferred outflows related to OPEB will be recognized as either OPEB expense or a reduction in the OPEB liability in future reporting years. The deferred outflows related to pensions are an aggregate of items related to pensions as calculated in accordance with GASB Codification Section P20: *Pension Activities – Reporting for Benefits Provided through Trusts That Meet Specified Criteria*. The deferred outflows related to pensions will be recognized as either pension expense or a reduction in the net pension liability in future reporting years.

Note 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Deferred Outflows/Inflows of Resources (Continued)

In addition to liabilities, the statement of net position will sometimes report a separate section for deferred inflows of resources. This separate financial statement element, deferred inflows of resources, represents an acquisition of net position that applies to a future period(s) and so will not be recognized as an inflow of resources (revenue) until that time. The Council has two items that qualify for reporting as deferred inflows of resources. The deferred inflows related to pensions are an aggregate of items related to pensions as calculated in accordance with GASB Codification Section P20: *Pension Activities – Reporting for Benefits Provided through Trusts That Meet Specified Criteria.* The deferred inflows related to pensions will be recognized as a reduction to pension expense in future reporting years. The *deferred inflows related to other-post employment benefit* are an aggregate of items related to OPEB, reflecting amounts resulting from experience gains/losses that have not been recognized in the current OPEB expense calculation, but will be potentially reflected in future years as calculated in accordance with GASB Codification Section P52: *Postemployment Benefits Other than Pensions – Reporting Benefits Not Provided through Trusts That Meet Specified Criteria*. The deferred inflows related to other-post employment benefits will be recognized as a reduction to OPEB expense in future reporting years.

Compensated Absences

The Council's policy permits employees to accumulate earned but unused paid time off benefits, which are eligible for payment upon separation from government service. The liability for such leave is reported as incurred in the government-wide financial statements. A liability for those amounts is recorded in the governmental funds only if the liability has matured as a result of employee resignations or retirements. The liability for compensated absences includes salary-related benefits, where applicable.

Upon beginning employment, regular and full-time employees and introductory employees working a full-time schedule will begin to earn paid time off (PTO) according to the schedule below. The amount of PTO accrued by employees throughout each year increases with the length of their employment as shown in the following schedule:

Years of Eligible Service	PTO Hours Biweekly	PTO Hours Each Year
Upon initial eligibility	7.38	192
After five years	8.31	216
After ten years	9.85	256
After twenty years	10.15	264

Note 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Compensated Absences (continued)

The "PTO Year" under this policy and accrual schedule will be based on an employee's anniversary date. PTO is paid at the employee's base pay rate at the time of the absence. It does not include overtime or any special forms of compensation such as incentives, commissions, bonuses, or shift differentials.

In the event that available PTO is not used by the end of an employee's PTO Year, employees may carry as many as 175 hours of unused time forward to the next PTO Year. Accumulation of hours may exceed 175 hours in a PTO Year; however, an employee may only carry 175 hours forward from one PTO Year to the next and all remaining PTO will be forfeited. Upon termination of employment, employees will be paid for unused PTO that has been earned through the last day of work.

Pensions

The Council participates in cost-sharing, multiple-employer, defined benefit pension plans that are administered by the State, the Florida Retirement System. For purposes of measuring the net pension asset or liability, deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions, and pension expense, information about the fiduciary net positions of the state-administered defined benefit pension plans and additions to/deductions from the state-administered defined benefit pension plan's fiduciary net positions have been determined on the same basis as they are reported by the state-administered defined benefit pension plans. For this purpose, plan member contributions are recognized in the period in which the contributions are due. The Council's employer contributions are recognized when due, and the Council has a legal requirement to provide the contributions. Benefits and refunds are recognized when due and payable in accordance with the terms of the state-administered defined benefit pension plan.

Other Postemployment Benefits (OPEB) Liability

The Council participates in a single employer, defined benefit OPEB plan. The Council does not have a trust for the plan, and there is no actuarially determined contribution. The OPEB liability is determined in accordance with GASB Codification Section P52: *Postemployment Benefits other than Pensions – Reporting Benefits Not Provided through Trusts That Meet Specified Criteria*.

Categories and Classification of Net Position and Fund Balance

Net position flow assumption – Sometimes the Council will fund outlays for a particular purpose from both restricted (e.g., restricted bond or grant proceeds) and unrestricted resources. In order to calculate the amounts to report as restricted – net position and unrestricted – net position in the government-wide financial statements, a flow assumption must be made about the order in which the resources are considered to be applied. It is the Council's policy to consider restricted – net position to have been depleted before unrestricted – net position is applied.

Note 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Categories and Classification of Net Position and Fund Balance (Continued)

Fund balance flow assumption – Sometimes the Council will fund outlays for a particular purpose from both restricted and unrestricted resources (the total of committed, assigned, and unassigned fund balance). In order to calculate the amounts to report as restricted, committed, assigned, and unassigned fund balance in the governmental fund financial statements a flow assumption must be made about the order in which the resources are considered to be applied. It is the Council's policy to consider restricted fund balance to have been depleted before using any of the components of unrestricted fund balance. Further, when the components of unrestricted fund balance can be used for the same purpose, committed fund balance is depleted first, followed by assigned fund balance. Unassigned fund balance is applied last.

Fund balance policies – Fund balance of governmental funds is reported in various categories based on the nature of any limitations requiring the use of resources for specific purposes. The Council itself can establish limitations on the use of resources through either a commitment (committed fund balance) or an assignment (assigned fund balance).

The provisions of GASB Statement No. 54, *Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions*, specifies the following classifications:

Nonspendable fund balance – Nonspendable fund balances are amounts that cannot be spent because they are either (a) not in spendable form or (b) legally or contractually required to be maintained intact.

Restricted fund balance – Restricted fund balances are restricted when constraints placed on the use of resources are either: (a) externally imposed by creditors, grantors, contributors, or laws or regulations of other governments; or (b) imposed by law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation.

Committed fund balance – The committed fund balance classification includes amounts that can be used only for the specific purposes determined by a formal action of the Council's highest level of decision-making authority. The Board of Directors (the "Board") is the highest level of decision-making authority for the Council that can, by adoption of a resolution prior to the end of the fiscal year, commit fund balance. Once adopted, the limitation imposed by the resolution remains in place until a similar action is taken (the adoption of another resolution) to remove or revise the limitation.

Assigned fund balance – Amounts in the assigned fund balance classification are intended to be used by the Council for specific purposes but do not meet the criteria to be classified as committed. The Board expressly delegates to the Executive Director authority under this policy to assign funds for particular purposes based on intent which can be expressed by (a) the Board itself or (b) a body (a budget or finance committee, for example) or (c) official (Executive Director) to which the Board has delegated the authority to assign amounts to be used for specific purposes. In other words, an additional action does not normally have to be taken for the removal of an assignment. Conversely, as discussed above, an additional action is essential to either remove or revise a commitment.

Note 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Categories and Classification of Net Position and Fund Balance (Continued)

Unassigned fund balance – Unassigned fund balance is the residual classification for the General Fund.

Revenues and Expenditures/Expenses

Program revenues – Amounts reported as *program revenues* include 1) charges to customers or applicants who purchase, use, or directly benefit from goods, services, or privileges provided by a given function or segment and 2) grants and contributions (including special assessments) that are restricted to meeting the operational or capital requirements of a particular function or segment. Internally dedicated resources are reported as general revenues rather than as program revenues.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make various estimates. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Subsequent Events

Management has evaluated subsequent events through the date that the financial statements were available to be issued, May 2, 2025, and there were no events that occurred that required disclosure. No subsequent events occurring after this date have been evaluated for inclusion in these financial statements.

Recently Issued and Implemented Accounting Pronouncements

The Council implemented the following standard during the current year.

GASB Statement No. 100, Accounting Changes and Error Corrections. This Statement establishes accounting and financial reporting requirements for (a) accounting changes and (b) the correction of an error in previously issued financial statements (error correction). This Statement defines accounting changes as changes in accounting principles, changes in accounting estimates, and changes to or within the financial reporting entity and describes the transactions or other events that constitute those changes. This Statement prescribes the accounting and financial reporting for (1) each type of accounting change and (2) error corrections. This Statement requires that (a) changes in accounting principles and error corrections be reported retroactively by restating prior periods, (b) changes to or within the financial reporting entity be reported by adjusting beginning balances of the current period, and (c) changes in accounting estimates be reported prospectively by recognizing the change in the current period. This Statement requires disclosure in notes to financial statements of descriptive information about accounting changes and error corrections, such as their nature. In addition, information about the quantitative effects on beginning balances of each accounting change and error correction should be disclosed by reporting unit in a tabular format to reconcile beginning balances as previously reported to beginning balances as restated.

Note 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Recently Issued and Implemented Accounting Pronouncements (continued)

Furthermore, this Statement addresses how information that is affected by a change in accounting principle or error correction should be presented in required supplementary information (RSI) and supplementary information (SI). There were no significant impacts of implementing this Statement.

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board has issued statements that will become effective in future years. These statements are as follows:

GASB Statement No. 101, Compensated Absences. The objective of this Statement is to better meet the information needs of financial statement users by updating the recognition and measurement guidance for compensated absences. That objective is achieved by aligning the recognition and measurement guidance under a unified model and by amending certain previously required disclosures. The requirements of this Statement are effective for fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2023, and all reporting periods thereafter.

GASB Statement No. 102, Certain Risk Disclosures. This Statement was issued in December 2023 to provide users of government financial statements with essential information about risks related to a government's vulnerabilities due to certain concentrations or constraints. This statement defines a concentration as a lack of diversity related to an aspect of a significant inflow of resources or outflow of resources. A constraint is a limitation imposed on a government by an external party or by formal action of the government's highest level of decision-making authority. Concentrations and constraints may limit a government's ability to acquire resources or control spending. This Statement requires a government to assess whether a concentration or constraint makes the primary government reporting unit or other reporting units that report a liability for revenue debt vulnerable to the risk of a substantial impact. Additionally, this Statement requires a government to assess whether an event or events associated with a concentration or constraint that could cause the substantial impact have occurred, have begun to occur, or are more likely than not to begin to occur within 12 months of the date the financial statements are issued. If a government determines that those criteria for disclosure have been met for a concentration or constraint, it should disclose information in notes to financial statements in sufficient detail to enable users of financial statements to understand the nature of the circumstances disclosed and the government's vulnerability to the risk of a substantial impact. Statement 102 will be effective for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025.

GASB Statement 103, Financial Reporting Model Improvements. This Statement was issued April 2024 to improve key components of the financial reporting model to enhance its effectiveness in providing information that is essential for decision making and assessing a government's accountability. This Statement also addresses certain application issues. This establishes new accounting and financial reporting requirements—or modifies existing requirements—related to Management's discussion and analysis (MD&A); unusual or infrequent items; presentation of the proprietary fund statement of revenues, expenses, and changes in fund net position; information about major component units in basic financial statements; budgetary comparison information; and financial trends information in the statistical section. This Statement will supersede and amend portions of GASB Statements 34 and 37.

Note 1 – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Recently Issued and Implemented Accounting Pronouncements (Continued)

This Statement further amends portions of GASB Statements 14, 41, 42, 44, 49, 56, 58, 61, 62 and 69. Related guidance will also be superseded or amended upon implementation. Statement 103 will be effective for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026.

GASB Statement 104, Disclosure of Certain Capital Assets. This Statement was issued September 2024 to provide users of government financial statements with essential information about certain types of capital assets. This requires certain types of capital assets to be disclosed separately in the capital assets note disclosures required by Statement 34. Lease assets recognized in accordance with Statement No. 87, Leases, and intangible right-to-use assets recognized in accordance with Statement No. 94, Public-Private and Public-Public Partnerships and Availability Payment Arrangements, should be disclosed separately by major class of underlying asset in the capital assets note disclosures. Subscription assets recognized in accordance with Statement No. 96, Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements, also should be separately disclosed. In addition, this Statement requires intangible assets other than those three types to be disclosed separately by major class. This Statement also requires additional disclosures for capital assets held for sale. A capital asset is a capital asset held for sale if (a) the government has decided to pursue the sale of the capital asset and (b) it is probable that the sale will be finalized within one year of the financial statement date. Governments should consider relevant factors to evaluate the likelihood of the capital asset being sold within the established time frame. This Statement requires that capital assets held for sale be evaluated each reporting period.

Governments should disclose (1) the ending balance of capital assets held for sale, with separate disclosure for historical cost and accumulated depreciation by major class of asset, and (2) the carrying amount of debt for which the capital assets held for sale are pledged as collateral for each major class of asset. Statement 104 will be effective for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026.

The Council is evaluating the requirements of the above statements and the impact on reporting.

Note 2: DETAILED NOTES ON ALL FUNDS

Deposits and Investments

As of September 30, 2024, $250,000 of the Council's bank balances is covered by federal depository insurance (FDIC). Monies invested in amounts greater than the insurance coverage are secured by the qualified public depositories pledging securities with the State Treasurer in such amounts required by the Florida Security for Public Depositories Act. In the event of a default or insolvency of a qualified public depositor, the State Treasurer will implement procedures for payment of losses according to the validated claims of the Council pursuant to Section 280.08, Florida Statutes.

The Council does not have a formal written investment policy, and therefore, adheres to Section 218.415(17), Florida Statutes, which allows the Council to invest in the following:

Note 2: DETAILED NOTES ON ALL FUNDS (Continued)

Deposits and Investments (Continued)

1. The Local Government Surplus Funds Trust Fund, or any intergovernmental investment pool authorized pursuant to the Florida Interlocal Cooperation Act of 1969 as provided in Section 163.01, Florida Statutes;
2. Securities and Exchange Commission registered money market funds with the highest credit quality rating from a nationally recognized rating agency;
3. Interest-bearing time deposits or savings accounts in qualified public depositories as defined in Section 280.02, Florida Statutes; and
4. Direct obligations of the U.S. Treasury.

Custodial credit risk – Custodial credit risk for deposits is the risk in the event of the failure of a depository financial institution a government may not be able to recover deposits. Monies placed on deposit with financial institutions in the form of demand deposits, time deposits or certificate of deposits are defined as public deposits. The financial institutions in which the Council places its deposits are certified as "qualified public depositories," as required under the Florida Security for Public Deposits Act. For an investment, this is the risk that, in the event of the failure of the counterparty, the Council will not be able to recover the value of its investments or collateral securities that are in the possession of an outside party.

Interest rate risk – Interest rate risk is the possibility that interest rates will rise and reduce the fair value of an investment.

Credit risk – Section I50: *Investments* of the GASB Codification requires that governments provide information about credit risk associated with their investments by disclosing the credit rating of investments in debt securities as described by nationally recognized statistical rating organizations.

Concentration risk – Section I50: *Investments* of the GASB Codification requires disclosures of investments in any one issuer that represents five percent or more of total investments, excluding investments issued or explicitly guaranteed by the U.S government, investments in mutual funds, external investments pools and other pooled investments.

As of September 30, 2024, the Council had no investments.

Note 2: DETAILED NOTES ON ALL FUNDS (Continued)

Deposits and Investments (Continued)

Capital Assets

The following is a summary of changes in capital assets during the year ended September 30, 2024.

	Beginning Balance	Increases	Decreases	Ending Balance
Governmental activities:				
Capital assets, being depreciated:				
Machinery and equipment	$ 23,209	$ -	$ -	$ 23,209
Total capital assets, being depreciated	23,209	-	-	23,209
Less accumulated depreciation for:				
Machinery and equipment	(13,733)	(2,321)	-	(16,054)
Total accumulated depreciation	(13,733)	(2,321)	-	(16,054)
Total capital assets, being depreciated, net	9,476	(2,321)	-	7,155
Governmental activities capital assets, net	$ 9,476	$ (2,321)	$ -	$ 7,155

Depreciation expense of $2,321 was allocated to the physical environment function in the statement of activities.

Changes In Long-Term Liabilities

Long-term liability activity for the year ended September 30, 2024, was as follows for governmental activities:

	Beginning Balance	Additions	Reductions	Ending Balance	Due Within One Year
Governmental activities:					
Net pension liability	$ 751,752	$ -	$ 40,997	$ 710,755	$ -
OPEB	4,174	-	111	4,063	-
Compensated absences	43,893	63,504	51,657	55,740	50,166
Total long-term liabilities	$ 799,819	$ 63,504	$ 92,765	$ 770,558	$ 50,166

Note 3: RETIREMENT PLANS

Florida Retirement System

Plan description. The Council participates in two defined benefit pension plans that are administered by the State of Florida, Department of Management Services, Division of Retirement. The plans provide retirement, disability or death benefits to retirees or their designated beneficiaries. Chapter 121, Florida Statutes, establishes the authority for benefit provisions. Changes to the law can only occur through an act of the Florida Legislature. The State of Florida issues a publicly available financial report that includes financial statements and required supplementary information for the plans. That report is available from the Florida Department of Management Services' website (www.dms.myflorida.com).

The Florida Retirement System (FRS) Pension Plan is a cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan with a Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) available for eligible employees. The FRS was established and is administered in accordance with Chapter 121, Florida Statutes. Retirees receive a lifetime pension benefit with joint and survivor payment options.

FRS membership is compulsory for employees filling regularly established positions in a state agency, county agency, state university, state college, or district school board, unless restricted from FRS membership under Sections 121.053 or 121.122, Florida Statutes, or allowed to participate in a defined contribution plan in lieu of FRS membership. Participation by cities, municipalities, special districts, charter schools and metropolitan planning organizations is optional.

The Retiree Health Insurance Subsidy (HIS) Program is a cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan established and administered in accordance with Section 112.363, Florida Statutes. The benefit is a monthly payment to assist retirees and surviving beneficiaries of the state-administered retirement systems in paying their health insurance costs. To be eligible to receive a HIS benefit, a retiree under a state administered retirement system must provide proof of eligible health insurance coverage, which can include Medicare.

Benefits provided. Benefits under the FRS Pension Plan are computed on the basis of age and/or years of service, average final compensation, and service credit. Credit for each year of service is expressed as a percentage of the average final compensation. For members initially enrolled before July 1, 2011, the average final compensation is the average of the five highest fiscal years' earnings; for members initially enrolled on or after July 1, 2011, the average final compensation is the average of the eight highest fiscal years' earnings. The total percentage value of the benefit received is determined by calculating the total value of all service, which is based on the retirement plan and/or class to which the member belonged when the service credit was earned.

Eligible retirees and beneficiaries receive a monthly HIS payment equal to the number of years of service credited at retirement multiplied by $5. The minimum payment is $30 and the maximum payment is $150 per month, pursuant to Section 112.363, Florida Statutes.

Contributions. The contribution requirements of plan members and the employer are established and amended by the Florida Legislature. Employees are required to contribute 3.00% of their salary to the FRS Pension Plan.

Note 3: RETIREMENT PLANS (Continued)

Florida Retirement System (Continued)

The employer's contribution rates as of September 30, 2024, were as follows:

	FRS	HIS
Regular class	13.63%	2.00%
Senior management service class	34.52%	2.00%

The employer's contributions for the year ended September 30, 2024, were $98,674 to the FRS and $12,795 to the HIS.

Pension liabilities and pension expense. In its financial statements for the year ended September 30, 2024, the Council reported a liability for its proportionate share of the net pension liability of the FRS Pension Plan and its proportionate share of the net pension liability of the HIS Program. The net pension liabilities were measured as of June 30, 2024. The Council's proportions of the net pension liabilities were based on its share of contributions to the pension plans relative to the contributions of all participating entities, actuarially determined.

	FRS	HIS
Net pension liability	$ 487,959	$ 222,796
Proportion at:		
Current measurement date	0.0013%	0.0015%
Prior measurement date	0.0014%	0.0013%
Change in proportionate share	-0.0001%	0.0002%
Pension expense	$ 96,781	$ 24,847

Deferred outflows/inflows of resources related to pensions. At September 30, 2024, the Council reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions from the following sources:

	FRS		HIS	
	Deferred Outflows of Resources	Deferred Inflows of Resources	Deferred Outflows of Resources	Deferred Inflows of Resources
Differences between expected and actual experience	$ 49,297	$ -	$ 2,151	$ 428
Changes in assumptions	66,879	-	3,943	26,376
Net differences between projected and actual investment earnings	-	32,432	-	81
Changes in proportion and differences between employer contributions and proportionate share of contributions	76,496	42,982	71,444	3,680
Contributions subsequent to the measurement date	16,923	-	2,980	-
Total	$ 209,595	$ 75,414	$ 80,518	$ 30,565

Note 3: RETIREMENT PLANS (Continued)

Florida Retirement System (Continued)

Deferred outflows of resources related to employer contributions paid subsequent to the measurement date and prior to the employer's fiscal year end will be recognized as a reduction of the net pension liability in the reporting period ending September 30, 2025.

Other pension-related amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources will be recognized in pension expense as follows:

Year Ending September 30:	FRS	HIS
2025	$ (10,387)	$ 7,621
2026	112,835	9,403
2027	8,226	13,698
2028	389	9,577
2029	6,195	5,218
Thereafter	-	1,456
Total	$ 117,258	$ 46,973

Actuarial assumptions. The total pension liability for each of the defined benefit plans was measured as of June 30, 2024. The total pension liability for the FRS Pension Plan was determined by an actuarial valuation dated July 1, 2024. For the HIS Program, the total pension liability was determined by an actuarial valuation dated July 1, 2024.

The individual entry age normal actuarial cost method was used for each plan, along with the following significant actuarial assumptions:

	FRS	HIS
Inflation	2.40%	2.40%
Payroll growth, including inflation	3.50%	3.25%
Investment rate of return	6.70%	N/A
Discount rate	6.70%	3.93%

Morality assumptions for both plans were based on the PUB-2010 base tables projected generationally with Scale MP-2021. For the both plans, the actuarial assumptions were based on the results of an actuarial experience study of the FRS for the period July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2023.

Note 3: RETIREMENT PLANS (Continued)

Florida Retirement System (Continued)

The following changes in key actuarial assumptions occurred in 2024:

FRS and HIS: The payroll assumed growth rate, including inflation, increased from 3.25% to 3.50%.

HIS: The municipal bond index rate and the discount rate used to determine the total pension liability increased from 3.65% to 3.93%.

The long-term expected investment rate of return assumption for the FRS Pension Plan was based on two building block components: 1) a long-term average annual inflation assumption of 2.40% and 2) an inferred real (in excess of inflation) return of 4.20%. Geometrically combining those building blocks using the formula (1 + .024) x (1 + .042) - 1 generates an expected nominal return of 6.70%. In the opinion of the FRS consulting actuary, both building block components and the overall 6.70% return assumption were determined to be reasonable and appropriate per Actuarial Standards of Practice. The 6.70% reported investment return assumption is the same as the investment return assumption chosen by the 2023 FRS Actuarial Assumption Conference for funding policy purposes. Each asset class assumption is based on a consistent set of underlying assumptions.

For the FRS Pension Plan, the table below summarizes the consulting actuary's assumptions based on the long-term target asset allocation. Each asset class assumption is based on a consistent set of underlying real return assumptions from the FRS consulting actuary's model combined with the FRS Actuarial Assumption Conference's 2.4% inflation assumption. The FRS consulting actuary's assumptions are not based on historical returns, but instead are based on a forward-looking capital market economic model.

Asset Class	Target Allocation	Annual Arithmetic Return	Compound Annual (Geometric) Return
Cash	1.0%	3.3%	3.3%
Fixed income	29.0%	5.7%	5.6%
Global equity	45.0%	8.6%	7.0%
Real estate	12.0%	8.1%	6.8%
Private equity	11.0%	12.4%	6.8%
Strategic investments	2.0%	6.6%	6.2%
Total	100%		

Discount rate. The discount rate used to measure the total pension liability for the FRS Pension Plan was 6.70%. FRS' fiduciary net position was projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments of current active and inactive employees. Therefore, the discount rate for calculating the total pension liability is equal to the long-term expected rate of return.

Note 3: RETIREMENT PLANS (Continued)

Florida Retirement System (Continued)

Because the HIS Program is essentially funded on a pay-as-you-go basis, a municipal bond rate of 3.93% was used to determine the total pension liability for the program. The Bond Buyer General Obligation Bond 20-Bond Municipal Bond Index was used as the applicable municipal bond index.

Sensitivity analysis. The following tables demonstrate the sensitivity of the net pension liability to changes in the discount rate. The sensitivity analysis shows the impact to the employer's proportionate share of the net pension liability if the discount rate was 1.00% higher or 1.00% lower than the current discount rate.

	FRS			HIS		
	1% Decrease (5.70%)	Discount Rate (6.70%)	1% Increase (7.70%)	1% Decrease (2.93%)	Discount Rate (3.93%)	1% Increase (4.93%)
Council's proportionate share of the net pension liability	$ 858,303	$ 487,959	$ 177,718	$ 253,625	$ 222,796	$ 197,204

Pension plans' fiduciary net position. Detailed information about the pension plans' fiduciary net position is available in the State's separately issued financial reports.

Payables to the pension plans. As of September 30, 2024, the Council did not have a payable to the pension plans.

Note 4: POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS OTHER THAN PENSIONS

Plan Description

The Council follows Section P52: *Postemployment Benefits Other than Pensions* (OPEB) of the GASB Codification, for certain postemployment healthcare benefits provided by the Council.

The Council participates in the Brevard County, Florida (the "County") healthcare plan. The Brevard County Board of County Commissioners (the "Board") administers a single-employer defined benefit healthcare plan (the "Plan") that provides medical insurance to its employees and their eligible dependents. Pursuant to Section 112.0801 Florida Statutes, the Council is required to provide eligible retirees (as defined in the County's pension plans) the opportunity to participate in this Plan at the same cost that is applicable to active employees. Eligible retirees must be drawing an immediate benefit from their respective pension plan and be enrolled in medical coverage prior to retirement. Surviving spouses of participants are allowed access to the Plan, but must pay the full premium. Benefit provisions for the Plan were established by the Board on May 12, 1987 and may only be amended by the Board. The Council does not issue stand-along financial statements for this Plan. All financial information related to the Plan is accounted for in the Council's basic financial statements.

Note 4: POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS OTHER THAN PENSIONS (Continued)

Plan Description (Continued)

Employees who are active participants in the Plan at the time of retirement and are either age 62 with completion of six years of service or have 30 years of service are eligible to receive benefits. The Council has 8 active participants. Of the total, none are eligible to receive benefits.

Benefit provisions can only be amended by the Board. On at least an annual basis, and prior to the enrollment process, the Board approves the rates for the coming year for the retiree, employee and County contributions. Neither the County nor the Council has established a trust or agency fund for the Plan. Neither the County nor the Council issues stand-alone financial statements for this Plan. All financial information related to the Plan is accounted for in the Council's basic financial statements.

Funding Policy

The Plan is funded on a pay-as-you-go basis. The maximum employer contribution target is 56% of the annual premium cost of the Plan. The annual premium costs are between $1,319 and $1,466 for retirees and spouses under age 65 and between $165 and $508 for retirees and spouses over age 65. Employees hired prior to January 1, 2006 are eligible to receive 100% of the earned percentage of benefits for their lifetime upon attainment of age 62 and completion of six years of service or upon completing 30 years of service, if earlier. Employees hired on or after January 1, 2006 are eligible to receive a graduated earned percentage of benefits upon retirement based on years of service.

The Council has opted to not fund the total OPEB obligation or the resulting unfunded actuarial accrued liability on an annual basis.

Plan Membership

At October 1, 2024, OPEB membership consisted of the following:

Inactive employees currently receiving benefit payments	-
Inactive employees entitled to but not yet receiving benefit payments	-
Active employees	8
Total	8

Note 4: POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS OTHER THAN PENSIONS (Continued)

Actuarial Assumptions and Other Inputs

In the September 30, 2024 measurement date, the actuarial assumptions and other inputs, applied include the following:

Inflation	100.00 percent rate of medical inflation
Salary increases	2.00 percent projected annual salary increase
Discount rate	4.06 percent investment rate of return
Health care cost trend rates	8.00 percent reducing to an ultimate 4.50 percent
Retirees' share of benefit-related costs	56.00 percent of annual premium cost

The discount rate used is the S&P Municipal Bond 20-Year High Grade Index as of September 30, 2024.

Projections of benefits for financial reporting purposes are based on the substantive Plan (the Plan as understood by the employer and the Plan members) and include types of benefits provided at the time of each valuation and historical pattern of sharing of benefit costs between the employer and Plan members to that point. The actuarial methods and assumptions used include techniques that are designed to reduce the effects of short-term volatility in actuarial accrued liabilities and the actuarial value of assets, consistent with the long-term perspective of the calculations.

Changes since last valuation	• Health care trend rates have been updated to an initial rate of 8.00%/6.50% decreasing by 0.50%/0.25% annually to an ultimate rate of 4.50%.
	• The discount rate has been updated from 4.77% as of September 30, 2023 to 4.06% as of September 30, 2024 based on a yield for 20-year tax exempt general obligation municipal bonds with an average rating of AA/Aa or higher (or equivalent quality on another rating scale).

Note 4: POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS OTHER THAN PENSIONS (Continued)

Change in OPEB Liability

	Total OPEB Liability (a)	Plan Fiduciary Net Position (b)	OPEB Liability (a) - (b)
Balance as of October 1, 2022 for FYE 2023	$ 4,174	$ -	$ 4,174
Changes for the year:			
Service cost	807	-	807
Interest	(51)	-	(51)
Changes of assumptions	363	-	363
Difference between expected and actual experience	(826)	-	(826)
Benefit payments	(404)		(404)
Net changes	(111)	-	(111)
Balance as of October 1, 2023 for FYE 2024	$ 4,063	$ -	$ 4,063

Sensitivity of the OPEB Liability

The following table represents the Council's total OPEB liability calculated using the discount rate of 4.06%, as well as what the Council's total OPEB liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is one percentage point lower (3.06%) or one percentage point higher (5.06%) than the current rate:

	1% Decrease (3.06%)	Current Discount Rate (4.06%)	1% Increase (5.06%)
Total OPEB Liability	$ 4,462	$ 4,063	$ 3,716

The following table represents the Council's total OPEB liability calculated using the current health care cost trend rate, as well as what the Council's total OPEB liability would be if it were calculated using a health care cost trend rate that is one percentage point lower or one percentage point higher than the current rate:

	1% Decrease (7.00%)	Current Trend Rate (8.00%)	1% Increase (9.00%)
Total OPEB Liability	$ 3,705	$ 4,063	$ 4,474

Note 4: POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS OTHER THAN PENSIONS (Continued)

OPEB Expense and Deferred Outflows of Resources Related to OPEB

For the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024, the Council recognized OPEB expense of $438. In addition, the Council reported deferred outflows related to the OPEB plan from the following sources.

	Deferred Outflows of Resources	Deferred Inflows of Resources
Difference between expected and actual experience	$ 778	$ 759
Changes of assumptions	1,871	413
Total	$ 2,649	$ 1,172

Amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources related to the OPEB plan will be recognized in the expense as follows:

Year ending September 30	
2025	$ 169
2026	169
2027	232
2028	345
2029	211
Thereafter	351
Total	$ 1,477

Note 5: RISK MANAGEMENT

The Council is exposed to various risks of loss related to torts; theft of, damage to, and destruction of assets; errors and omissions; and natural disasters. In order to limit its exposure to these risks, the Council is a participant in the Preferred Governmental Insurance Trust for general and auto liability. The insurance program purchases excess and specific coverages from third party carriers. Participants in the program are billed annually for their portion of the cost of the program adjusted for actual experience during the period of coverage. Participants are not assessed for unanticipated losses incurred by the program. There have been no significant reductions in insurance coverage during the year ended September 30, 2024. Settled claims resulting from the risks described above have not exceeded the insurance coverage for the past three fiscal years.

Note 6: COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES

During the ordinary course of its operation, the Council is party to various claims, legal actions, and complaints. While the ultimate effect of such litigation cannot be ascertained at this time, in the opinion of counsel for the Council, the liabilities which may arise from such actions would not result in losses which would exceed the liability insurance limits in effect at the time the claim arose or otherwise materially affect the financial condition of the Council or results of activities.

Amounts received or receivable from grantor agencies are subject to audit and adjustment by grantor agencies, principally the federal and state governments. Any disallowed claims, including amounts already collected, may constitute a liability of the applicable fund(s). The amount, if any, of expenditures from current or prior years which may be disallowed by the grantor cannot be determined at this time although the Council expects such amounts not recorded, if any, to be immaterial.

REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION OTHER THAN MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

IRL Council
Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in General Fund Balances – Budget and Actual

Year ended September 30, 2024	Original Budget	Final Budget	Actual (Budgetary Basis)	Variance with Final Budget Positive (Negative)
Revenues				
Member contributions	$ 1,500,000	$ 1,500,000	$ 950,000	$ (550,000)
Federal grants	800,000	850,000	835,948	(14,052)
Federal infrastructure	909,800	909,800	737,884	(171,916)
State specialty license plates	125,000	125,000	134,728	9,728
Miscellaneous revenue	-	-	144,741	144,741
Total revenues	3,334,800	3,384,800	2,803,301	(581,499)
Expenditures				
Category:				
Physical environment:				
Other Expenditures	2,473,509	4,735,025	2,668,045	2,066,980
Salaries and benefits	642,386	669,020	709,775	(40,755)
Facilities expenses	29,500	40,500	35,587	4,913
Administrative costs	66,000	71,000	51,300	19,700
Administrative services	123,405	123,405	75,716	47,689
Total expenditures	3,334,800	5,638,950	3,540,423	2,098,527
Net change in fund balances	-	(2,254,150)	(737,122)	1,517,028
Fund balances, beginning of the year	3,261,090	3,261,090	3,261,090	-
Fund balances, end of year	$ 3,261,090	$ 1,006,940	$ 2,523,968	$ 1,517,028

Note that this schedule is prepared on a budgetary basis, but is not different from Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) in the presentation.

IRL Council
Budgetary Notes to Required Supplementary Information

Note A – BUDGETARY INFORMATION

The Council adheres to the following procedures in establishing the budgetary data reflected in the budgetary schedule:

a) A tentative budget is adopted by the Board after appropriate public hearing of each year covering the proposed operations and requirements for the ensuing fiscal year.

b) By September 30th, the Board, after the appropriate public hearing, adopts the final budget.

c) The governing body may, at any time within a fiscal year or up to 60 days following the end of the fiscal year, amend a budget for that year by resolution.

d) Budgetary control is maintained at the program level.

e) The budget is prepared on a basis consistent with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

f) The budgetary comparison schedule shown in the accompanying required supplementary information presents comparisons of the legally adopted budget, as amended, with actual results. The originally adopted budget is presented for purposes of comparison to the final, amended budget.

IRL Council
Schedule of Proportionate Share of Net Pension Liability
Last Nine Years

Florida Retirement System (FRS)

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Council's proportion of the net pension liability	**0.0013%**	0.0014%	0.0010%	0.0011%	0.0010%	0.0009%	0.0009%	0.0005%	0.0002%
Council's proportionate share of the net pension liability	**$ 487,959**	$ 552,477	$ 386,245	$ 84,619	$ 450,091	$ 293,286	$ 266,318	$ 149,337	$ 56,891
Council's covered payroll	**$ 628,558**	$ 497,112	$ 303,581	$ 308,696	$ 298,489	$ 225,451	$ 245,034	$ 240,048	$ 123,487
Council's proportionate share of the net pension liability as a percentage of its covered payroll	**77.63%**	111.14%	127.23%	27.41%	150.79%	130.09%	108.69%	62.21%	46.07%
Plan fiduciary net position as a percentage of the total pension liability	**83.70%**	82.38%	82.89%	96.40%	78.85%	82.61%	84.26%	83.89%	84.88%

Health Insurance Subsidy (HIS)

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Council's proportion of the net pension liability	**0.0015%**	0.0013%	0.0008%	0.0009%	0.0009%	0.0007%	0.0008%	0.0008%	0.0004%
Council's proportionate share of the net pension liability	**$ 222,796**	$ 199,275	$ 88,230	$ 106,958	$ 104,987	$ 75,410	$ 79,387	$ 80,508	$ 46,610
Council's covered payroll	**$ 628,558**	$ 497,112	$ 303,581	$ 308,696	$ 298,489	$ 225,451	$ 245,034	$ 240,048	$ 123,487
Council's proportionate share of the net pension liability as a percentage of its covered payroll	**35.45%**	40.09%	29.06%	34.65%	35.17%	33.45%	32.40%	33.54%	37.74%
Plan fiduciary net position as a percentage of the total pension liability	**4.80%**	4.12%	4.81%	3.56%	3.00%	2.63%	2.15%	1.64%	0.97%

Note 1: GASB 68 requires information for 10 years. However, until a full 10-year trend is compiled, the Council is presenting information for only the years for which information is available.

Note 2: The Plan's fiduciary net position as a percentage of the total pension liability is published in Note 4 of the Plan's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

Note 3: Amounts presented for each fiscal year were determined as of 6/30.

IRL Council
Schedule of Contributions
Last Nine Years

Florida Retirement System (FRS)

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Contractually required contribution	**$ 71,427**	$ 79,092	$ 48,215	$ 42,878	$ 34,504	$ 26,407	$ 25,198	$ 13,139	$ 5,495
Contributions in relation to the contractually required contributions	**71,427**	79,092	48,215	42,878	34,504	26,407	25,198	13,139	5,495
Contribution deficiency (excess)	**$ -**	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Council's covered payroll	**$ 639,594**	$ 553,826	$ 306,931	$ 300,285	$ 298,489	$ 225,451	$ 245,034	$ 240,048	$ 123,487
Contributions as a percentage of covered payroll	**11.17%**	14.28%	15.71%	14.28%	11.56%	11.71%	10.28%	5.47%	4.45%

Health Insurance Subsidy (HIS)

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Contractually required contribution	**$ 12,574**	$ 9,665	$ 5,096	$ 4,985	$ 4,955	$ 3,742	$ 4,068	$ 3,985	$ 2,050
Contributions in relation to the contractually required contributions	**12,574**	9,665	5,096	4,985	4,955	3,742	4,068	3,985	2,050
Contribution deficiency (excess)	**$ -**	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Council's covered payroll	**$ 639,594**	$ 553,826	$ 306,931	$ 300,285	$ 298,489	$ 225,451	$ 245,034	$ 240,048	$ 123,487
Contributions as a percentage of covered payroll	**1.97%**	1.75%	1.66%	1.66%	1.66%	1.66%	1.66%	1.66%	1.66%

Note 1: GASB 68 requires information for 10 years. However, until a full 10-year trend is compiled, the Council is presenting information for only the years for which information is available.

IRL Council
Schedule of Changes in Total OPEB Liability and Related Ratios
Last Seven Years

September 30,	**2024**	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total OPEB liability							
Service cost	**$ 807**	$ 829	$ 386	$ 427	$ 1,546	$ 1,455	$ 2,839
Interest	**(51)**	173	46	44	156	101	69
Changes of assumptions	**363**	1,325	(445)	(87)	710	188	(109)
Differences between expected and actual experience	**(826)**	-	961	(443)	(4,624)	153	(2,310)
Benefit Payments	**(404)**	(870)	(240)	-	-	-	-
Net change in total OPEB liability	**(111)**	1,457	708	(59)	(2,212)	1,897	489
Total OPEB liability - beginning	**4,174**	2,717	2,009	2,068	4,280	2,383	1,894
Total OPEB liability - ending	**$ 4,063**	$ 4,174	$ 2,717	$ 2,009	$ 2,068	$ 4,280	$ 2,383
Covered-employee payroll	**$ 639,594**	$ 553,826	$ 306,931	$ 300,285	$ 298,489	$ 225,451	$ 245,034
Total OPEB liability as a percentage of covered payroll	**0.64%**	0.75%	0.89%	0.67%	0.69%	1.90%	0.97%

Note 1: GASB 75 requires an employer to disclose a 10-year history. However, until a full 10-year trend is compiled, information will be presented only for those years for which information is available.

Note 2: The following rates were used for each period:							
Discount rate	4.06%	4.77%	4.77%	2.43%	2.14%	3.64%	4.24%

Note 3: No assets are accumulated in a trust that meets the criteria in GASB 75 paragraph 4

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

CARR, RIGGS & INGRAM, L.L.C.

Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C.
7506 Lynx Way
Suite 201
Melbourne, FL 32940

321.255.0088
386.336.4189 (fax)
CRIadv.com

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS BASED ON AN AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH *GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS*

To the Board of Directors
Indian River Lagoon Council

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the financial statements of the governmental activities, and each major fund of the Indian River Lagoon Council (the "Council"), as of and for the year ended September 30, 2024, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Council's basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated May 2, 2025.

Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered the Council's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Council's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Council's internal control.

A *deficiency in internal control* exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements, on a timely basis. A *material weakness* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. A *significant deficiency* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or, significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified.

Report on Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Council's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C.

Melbourne, Florida
May 2, 2025

CARR, RIGGS & INGRAM, L.L.C.

Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C.
7506 Lynx Way
Suite 201
Melbourne, FL 32940

321.255.0088
386.336.4189 (fax)
CRIadv.com

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON COMPLIANCE FOR THE MAJOR PROGRAM AND ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER COMPLIANCE REQUIRED BY THE UNIFORM GUIDANCE

To the Board of Directors
Indian River Lagoon Council

Report on Compliance for Each Major Federal Program

Opinion on Each Major Federal Program

We have audited Indian River Lagoon Council's (the "Council") compliance with the types of compliance requirements identified as subject to audit in the OMB *Compliance Supplement* that could have a direct and material effect on each of the Council's major federal programs for the year ended September 30, 2024. The Council's major federal programs are identified in the summary of auditor's results section of the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs.

In our opinion, the Council complied, in all material respects, with the compliance requirements referred to above that could have a direct and material effect on each of its major federal program for the year ended September 30, 2024.

Basis for Opinion on the Major Federal Program

We conducted our audit of compliance in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and the audit requirements of Title 2 U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance). Our responsibilities under those standards and the Uniform Guidance are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance section of our report.

We are required to be independent of the Council and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion on compliance for each major federal program. Our audit does not provide a legal determination of the Council's compliance with the compliance requirements referred to above.

Responsibilities of Management for Compliance

Management is responsible for compliance with the requirements referred to above and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of effective internal control over compliance with the requirements of laws, statutes, regulations, rules, and provisions of contracts or grant agreements applicable to the Council's federal program.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether material noncompliance with the compliance requirements referred to above occurred, whether due to fraud or error, and express an opinion on the Council 's compliance based on our audit. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance will always detect material noncompliance when it exists. The risk of not detecting material noncompliance resulting from fraud is higher than for that resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Noncompliance with the compliance requirements referred to above is considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, it would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user of the report on compliance about the Council 's compliance with the requirements of each major federal program as a whole.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material noncompliance, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the Council's compliance with the compliance requirements referred to above and performing such other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.
- Obtain an understanding of the Council 's internal control over compliance relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances and to test and report on internal control over compliance in accordance with the Uniform Guidance, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Council's internal control over compliance. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and any significant deficiencies and material weaknesses in internal control over compliance that we identified during the audit.

Report on Internal Control over Compliance

Our consideration of internal control over compliance was for the limited purpose described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance section above and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control over compliance that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal control over compliance and therefore, material weaknesses or significant

deficiencies may exist that were not identified. However, as discussed below, we did identify a certain deficiency in internal control over compliance that we consider to be a material weakness.

A *deficiency in internal control over compliance* exists when the design or operation of a control over compliance does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, noncompliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program on a timely basis. A *material weakness in internal control over compliance* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control over compliance, such that there is a reasonable possibility that material noncompliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. We consider the deficiency in internal control over compliance described in the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs as item 2024-001 to be a material weakness.

A *significant deficiency in internal control over compliance* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control over compliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program that is less severe than a material weakness in internal control over compliance, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance. We consider the deficiencies in internal control over compliance described in the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs as items 2024-002 and 2024-003 to be significant deficiencies.

Our audit was not designed for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over compliance. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.

Government Auditing Standards requires the auditor to perform limited procedures on the Council's response to the internal control over compliance findings identified in our compliance audit described in the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs. The Council's response was not subjected to the other auditing procedures applied in the audit of compliance and, accordingly, we express no opinion on the response.

The purpose of this report on internal control over compliance is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over compliance and the results of that testing based on the requirements of the Uniform Guidance. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose.

Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C.

Melbourne, Florida
May 2, 2025

IRL Council
Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards and Notes to Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards
For the Year Ended September 30, 2024

Section I-Summary of Auditor's Results

Financial Statements

1. Type of Auditor's report issued:	Unmodified
2. Internal control over major financial reporting:	
a. Material weakness identified?	No
b. Significant deficiencies identified not considered to be material weaknesses?	None noted
c. Noncompliance material to the financial statements noted?	No

Federal Awards

1. Type of Auditor's report issued on compliance for major federal programs	Unmodified
2. Internal control over major programs:	
a. Material weakness identified?	Yes
b. Significant deficiency identified not considered to be material weaknesses?	Yes
3. Any audit findings disclosed that are required to be reported in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200 of OMB Compliance Supplement?	Yes
4. Identification of major federal program:	

Assistance Listing Number	Federal Program
66.456	National Estuary Program

5. Dollar threshold used to distinguish between type A and B programs:	$ 750,000
6. Auditee qualified as a low-risk auditee for federal purposes?	No

Section II-Financial Statement Findings

No matters were reported.

Section III-Federal Award Findings and Questioned Costs

MW 2024-001 REPORTING

United States Environmental Protection Agency
ALN 66.456 – National Estuary Program
Federal Award ID Number: CE-00D90119, 4T-02D39922, CE-02D56923
2024 Funding

Criteria: Per 2 CFR 200.303, non-Federal entities must establish and maintain effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance of compliance with the Uniform Guidance and the terms and conditions outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency. EPA recipients must submit the Federal Financial Report (SF-425) at least annually. EPA recipients must submit the SF-425 no later than 90 calendar days for annual reports. Final reports are due no later than 120 calendar days after the end date of the period of performance of the award.

Condition: The Federal Financial Report Standard Form 425 was submitted late to the Environmental Protection Agency on March 10, 2025.

Cause: The Environmental Protection Agency had informed the Council that these reports were only due at closeout of the grant; therefore, the Council did not submit these reports. However, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) stated that this was not the correct procedure. As a result of the OIG's EPA audit, the Council filed these reports on March 10, 2025 with the EPA to be in compliance.

Effect: Potential for unintended errors to occur without being immediately identified and corrected. The Council was not in compliance with the Uniform Guidance and the National Estuary Program.

Questioned Costs: None.

Perspective: All of the reports identified above were not reviewed.

Recommendation: The Chief Operating Officer should obtain in writing any adjustments or clarifications to the grant awards to ensure the requested reports are prepared and reviewed.

Management Response: EPA has never requested the SF425 (Federal Financial Reporting Form) from year's prior and we were told verbally that we were only required to submit them at grant closeout. During a current EPA OIG audit, we were informed that the procedural process we were following was incorrect and that yearly reports were required to be submitted. To bring the IRL Council back into compliance with all federal awards, the Chief Operating Officer completed the FY 2024 forms and submitted them to EPA on March 10, 2025.

SD 2024-002 SUSPENSION AND DEBARMENT

United States Environmental Protection Agency
ALN 66.456 – National Estuary Program
Federal Award ID Number: CE-00D90119, 4T-02D39922, CE-02D56923
2024 Funding
Repeat finding

Criteria: 2 CFR 200.303 requires non-federal entities to establish and maintain effective internal controls. Pursuant to 2 CFR section 180.300, the Council may not contract with or make subawards to parties that are identified as being suspended or debarred by the Federal Government. The Council must verify the parties' eligibility to receive payment from a program funded by a Federal grant prior to entering a covered transaction (as defined in 2 CFR section 180.220).

Condition: The Council did not have a process in place to verify that subrecipients and vendors for covered transactions were not suspended or debarred.

Cause: Management was not aware of this procurement requirement.

Effect: The Council could inadvertently enter a covered transaction with a suspended or debarred party, resulting in the disallowance of payments made to that party as eligible costs under the Federal program.

Questioned Costs: None.

Perspective: Many of the subawards made by the Council were to other local governments or universities, which are entities unlikely to be suspended or debarred. As part of our compliance testing, we tested a sample of subrecipients and vendors for suspension and debarment, noting no exceptions.

Recommendation: We recommend the Council continue with the controls that were implemented in late 2024 to ensure the Council does not enter a subaward or other covered transaction with a party that is suspended, debarred or otherwise excluded from participating in federal awards. As the control was not in place for the majority of 2024, it is a repeat finding.

Management Response: The IRL Council amended its Operating Procedures following the FY 2023 finding to include suspension and debarment procedures into procurement methods for activities that are federally funded. The IRL Council Chief Operating Officer, immediately checked all current vendors for compliance within SAM.gov and all new or amended agreements have since been checked in SAM.gov for compliance. As noted by Carr, Riggs, and Ingram there were no instances of exception in their testing. Due to the timing of the FY 2023 finding, FY 2024 would also be considered a finding regardless of any corrective action taken.

SD 2024-003 SUBRECIPIENT MONITORING

United States Environmental Protection Agency
ALN 66.456 – National Estuary Program
Federal Award ID Number: CE-00D90119, 4T-02D39922, CE-02D56923
2024 Funding
Repeat finding

Criteria: 2 CFR 200.303 requires non-federal entities to establish and maintain effective internal controls. The use of subrecipients in achieving the goals of the federal award requires the establishment of controls over the monitoring of subrecipients pursuant to 2 CFR section 200.331 and 200.332. This includes all requirements imposed by the pass-through entity on the subrecipient so that the Federal award is used in accordance with Federal statutes, regulations and the terms and conditions of the Federal award and any additional requirements that the pass-through entity imposes on the subrecipient in order for the pass-through entity to meet its own responsibility to the Federal awarding agency including identification of any required financial and performance reports.

Condition: The Council did not have controls in place to obtain and review subrecipient single audit reports as a means to ensure the subrecipients are taking timely and appropriate action on deficiencies, if any, pertaining to the Federal award.

Cause: The Council requested audits from it's subrecipients; however, if the most recent year was not yet available the prior fiscal year's audit was not requested to review for any deficiencies.

Effect: Without the monitoring of the results of audits and on-site reviews, the Council may not have sufficient information to evaluate the risks of noncompliance associated with a subrecipient.

Questioned Costs: None.

Perspective: The Council did perform monitoring activities related to the use of funds by subrecipients; however, not all controls required for subrecipient monitoring to comply with 2 CFR section 200.331 and 200.332 were fully implemented for the fiscal year under audit. For the 8 subrecipients sampled, audit reports were obtained for 4 subrecipients.

Recommendation: If the most recent subrecipient audit report is not yet available, management should request the prior fiscal year if not already obtained.

Management Response: The IRL Council put controls in place to be more effective at subrecipient monitoring following the FY 2023 finding which included the following actions:

The IRL Council reviewed all projects and activities currently allocated and funded by federal sources to ensure the Uniform Guidance was in place within their respective agreements, and they were amended as needed. All new subrecipient agreements funded by federal sources were not executed until the respective federal award was in place and the Uniform Guidance language was included.

The IRL Council did request audit reports from subrecipients and made statements on them, however for the ones who had not completed their FY 2024 audit, a prior year audit report was not immediately requested and statements for those subrecipients had not yet been made. The IRL Council will implement a control to request prior year Financial Statements/audit reports from subrecipients who have not yet completed their report for the year being requested during the Council's monitoring.

Section IV-Prior Findings and Questioned Costs for Federal Awards

MW 2023-001 CASH MANAGEMENT
Status: Cleared

SD 2023-002 PROCUREMENT
Status: Cleared

SD 2023-003 SUSPENSION AND DEBARMENT
Status: Repeat audit finding, revised as SD 2024-002 Suspension and Debarment.

SD 2023-004 SUBRECIPIENT MONITORING
Status: Repeating audit finding, revised as SD 2024-003 Subrecipient Monitoring.

IRL Council
Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards and
Notes to the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards
For the Year Ended September 30, 2024

Federal Agency, Pass-through Entity, Federal Program	Assistance Listing	Grant/ Contract No.	Federal Expenditures	Transfers to Subrecipients
United States Environmental Protection Agency				
National Estuary Program	66.456	CE-00D90119	$ 291,872	$ 121,227
National Estuary Program	66.456	4T-02D39922	737,884	737,884
National Estuary Program	66.456	CE-02D56923	544,076	195,923
Total United States Environmental Protection Agency			1,573,832	1,055,034
Total Expenditures of Federal Awards			**$ 1,573,832**	**$ 1,055,034**

NOTE 1: BASIS OF PRESENTATION

The accompanying schedule of expenditures of federal awards (the "Schedule") includes the federal activity of IRL Council under programs of the federal government for the year ended September 30, 2024. The information in this Schedule is presented in accordance with the requirements of Title 2 U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance). Because the Schedule presents only a selected portion of the operations of IRL Council, it is not intended to and does not present the financial position, changes in net assets, or cash flows of IRL Council.

NOTE 2: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Expenditures reported on the Schedule are reported on the accrual basis of accounting. Such expenditures are recognized following the cost principles contained in the Uniform Guidance, wherein certain types of expenditures are not allowable or are limited as to reimbursement. Additionally, IRL Council did not receive any noncash assistance, federal loans, or federally funded insurance during the year ended September 30, 2024.

Note 3: INDIRECT RATE

IRL Council elected not to use the 10-percent de minimus indirect cost rate allowed under Uniform Guidance.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

CARR, RIGGS & INGRAM, L.L.C.

Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C.
7506 Lynx Way
Suite 201
Melbourne, FL 32940

321.255.0088
386.336.4189 (fax)
CRIadv.com

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S MANAGEMENT LETTER

To the Board of Directors
IRL Council
Sebastian, Florida

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the financial statements of IRL Council, as of and for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024, and have issued our report thereon dated May 2, 2025.

Auditor's Responsibility

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards,* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and Chapter 10.550, Rules of the Auditor General.

Other Reporting Requirements

We have issued our Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters Based on an Audit of the Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and the Independent Accountant's Report on an examination conducted in accordance with *AICPA Professional Standards*, AT-C Section 315, regarding compliance requirements in accordance with Chapter 10.550, Rules of the Auditor General. Disclosures in those reports, which are dated May 2, 2025, should be considered in conjunction with this management letter.

Prior Audit Findings

Section 10.554(1)(i)1., Rules of the Auditor General, requires that we determine whether or not corrective actions have been taken to address findings and recommendations made in the preceding financial audit report. Finding number 2023-001, and 2023-002 were resolved and closed in the current fiscal year. Findings 2023-003 and 2023-004, which originated in 2023, were repeated in the current fiscal year as 2024-002 and 2024-003, respectively.

Official Title and Legal Authority

Section 10.554(1)(i)4., Rules of the Auditor General, requires that the name or official title and legal authority for the primary government and each component unit of the reporting entity be disclosed in this management letter, unless disclosed in the notes to the financial statements. The name or

official title and legal authority for IRL Council is disclosed in Note 1 to the financial statements. IRL Council has no component units.

Financial Condition and Management

Sections 10.554(1)(i)5.a. and 10.556(7), Rules of the Auditor General, require us to apply appropriate procedures and communicate the results of our determination as to whether or not IRL Council met one or more of the conditions described in Section 218.503(1), Florida Statutes, and to identify the specific condition(s) met. In connection with our audit, we determined that IRL Council did not meet any of the conditions described in Section 218.503(1), Florida Statutes.

Pursuant to Sections 10.554(1)(i)5.b. and 10.556(8), Rules of the Auditor General, we applied financial condition assessment procedures for IRL Council. It is management's responsibility to monitor IRL Council's financial condition, and our financial condition assessment was based in part on representations made by management and review of financial information provided by same.

Section 10.554(1)(i)2., Rules of the Auditor General, requires that we communicate any recommendations to improve financial management. In connection with our audit, we did not identify any recommendations to improve financial management.

Special District Component Units

Section 10.554(1)(i)5.c., Rules of the Auditor General, requires, if appropriate that we communicate the failure of a special district that is a component unit of a county, municipality, or special district, to provide the financial information necessary for proper reporting of the component unit within the audited financial statements of the county, municipality, or special district in accordance with Section 218.39(3)(b), Florida Statutes. In connection with our audit, we did not note any special district component units that failed to provide the necessary information for proper reporting in accordance with Section 218.39(3)(b), Florida Statutes.

Specific Information

As required by Section 218.39(3)(c), Florida Statutes, and Section 10.554(1)(i)7, Rules of the Auditor General, IRL Council reported:

a. Total number of Council employees compensated in the last pay period of the Council's fiscal year	**8**
b. Total number of independent contractors to whom nonemployee compensation was paid in the last month of the Council's fiscal year	**0**
c. All compensation earned by or awarded to employees, whether paid or accrued, regardless of contingency	**$639,594**
d. All compensation earned by or awarded to nonemployee independent contractors, whether paid or accrued, regardless of contingency	**$ 0**

e. Each construction project with a total cost of at least $65,000 approved by the Council that is scheduled to begin on or after October 1 of the fiscal year being reported, together with the total expenditures for such project — **None**

f. A budget variance based on the budget adopted under Section 189.016(4), Florida Statutes before the beginning of the fiscal year being reported if the Council amends a final adopted budget under Section 189.016(6), Florida Statutes as follows: — **See page 45**

As required by Section 218.39(3)(c), Florida Statutes, and Section 10.554(1)(i)8, Rules of the Auditor General, IRL Council had not imposed any ad valorem taxes.

As required by Section 218.39(3)(c), Florida Statutes, and Section 10.554(1)(i)9, Rules of the Auditor General, IRL Council had not imposed any non-ad valorem special assessments.

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Programs (Unaudited)

As required by Section 10.554(1)(i)6.a., Rules of the Auditor General, the Council did not operate PACE program pursuant to Section 163.081 or Section 163.082, Florida Statutes, within the Council's geographical boundaries during the fiscal year under audit.

Additional Matters

Section 10.554(1)(i)3., Rules of the Auditor General, requires us to communicate noncompliance with provisions of contracts or grant agreements, or abuse, that have occurred, or are likely to have occurred, that have an effect on the financial statements that is less than material but warrants the attention of those charged with governance. In connection with our audit, we did not note any such findings.

Purpose of this Letter

Our management letter is intended solely for the information and use of the Legislative Auditing Committee, members of the Florida Senate and the Florida House of Representatives, the Florida Auditor General, Federal and other granting agencies, the Board of Directors and applicable management, and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C.

Melbourne, Florida
May 2, 2025

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

CARR, RIGGS & INGRAM, L.L.C.

Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C.
7506 Lynx Way
Suite 201
Melbourne, FL 32940

321.255.0088
386.336.4189 (fax)
CRIadv.com

INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT ON COMPLIANCE WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT POLICIES

To the Board of Directors
IRL Council
Sebastian, Florida

We have examined IRL Council's compliance with the requirements of Section 218.415, Florida Statutes, *Local Government Investment Policies*, during the year ended September 30, 2024. Management of IRL Council is responsible for IRL Council's compliance with the specified requirements. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on IRL Council's compliance with the specified requirements based on our examination.

Our examination was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the AICPA. Those standards require that we plan and perform the examination to obtain reasonable assurance about whether IRL Council complied, in all material respects, with the specified requirements referenced above. An examination involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about whether IRL Council complied with the specified requirements. The nature, timing, and extent of the procedures selected depend on our judgment, including an assessment of the risks of material noncompliance, whether due to fraud or error. We believe that the evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

We are required to be independent and to meet our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with relevant ethical requirements related to the examination engagement.

Our examination does not provide a legal determination on IRL Council's compliance with specified requirements.

In our opinion, IRL Council complied, in all material respects, with the requirements of Section 218.415, Florida Statutes, *Local Government Investment Policies*, for the year ended September 30, 2024.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of management and the State of Florida Auditor General and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C.

Melbourne, Florida
May 2, 2025

ONE LAGOON
ONE COMMUNITY • ONE VOICE

ONE LAGOON
INDIAN RIVER LAGOON NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

+321-536-6039
info@irlcouncil.org
www.onelagoon.org
1235 Main Street, Sebastian, FL 32958

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN
April 30, 2025
The IRL Council submits the following corrective action plan for the year ended September 30, 2024.

Name and address of independent public accounting firm:
Carr, Riggs & Ingram
7506 Lynx Way
Suite 201
Melbourne, Florida 32940

Audit Period: Fiscal Year October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024
The findings from the Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs is discussed below. The finding number corresponds to the number assigned in the schedule.

MW 2024-001 REPORTING
Recommendation: The Chief Operating Officer should obtain in writing any adjustments or clarifications to the grant awards to ensure the requested reports are prepared and reviewed.

Management's Response: *EPA has never requested the SF425 (Federal Financial Reporting Form) from year's prior and we were told verbally that we were only required to submit them at grant closeout. During a current EPA OIG audit, we were informed that the procedural process we were following was incorrect and that yearly reports were required to be submitted. To bring the IRL Council back into compliance with all federal awards, the Chief Operating Officer completed the FY 2024 forms and submitted them to EPA on March 10, 2025.*

Responsible Party: Daniel Kolodny, Chief Operating Officer

Anticipated Completion Date: Remedial action completed on March 10, 2025.

SD 2024-002 SUSPENSION AND DEBARMENT

Recommendation: We recommend the Council continue with the controls that were implemented in late 2024 to ensure the Council does not enter a subaward or other covered transaction with a party that is suspended, debarred or otherwise excluded from participating in federal awards. As the control was not in place for the majority of 2024, it is a repeat finding.

Management's Response: *The IRL Council amended its Operating Procedures following the FY 2023 finding to include suspension and debarment procedures into procurement methods for activities that are federally funded. The IRL Council Chief Operating Officer, immediately checked all current vendors for compliance within SAM.gov and all new or amended agreements have since been checked in SAM.gov for compliance. As noted by Carr, Riggs, and Ingram there were no instances of exception in their testing. Due to the timing of the FY 2023 finding, FY 2024 would also be considered a finding regardless of any corrective action taken.*

Anticipated Completion Date: Remedial action completed on December 31, 2024.

SD 2024-003 SUBRECIPIENT MONITORING

Recommendations: If the most recent subrecipient audit report is not yet available, management should request the prior fiscal year if not already obtained.

Management's Response: *The IRL Council put controls in place to be more effective at subrecipient monitoring following the FY 2023 finding which included the following actions: The IRL Council reviewed all projects and activities currently allocated and funded by federal sources to ensure the Uniform Guidance was in place within their respective agreements, and they were amended as needed. All new subrecipient agreements funded by federal sources were not executed until the respective federal award was in place and the Uniform Guidance language was included. The IRL Council did request audit reports from subrecipients and made statements on them, however for the ones who had not completed their FY 2024 audit, a prior year audit report was not immediately requested and statements for those subrecipients had not yet been made. The IRL Council will implement a control to request prior year Financial Statements/audit reports from subrecipients who have not yet completed their report for the year being requested during the Council's monitoring.*

Responsible Party: Daniel Kolodny, COO

Anticipated Completion Date: June 1, 2025.

IRL Council

REQUIRED COMMUNICATIONS

September 30, 2024

CARR, RIGGS & INGRAM, L.L.C.

Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C.
7506 Lynx Way
Suite 201
Melbourne, FL 32940

321.255.0088
386.336.4189 (fax)
CRIadv.com

May 2, 2025

To the Board of Directors
IRL Council
Sebastian, Florida

We are pleased to present the results of our audit of the financial statements of the governmental activities and the major fund, including the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the basic financial statements of the IRL Council (the "Council") for the year ended September 30, 2024.

This report to the management and Board of Directors summarizes our audit, the report issued and various analyses and observations related to the IRL Council's accounting and reporting. The document also contains the communications required by our professional standards.

Our audit was designed, primarily, to express an opinion on the IRL Council's 2024 financial statements for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024. We considered the IRL Council's current and emerging needs, along with an assessment of risks that could materially affect the financial statements, and aligned our audit procedures accordingly. We conducted the audit with the objectivity and independence that you, the Board of Directors, expect. We received the full support and assistance of the IRL Council's personnel.

At Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C. (CRI), we are continually evaluating the quality of our professionals' work in order to deliver audit services of the highest quality that will meet or exceed your expectations. We encourage you to provide any feedback you believe is appropriate to ensure that we do not overlook a single detail as it relates to the quality of our services.

This information is intended solely for the use of the Board of Directors and management of the IRL Council and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We appreciate this opportunity to work with you. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at 321.426.3040 or cnollrhan@CRIadv.com.

Very truly yours,

Christine E. Noll-Rhan, CPA
Partner
Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C.

Required Communications

As discussed with management during our planning process and communicated to the Board of Directors in our engagement letter to you dated September 8, 2021, as amended on August 23, 2022, and revised on January 24, 2025, our audit plan represented an approach responsive to the assessment of risk for the IRL Council. Specifically, we planned and performed our audit to:

- Perform audit services, as required by Section 218.39 of the Florida Statutes, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, *Government Auditing Standards* and Chapter 10.550, Rules of the Auditor General, in order to express an opinion on the Council's basic financial statements for the year ended September 30, 2024;

- Report on internal control over financial reporting and on compliance and other matters based on an audit of financial statements performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*; and Uniform Guidance 2 CFR Part 200 in order to express an opinion on compliance with requirements applicable to each major federal program;

- Report on internal control over compliance with the types of compliance requirements described in Uniform Guidance 2 CFR Part 200 and the OMB Compliance Supplement;

- Communicate directly with the Board of Directors and management regarding the results of our procedures;

- Address with the Board of Directors and management any accounting and financial reporting issues;

- Anticipate and respond to concerns of the Board of Directors and management; and

- Other audit-related projects as they arise and upon request.

Required Communications

We have audited the financial statements of the governmental activities and the major fund, including the related notes to the financial statements of the IRL Council (the "Council") for the year ended September 30, 2024, and have issued our report thereon dated May 2, 2025. Professional standards require that we communicate to you the following information related to our audit:

MATTER TO BE COMMUNICATED	AUDITOR'S RESPONSE
Auditor's responsibility under Generally Accepted Auditing Standards *Government Auditing Standards,* Chapter 10.550*, Rules of the Auditor General* and the Uniform Guidance.	As stated in our engagement letter dated September 8, 2021, as amended on August 23, 2022, and revised on January 24, 2025, our responsibility, as described by professional standards, is to express an opinion about whether the financial statements prepared by management, with your oversight, are fairly presented, in all material respects, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP), and *Government Auditing Standards*, and Chapter 10.550*, Rules of the Auditor General* and to report on the fairness of supplementary information as described in the engagement letter when considered in relation to the financial statements as a whole. Our audit of the financial statements does not relieve you or management of your responsibilities. Required supplementary information, such as management's discussion and analysis, is required by general accepted accounted principals and will be subjected to certain limited procedures, but will not be audited. As part of our audit, we considered the internal control of the IRL Council and internal controls related to major federal programs and an opinion on compliance with laws, regulations, and the provisions of contracts or grant agreements that could have direct and material effect on each federal program in accordance with Title 2 *U.S. Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance) and Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations. Such considerations were solely for the purpose of determining our audit procedures and not to provide any assurance concerning such internal control.
Client's responsibility	Management, with oversight from those charged with governance, is responsible for establishing and maintaining internal controls, including monitoring ongoing activities; for the selection and application of accounting principles; and for the fair presentation in the financial statements of financial position and changes in financial position in conformity with the applicable framework. Management is

MATTER TO BE COMMUNICATED	AUDITOR'S RESPONSE
	responsible for the design and implementation of programs and controls to prevent and detect fraud. Management is responsible for overseeing nonaudit services by designating an individual with suitable skill, knowledge or experience to evaluate the adequacy and result of those services, and accept responsibility for them.
Planned scope and timing of the audit	Our initial audit plan was not significantly altered during our fieldwork.
Management judgments and accounting estimates *The process used by management in forming particularly sensitive accounting estimates and the basis for the auditor's conclusion regarding the reasonableness of those estimates.*	Please see the following section titled "*Accounting Policies, Judgments and Sensitive Estimates and CRI Comments on Quality*."
Potential effect on the financial statements of any significant risks and exposures *Major risks and exposures facing IRL Council and how they are disclosed.*	No such risks or exposures were noted.
Significant accounting policies, including critical accounting policies and alternative treatments within generally accepted accounting principles and the auditor's judgment about the quality of accounting principles • *The initial selection of and changes in significant accounting policies or their application; methods used to account for significant unusual transactions; and effect of significant policies in controversial or emerging areas for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus.* • *The auditor should also discuss the auditor's judgment about the quality, not just the acceptability, of the Council's accounting policies as applied in its financial reporting. The discussion should include such matters as consistency of accounting policies and their application, and clarity and completeness of the financial statements, including disclosures.* • *Critical accounting policies and practices applied by the Council in its financial statements and our assessment of management's disclosures regarding such policies and practices (including any significant modifications to such disclosures proposed by us but rejected by management), the reasons why certain policies and practices are or are not considered critical, and how current and anticipated future events impact*	Significant accounting policies used by the IRL Council are described in Note 1 to the financial statements. New accounting policies were adopted during the fiscal year as a result of the following recently issued accounting pronouncements: - Statement 100 No. 100, *Accounting Changes and Error Corrections* (GASB 100) The adoption of GASB Statement No. 100 had no impact on the financial statements. We noted no transactions entered into by the IRL Council during the year for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus. All significant transactions have been recognized in the financial statements in the proper period. Certain financial statement disclosures are particularly sensitive because of their significance to financial statement users. The most sensitive disclosures affecting the financial statements were: The disclosure of net pension liability for the FRS and HIS in Note 3 to the financial statements due to GASBC P20: *Pension Activities*. The disclosures in IRL Council's financial statements are

MATTER TO BE COMMUNICATED	AUDITOR'S RESPONSE
those determinations; • *Alternative treatments within GAAP for accounting policies and practices related to material items, including recognition, measurement, presentation and disclosure alternatives, that have been discussed with client management during the current audit period, the ramifications of the use of such alternative disclosures and treatments, and the treatment preferred by the auditor.*	neutral, consistent, and clear.
Significant difficulties encountered in the audit *Any significant difficulties, for example, unreasonable logistical constraints or lack of cooperation by management.*	We encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management in performing and completing our audit.
Disagreements with management *Disagreements, whether or not subsequently resolved, about matters significant to the financial statements or auditor's report. This does not include those that came about based on incomplete facts or preliminary information.*	We are pleased to report that no such disagreements arose during the course of our audit.
Other findings or issues *Matters significant to oversight of the financial reporting practices by those charged with governance. For example, an entity's failure to obtain the necessary type of audit, such as one under Government Auditing Standards, in addition to GAAS.*	None noted.
Matters arising from the audit that were discussed with, or the subject of correspondence with, management *Conditions that might affect risk or discussions regarding accounting practices or application of auditing standards.*	None noted.
Corrected and uncorrected misstatements *All significant audit adjustments arising from the audit, whether or not recorded by the Council, that could individually or in the aggregate have a significant effect on the financial statements. We should also inform those charged with governance about uncorrected misstatements aggregated by us during the current engagement and pertaining to the latest period presented, that were determined by management to be immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole. Any internal control deficiencies that could have prevented the misstatements.*	See "Summary of Audit Adjustments" Section.

MATTER TO BE COMMUNICATED	AUDITOR'S RESPONSE
Major issues discussed with management prior to retention *Any major accounting, auditing or reporting issues discussed with management in connection with our initial or recurring retention.*	Discussions occurred in the normal course of our professional relationship and our responses were not a condition to our retention.
Consultations with other accountants *When management has consulted with other accountants about significant accounting or auditing matters.*	To our knowledge, there were no such consultations with other accountants.
Written representations *A description of the written representations the auditor requested (or a copy of the representation letter).*	See "*Draft Management Representation Letter*" section.
Internal control deficiencies *Any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in the design or operation of internal control that came to the auditor's attention during the audit.*	Refer to "*Independent Auditor's Report on Compliance Required by the Uniform Guidance".*
Fraud and illegal acts *Fraud involving senior management or those responsible for internal controls, or causing a material misstatement of the financial statements, where the auditor determines there is evidence that such fraud may exist. Any illegal acts coming to the auditor's attention involving senior management and any other illegal acts, unless clearly inconsequential.*	We are unaware of any fraud or illegal acts involving management or causing material misstatement of the financial statements.
Other information in documents containing audited financial statements *The external auditor's responsibility for information in a document containing audited financial statements, as well as any procedures performed and the results.*	Our responsibility related to documents (including annual reports, websites, etc.) containing the financial statements is to read the other information to consider whether: • Such information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements; and • We believe such information represents a material misstatement of fact. We have not been provided any such items to date and are unaware of any other documents that contain audited financial statements.
Significant unusual accounting transactions *Auditor communication with governance to include auditor's views on policies and practices management used, as well as the auditor's understanding of the business purpose.*	No significant unusual accounting transactions were noted during the year.
Required Supplementary Information *The auditor's responsibility for required supplementary information accompanying the*	We applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information (RSI) that supplements the

MATTER TO BE COMMUNICATED	AUDITOR'S RESPONSE
financial statements, as well as any procedures performed and the results.	financial statements. Our procedures consisted of inquiries of management regarding the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the financial statements. We did not audit the RSI and do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the RSI.

Accounting Policies, Judgments and Sensitive Estimates and Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLC Comments on Quality

We are required to communicate our judgments about the quality, not just the acceptability, of IRL Council's accounting principles as applied in its financial reporting. We are also required to communicate critical accounting policies and sensitive accounting estimates. Accounting estimates are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management's knowledge and experience about past and current events and assumptions about future events. Certain accounting estimates are particularly sensitive because of their significance to the financial statements and because of the possibility that future events effecting them may differ significantly from those expected. The Board of Directors and management may wish to monitor throughout the year the process used to compute and record these accounting estimates. The table below summarizes our communications regarding these matters.

AREA	ACCOUNTING POLICY	CRITICAL POLICY?	JUDGMENTS & SENSITIVE ESTIMATE	COMMENTS ON QUALITY OF ACCOUNTING POLICY & APPLICATION
Compensated Absences	Liabilities for compensated absences attributable to services already rendered are accrued as employees earn the rights to those benefits. The Council follows the provisions of Section C60: *Compensated Absences*, of the GASB Codification when reporting these liabilities.	Yes	The Council estimates the accrued liabilities for compensated absences using leave balances accrued at the end of the fiscal year multiplied by the pay rate in effect for each employee as of the end of the fiscal year.	The Council's policies are in accordance with all applicable accounting guidelines and GASB.
Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) and related Deferred Outflows and Inflows of Resources	The Council follows the provisions of Section P50: *Postemployment Benefits Other Than Pensions – Employer Reporting*, of the GASB Codification when reporting its OPEB liability and related costs.	Yes	The Council's estimate of the other postemployment benefit liability is based on healthcare costs and employment assumptions developed by management. A third-party actuary utilized these assumptions to calculate the year-end liability.	We evaluated the assumptions used by the actuary in estimating the Council's total OPEB liability, the fiduciary net position, and the related deferred outflows/inflows and found them to be in accordance with the provisions of applicable accounting guidelines and GASB.

AREA	ACCOUNTING POLICY	CRITICAL POLICY?	JUDGMENTS & SENSITIVE ESTIMATE	COMMENTS ON QUALITY OF ACCOUNTING POLICY & APPLICATION
Net Pension Liability and Related Deferred Outflows and Deferred Inflows of Resources	The Council participates in the Florida Retirement System (FRS), an agent multiple-employer plan administered by the State of Florida, State Board of Administration. The FRS utilizes an independent actuary to provide an actuarial valuation report specific to each participating employer. This report provides each participating employer with estimates of the total pension liability, fiduciary net position, related deferred outflows/inflows and actuarially required contributions in accordance with the provisions. The Council follows the provision of Section P20: *Reporting for Benefits Provided through Trust That Meet Specified Criteria*, of the GASB Codification when reporting pension liabilities.	Yes	The Council relies on valuations from the Pension Plan's actuary for the estimated value of the Council's net pension liability. The actuarial valuation is based on financial information, utilizing assumptions developed by management.	We evaluated the assumptions used by the actuary in estimating the Council's total pension liability, the fiduciary net position, and the related deferred outflows/inflows and found them to be in accordance with the provisions of applicable guidelines and GASB.

During the course of our audit, we accumulate differences between amounts recorded by the Council and amounts that we believe are required to be recorded under GAAP reporting guidelines. Those adjustments are either recorded (corrected) by the Council or passed (uncorrected). Uncorrected misstatements or the matters underlying them could potentially cause future period financial statements to be materially misstated, even if, in the auditor's judgment, such uncorrected misstatements are immaterial to the financial statements under audit.

During the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024, the Council had the no uncorrected adjustment.

QUALITATIVE MATERIALITY CONSIDERATIONS

In evaluating the materiality of audit differences when they do arise, we consider both quantitative and qualitative factors, for example:

- Whether the difference arises from an item capable of precise measurement or whether it arises from an estimate, and, if so, the degree of imprecision inherent in the estimate.
- Whether the difference masks a change in earnings or other trends.
- Whether the difference changes a net decrease in assets to addition, or vice versa.
- Whether the difference concerns an area of the Council's operating environment that has been identified as playing a significant role in the Council's operations or viability.
- Whether the difference affects compliance with regulatory requirements.
- Whether the difference has the effect of increasing management's compensation – for example, by satisfying requirements for the award of bonuses or other forms of incentive compensation.
- Whether the difference involves concealment of an unlawful transaction.

May 2, 2025

Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C.
7506, Lynx Way
Suite 201
Melbourne, FL 32940

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of IRL Council (the "Council"), which comprise the respective financial position of the governmental activities and the major fund as of September 30, 2024, and the respective changes in financial position for the year then ended, and the disclosures (collectively, the "financial statements"), for the purpose of expressing opinions as to whether the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (U.S. GAAP).

Certain representations in this letter are described as being limited to matters that are material. Items are considered material, regardless of size, if they involve an omission or misstatement of accounting information that, in light of surrounding circumstances, makes it probable that the judgment of a reasonable person relying on the information would be changed or influenced by the omission or misstatement. An omission or misstatement that is monetarily small in amount could be considered material as a result of qualitative factors.

We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, as of May 2, 2025, the following representations made to you during your audit.

Financial Statements

1) We have fulfilled our responsibilities, as set out in the terms of the audit engagement dated September 8, 2021, as amended on August 23, 2022, and revised on January 24, 2025, including our responsibility for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with U.S. GAAP and for preparation of the supplementary information in accordance with the applicable criteria.

2) The financial statements referred to above are fairly presented in conformity with U.S. GAAP and include all properly classified funds and other financial information of the primary government and all component units required by generally accepted accounting principles to be included in the financial reporting entity.

3) We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

4) We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud.

5) Significant assumptions we used in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.

6) There were no related party relationships and transactions, including revenues, expenditures/expenses, loans, transfers, leasing arrangements, guarantees, or amounts receivable from or payable to related parties that were required to be accounted for and disclosed in accordance with U.S. GAAP.

7) Adjustments or disclosures have been made for all events, including instances of noncompliance, subsequent to the date of the financial statements that would require adjustment to or disclosure in the financial statements.

8) The effects of all known actual or possible litigation, claims, and assessments have been accounted for and disclosed in accordance with U.S. GAAP.

9) There are no guarantees, whether written or oral, under which the Council is contingently liable.

10) Expenditures of state programs were below the $750,000 threshold in the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024, and we were not required to have an audit in accordance with the Florida Single Audit Act. Expenditures of federal awards were below the $750,000 threshold for the second prior audit period, and we were not required to have an audit in accordance with the Uniform Guidance.

Information Provided

11) We have provided you with:

    a) Access to all information, of which we are aware, that is relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, such as records (including information obtained from outside of the general and subsidiary ledgers), documentation, and other matters and all audit or relevant monitoring reports, if any, received from funding sources.

    b) Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit.

    c) Unrestricted access to persons within the Council from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.

    d) Minutes of the meetings of the Council or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared.

12) All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

13) We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.

14) We have no knowledge of any fraud or suspected fraud that affects the Council and involves—

    a) Management,

    b) Employees who have significant roles in internal control, or

    c) Others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.

15) We have no knowledge of any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Council's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators, or others.

16) We have no knowledge of instances of noncompliance or suspected noncompliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, or grant agreements, or waste or abuse, whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements.

17) We have disclosed to you all known actual or possible litigation, claims, and assessments whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.

18) We have disclosed to you the names of the Council's related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions, including any side agreements.

Government-specific

19) There have been no communications from regulatory agencies concerning noncompliance with, or deficiencies in, financial reporting practices.

20) We have a process to track the status of audit findings and recommendations.

21) We have identified to you any previous audits, attestation engagements, and other studies related to the objectives of the audit and whether related recommendations have been implemented.

22) We have identified to you any investigations or legal proceedings that have been initiated with respect to the period under audit.

23) We have provided our views on reported findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as our planned corrective actions, for the report.

24) The Council has no plans or intentions that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets, deferred outflows of resources, liabilities, deferred inflows of resources, and fund balance or net position.

25) We are responsible for compliance with the laws, regulations, and provisions of contracts and grant agreements applicable to us, including tax or debt limits and debt contracts, and legal and contractual provisions for reporting specific activities in separate funds.

26) We have appropriately identified, recorded, and disclosed all leases in accordance with GASBS No. 87.

27) There are no conduit debt obligations to be disclosed in accordance with GASB No. 91.

28) We have appropriately identified, recorded, and disclosed subscription-based information technology arrangements in accordance with GASBS No. 96.

29) We have identified and disclosed to you all instances of identified and suspected fraud and noncompliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements that we believe have a material effect on the financial statements.

30) There are no violations or possible violations of budget ordinances, laws and regulations (including those pertaining to adopting, approving, and amending budgets), provisions of contracts and grant agreements, tax or debt limits, and any related debt covenants whose effects should be considered for disclosure in the financial statements, or as a basis for recording a loss contingency, or for reporting on noncompliance.

31) As part of your audit, you assisted with preparation of the financial statements and disclosures the required supplementary information, the schedule of expenditures of federal awards and the data collection form. We acknowledge our responsibility as it relates to those nonaudit services, including that we assume all management responsibilities; oversee the services by designating an individual, Daniel Kolodny, Chief Operations Officer, who possesses suitable skill, knowledge, or experience; evaluate the adequacy and results of the services performed; and accept responsibility for the results of the services. We have reviewed, approved, and accepted responsibility for those financial statements and disclosures, required supplementary information, the schedule of expenditures of federal awards and the data collection form.

32) The Council has satisfactory title to all owned assets, and there are no liens or encumbrances on such assets nor has any asset been pledged as collateral.

33) The Council has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that would have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of noncompliance.

34) The Council has no component units, majority equity interests in legally separate organizations or joint ventures with an equity interest or other related organizations.

35) There are no fiduciary activities to be reported in accordance with GASBS No. 84.

36) The financial statements properly classify all funds and activities in accordance with GASBS No. 34, as amended.

37) All funds that meet the quantitative criteria in GASBS No. 34 and 37 for presentation as major are identified and presented as such and all other funds that are presented as major are particularly important to financial statement users.

38) Components of net position (net investment in capital assets; restricted; and unrestricted) and classifications of fund balance (nonspendable, restricted, committed, assigned, and unassigned) are properly classified and, if applicable, approved.

39) Provisions for uncollectible receivables have been properly identified and recorded.

40) Expenses have been appropriately classified in or allocated to functions and programs in the statement of activities, and allocations have been made on a reasonable basis.

41) Revenues are appropriately classified in the statement of activities within program revenues, general revenues, contributions to term or permanent endowments, or contributions to permanent fund principal.

42) Deposits are properly classified as to risk and are properly disclosed.

43) Capital assets, including infrastructure and intangible assets, are properly capitalized, reported, and, if applicable, depreciated or amortized.

44) We have appropriately disclosed the Council's policy regarding whether to first apply restricted or unrestricted resources when an expense is incurred for purposes for which both restricted and unrestricted net position is available and have determined that net position is properly recognized under the policy.

45) We are following our established accounting policy regarding which resources (that is, restricted, committed, assigned, or unassigned) are considered to be spent first for expenditures for which more than one resource classification is available. That policy determines the fund balance classifications for financial reporting purposes.

46) We acknowledge our responsibility for the required supplementary information (RSI). The RSI is measured and presented within prescribed guidelines and the methods of measurement and presentation have not changed from those used in the prior period except that the general fund budget and actual schedule is being presented as RSI. We have disclosed to you any significant assumptions and interpretations underlying the measurement and presentation of the RSI.

47) The Council is responsible for and we are in compliance with 218.39(3)(c), Florida Statutes. We acknowledge our responsibility for the information required by Section 218.39, Florida Statutes, and its presentation is within prescribed guidelines.

48) With respect to federal award programs:

    1) We are responsible for understanding and complying with and have complied with, the requirements of Title 2 U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance), including requirements related to preparation of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards.

2) We acknowledge our responsibility for preparing and presenting the schedule of expenditures of federal awards (SEFA) and related disclosures in accordance with the requirements of Uniform Guidance, and we believe the SEFA, including its form and content, is fairly presented in accordance with the Uniform Guidance. The methods of measurement or presentation of the SEFA have not changed from those used in the prior period and we have disclosed to you any significant assumptions and interpretations underlying the measurement or presentation of the SEFA.

3) If the SEFA is not presented with the audited financial statements, we will make the audited financial statements readily available to the intended users of the SEFA no later than the date we issue the SEFA and the auditor's report thereon.

4) We have identified and disclosed to you all of our government programs and related activities subject to the Uniform Guidance compliance audit, and have included in the SEFA, expenditures made during the audit period for all awards provided by federal agencies in the form of federal awards, federal cost-reimbursement contracts, loans, loan guarantees, property (included donated surplus property), cooperative agreements, interest subsidies, insurance, food commodities, direct appropriations, and other direct assistance.

5) We are responsible for understanding and complying with, and have complied with, the requirements of federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of federal awards related to each of our federal programs and have identified and disclosed to you the requirements of federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of federal awards that are considered to have a direct and material effect on each major program.

6) We are responsible for establishing, designing, implementing, and maintaining, and have established, designed, implemented and maintained, effective internal control over compliance for federal programs that provides reasonable assurance that we are managing our federal awards in compliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of federal awards that could have a material effect on our federal programs. We believe the internal control system is adequate and is functioning as intended.

7) We have made available to you all federal awards (including amendments, if any) and any other correspondence with federal agencies or pass-through entities relevant to federal programs and related activities.

8) We have received no requests from a federal agency to audit one or more specific programs as a major program.

9) We have complied with the direct and material compliance requirements (except for noncompliance disclosed to you), including when applicable, those set forth in the OMB Compliance Supplement (including its addendum), relating to federal awards and there were no amounts questioned and no known noncompliance with the direct and material compliance requirements of federal awards.

10) We have disclosed any communications from federal awarding agencies and pass-through entities concerning possible noncompliance with the direct and material compliance requirements, including communications received from the end of the period covered by the compliance audit to the date of the auditor's report.

11) We have disclosed to you the findings received and related corrective actions taken from previous audits, attestation engagements, and internal or external monitoring that directly relate to the objectives of the compliance audit, including findings received and corrective actions taken from the end of the period covered by the compliance audit to the date of the auditor's report.

12) Amounts claimed or used for matching were determined in accordance with relevant guidelines in OMB's Uniform Guidance (2 CFR part 200, subpart E).

13) We have disclosed to you our interpretation of compliance requirements that may have varying interpretations.

14) We have made available to you all documentation related to compliance with the direct and material compliance requirements, including information related to federal program financial reports and claims for advances and reimbursements.

15) We have disclosed to you the nature of any subsequent events that provide additional evidence about conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period affecting noncompliance during the reporting period.

16) There are no such known instances of noncompliance with direct and material compliance requirements that occurred subsequent to the period covered by the auditor's report.

17) No changes have been made in internal control over compliance or other factors that might significantly affect internal control, including any corrective action we have taken regarding significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal control over compliance, subsequent to the period covered by the auditor's report.

18) Federal program financial reports and claims for advances and reimbursements are supported by the books and records from which the financial statements have been prepared.

19) The copies of federal program financial reports provided to you are true copies of the reports submitted, or electronically transmitted, to the respective federal agency or pass-through entity, as applicable.

20) We have charged costs to federal awards in accordance with applicable cost principles.

21) We are responsible for and have accurately prepared the summary schedule of prior audit findings to include all findings required to be included by the Uniform Guidance, and we have provided you with all information on the status of the follow-up on prior audit findings by federal awarding agencies and pass-through entities, including all management decisions.

22) We are responsible for and have ensured the reporting package does not contain protected personally identifiable information.

23) We are responsible for and have accurately prepared the auditee section of the Data Collection Form as required by Uniform Guidance.

24) We are responsible for taking corrective action on each audit finding of the compliance audit and have developed a corrective action plan that meets the requirements of Uniform Guidance.

25) We have disclosed to you all contracts or other agreements with service organizations, and we have disclosed to you all communications from the service organizations relating to noncompliance at the service organizations.

Compliance with Florida Statute 218.415

48) The Council is in compliance with Florida Statute 218.415, *Local Government Investment Policies*, in all respects.

49) We are responsible for complying with Florida Statute 218.415, *Local Government Investment Policies.*

50) We are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control over compliance.

51) We have performed an evaluation of the Council's compliance with Florida Statute 218.415, *Local Government Investment Policies.*

52) All relevant matters are reflected in the measurement or evaluation of the Council's compliance with the specified requirements.

53) We are responsible for selecting the specified requirements and for determining that the specified requirements are appropriate for our purposes.

54) We have disclosed to you all known noncompliance with Florida Statute 218.415, *Local Government Investment Policies*, including noncompliance occurring after September 30, 2024, if any.

55) We have provided you with all relevant information and access to information and personnel in connection with your examination of compliance with Florida Statute 218.415, *Local Government Investment Policies.*

56) Our interpretation of Florida Statute 218.415, *Local Government Investment Policies* is as follows:

    a) As the Council has elected to invest surplus funds in compliance with section 218.415(17) of the Florida Statutes, the provisions of section 218.415(14) requiring a minimum number of hours of completion of continuing professional education do not apply.

57) We have disclosed to you all known matters that may contradict the Council's compliance with the specified requirements and we have disclosed to you all communications from regulatory agencies, consultants and others regarding possible noncompliance with Florida Statute 218.415, *Local Government Investment Policies*, including communications received between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024 and through the date of this letter.

58) We have complied with all Board of Directors approved financial management and banking policies during the reporting period.

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Title: _____ Title: _____

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

Ranked Order	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
1	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
2	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
3	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
4	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
5	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
6	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
7	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**	$4,999.61	-$7,409.51

2025 Small Grants

Ranked Order	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
8	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**
9	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**
10	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**
11	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**
12	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**
13	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**
14	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