

# Indian River County Seagrass Project

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Historically seagrass dominated over algae in the IRL and buffered nutrient loading in the IRL. The Indian River Lagoon (IRL) has lost much of the seagrass that once thrived prior. Unfortunately, the seagrass recovery that was occurring has been impacted by frequently occurring “Brown Tide” events, Hurricane Mathew and Hurricane Irma. According to the report released by the ST. Johns River Water Management District the Lagoon has been experiencing a large quantity of seagrass meadows loss since 2005 (Report: Indian River Lagoon Status and Trends, 2017).

This project will jumpstart seagrass meadows re-colonization within large un-vegetated areas utilizing scientifically validated techniques. This project will decrease recovery time for seagrass colonization within large shifting sand flats. This project will sequester nutrients, stabilize sediment, enhance recreational and commercial fisheries, and increase wildlife opportunities. The methodologies that used for this restoration have already been proven to be effective for restoration of seagrass in the Indian River Lagoon.

This project will target multiple barren flats located nearby the Wabasso section of the IRL around the Pine Island and Hole in the Wall Island.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this project is to create 40 acres of self-sustaining seagrass meadows.

## RESTORATION TASKS

1. **Acquire necessary permits for restoration activities.**
2. **Prevent vessel impacts by installing navigational aids.**
3. **Mechanically plant, protect, and maintain nursery grown seagrass.**
4. **Monitor project success.**

## OVERVIEW OF TASKS

A total of 220,000 Shoal and Widgeon seagrass planting units will be grown out in a commercial aquatic nursery. The seagrass planting units will then be mechanically installed into the designated areas at 3 ft o.c. intervals. The plants will then be maintained for two years. The restoration success will be monitored annually for a period of three years.

## ESTIMATED PROJECT BUDGET

\$ 3,400,000