

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Board of County Commissioners

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

FROM: Melissa Meisenburg, Sr. Lagoon Environmental Specialist

SUBJECT: National Estuaries Week, September 21st-28th

DATE: September 13, 2024

DESCRIPTIONS AND CONDITIONS

National Estuaries Week is an annual celebration and campaign to increase public awareness of our estuaries and encourage people to become involved in the protection of these natural resources. Estuaries around the world provide habitats for plants and animals, protection from flooding, are regional economic drivers, and recreation areas.

This week we recognize the importance of the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) to our community. The IRL is one of the most diverse estuaries in the world, spanning 156 miles along Florida's east coast. It is home to over 4,000 species of which 53 species are classified as threatened or endangered. In honor of National Estuaries Week, we wanted to highlight the work that the Lagoon Division is performing to help protect this valuable resource.

The goal of the Lagoon Division of Indian River County (IRC) is to protect the Lagoon through research and restoration projects designed to improve resiliency and conditions for the IRL and the IRC Community. To achieve this goal, IRC adopted the Lagoon Management Plan (LMP) in September 2023. The LMP is a living document highlighting the key factors impacting the IRL in IRC. Multiple County departments were involved in its development and continue to be involved through Lagoon beneficial projects. Such projects include stormwater treatment facilities, a County-wide fertilizer ordinance, and septic to sewer projects. Additionally, the Lagoon Division is working on the removal of derelict vessels, completing a County-wide muck survey, is one of ten partners with the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program awarded \$9.4 million National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration Habitat Transformational Grant, and is implementing a Living Docks program.

FUNDING

No funding is required for this informational agenda item.

APPROVED AGENDA ITEM FOR

September 24, 2024