

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members AGENDA ITEM 12

From: Staff

Date: June 17, 2016 Council Meeting

Subject: Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian River Lagoon Council – Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program

Introduction

This item proposes a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Council to memorialize and encourage mutual cooperation and the provision of technical support and assistance between the two organizations (Exhibit 1). The IRL is an imperiled estuarine ecosystem of national significance. Addressing the full-scale problems of the IRL transcend political county boundaries and will require multi-jurisdictional cooperation for permanent solutions. The plans and programs of both organizations share the long-term goal of a healthy, seagrass-based IRL ecosystem.

Background

Congress established the National Estuary Program (NEP) in 1987 to protect and restore the water quality and ecological integrity of estuaries of national significance. Nationally there are 28 estuaries in 18 coastal states and Puerto Rico covered under the program. Stretching along more than 40 percent of Florida's east coast, the IRL is 156 miles long extending from the Ponce Inlet in Volusia County to the Jupiter Inlet in northern Palm Beach County. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administers the NEP. Decisions are made locally, and each NEP is composed of representatives from federal, state and local government agencies, local residents, business leaders, educators, and researchers.

Overview

The IRL NEP was established in 1990 and has operated with the guidance of an Advisory Board. In February 2015, the Advisory Board approved the formation of a new independent special district to sponsor and carry out the goals of the IRL NEP. The IRL Council includes representatives of five counties bordering the lagoon, which are Brevard, Volusia, St. Lucie and Martin counties; the Indian River County Lagoon Coalition; the St. Johns River and South Florida water management districts; and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. All eight Council members have signed an interlocal agreement outlining their managerial and financial responsibilities.

Martin County commissioner and Council board member Ed Fielding currently chairs the IRL Council. Council gubernatorial appointee, Doug Bournique, serves on the IRL Council board of directors as a representative of the St. Johns River Water Management District (Exhibit 2).

Conclusion

The purpose and intent of this MOU is to foster coordination, cooperation, and the sharing of resources and information between the organizations. Under the MOU, the parties agree to cooperatively work together to improve communication and provide technical assistance and mutual support towards accomplishing their shared goals related to a healthy, sustainable IRL. This may include sharing of resource information, technical staff expertise, and temporary office space; coordination of meetings; website postings, and other events; and other mutually beneficial cooperative efforts.

Recommendation

Council should authorize the Chairman to sign and transmit the Memorandum of Understanding to the IRL Council for their consideration and action.

Attachments

EXHIBIT 1

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL AND THE INDIAN RIVER LAGOON COUNCIL REGARDING MUTUAL COOPERATION AND PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

WHEREAS, the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, hereinafter referred to as the TCRPC, was established in 1976 under the laws of Florida by interlocal agreement between Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River counties to: 1) enhance their ability to identify and resolve issues transcending their individual boundaries; and 2) establish a Strategic Regional Policy Plan for the orderly and balanced economic growth of the region consistent with the protection of natural resources and enhancement of the quality of life of the residents of the region;

WHEREAS, the Indian River Lagoon Council, hereinafter referred to as IRLC, was established in 2015 under the laws of Florida by interlocal agreement between Volusia, Brevard, St. Lucie and Martin counties; the Indian River County Lagoon Coalition; the Florida Department of Environmental Protection; and the St. Johns River and South Florida water management districts to carry out the goals of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan established under the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program;

WHEREAS, the full-scale problems of the Indian River Lagoon transcend county political boundaries and will require multi-jurisdictional cooperation across its entire 156-mile length for permanent solutions; and

WHEREAS, the plans and programs of the TCRPC and IRLC share the long-term goal of a healthy, seagrass-based Indian River Lagoon ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, this goal can be more quickly and effectively achieved by working cooperatively together and sharing resources; and

WHEREAS, the purpose and intent of this Memorandum of Understanding is to foster coordination, cooperation, and the sharing of resources and information between the organizations toward achievement of their goals for the Indian River Lagoon.

NOW, THEREFORE, the TCRPC and IRLC hereby understand and agree as follows:

SECTION I. Mutual Cooperation and Assistance

The parties agree to cooperatively work together to improve communication and provide technical assistance and mutual support towards accomplishing their shared goals related to a healthy, sustainable Indian River Lagoon. This may include sharing of resource information, technical staff expertise, and temporary office space; coordination of meetings; website postings, and other events; and other mutually beneficial cooperative efforts.

SECTION II. Liability

The parties agree that, by execution of this Memorandum of Understanding, no party will be deemed to have waived its statutory defense of sovereign immunity, or increased its limits of liability as provided by Florida Statutes. The extension of mutual assistance and cooperation by the parties shall be within the limits of their time and financial resources as determined by the respective Councils.

TCRPC and IRL Council, hereby affirm that, at a duly constituted meeting, it approved the terms of and does hereby enter into the Memorandum of Understanding.

ATTEST:

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING
COUNCIL

Witness

Michael Davis, Chairman

Date

ATTEST:

INDIAN RIVER LAGOON COUNCIL

Witness

Ed Fielding, Chairman

Date

EXHIBIT 2

INDIAN RIVER LAGOON NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Ed Fielding, (Chair), Martin County Commissioner
- Curt Smith, (Vice Chair), Brevard County Commissioner
- Chris Dzadoovsky (Secretary), St. Lucie County Commissioner
- Doug Daniels, Volusia County Councilman
- Drew Bartlett, Department of Environmental Protection Deputy Secretary
- Doug Bournique, St. Johns River Water Management District Governing Board member
- Kevin Powers, South Florida Water Management District Governing Board member
- Richard H. Gillmor, Indian River County Lagoon Coalition, Sebastian City Council