

## **GOAL VI B**

### **ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY BASED “PEER REVIEW” OF SCIENCE-BASED RULES AND REGULATIONS**

The disagreement between community knowledge and science-based data has been challenging the coordination of efforts between environmental interests, waterway users, and regulation authorities for decades. Brevard County is moving forward to address the disputed and/or divergent information that develops conflicts between the boaters and/or fishermen, the environmental groups, and the scientific researchers. As a local government entity, the County acts as moderator between these groups, where it is required to come up with solutions that look to ensure mutual benefits to all parties.

Ideally, science-based data pertaining to recreational boating patterns should include spatially explicit referenced details, such as boating origin analyses with data on the type of access facility, facility location, and user numbers. This combination of information would help policy makers decide where infrastructure should be built (such as mooring fields) (Sidman, et al., 2007). Due to the complex makeup of boaters in the region, ranging from local residents, frequent users from adjacent counties, seasonal visitors and worldwide tourists, it is extremely difficult to clearly identify and prioritize the features needed to optimize waterway use. Additionally, many boaters are also commercial fishermen, meaning that their activities will impact the fish population and other biological systems in and around the IRL and St. Johns River system. Therefore, the County must come up with a strategy that champions and defends scientific integrity, honesty, objectivity and accountability, and integrates science with the environmental, social, and economic and education needs and values of the community (IRL-NEP, 2008). The strategy should include development of a coordinated, integrated and well-managed IRL and St. Johns River field research site network with access and facility support, from which scientific data can be processed and translated into plain language for non-scientific user-groups.

To achieve this goal, and sustain the uniqueness and diversity of the IRL and St. Johns River system, the county must coordinate with local and regional organizations, educational institutions, and all the municipalities within the county to encourage community-based review and understanding of science-based rules and regulations.

### **Potential Funding Sources**

The broad nature of this Goal is being addressed partially through the development of this plan and the community based nature of its development.

This Goal has no specific related Tasks and no funding sources have been identified.

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# INCREASE INVOLVEMENT OF THE EXISTING MARINE ADVISORY COUNCIL IN DETERMINING THE NEED FOR AND APPLICATION OF RELEVANT STUDIES

## Overview of Actions

No Related Action

### ***OBJECTIVE VIB1:***

Increase involvement of the existing Marine Advisory Council in determining the need for and application of relevant studies.

### ***RELATED IRL CCMP ACTIONS:***

- SR-1: Create an Indian River Lagoon Science and Management Working Group charged with the development and implementation of a scientific research vision and implementation strategy for the Indian River Lagoon. This strategy should be consistent with and complimentary to statewide research strategies identified by the Florida Coastal and Ocean Resources Council and national coastal priorities.
- SR-2: Include the value of scientific research in any studies of the Indian River Lagoon regional economy.
- SR-3: Expand and diversify funding for scientific research in the Indian River Lagoon.
- FI-1: Continue the Indian River Lagoon Advisory Board's role of oversight, monitoring, and guidance of implementation of the IRL CCMP.
- FI-2: Continue measurement of progress of CCMP implementation activities.
- DIM-1: Continue projects and strategies related to data and information management.
- MON-1: Continue projects related to monitoring the resources of the Indian River Lagoon and address gaps in data as needed.
- MON-3: Provide support for the development of a triennial report on the state of the Indian River Lagoon

### ***PRIORITY PROBLEM:***

Currently, there are a variety of educational programs, as well as related educational materials, present in Brevard County that emphasize boating/waterway safety, promote sustainable fisheries management, proper grey/black water disposal, etc. These programs often lack consistency and uniformity. Many of which can lack creditable scientific data. The reason for the lack of consistency is partly due to the fact that development of a comprehensive research strategy in any estuarine ecosystem is extremely challenging. On top of the complexity of the ecosystem itself, assessment of the current state of knowledge of the system among stakeholders is one of the most difficult tasks to accomplish. In the case of Brevard County, these challenges are exacerbated by the extreme biological diversity and unique natural variability of the IRL and St. Johns River ecosystems (IRL-NEP, 2008).

To address these problems, the Indian River Lagoon Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) has been updated to include current scientific research that relates to the IRL region and its economy. Monitoring and guidance for CCMP implementation has also been emphasized. The intellectual capacity and technological infrastructure available in Brevard County provide an excellent opportunity to make a substantial contribution to county and regional stakeholder knowledge. The CCMP has proposed that an IRL Science and Management Working Group should be created to develop strategies that best utilize the available resources in the region (IRL-NEP, 2008).

The Brevard County Marine Advisory Council (BMAC) provides advice and guidance to the Board of County Commissioners. Its scope of work includes all marine-related issues to insure a well-maintained, safe, healthy and friendly marine environment for the residents and visiting user of Brevard's marine resources (Brevard County Marine Advisory Council, 2010). BMAC meets monthly to discuss progress on reports from the Brevard County Natural Resources Management Office, the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, and issues brought forth by the public. Upon completion, the CM3P Work Group reports are also reviewed by BMAC members.

There are many educational institutions and local non-profit organizations that provide public review, workshops and outreach programs for Brevard County residents and visitors. The University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences has an extension office in Brevard, and its website provides extensive information from hurricane preparedness, fisheries, to solid waste disposal. Brevard Marine Resources Council, located right on the Lagoon, holds brown bag lunches and conducts Lagoonwatch, in which residents of all age could find ways to participate and learn about the history and biophysical structure of the IRL and St. Johns River systems. The biggest challenge that remains, however, is how to efficiently utilize these resources, combined with scientific studies, and conduct consistent educational outreach programs that the organization or program could easily monitor the progress so that the county is assured that the waterway users are properly educated.

***ESTIMATED COSTS:***

The cost could be minimized by utilizing available resources from institutions and non-profit organizations, as well as efficiently allocating County and municipality staff.

NOTE: Goal title has been changed to Marine Advisory Council from Marine Advisory Committee, reflecting the name of the entity currently in place.

## REFERENCES

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