



**February 21, 2025**  
**IRLS Forum: Collaboration and Communication**

The Indian River Lagoon Symposium (IRLS) is a multi-institutional, multi-agency effort to provide a forum for discussing Indian River Lagoon science and its application to management of the lagoon. The Indian River Lagoon Observatory (IRLO), based at FAU Harbor Branch in Fort Pierce, was established in 2011 to acquire and disseminate data and knowledge on the IRL critical to its ecological function and its sustainable management. The IRLS was launched in 2012 as the centerpiece of IRLO's collaborative efforts as a forum for research on the IRL and its management to narrow the gaps between research and its application.

The IRLS Forum will aim to enhance collaboration and communication between diverse IRL stakeholders while sharing lessons learned and building relationships. Presentations from resource managers, researchers, restoration practitioners, and environmental organizations will highlight efforts to promote ecosystem health and awareness. This forum provides a perfect platform to spark new partnerships, share insights, and introduce initiatives that foster meaningful collaboration and strengthen connections within the IRL community.

**IRLS 2025 Steering Committee**

A Steering Committee with representatives from academic, governmental, and non-profit organizations defines the goals, basic outline, and structure for the symposium; identifies potential participants; and provides guidance, logistical support, and planning for the symposium. The Steering Committee is instrumental in making the symposium a truly collaborative effort within the diverse IRL research community. The 2025 Steering Committee members are:

- Irene Arpayoglou – FDEP/Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserves
- Rachel Brewton – Florida Atlantic University
- Kristen Davis – Florida Atlantic University
- Kelli Hunsucker – Florida Institute of Technology
- Chuck Jacoby – University of South Florida
- Tim Moore – Florida Atlantic University
- Elizabeth Salewski – South Florida Water Management District
- Loraé Simpson – St. Johns River Water Management District
- Holly Sweat – Smithsonian Marine Station at Fort Pierce
- Linda Walters – University of Central Florida
- Jessy Wayles – Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program

## Acknowledgments

### Symposium Host

Since its inception, Florida Atlantic University's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute has been proud to serve as the host and venue of the Indian River Lagoon Symposium.



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Oceanographic Institute**

### IRLS 2025 Sponsors

Since 2012, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation has been the primary sponsor for the Indian River Lagoon Symposium. We thank Michael O'Reilly, Chair; Staci Barney Rosalia, Executive Director; and Cyndi Permenter, Director of Operations, for their support. We also thank the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program for its continued support. Additionally, we thank the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida and the Treasure Coast Chapter of the Florida Association of Environmental Professionals for their support of this year's symposium.

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**Indian River Lagoon Symposium 2025**  
***IRLS Forum: Collaboration and Communication Program Schedule***

**Program Schedule**

(Note: The presenting author of talks is the first author, unless indicated by underlining.)

**Friday, February 21, 2025**

- 0730 – 0830    Registration and Coffee**
- 0830 – 0835    Welcome**
- 0835 – 0930    Session 1 – Environmental Monitoring & Citizen Science**  
Session Chair: Loraé Simpson
- 0835 – 0840    **Monitoring nekton communities associated with IRL restoration projects**  
Derek Tremain  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Melbourne, FL
- 0840 – 0845    **Mangrove Restoration in the Indian River Lagoon while Battling Fungal Disease: Moving Forward**  
Mara Skadden<sup>1</sup> and Melissa Deinys<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Marine Resources Council, Palm Bay, FL; <sup>2</sup>University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL
- 0845 – 0850    **An Integrated Detection & Delivery System to Abate Contaminants in Water Bodies**  
Sharanya Natarajan  
Edgewood Jr/Sr High School, Merritt Island, FL
- 0850 – 0855    **The Relation Between Water Quality and Seagrass Health in the Southern Indian River Lagoon**  
Michael Yustin<sup>1</sup> and Patrick Zuloaga<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Martin County Board of County Commissioners, Stuart, FL; <sup>2</sup>TetraTech Inc., West Palm Beach, FL
- 0855 – 0900    **Questions**
- 0900 – 0905    **Conservation at the Crossroads: HSWRI's Marine Conservation Efforts in the Indian River Lagoon and the Path Forward**  
Jeff Eble, Wendy Noke-Durden, and Teresa Jablonski  
Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute, Melbourne Beach, FL
- 0905 – 0910    **ORCA's Citizen Science Projects**  
Missy Weiss  
Ocean Research & Conservation Association, Vero Beach, FL
- 0910 – 0915    **Eyes on Seagrass Blitz in the Indian River Lagoon**  
Lisa Krimsky<sup>1</sup>, Holly Abeels<sup>1</sup>, Vincent Encomio<sup>2</sup>, Carolyn Kovacs<sup>1</sup>, and Andrea Lazzari<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, UF/IFAS Extension, <sup>2</sup>Martin and St. Lucie Counties, Stuart, FL

- 0915 – 0920 **New Swell Educational Mangrove Planter Boxes**  
Cory Redwine<sup>1,2</sup> and Alex Gorichky<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Whitney Laboratory for Marine Biosciences, University of Florida, St. Augustine, FL;  
<sup>2</sup>Sea Redwine Preservation, Merritt Island, FL
- 0920 – 0925 **Beyond the Lagoon: Student Scientists Discover a Gamefish Nursery at Jones' Pier**  
Ashley Lingwood  
Indian River County Conservation Lands Division Program, Vero Beach, FL
- 0925 – 0930 **Questions**
- 0930 – 1000 Break**
- 1000 – 1100 Session 2 – Coalitions & Counties**  
Session Char: Rachel Brewton
- 1000 – 1005 **Space Coast Association of Environmental Professionals**  
Josh Mills  
Florida Association of Environmental Professionals; Native Shorelines, Jensen Beach, FL
- 1005 – 1010 **Preservation Starts with a Community: A Case Study in the Jupiter Narrows**  
Sue Panella  
Jupiter Narrows Conservation Alliance, Inc., Tequesta, FL
- 1010 – 1015 **Explore Natural Martin- Leave No Trace Coalition**  
Emily Dark  
Martin County Board of County Commissioners, Stuart, FL
- 1015 – 1020 **Stronger Together**  
Melissa Meisenburg  
Indian River County, Natural Resources, Lagoon Division, Vero Beach, FL
- 1020 – 1025 **Statewide Habitat Restoration Initiatives**  
Frank Gidus  
Coastal Conservation Association Florida, Orlando, FL
- 1025 – 1030 **Questions**
- 1030 – 1035 **Introduction to the Treasure Coast Scenic Highway**  
Stephanie M. Torres  
St. Lucie Transportation Planning Organization, Fort Pierce, FL
- 1035 – 1040 **Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway**  
Nicholas Sanzone  
Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway, Sebastian, FL

- 1040 – 1045 **Land Conservation to Benefit Indian River Lagoon Water Quality**  
Casey Darling Kniffin  
Florida Wildlife Federation, Tallahassee, FL
- 1045 – 1050 **Brevard County Save Our Indian River Lagoon Update**  
Anthony Gubler  
Brevard County Natural Resources Management, Viera, FL
- 1050 – 1055 **Collaborating for Conservation: Partnering with Local Government to Promote Manatee-Safe Boating**  
Tiare Fridrich<sup>1</sup> and Gina McClain<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Save the Manatee Club, Longwood, FL; <sup>2</sup>Volusia County Environmental Management
- 1055 – 1100 **Questions**
- 1100 – 1130 Break**
- 1130 – 1230 **Session 3 – Living Shorelines & Youth Focused Environmental Groups**  
Session Chair: Irene Arpayoglou
- 1130 – 1135 **Moving the Needle on Living Shorelines – Florida Sea Grant and UF/IFAS Extension Programs**  
Vincent Encomio<sup>1,2</sup>, Mandy Baily<sup>2</sup>, and Ken Gioeli<sup>3</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>UF/IFAS Extension, Martin and St. Lucie Counties, Stuart, FL; <sup>2</sup>Florida Sea Grant;  
<sup>3</sup>UF/IFAS Extension St. Lucie County
- 1135 – 1140 **Resilient Shoreline and Coral Update**  
Nick Bourdon  
Reef Arches, Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, FL
- 1140 – 1145 **A Brief History of the Harbor Branch Seagrass Nursery**  
Richard Mulroy and Rachel Brewton  
FAU Harbor Branch, Fort Pierce, FL
- 1145 – 1150 **Large-Scale Habitat Restoration in Satellite Beach – An Update**  
Olivia Escandell<sup>1</sup>, Annie Roddenberry<sup>2</sup>, Kent Smith<sup>3</sup>, Caity Savoia<sup>1</sup>, and Catalina Weaver<sup>3</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Melbourne, FL; <sup>2</sup>Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, New Smyrna Beach, FL; <sup>3</sup>Florida Fish and Wildlife
- 1150 – 1155 **Preparing A Mosquito Control Impoundment For A Changing Climate**  
Jonathan Linder, Keith Minner, Bridget Picco, Gil Tompkins, Bob Spreitzer, Roy Montalvan, Jimmy Sullivan, and Joseph Faella  
Brevard County Mosquito Control, Titusville, FL
- 1155 – 1200 **Questions**

- 1200 – 1205 **Buffer Zones: Engaging the Community in Native Gardening to Improve Indian River Lagoon Conditions**  
Victoria Wilcock<sup>1</sup>, Olivia Escandell<sup>1</sup>, Tyler Provoncha<sup>1</sup>, and Austin Fox<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Brevard Zoo, Melbourne, FL; <sup>2</sup>Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, FL
- 1205 – 1210 **Creating a Climate Friendly Landscape**  
Emily Ralston<sup>1</sup>, Steven Lazarus<sup>1</sup>, and Camille Hadley<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, FL; <sup>2</sup>Little Growers, Inc., Melbourne, FL
- 1210 – 1215 **RiverKidz for the Future of the IRL**  
Casey Darling Kniffin, Kelli Dore, Finley Dore, Eleanor Kniffin  
RiverKids/Rivers Coalition, Stuart, FL
- 1215 – 1220 **Engaging Youth, Anglers, and Boaters in Protecting the Indian River Lagoon.**  
Carla Perscky  
Anglers for Conservation, Satellite Beach, FL
- 1220 – 1225 **Understanding and Conserving Manatees and their Habitat: The Manatee Center's Role in Connecting Communities for Conservation**  
Elyse Geraghty  
The Manatee Center, Fort Pierce, FL
- 1225 – 1230 **Questions**
- 1230 – 1235 **Closing Remarks**