



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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Environmental Restoration Projects to Benefit Indian River Lagoon *Projects will improve wildlife and water quality*



(Click on the image for a larger version.)

West Palm Beach, FL — Eight projects designed to benefit the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem were approved for implementation as part of a multi-agency initiative administered by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD).

The projects are set to begin this month and will deliver benefits that include salt marsh restoration, reduced estuary sediments and water quality improvement. The Indian River Lagoon is considered the most ecologically diverse estuary in North America and is home to more than 4,000 plant and animal species.

“Completing these projects in Martin and St. Lucie counties will provide tangible, near-term benefits to the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem,” said Governing Board Vice-Chairman Kevin Powers, a long-time Martin County resident. “We are committed to environmental restoration efforts with our many partners who are seeing these projects through.”

The projects were recommended for funding by the St. Lucie River Issues Team, a 15-member group representing organizations working together to accelerate and implement “ready-to-go” projects that offer quantifiable benefits to the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon.

The District serves as the administrator for the dedicated state funding. The projects are:

| Recipient | Project |
|---|---|
| St. Lucie County | Harbor Branch Preserve project to restore tidal flow to 178-acre salt marsh |
| Fort Pierce Farms Water Control District | Canal 1 and 4 stormwater retrofit and erosion protection |
| Treasure Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council | Heathcote Park/Virginia Avenue Canal stormwater retrofit to implement Best Management Practices * |
| Florida Oceanographic Society | Establish the Florida Oceanographic Coastal Center site for seagrass health monitoring |
| University of Florida/IFAS | Research nitrogen and phosphorus transport from agricultural fields to Indian River Lagoon |
| St. Lucie County | Research on beneficial use of muck sediment from St. Lucie County waterways |
| Groveland Utilities Public/Private Partnership | Grove Land Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area feasibility study * |
| Florida Tech./Marine Resource Council | Collection of fertilizer nutrient data in Martin and St. Lucie counties |

**These two projects were approved by the SFWMD Governing Board at the March meeting.*

In addition to the Indian River Lagoon projects listed above, five priority projects for the St. Lucie River and Estuary moved forward in January for implementation.

Since the St. Lucie River Issues Team was initiated in 1998, the team’s recommended projects have received \$63 million from the Florida Legislature, more than \$65 million from local partners and \$2 million from the federal government.

Accomplishments to date include the restoration of more than 4,671 acres of habitat, 4,358 acres of wetlands and 25,940 feet of shoreline throughout this unique watershed.

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About the South Florida Water Management District

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state’s five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.