



# Agenda Report

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson  
Way  
Viera, FL 32940

## New Business - Miscellaneous

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J.5.

11/18/2025

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### Subject:

Legislative Intent and Staff Direction, Re: Future funding needs for restoring health to the Indian River Lagoon, municipal support for the County managing dedicated funds and public input.

### Fiscal Impact:

NA

### Dept/Office:

District 5 Commission Office on behalf of a citizen request

### Requested Action:

It is requested that the BOCC consider the following actions:

1. Approve Legislative Intent and permission to advertise an ordinance for a voter referendum to renew the ½ cent infrastructure sales tax for the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Program to return to the Board for a Public Hearing in April or May;
2. Direct staff to work with municipalities to amend the existing sales tax use and distribution Interlocal agreement to extend its terms, subject to voter approval of the sales tax renewal;
3. Direct staff to work with municipalities and the community on a Project Plan that identifies the most cost-effective pollution reduction opportunities and unfunded needs for restoring health to the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem, to be implemented with funds raised or leveraged by extension of the sales tax, if renewed by the voters;
4. Solicit public input to be considered during development of the ordinance, ballot language, and Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan; and
5. Direct staff to develop ballot language for the November 2026 General Election.

### Summary Explanation and Background:

The Save Our Indian River Lagoon (SOIRL) Program was created with the ½ cent sales tax that Brevard County residents voted to impose on themselves in 2016. The program is designed to address excess nitrogen and phosphorus pollution to the Indian River Lagoon through various projects to reduce pollution inputs, remove legacy loads of pollution, and restore natural filtration systems. It has been a dedicated funding source for local projects planned to meet water quality targets and improve the health, productivity, aesthetic appeal, and economic value of the lagoon. This referendum funding also allows the County to leverage additional dollars in match funding from state and federal grant programs because the lagoon ecosystem is valued not only in Florida, but also nationally.

The SOIRL Program has completed wastewater treatment plant upgrades, septic to sewer conversions, septic upgrades, stormwater treatments and muck removal projects. Excess nitrogen levels in the lagoon have

reduced from 1.6 mg/L to 1.1mg/L. Harmful algal blooms have declined and fishkills have lessened. Seagrass beds have begun to recover and fish populations are improving where there is seagrass. But blooms and fishkills still occur and diminish local quality of life. More pollution reduction is needed to restore health to the lagoon and protect the economic engine that supports local jobs as well as recruitment and retention of our stellar workforce. The tax expires in 2026 but could be extended by the voters through a referendum on the November 2026 ballot.

#### History:

In January through March of 2016, Brevard County residents endured the most extensive and intense algal bloom recorded in the Indian River Lagoon during winter months. The collapse of this bloom in March resulted in the most extensive fishkill in the recorded history of the lagoon. This event followed a super bloom in 2011, brown tide in 2012, 2013, and 2015, and unusual mortality events for dolphins, manatees, and pelicans. The Board sent a letter to the Governor requesting assistance. The Governor sent leadership from multiple agencies who advised the County to develop a project plan, with cost estimates, that the state could help fund. The Board directed staff to develop a project plan and explore dedicated funding sources with which to leverage state and federal grants.

The County Commission authorized a public survey, heard extensive public testimony regarding the need for action, and considered the relative merits of establishing a Special Taxing District with a 1-mill or ½ mill ad valorem levy versus a ½-cent Infrastructure Sales Tax. Ultimately, the County Commission voted unanimously to approve the first Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan, create a Citizen Oversight Committee, establish a Save Our Indian River Lagoon Trust Fund, and adopt an ordinance allowing a ½-cent infrastructure sales tax referendum to be placed on the general election ballot for the voters to consider as a means to fund restoring health to the Indian River Lagoon.

The Board's selected option required an interlocal agreement regarding sales tax use and distribution with cities representing a majority of the municipal population. The interlocal agreement allows 1) the County to host a dedicated trust fund for the tax proceeds, 2) the County to manage use and distribution of the trust funds to include city projects, 3) the League of Cities to select half of the appointees to the Citizen Oversight Committee which makes annual recommendations for Project Plan updates, and 4) the County and municipalities to share Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) credits for pollution reductions achieved by projects funded by the sales tax.

The municipal interlocal agreement was approved by every city and town and the voters approved the sales tax in every voting precinct.

#### **Clerk to the Board Instructions:**

NA



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November 19, 2025

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Jim Liesenfelt, County Manager

**RE:** Item J.5., Legislative Intent and Staff Direction for Future Funding Needs for Restoring Health to the Indian River Lagoon (IRL), Municipal Support for the County Managing Dedicated Funds and Public Input

The Board of County Commissioners, in regular session on November 18, 2025, approved legislative intent and permission to advertise an ordinance for a voter referendum to renew the one-half cent infrastructure sales tax for the Save Our Indian River Lagoon (SOIRL) Program to return to the Board for a public hearing in April or May; directed staff to work with municipalities to amend the existing sales tax use and distribution Interlocal Agreement to extend its terms, subject to voter approval of the sales tax renewal; directed staff to work with municipalities and the community on a project plan that identifies the most cost-effective pollution reduction opportunities and unfunded needs for restoring health to the IRL ecosystem, to be implemented with funds raised or leveraged by extension of the sales tax, if renewed by the voters; approved soliciting public input to be considered during development of the ordinance, ballot language, and SOIRL Project Plan; directed staff to develop ballot language for the November 2026 General Election; approved the scheduling of a Board Workshop on Monday, January 5, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., at the City of Titusville Council Chambers; and approved the scheduling of a Board Workshop on Monday, January 12, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., at the City of Palm Bay Council Chambers.

Your continued cooperation is always appreciated.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
RACHEL M. SADOFF, CLERK

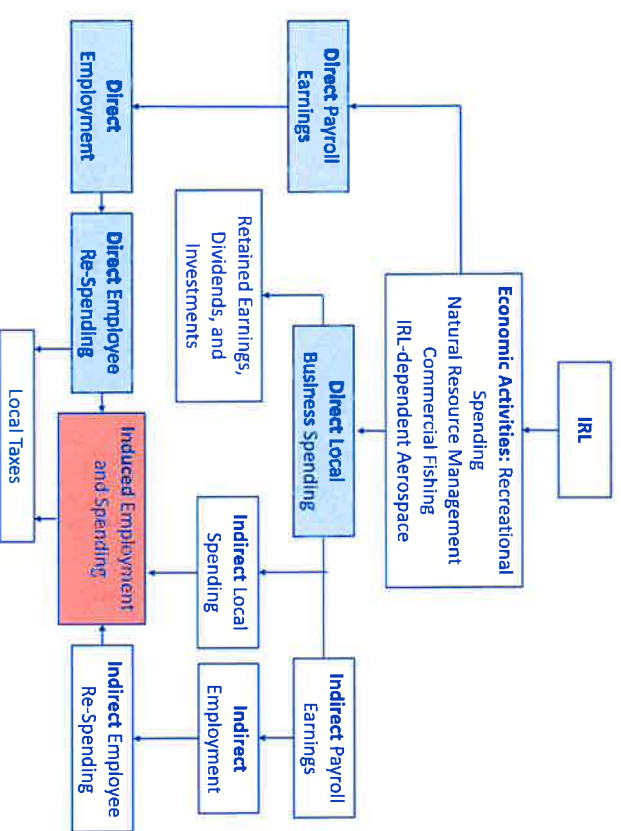
  
Kimberly Powell, Clerk to the Board

/ds

cc: Each Commissioner  
County Attorney  
Natural Resources Management

# Input-Output Model

- Measures effects of spending as dollars flow through regional economy
- Spending data is margined for dollars that leave local economy
  - i.e., petroleum is primarily produced outside Florida
- Regional multipliers are used to estimate impacts
  - including tax revenues
- Value-added measures reflects an industry's capacity to translate a change into income and final demand
- Induced effects from visitors only



## Economic Impact of the IRL - Total

	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
Direct	71,689	\$5.2B	\$8.5B	\$17.1B
Indirect	33,462	\$2.0B	\$3.0B	\$5.8B
Induced	23,249	\$1.2B	\$2.5B	\$4.0B
Property Value Impacts Annualized				
			\$1.4B	
Total	128,400	\$8.3B	\$15.4B	\$26.9B

# IRL Summary Results

**\$28.3 BILLION**  
in spending  
generates



**\$14 BILLION**  
in value added  
to local GDP



**\$8.3 BILLION**  
in wages



**128,400**  
jobs

	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output	Taxes
Recreation	75,206	\$3.2B	\$5.6B	\$10.5B	\$1.4B
Natural Resource Management	1,041	\$77M	\$112M	\$222M	\$25
Commercial Fishing	30	\$0.1M	\$3M	\$3M	\$0.4M
Boat Dealers	1,445	\$111M	\$166	\$431M	\$36M
Aerospace	50,679	\$5.0B	\$8.1B	\$15.7B	\$2B
Property Values				\$1.4B	
Total	128,400	\$8.3B	\$14.0B	\$28.3B	\$3.5B



# Summary Results – Brevard County

	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output	State & Local Taxes	Federal Taxes
		(in Millions of \$)				
Recreation	32,135	\$1,378.4	\$2,383.5	\$4,446.6	\$272.6	\$354.3
Commercial Fishing	7	\$0.11	\$2.10	\$2.13	\$0.1	\$0.1
Boat Sales	336	\$24.1	\$36.0	\$99.2	\$2.7	\$5.9
Nat Res Mgmt	358	\$30.8	\$45.2	\$82.3	\$2.5	\$7.6
Aerospace	48,280	\$4,781.4	\$7,779.1	\$15,021.2	\$359.3	\$1,219.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>81,115</b>	<b>\$6,214.8</b>	<b>\$10,245.9</b>	<b>\$19,651.3</b>	<b>\$637.1</b>	<b>\$1,587.9</b>
Property Values			\$369.4			
<b>Total with Property Values</b>			<b>\$10,615</b>			

# Dashboord Tool

- Allows IRLNEP to access SEP data by user needs: city, county, priority community etc. across time
- 2012-2022 for most data
- 2019 – 2022 for some data



<https://datavisual.balmorlgroup.us/IRLNEPeconomicupdate2025>

IRLNEP Economic Update 2025





# Questions? Thank you!

Valerie Seidel

Cortney Cortez

The Balmoral Group

Ph: 407-629-2185

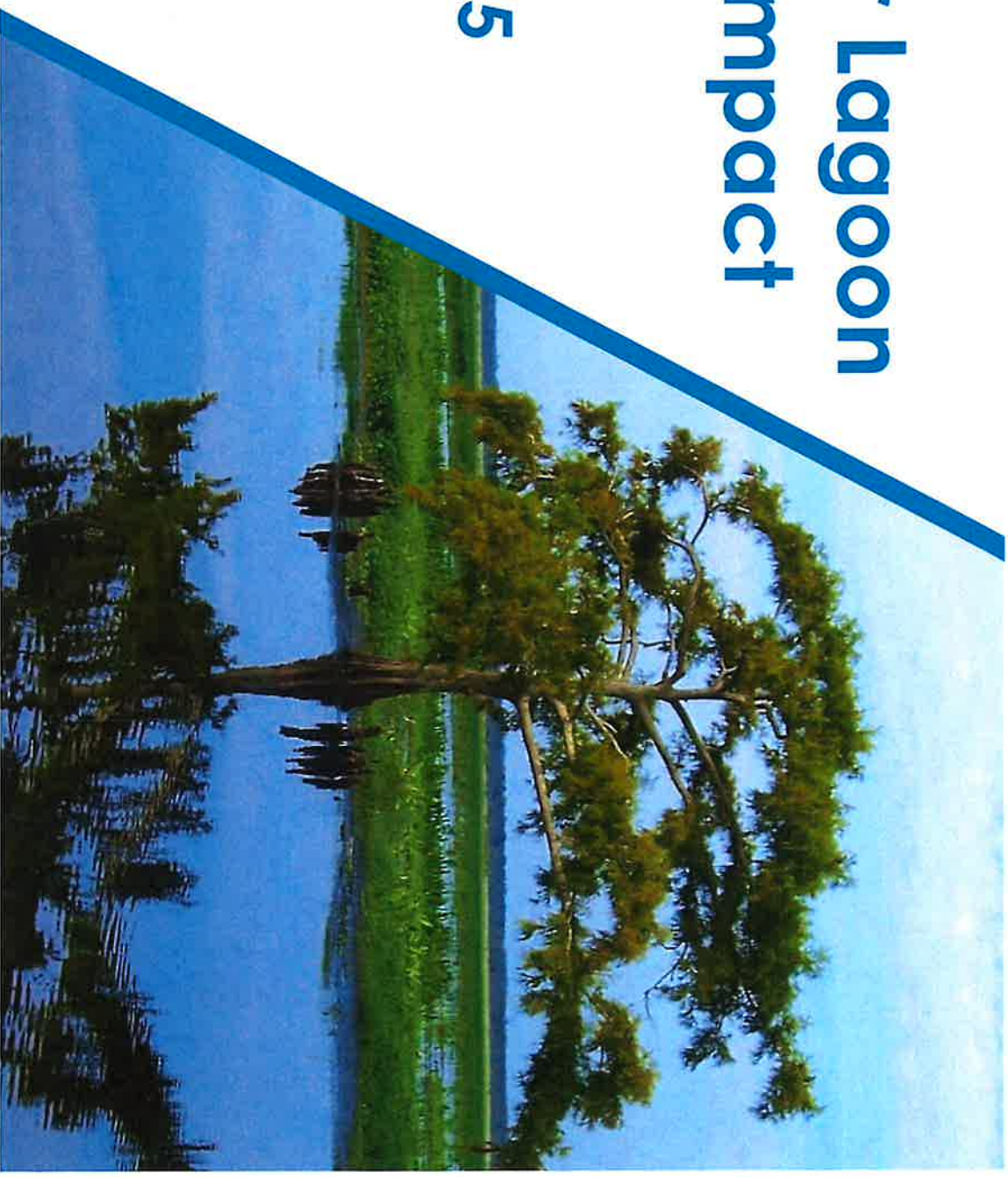
[vseidel@balmoralgroup.us](mailto:vseidel@balmoralgroup.us)

[ccortez@balmoralgroup.us](mailto:ccortez@balmoralgroup.us)



# Indian River Lagoon Economic Impact Update

November 2025



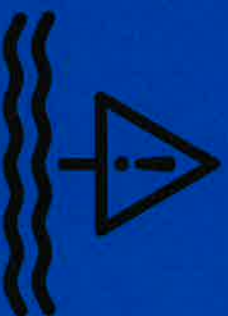


**OVER 940,000**

**acres of natural lands and agricultural lands retain more than**

**100 BILLION**

**gallons of floodwaters annually**



**52,500**

**ACRES**

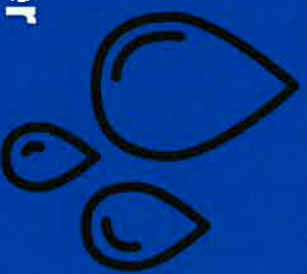
**of natural lands provide additional coastal protection**



**368,000**

**ACRES**

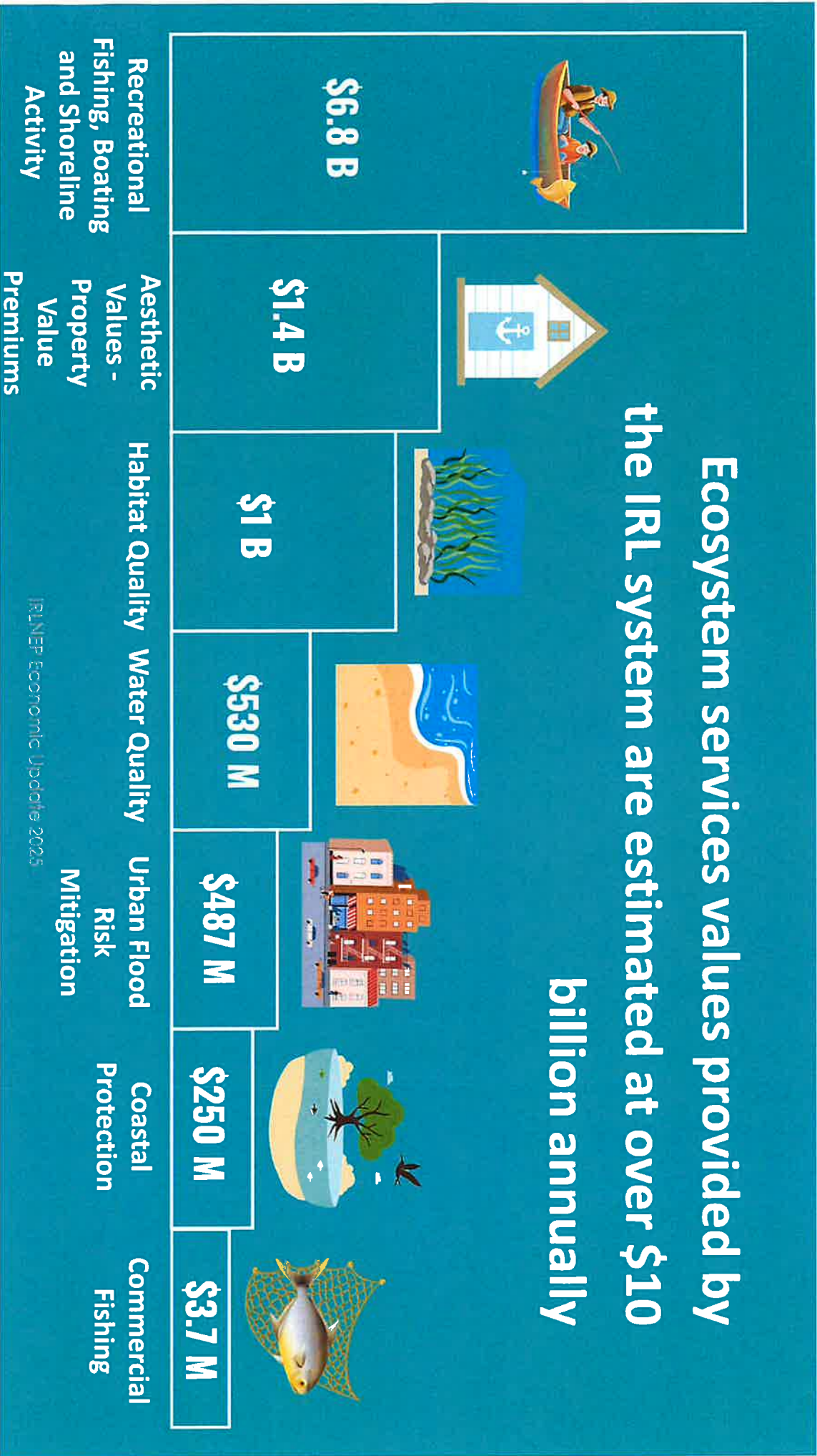
**of land provides water filtration and purification**



**These lands and waters generate habitat, aesthetic and recreational values**



# Ecosystem services values provided by the IRL system are estimated at over \$10 billion annually



# Ecosystem Services Valuation



Coastal Protection  
Water Filtration/Water Quality  
Habitat Quality  
Aesthetic or Scenic Value  
Recreational Value and Tourism

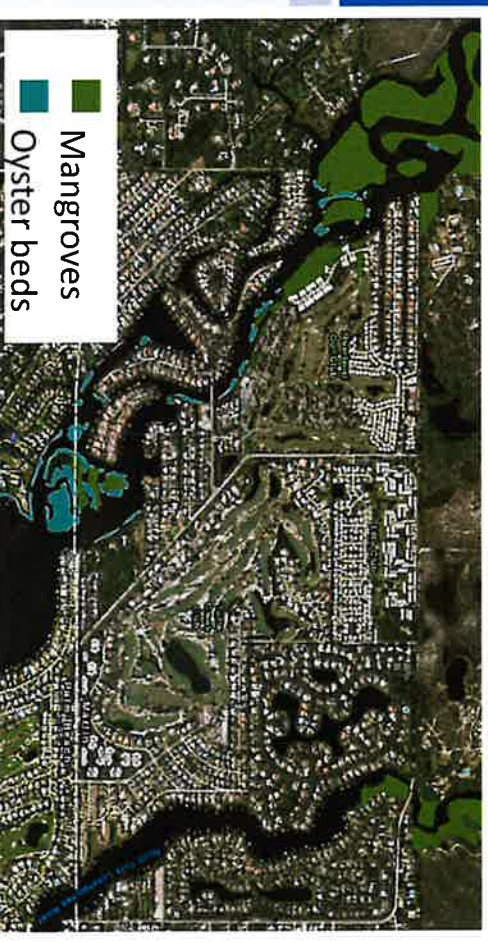
# Ecosystem service: Coastal protection

The InVEST™ model calculates the difference in exposure to coastal hazards with and without natural protective processes intact.

TBG used CLC land cover data from FWC as inputs to estimate coastal protection provided by IRL habitat.

	Estimated Acres – Existing Condition	Coastal Protection Ecosystem Services in \$ Millions	Projected Improvements from Projects in \$ Millions
Salt Marsh	17,959	\$ 77.1	
Mangrove	19,302	82.9	
Maritime Hammocks	12,553	\$59.1	
Other	2,703	\$29.8	
Total	52,518	\$250	\$8.4

Example habitats providing coastal protection services



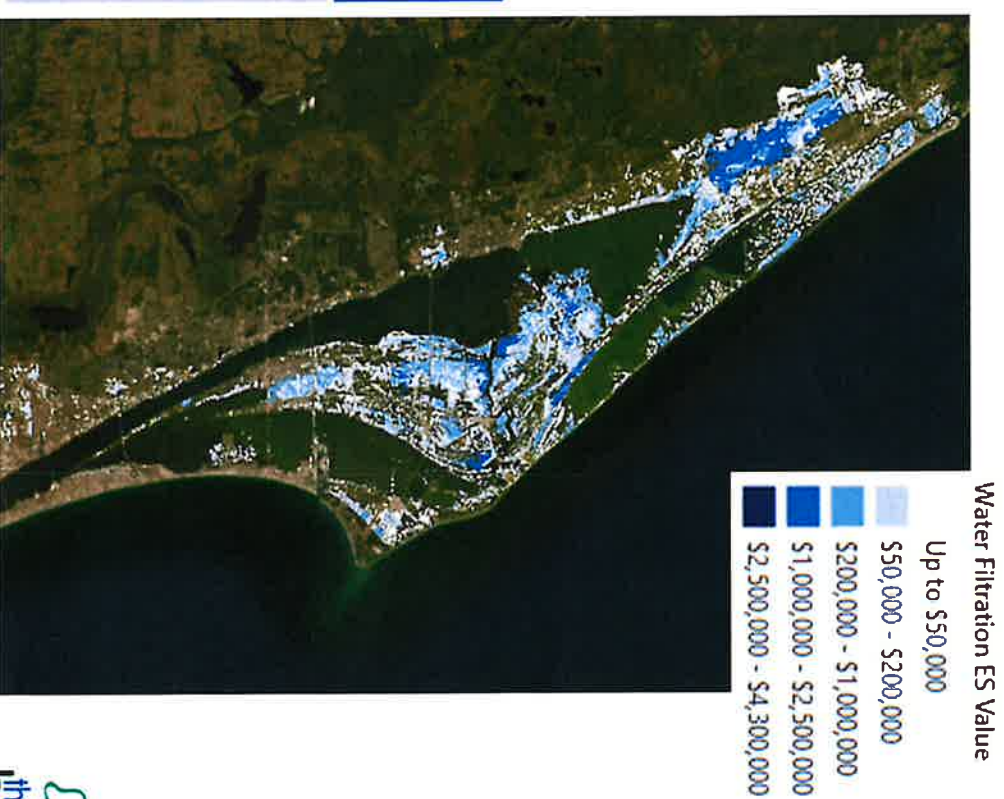


## Ecosystem service: Water Filtration

FEMA Ecosystem Services values for detailed CLC habitat types were used to estimate water quality improvement values in the BCAs, and for overall ecosystem services valuation.

Habitat Type	Estimated Acres - Existing Condition	Water Filtration Ecosystem Services	Projected Improvements from Projects
Coastal Wetland	57,754	\$106,042,000	
Forest	149,410	\$76,595,000	
Inland Wetland	159,402	\$297,561,000	
Riparian	6,703	\$49,287,000	
Shellfish Reefs	532	\$376,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>368,565</b>	<b>\$529,860,000</b>	<b>\$38,009,000</b>

IRUNEP Economic Update 2025



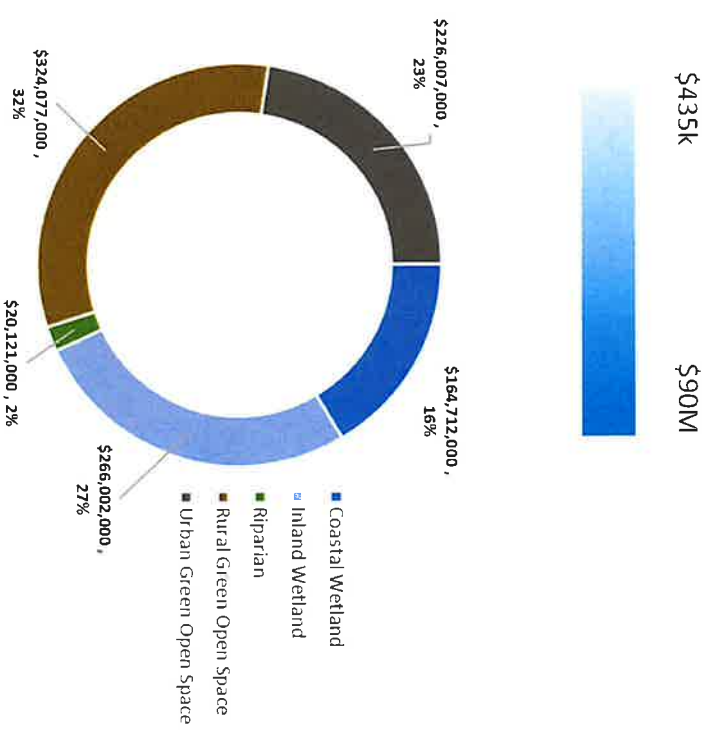
# Ecosystem service: Wildlife Habitat

Estimated ecosystem services using FWC  
CLC data

FEMA Habitat Type	Habitat ES \$/ac	IRL Acres	Total Habitat
Coastal Wetland	\$2,420	57,754	\$164,712,000
Inland Wetland	\$1,416	159,402	\$226,002,000
Riparian	\$2,547	6,703	\$20,121,000
Rural Green Open Space	\$2,021	136,067	\$324,077,000
Urban Green Open Space	\$5,890	32,559	\$226,007,000
<b>Total Habitat ES Value</b>			<b>\$1,000,917,000</b>

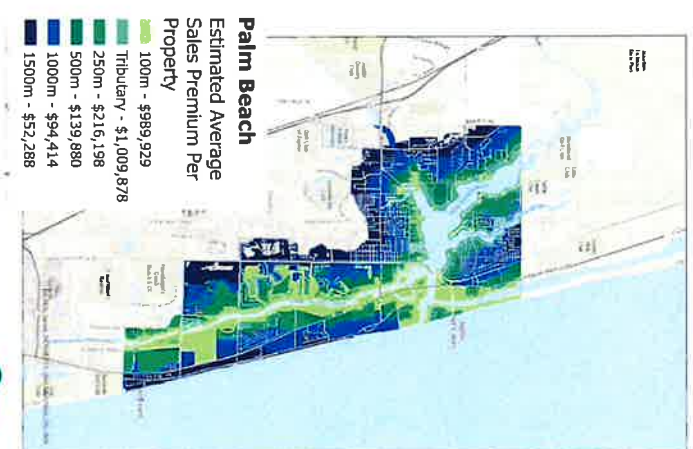
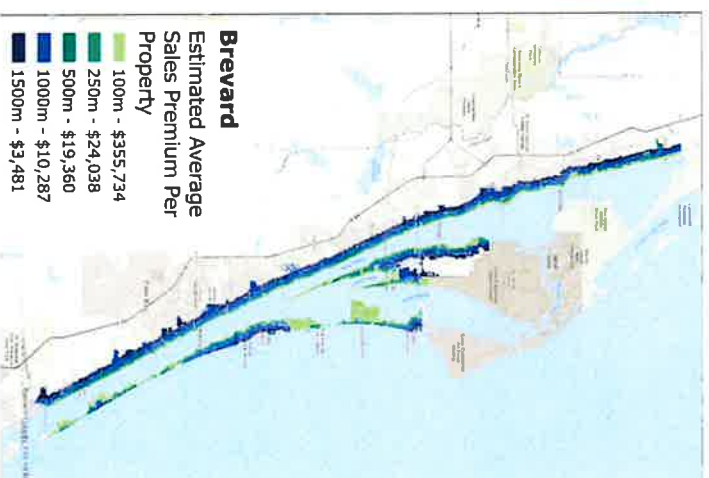


Habitat Quality Ecosystem Services by Basin and type



# Ecosystem Service: Aesthetic Value

Estimated with hedonic models





# Property Values

County	Waterfront	Canal/ River Access	Up to 1,500m	Total	Annualized
Volusia	\$443 M	\$0	\$787 M	\$1,230 M	\$73.8 M
Brevard	\$3,582 M	\$1,568 M	\$1,007 M	\$6,157 M	\$369.4 M
Indian River	\$1,625 M	\$278 M	\$1,204 M	\$3,107 M	\$186.5 M
St. Lucie	\$577 M	\$-	\$964 M	\$1,541 M	\$92.5 M
Martin	\$3,069 M	\$606 M	\$2,163 M	\$5,838 M	\$350.3 M
Palm Beach	\$1,015 M	\$1,723 M	\$2,343 M	\$5,081 M	\$304.9 M
Total	\$10,312 M	\$4,177 M	\$8,466 M	\$22,955 M	\$1,377.4 M

# Benefit-Cost Analysis



NOAA projects  
Case studies across Habitat  
Restoration types

# Benefit-Cost Analysis Case Studies

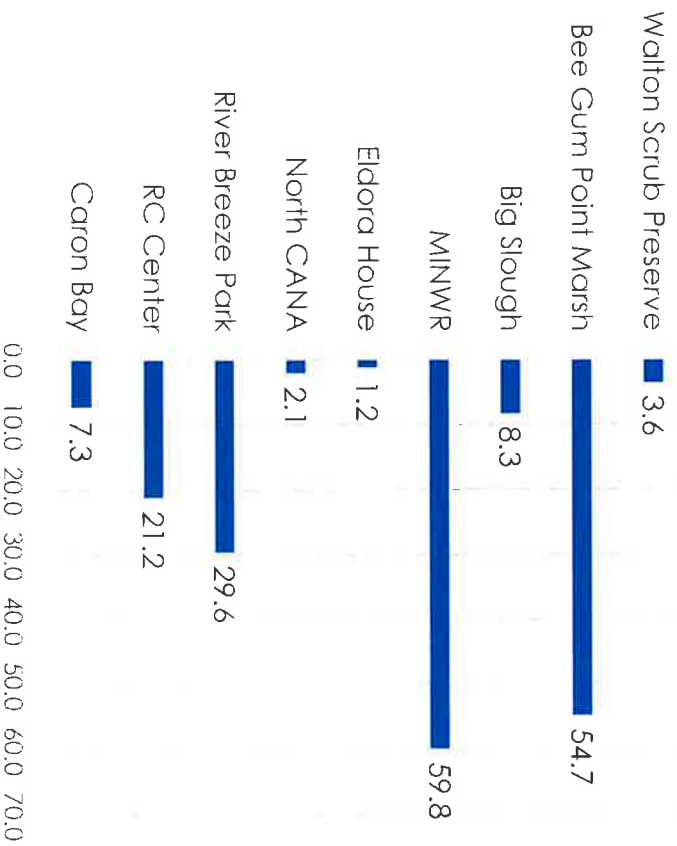
- Selected case studies
- Identified costs & benefits
- Tracking units

## CBA Metrics

Location	Primary Habitat Type	Case Study	Total Costs (10-years)	Total Benefits (10-years)
Mosquito Lagoon	Salt Marsh	Caron Bay	\$383,817	\$2,793,532
	Fish Reef	RC Center	\$24,499	\$518,379
	Clam	River Breeze Park	\$408,316	\$12,074,375
	Oyster Reef	North CANA	\$417,406	\$859,326
North IRL	Living Shoreline	Eldora House	\$426,231	\$504,273
	Wetland	MINWR/KSC	\$922,500	\$55,196,114
Central IRL	Seagrass	Big Slough	\$602,670	\$5,012,707
	Fish Passage	Bee Gum Point Marsh	\$562,367	\$30,764,204
South IRL	Mangrove	Walton Scrub Preserve	\$924,961	\$3,306,142



# Benefit-Cost Analysis



**24X**  
RETURN ON  
INVESTMENT



Overall, a 24x return on investment

# Economic Impact



Industry sectors  
Dashboard tool