

Impediments to Implementation of the Indian River Lagoon Basin Management Action Plans



Prepared by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council and the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council for the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

Graphics Courtesy of: Sea Turtle Conservancy, Coastal Tech Corp, UFL IFAS, Brevard County, Volusia County, Martin County Coastal



Introduction

- The report is the result of a cooperative effort by East Central Florida Regional Planning Council and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council to provide a regional evaluation and assessment related to the Indian River Lagoon, and St. Lucie River and Estuary.



Introduction

- The goal is to provide recommendations that will assist local governments and other entities to fully implement Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs).
- This work was supported by a Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

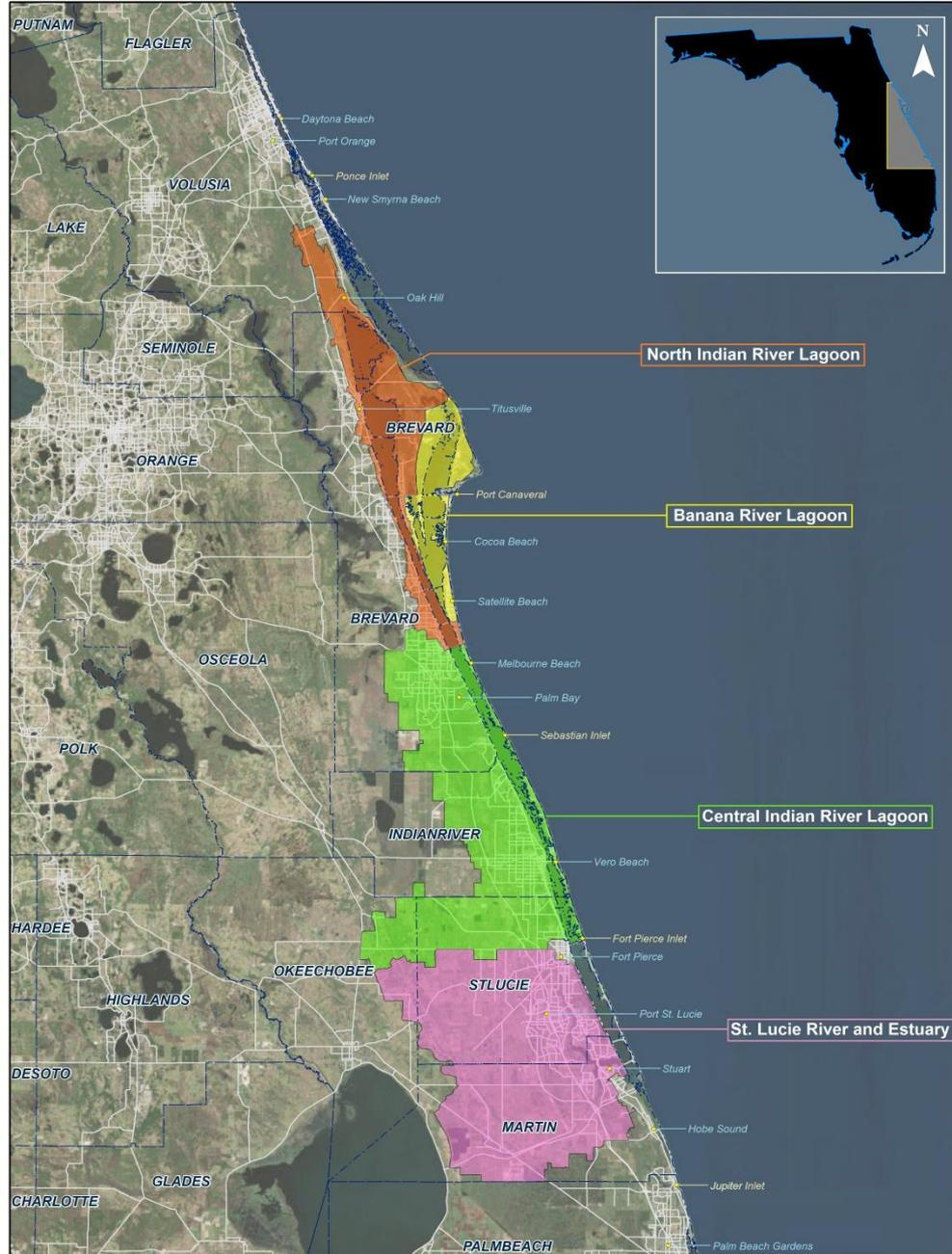


Background

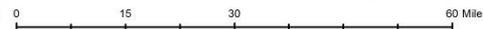
- Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program is a statewide watershed-based management approach to restore and protect water quality in Florida.
- TMDLs are implemented through a phased approach, which includes the development of BMAPs.
- Each BMAP contains a comprehensive set of strategies for restoring impaired waters by reducing pollutant loadings to meet the allowable loadings established in a TMDL.



Indian River Lagoon Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) Areas



Source(s): Florida Geographic Data Library (County Boundaries, Roadways); Florida Department of Environmental Protection (BMAPs); ESRI (Aerial)



Methods

- Council staff interviewed county staff responsible for identifying projects to achieve nutrient reductions in Brevard, Indian River, Martin, and St. Lucie counties.
- Based on the meetings, Council staff compiled a list of possible BMAP impediments.
- Local governments were then asked to score each item based on the perception of how the impediment may impact the ability of their organization to implement the BMAPs.

List of Impediments

1. Inadequate funding.
2. Nutrient loading from muck is not being addressed.
3. Nutrient loading from groundwater is not being addressed.
4. No incentive for innovative stormwater management.
5. Incomplete water quality data.



List of Impediments

6. Inadequate water quality monitoring.
7. Unequal treatment of public and private entities, agriculture, and water control districts.
8. Onerous conditions attached to BMAP projects.
9. Inadequate technology to meet TMDL goals.
10. BMAPs are based on flawed TMDLs.



List of Impediments

11. Trends in nutrient loading from the atmosphere are not being considered.
12. Legacy Loading in Lake Okeechobee.
13. Lack of operations and maintenance monitoring.
14. Load allocation process is not consistent between BMAPs.
15. Incomplete knowledge of existing infrastructure.



Inadequate Funding

- Inadequate funding was identified as a major impediment by all of the local governments surveyed.
- Brevard County estimated it would take \$1.3 billion to implement the three northern IRL BMAPs.
- Martin County's 2015 Stormwater/Water Quality Needs Assessment Update identified future project costs totaling \$191,227,942.
- Required nutrient reductions in all four of the BMAPs is estimated to cost \$4.6 billion.

Recommendations

Funding

- FDEP and all affected local governments should support an annual allocation of state funds to be dedicated to the implementation of BMAP strategies for achieving TMDLs for the Indian River Lagoon, and St. Lucie River and Estuary.
- FDEP should establish a matching grant program specifically designed to equitably define and distribute allocated trust fund monies for implementing BMAP strategies achieving TMDLs.

Recommendations

Water Quality Monitoring

- FDEP should establish and fund a comprehensive water quality monitoring program as part of its overall statewide BMAP program.



Recommendations

Time Frames and Implementation Schedule

- FDEP or an independent authority should conduct a comprehensive audit of program goals and progress to determine if the time frames for accomplishing BMAP goals are achievable, and any adjustments are necessary.
- Consider establishing an end point or a process for establishing BMAP completion dates for MS4 entities participating in the program that are presumed to have completed their assigned nutrient reduction projects.

Recommendations

Equitable Treatment of Participants

- FDEP and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services should work with all participating entities to rectify any concerns raised by participants related to equitable treatment.



Contact

Peter G. Merritt, Ph.D.
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
772-221-4060
pmerritt@tcrpc.org

www.tcrpc.org