



Indian River County, Florida

Indian River County
Administration Complex
1801 27th Street
Vero Beach, Florida 32960
indianriver.gov

MEMORANDUM

File ID: 25-0497

Type: Consent Staff Report

Meeting Date: 5/20/2025

TO: Board of County Commissioners

THROUGH: John A. Titkanich, Jr., County Administrator
Kylie Yanchula, Natural Resources Director

FROM: Eric Charest, Assistant Director Natural Resources Department

DATE: April 16, 2025

SUBJECT: Florida Department of Transportation's SRA1A Bridge Replacement and
Indian River County's Artificial Reef Program

BACKGROUND

Indian River County (IRC) Natural Resources Department Staff (Staff) have been in communications with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) with regards to their upcoming State Road A1A Bridge Replacement Project (Project) over the Sebastian Inlet. As FDOT's Project will result in the demolition of the existing Bridge, the County was made aware of the opportunity to repurpose a portion of the bridge demolition debris for use in its' artificial reef program. IRC currently holds active permits through the US Army Corps of Engineers for 2 Artificial Reef locations offshore of the County, with adequate space to accommodate deployments for qualifying material such as what will be made available from FDOT's Project.

As the cost for repurposing bridge demolition debris for use as Artificial Reef material is in excess of what it would cost the FDOT to appropriately dispose of the material, should the County be interested in utilizing it for Artificial Reef deployment, the County would need to enter into a Local Funding Agreement (LFA) with the FDOT to offset the increase in FDOT costs. FDOT has estimated that the additional cost to provide IRC with approximately 3,500 tons of artificial reef qualifying material, along transportation and deployment into one of the County's permitted sites, would be \$219,000.00 more than what the costs would be to properly dispose of the material.

Aware of increased costs to repurpose applicable material for Artificial Reef deployments, Coastal Conservation Association (CCA), Inc., a Florida based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to marine fisheries and coastal conservation, education and advocacy has offered to provide funding to the County to help defray costs associated with the County's use of the Sebastian Inlet Bridge debris for artificial reefing. CCA has offered the County 50.2% of the cost of repurposing the material, in the amount of \$110,000.00 for the County to utilize the materials in an Artificial Reef deployment. Through this proposed contribution, CCA is requesting County approval for them to reserve naming rights for a portion of the reefs deployed utilizing the bridge material.

The deployment of any qualifying bridge material would be done in accordance with the County's permits, with the County's responsibility, beyond a financial contribution to the FDOT of \$109,000.00, being to verify proper deployment of the materials as well as perform assessment dives on the newly deployed reefs.

BUDGETARY IMPACT

Funding in the amount of \$25,000.00 is currently budgeted and available in the Coastal Engineering Fund/Artificial Reef Account No. 12814472-033490-05053. Additional funds in the amount of \$84,000.00 are available in the Coastal Engineering, Other Professional Services Account No. 12814472-033190 via line transfer into the Artificial Reef account. In addition, donated funds to the County in the amount of \$110,000.00 from Coastal Conservation Association, Inc., would be leveraged against the County's \$109,000.00 in order to enter into the LFA with FDOT in the amount of \$219,000.00.

| Account Name | Account No. | Amount |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| Coastal Engineering Fund/Artificial Reef | 12814472-033490-05053 | \$25,000.00 |
| Coastal Engineering Fund/Other Professional Services | 12814472-033190 | \$84,000.00 |
| Coastal Conservation Association, Inc. donated funds | | \$110,000.00 |
| Total LFA Agreement request | | \$219,000.00 |

POTENTIAL FUTURE BOARD ACTIONS

Approval of proposed reef names by Coastal Conservation Association, Inc., for 50% (up to 3) reefs created from bridge demolition material, contingent on the number of reefs deployed.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Environment

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the BCC approve the following items in order to enable the County to repurpose up to 3,500 tons of FDOT SRA1A Sebastian Inlet Bridge demolition material for deployment within the County's permitted artificial reef sites.

1. Authorize the transfer of up to \$84,000.00 in funds from within the Coastal Engineering/Other Professional Services Account No. 12814472-033190 into Coastal Engineering/Artificial Reef Account No. 12814472-033490-05053, resulting in a total of \$109,000.00 Artificial Reef funding from the County.
2. Accept \$110,000.00 donation from Coastal Conservation Association, Inc., and authorize the Chair to execute the Local Funding Agreement between CCA and IRC upon concurrence by the County Attorney. Donated funds to be used to offset LFA Agreement costs with the FDOT, contingent on BCC approving FDOT LFA.
3. Execute Resolution committing \$219,000.00 in County funds to the FDOT under proposed LFA 445618-1-52-01.
4. Enter into LFA 445618-1-52-01 with FDOT for the Project and authorize the Chair to execute the agreement upon concurrence by the County Attorney.
5. Authorize CCA to provide names for 50% (up to 3) of the Artificial Reef deployments, pending BCC approval of the proposed names.