

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA  
BOARD MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** Michael Zito, Interim County Administrator

**THROUGH:** Richard B. Szpyrka, P.E., Public Works Director

**THROUGH:** Eric Charest, Natural Resources Manager

**FROM:** Melissa Meisenburg, Lagoon Plan Environmental Specialist

**SUBJECT:** Approval to Submit Letters of Intent for the National Estuary Program's Coastal Watershed Grant

**DATE:** March 27, 2023

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**DESCRIPTION AND CONDITIONS**

Coastal Division staff is requesting Indian River County Board of County Commissioner (BCC) approval to submit two Letters of Intent (LOI) for projects to receive potential funding made available through the National Estuary Program's Coastal Watershed Grant. The grant is administered through Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) in close coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The grant funds projects addressing key factors estuaries across the United States are experiencing, including but not limited to loss of key habitats, harmful algal blooms, impacts of nutrients on coastal ecosystems and contaminants of emerging concern.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) requires the submission of an LOI by May 5, 2023. If selected by the RAE grant committee, the full proposal is due July 21, 2023. Entities may submit up to three LOIs, but only one may be selected for a full proposal submission. The Coastal Watershed Grant projects are awarded and administered by RAE with federal funding from the EPA. The award ranges from \$75,000 to \$250,000 and projects must be completed within a two-year-period.

Coastal Division staff has two distinct proposals for projects meeting the requirements of the RFP and is requesting to submit an LOI for both projects.

1. On January 18, 2022 the BCC directed Coastal Division staff to work with Florida Institute of Technology's Dr. Austin Fox to develop and conduct a County wide muck mapping survey within the Indian River Lagoon. Determining the location of extensive muck and potential nutrient fluxes is beneficial in understanding muck accumulation within regions of the Indian River Lagoon. A comprehensive muck survey will fill a data gap identified during the Research and Review Phase of The Indian River County Lagoon Management Plan. In addition, mitigation strategies provide Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) credits required to meet the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) set forth by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). Staff has worked closely with Dr. Fox to develop a comprehensive muck survey with sediment and nutrient analysis proposal. Dr. Fox provided staff with a scope of work for the project, which can be completed in six tasks over the course of one year. The total budget for the project is \$102,275.

2. In 2019 the Lauren’s Island project was developed to restore an oyster habitat and minimize erosion at a small spoil island south of the State Road 60 bridge. Over the past year, Coastal Division staff has acquired the necessary permits and easements from the FDEP and United States Army Corp of Engineers to carry out the project. In addition to the permits, the County was awarded \$50,000 through an FDEP grant. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$300,000. The project design requires the use of oyster gabions around the island with signage to notify boaters of the oyster habitat.

**FUNDING**

Per the RFP, funded projects must provide 25% of the total project costs. The 25% match must use non-federal dollars. Matching funds may include cash or in-kind support. Funding in the amount of \$70,000 for the County matches is budgeted and available in the General Fund/Lagoon/Other Professional Services account 00128337-033190.

Project	Total Budget	County Funds	Other Funding	LOI Request	Account Number
Muck Survey	\$102,275	\$35,000	\$0	\$67,275	00128337-033190
Lauren’s Island Oyster Project	\$300,000	\$35,000	\$50,000	\$215,000	00128337-033190

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the Board of County Commissioners approve the request to submit two Letters of Intent for the Coastal Watershed Grant.

**ATTACHMENTS**

NEP Coastal Watershed Grant Program

**APPROVED AGENDA ITEM FOR:**

April 18, 2023