



**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**Parks & Recreation – Conservation Resources /
Department of General Services**

Date: September 23, 2021

To: Jason E. Brown, County Administrator

Thru: Michael C. Zito, Assistant County Administrator
Kevin Kirwin, Director Parks & Recreation

From: Beth Powell, Asst. Director Parks & Conservation Resources

Subject: Notice of Public Meeting for the Lost Tree Islands Conservation Area
Restoration/Enhancement Plan

DESCRIPTIONS AND CONDITIONS

The Lost Tree Islands Conservation Area (LTICA) was purchased in 2003 with funds from the Florida Communities Trust and the County’s environmental lands bond referendum with additional funding assistance provided by the City of Vero Beach and the Town of Indian River Shores (2002). The 508-acre site is located in the Central Indian River Lagoon (IRL) approximately 0.75 miles north of the SR 60 boat launch on the barrier island. The LTICA is the second largest publicly-owned island system that is protected in Indian River County, and includes more than 10 miles of shoreline habitat. The LTICA ecological enhancement project will be the largest lagoon-based enhancement project undertaken by Indian River County providing water quality benefits, habitat for native wildlife species, and opportunities for public passive recreation and environmental education.

On October 15, 2019, the Board authorized the Chairman to execute a Cost-Share Agreement with the Indian River Lagoon Council (IRLC) for the purposes of completing the design and engineering for the restoration of the three outer islands at Lost Tree Islands Conservation Area (LTICA). Subsequently, on March 10, 2020, the Board approved an Agreement with Carter Associates, Inc. to provide design and engineering services for the project.

The project objectives for design and engineering of the LTICA habitat enhancement plan are briefly summarized as follows:

- Site design that is resilient and versatile, and by its nature will be adaptable during extreme weather events and climate change
- Water quality benefits through creation and enhancement of wetland communities
- Establishment of endemic habitat, including, but not limited to:

- High marsh habitat which is a rare resource in Indian River County
- Strategically located mangrove wetlands
- Maritime hammock habitat o Salt flats and open sandy beaches for shorebird nesting
- Seagrass habitat (based on appropriateness and feasibility)
- Oyster reefs (based on appropriateness and feasibility)
- Expanded nursery areas for fish and invertebrates
- Incorporation of innovative, low maintenance elements for shoreline stabilization
- Incorporation of green technologies where appropriate and feasible
- Provide for educational engagement on the ecological issues facing the Lagoon
- Provide passive recreational opportunities that promote ecotourism, educational awareness, local responsibility and facilitates informed community input
- Minimization of mosquito production
- Elimination of nuisance and exotic plant species such as Australian pine and Brazilian pepper
- Minimization of long-term maintenance, management, and capital costs

To date, County staff and the design engineer have completed the draft design and engineering plans for the enhancement of the three outer islands consistent with the IRLC grant funding and engineering agreement. A part of the County’s grant obligation is to solicit public feedback and provide information for the plan through a public meeting.

A public meeting will be held through a virtual and in-person hybrid platform on Wednesday, October 27, 2021 from 6-7:30pm at the iG Recreation Center utilizing state of the art technology to facilitate discussion and public input for the project. This hybrid meeting will allow the public to learn about the design process and to review the 80% complete design plans. Registration information can be found on the County’s website at www.ircgov.com/conservation or by emailing Conservation@ircgov.com.

APPROVED AGENDA ITEM FOR OCTOBER 12, 2021