



MARTIN COUNTY

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

2022 Federal Legislative Program

ADOPTED:



MARTIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

2022 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP)

The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan is a framework for restoring, protecting, and preserving the greater Everglades ecosystem. The plan is a 50-50 partnership between the State of Florida and the federal government.

Indian River Lagoon – South

The Indian River Lagoon, home to more than 3,000 species of plants and animals, is considered the most biologically diverse estuarine system in the continental United States. The **Indian River**

Lagoon-South (IRL-S) Restoration Project, part of **CERP**, was authorized to address the damaging effects of pollution and unnaturally large freshwater discharges and local basin runoff on our ecologically vital water bodies.

IRL-S includes construction and operation of four new, large-scale above-ground

reservoirs and their connecting canals, control structures, levees, and pumps to capture water from the C-23, C-24, C-25, and C-44 canals for increased storage. It also includes the construction and operation of four new stormwater treatment areas (STAs), one for each of the basins (C-23/C-24 North, C-23/C-24 South, C-25, and C-44) to reduce the amounts of sediment, phosphorus, and nitrogen entering the estuary and the lagoon.



REQUEST full annual funding at \$200 million from the federal government for **CERP**. **REQUEST** the prioritization of the completion of design and land acquisition for the **C-23 and C-24 North components of IRL-S**.

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Coastal Resiliency

Reauthorization of the Coral Reef Conservation Act

While disease outbreaks are not unprecedented along the Florida Reef Tract, this current disease event is unique in that it has:

- Persisted and continued to spread since 2014 and includes multiple diseases.
- Impacted over 18 species of stony coral, including primary reef builders and species that have been listed as “Threatened” under the Endangered Species Act.
- Effectively eliminated a few especially susceptible species from the known wild population.

The coral reef tract brings in over \$6 billion in revenue to the state.

SUPPORT reauthorization of the Coral Reef Conservation Act to allow the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to undertake several activities to understand, manage, and protect coral reef ecosystems.

REQUEST the establishment of a Coral Reef Conservation Fund. **REQUEST** the inclusion of NOAA in emergency assistance. **REQUEST** the authorization of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.



Beach Restoration and Inlet Management

Continue to work with the federal government to provide storm protection, recreation and habitat on eroded beaches



SUPPORT adequate annual funding for the USACE Operations & Maintenance (O&M) “Small, Remote, or Subsistence Navigation” dredging account, including additional funding for dredging not identified in the annual Federal Administration budget.

SUPPORT securing a long-term contributed funds agreement (CFA) to allow for the continuation of an active partnership between Martin County and the Corps as we both work to manage and maintain the St.

Lucie Inlet. A long-term CFA will allow the county to maintain the inlet at our expense in times of need.

SUPPORT issuance of a federal permit to the county should the county need to do our own dredging to achieve greater cost-effectiveness.



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Water Resource Development Act (WRDA)

SUPPORT the bi-annual passage of the Water Resources Development Act that authorizes US Army Corps of Engineers projects and policies that often have statewide impacts to Florida, including Everglades restoration, port and inlet construction, and beach nourishment projects.

National Estuary Program

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established the National Estuary Program (NEP) as a core water program authorized by Section 320 of the Clean Water Act. The Indian River Lagoon was nominated as an Estuary of National Significance and joined the NEP in 1990 under the sponsorship of the St. Johns and South Florida Water Management Districts. The mission of the NEP is to protect and restore the water quality and ecological integrity of the 28 estuaries designated by the U.S. Congress as “Estuaries of National Significance.”



SUPPORT full funding for the National Estuary Program.

Conservation Land Acquisition

Acquisition of conservation lands is a foundational element to Martin County’s priorities of water quality, open spaces, and quality of life. There are several programs of interest related to land acquisition each of which depend on State and

Federal partnerships to effectively achieve results.

The Martin County Blue Ways program provides conservation lands for local basin water quality projects, recreational access to the rivers, the lagoon, and ocean. The Loxa-Lucie program provides a wildlife and recreation corridor between Halpatiokee, Atlantic Ridge State Park and Jonathon Dickinson State Park that would create a “super park” which would serve as a destination for people and wildlife. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project identified





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thousands of acres for acquisition to provide natural area water storage and treatment. These areas also contribute to wildlife habitat and large open areas for passive recreation. Acquisition in the PalMar area preserves some of the highest quality wetland in the greater Everglades. This is a critical effort to maintain and restore water quality and timing for the wild and scenic Loxahatchee River. Land acquisition is in Martin County's legacy. These programs fit very well into several state and federal programs for land acquisition assistance and the county supports active engagement with our state and federal delegation to advance these efforts

SUPPORT state funding for PalMar land acquisition and Florida Forever funding for state land acquisition.

Sand Acquisition, Nourishment, and Development (SAND) Act

Over the past several years, it has become clear that communities in South Florida need more sand for beach nourishment projects, while there is a relatively large reserve of material off the Treasure Coast. However, transportation distance and grain size and color variations, plus other local concerns, make the Treasure Coast material less suitable for South Florida beaches.

SUPPORT passage of a SAND Act that permits exploration of non-domestic sand for American shore protection projects.

