MRC
Marine Resources Council
SaveTheIRL.org

INDIAN RIVER LAGOON COASTAL COMMUNITY REPORT CARD

Grading water quality and habitat health

Protect Our Paradise!

Why Is Seagrass Dying?
We All Need To Help
It's Time For LID

Seagrass is Dying; We Need To Know Why

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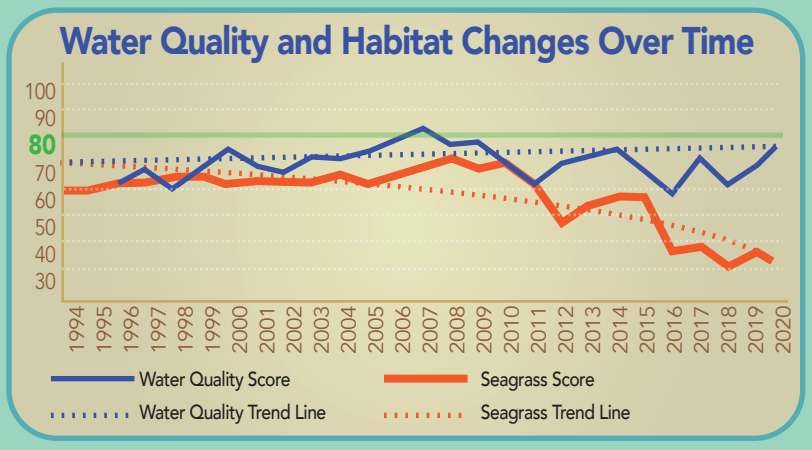


An 80 meets regulatory target.

Seagrass, the key indicator of habitat health, is dying, even though water quality is improving.

Water quality in the Indian River Lagoon coastal community is improving.

- Thankfully much is being done to implement the Comprehensive Conservation Master Plan, adopted by the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program.
- The plan guides the five-county lagoon region in its pursuit of restoring balance to the east-central Florida coastal community and can be found via onelagoon.org.

While water quality is improving, seagrass is continuing to die.

Florida needs to broaden water quality testing immediately.

Our state water districts currently determine water quality based on:

Phosphorus, nitrogen and chlorophyll-a, factors in measuring excess algae, and,

Turbidity, a measurement of water clarity.

For many years, when water quality improved, seagrass health did too. That is changing.

Seagrass is the essence of life in the Indian River Lagoon coastal community of east-central Florida, not just for manatee, but for the entire regional ecosystem.

Tourism, recreation, fishing, home values, space and other industries, and human health are at risk if the lifeblood of our community becomes an underwater desert.

Much is happening; further, urgent action is needed now in this regard!

What is causing the seagrass to die?

We don't know the answer because the state's water quality monitoring is not adequately explaining the loss of seagrass. We need to collect more information on other toxins and pollutants.

- High turbidity which blocks sunlight from reaching the bottom can be a factor in seagrass loss; however, seagrass is dying in areas with clear water. That's deeply concerning.
- Storm water runoff, wastewater pollution, herbicides, pesticides, and harmful development practices all contribute.
- It's time to change how we measure water quality in the Indian River Lagoon coastal community, before it is too late to save seagrass.

It's time for a bold new community vision; clear, concise and consistent communication, and,

A SEA Change:
Science + Education + Action.

IMAGINE!

The Indian River Lagoon so clear that you can wade into it and see your toes wiggling in the sand. It's possible if we continue to make progress.

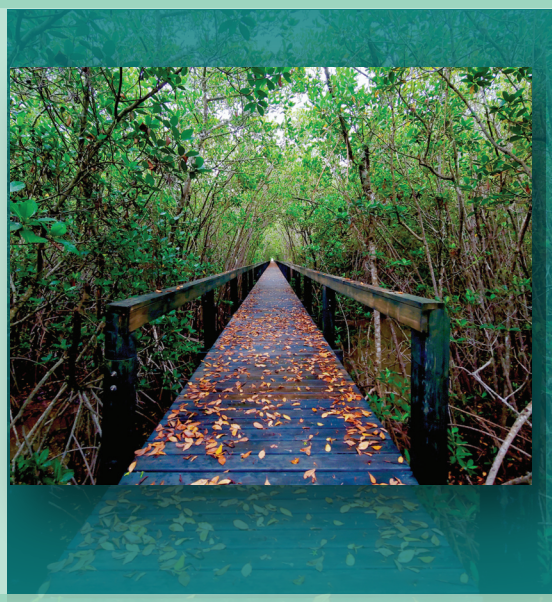
There's a great deal already underway; however, much more needs to happen.

What Are You Doing To Help?

Thank you for whatever you are already doing. Please do more.

- Stop fertilizing the lawn.
- Wash your car at a carwash instead of on the driveway.
- Contact your city or county representative and ask them to implement Low Impact Development that will build a better future for our coastal community.
- Become a member of MRC at SaveTheIRL.org.

As balance is restored, our economy and our ecology will thrive and become more resilient. Let's all work together to protect our paradise.



It's Time For LID!

Wherever you live, work or play, become involved in converting our east-central Florida counties, municipalities, neighborhoods and your own home to Low Impact Development (LID). There are ways to help with updating existing developments and buildings.

MRC is dedicated to putting the LID on harmful community development practices by working at the federal, state, county, municipal and neighborhood level to accomplish that conversion.

Low Impact Development will not only protect our ecology, but it will fuel our future economy. In essence, what LID accomplishes is reducing pollution to the Indian River Lagoon, which comes from across the entire east-central coastal region.

When we reduce pollution, we will reinvigorate our outdoor industries, grow eco-tourism, protect overall tourism, attract progressive employers and developers and others who care as much about tomorrow as today and know the value of protecting our paradise.

Learn more at SaveTheIRL.org or contact MRC at 321.725.7775 if you would like to discover more opportunities to protect our paradise.

MRC Federal Tax ID#: 59-3030066 (If you wish to remain anonymous, please note when you donate)

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REPORT CARD

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Health Scores

Lagoon Region	Grades 2019	Grades 2020
Mosquito Lagoon North	B	C
Mosquito Lagoon Central	D	F
Mosquito Lagoon South	C-	C
Banana River Lagoon	F	F--
North IRL	F	F--
Central IRL - North	F	F--
Central IRL - South	C	C
South IRL - North	D	D
South IRL - Central	F	F-
South IRL - South	D	D

Tributaries	Grades 2019	Grades 2020
Turnbull Creek	D+	D+
Big Flounder Creek	F	F-
Horse Creek	B-	B-
Eau Gallie River	D+	D+
Crane Creek	D-	D-
Turkey Creek	D	D+
Goat Creek	D+	D+
Sebastian Estuary	C-	C-
Sebastian North Prong	C-	C-
Sebastian South Prong	C+	C
C-54 Canal	C	C
St. Lucie Estuary	C	D+
St. Lucie River - North Fork	F	F
St. Lucie River - South Fork	F	F-
Lower Loxahatchee	B+	B
Middle Loxahatchee	B-	B-
Upper Loxahatchee	B+	A-
Loxahatchee South West Fork	B	B-

*A grade of B is meeting the regulatory target

LEGEND

- A **90-100** (Very Good)
- B **80-89** (Good)
- C **70-79** (Average)
- D **60-69** (Poor)
- F **50-59** (Very Poor)
- F- **40-49** (Very, Very Poor)
- F-- **0-39** (Extremely Poor)

What Is Causing Seagrass to Die?

The Total Health Score shown on the map and in the table to the right is a combined average score of Water Quality and Habitat Health. The individual scores for water quality and habitat health show that although water quality improved, seagrass continued to decline.

For more complete and historic health scores, visit SaveTheIRL.org.

Total Health Score: 55 (F)

Water Quality Score: 77 (C) Improving.

Habitat Health Score: 33 (F--) Declining.

According to the most recent data, water quality is improving, however habitat health, as measured by seagrass health, is declining.

- This is deeply concerning, since water clarity improved in areas where seagrass continued to decline.
- The most current data provided by Florida agencies, the basis of this annual report card, was nearly one year old when received.
- More current data, along with expanded water quality testing is imperative to understanding the current habitat health crisis facing the east-central Florida region.

"1,000 Points of Life" Initiative Underway

MRC is facilitating "1,000 Points of Life," a community collaborative effort to expand and speed current water sampling to more quickly and accurately understand what chemicals are contributing to seagrass loss. We welcome partnerships in this regard; contact MRC Executive Director Leesa Souto via Leesa@mrcirl.org or 321.725.7775.

Learn more at SaveTheIRL.org or contact MRC at 321.725.7775 if you would like to discover more opportunities to protect our paradise.

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