

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA  
MEMORANDUM**

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

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

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

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

**SUBJECT:** Revised Outline for Indian River County's Lagoon Management Plan

**DATE:** March 24, 2023

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**BACKGROUND**

On June 19, 2018, under Commissioners Matters 14.C.1, the Indian River County Board of County Commissioners (Board) discussed and approved pursuing an Indian River County Lagoon Management Plan (IRL Plan). The plan would combine the efforts the County is undertaking through multiple departments including Public Works, Utilities, Parks and Community Development into a comprehensive management plan designed to improve the health of the Indian River Lagoon. On September 7, 2018 County staff entered into a work order with Tetra Tech, Inc. (Tetra Tech) to assist in the development of an IRL Plan Outline laying the foundation for potential water quality projects, restoration projects and education efforts.

Staff presented the initial IRL Plan Outline to the Board on May 7, 2019. At that time, recommendations were made regarding the direction of the IRL Plan. Staff incorporated the Board's recommendations into a revised outline, which was presented to the Board on July 16, 2019. During the meeting, the revised outline was not supported by the Board, instead staff was directed to move forward with a Research and Review Phase to identify key factors which may be impacting the region of the Indian River Lagoon in Indian River County. Updates on the Research and Review Phase were presented quarterly to the Board. The final update was presented on September 21, 2021. Board direction at that time was for staff to move forward with a new outline incorporating the key factors identified in the Research and Review Phase.

**DESCRIPTIONS AND CONDITIONS**

Coastal Division staff worked closely with Tetra Tech to develop the revised outline for the Indian River Lagoon Plan. The layout for the plan is intended to be similar to the County's 2019 Beach Preservation Plan, so it will be reader-friendly. The plan will identify management strategies and projects supported by the data analyzed during the Research and Review Phase. Measurable metrics will also be included in the document in order to demonstrate the County's progress towards plan goals.

The current revised outline follows an ecosystem approach, incorporating the key factors

discovered during the Research and Review Phase. The Plan outline places the key factors into five focus areas; Coastal, Stormwater, Conservation Lands, Utilities and Community Development. The categories will provide the reader with detailed information on each topic, current projects, upcoming projects and potential projects designed to benefit the Indian River Lagoon.

The Plan Development Phase is anticipated to take approximately 9-12 months to complete. During the Plan Develop Phase, Coastal Division staff will continue to gather valuable scientific data for inclusion in the management plan, while filling in data gaps identified in the Research and Review Phase. Staff will continue to seek funding sources to pursue science-based projects to improve the health and resiliency of the Indian River Lagoon and benefit the community.

After Plan development and adoption by the Board, the recommendations, goals and objectives written into the IRL Plan will be used to direct future Lagoon efforts for the County. The IRL Plan will work with multiple Indian River County Departments with diverse skill sets, knowledge and abilities to affect change in the Lagoon. The Plan is meant to be adaptive in nature, with updates anticipated to be made every five years to address and reevaluate goals, incorporate new strategies, evaluate current projects and create new recommendations for management strategies.

### **FUNDING**

Funding is not necessary for the approval of the revised IRL Plan Outline.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff is requesting feedback from the Board on the revised IRL Plan Outline and is requesting approval to move forward with the Plan Development Phase. If approved, staff will continue to work with Tetra Tech to develop a plan highlighting the key factors identified in the Research and Review Phase, including identifying projects and recommendations for on-going management strategies.

### **ATTACHMENT**

Revised IRL Management Plan Outline