

MARTIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

2019 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

PalMar Land Acquisition

SUPPORT federal legislation or funding to advance the acquisition of PalMar. Acquisition of PalMar would enhance Martin County's ability to protect the area's natural resources, provide outdoor recreational opportunities, and to assist in the restoration of the federally designated "Wild and Scenic" Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River.

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.

Endangered Species Petition

Martin County has partnered with Dr. Grant Gilmore to research and create a petition to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. This petition will request that the St. Lucie Estuary be designated as a unique critical habitat for five fish species. There is also a petition to have these five species of fish listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

SUPPORT the Department of Interior to lend aid to this petition in the form of United States Fish and Wildlife Service staff expertise and data sharing. **SUPPORT** that the petition receives a timely and thorough review and response after it has been filed.



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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.

SUPPORT the selection of Alternative 5R as the Tentatively Selected Plan for the Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Project (LRWRP). Martin County encourages the Corps to complete the development of the Project Implementation Report (PIR) with the goal of getting this project approved in the next (WRDA) bill.

The Loxahatchee River is the last free-flowing river in southeast Florida and has been designated as a National Wild and Scenic River by the federal and state government. The wild and scenic portion of the Loxahatchee River has been degraded because of human modifications to the watershed's hydrology that have adversely affected the quality, quantity, and timing of surface water flows and degraded the ecology of the river.

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.



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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.



Water Resource Development Act (WRDA)



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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 federal funding at \$200 million.

REQUEST the prioritization of the completion of design and land acquisition for the C-23 and C-24 North and South components of IRL-S.

REQUEST that public health and safety be the primary consideration for all authorized C&SF project purposes by minimizing the potential for toxic cyanobacteria blooms and preventing toxic discharges into the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee watersheds.

Coastal Resiliency

Reauthorization of the Coral Reef Conservation Act

