

Indian River - Malabar to Vero Beach

AQUATIC PRESERVE

"The Indian River lagoon, America's most diverse and beautiful estuary, is vital to our economy and environment, yet its future is uncertain. Preserving and protecting the lagoon is beneficial to ours and future generations."

*Richard Baker
President of Pelican Island Audubon Society*

Key Accomplishments

- The Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserves staff is currently working with multiple government and private groups to create a Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA). The CISMA assists stakeholders in providing comprehensive and coordinated management of invasive species.
- The Spoil Island Working Group (SIWG) continues its annual meeting to share data and coordinate enhancement efforts. SIWG partners include Florida Institute of Technology, Keep Brevard Beautiful, Environmental Learning Center and SJRWMD National Estuary Program.
- Volunteers logged over 700 hours of spoil island enhancement over the 2009-2010 spoil island season. Participants from all walks of life assisted in enhancement efforts; from students to retirees, Eagle Scouts to private companies. Over 500 native plants were placed as well as picnic tables, fire rings, and an educational kiosk.
- The citizen support organization, the "Coastal Preserves Alliance" continues to support the Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserve by increasing community awareness through its annual outreach event "Gobyfest".



Island enhancement volunteers after installing an educational kiosk

Project Spotlight

Island Enhancement Program

The Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserve staff coordinates volunteer work days twice per month for habitat restoration, recreational enhancement, and cleanups on spoil islands in the aquatic preserve. We are partnering with Keep Brevard Beautiful, Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, boating groups, academic institutions, and other community organizations within Brevard and Indian River Counties. Volunteers are working to improve visitor



Native plantings by island enhancement volunteers

access and build public recreation facilities - docks, gazebos and picnic tables - later enjoyed and maintained by these same "end users". Exotic invasive plant removal and restoration of native plants are essential components of the Indian River Lagoon Spoil Island Project and ultimately improves habitat for birds and other species. Experiments with mangrove and various salt marsh grass species are currently being investigated to stabilize eroding shorelines on spoil islands and other public lands. Funding for the Indian River Lagoon Spoil Island Project is provided by the Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserves Field Office and Florida Inland Navigation District.

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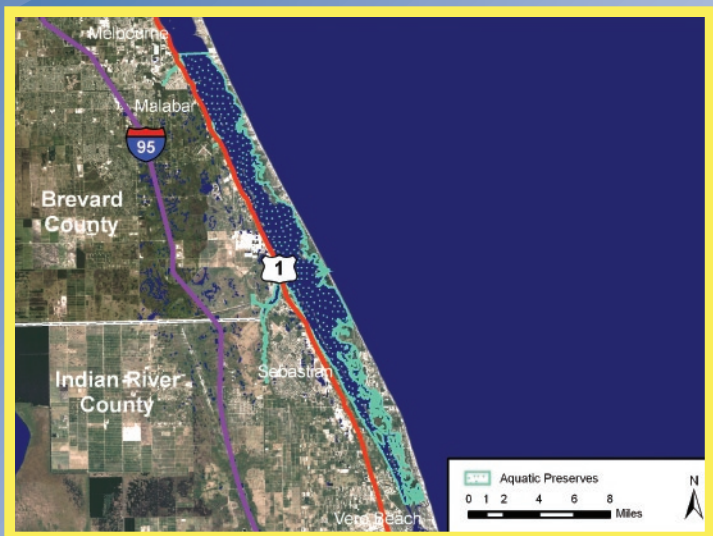


Location:

Brevard and Indian River counties

Acreage:

28,000 acres of sovereign submerged lands



Local contact:

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Sebastian Inlet and St. Sebastian River



Nesting pelicans



Crab on mangrove

Aquatic Preserve Facts:

- Turkey Creek and the St. Sebastian River are the main freshwater tributaries of the Indian River Aquatic Preserve.
- The tidal influence of the Sebastian Inlet and wind driven currents provide flushing of the Indian River Aquatic Preserve and regulate its salinity.
- This aquatic preserve is characterized by the overlap of temperate and subtropical zones along with the convergence of fresh and brackish water systems that create a highly diverse ecosystem.
- The Indian River Lagoon is America's most diverse estuary. There are over 400 species of fish, 260 species of mollusks and 479 species of shrimp and crabs.
- Public uses include boating, swimming, fishing, clamming, sail boarding, kayaking, and manatee, dolphin, and bird watching.



Boaters enjoying the Indian River



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