

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA
MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENTAL

TO: Jason E. Brown, County Administrator

THROUGH: Richard B. Szyrka P.E., Public Works Director

THROUGH: Keith McCully P.E., Stormwater Engineer

FROM: Alexis Peralta, Stormwater Educator & Fertilizer Enforcement

SUBJECT: **Stormdrain Awareness: An Educational Art Project**

DATE: October 29, 2019

DESCRIPTION

“Only Rain Down the Drain” is the motto of Indian River County Stormwater. In an attempt to educate the Public and help citizens of the County understand the relationship between the stormdrain and the Indian River Lagoon, staff is proposing a new educational art project of painting local stormdrains. Drains that have heavy foot traffic and are visible to the masses will be creatively and permanently painted with images that foster a sense of responsibility for the health of the Lagoon and, in turn, help prevent individual/personal stormwater pollution.

Previous stormdrain awareness attempts have been made through permanent, small, plastic markers that read “Drains to Lagoon.” The public has liked these markers but overall complain they are not visible enough to really market the message. By drawing more attention through professional art that lasts, the County will educate many more residents on the importance of stormwater drains, how they prevent flooding but are untreated, and that we all have a responsibility to prevent pollution as they lead to the Indian River Lagoon.

With the help of The Downtown Vero Beach Mural Project, volunteer artists will be assigned an approved stormdrain and paint a scene that includes the slogan “Only Rain Down the Drain.” Incorporating the message onto each individual design will give a consistency from drain to drain that helps the message stick. Artists can be paired with environmental organizations, school groups, or civic groups, such as nonprofits and rotary clubs, that wish to sponsor a drain. All drain designs will go through an application process for approval of design and to determine which drain will be assigned according to location and size. The art is expected to last a few years before fading; staff and volunteers will review drains annually to determine deterioration rate. Based off the exuberant public excitement for this project, staff estimates a biannual update where artists can touch up the drains or they can be painted over and recreated.

Many stormdrains in high foot traffic areas are located within the municipalities of the City of Vero Beach and the City of Sebastian. Staff has reached out to both, and also to the Town of Indian River Shores, to create a County-wide project that spans our entire area of the Lagoon. The City of Vero Beach is very interested and excited to utilize this project to forward their same message of stormdrains leading to the Lagoon. If the County Board of Commissioners approves the project, staff will go to City Council for official municipal approval. If necessary, and depending on location, the Florida Department of Transportation will be contacted regarding approval for drains in their sector.

Crystal Ploszay, owner of Unicorn Epoxy, professionally specializes in concrete painting and has graciously donated all the necessary art supplies for up to 30 drains this year, as well as prepping the stormdrain area and finishing with a rough glaze to seal the art and make sure it is slip proof and

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follows all safety regulations. (A demonstration of her work can be viewed at Waldo's Driftwood Resort and Restaurant on the patio floor).

The public awareness for this project is estimated to reach more residents than any other IRC stormwater education project by incorporating drains along our entire section of the Lagoon, including the City of Vero Beach, the City of Sebastian, and the Town of Indian River Shores. As with most educational marketing projects, there will not be a quantified number of people reached to record; but statistically it has been proven that more education leads to less pollution, therefore the thousands that will see these drains will ideally learn the reason behind the project and, in turn, help prevent stormwater pollution to the Lagoon. Additionally, for the educational component, the Stormwater Division will be featuring the completed drains on the Facebook page with additional rotating information about HOW residents can prevent pollution. Facebook themes will include fertilizer, litter, pet waste, cigarette butts, etc. This project will count towards our education and outreach TMDL reductions and be reported in our annual NPDES report.

The Downtown Vero Beach Mural Project is collecting applications to participate in this Stormdrain Educational Art Project until December 31st 2019. Public Works will have the final decision on all designs and drain art, and painting would begin early 2020.

FUNDING

Art supplies are donated by Crystal Ploszay with Unicorn Epoxy.

Artists are all volunteer and coordinated through Linda Moore and The Downtown Vero Beach Mural Project Inc.

Estimated funding for unexpected supplies/materials in the amount of \$500 is available from Transportation Fund/Stormwater/ Other Promotional Expense Account #11128138-034820.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests Board approval of this project and will then move forward with selecting applications.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

APPROVED AGENDA ITEM FOR November 12, 2019