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Sea & Shoreline Restores Seagrass Habitat in the Indian River Lagoon to Enhance Water Quality

WINTER GARDEN, Fla., December 8, 2020 / PRNewswire/ -- Sea & Shoreline began a two-acre seagrass restoration project in Fort Pierce Inlet State Park's Tucker Cove in the Indian River Lagoon (IRL). The project will demonstrate how planting seagrass can improve the health of the aquatic ecosystem and have a transformational effect on areas of the IRL that have been impacted by algal blooms.

"There has been a steady decline in water quality in the Indian River Lagoon due to excessive nutrient loading which caused algal blooms and resulted in seagrass dying off," said Sea & Shoreline's Lead Biologist Ryan Brushwood. "Seagrass provides critical ecosystem services such as food and habitat for a wide variety of fish and animals, water clarity enhancement, sediment stabilization, oxygen production, and carbon and nutrient sequestration."

Under a grant from the IRL Council, the host agency of the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program (IRNEP), Sea & Shoreline will plant two acres of seagrass, protect it with GrowSAV™ Herbivory Exclusion Devices until it can take root, then monitor and maintain it for a three-year period.

Sea & Shoreline's method of seagrass restoration has been successful and scientifically validated in other areas of Florida including the restoration of nearly 50 acres of seagrass habitat within the Kings Bay Restoration Project in Crystal River, FL.

According to Daniel Kolodny, COO of the IRL Council and IRLNEP, "Seagrass restoration is critically important to lagoon health. It was identified as a top priority in our Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. Our goal with this project is to demonstrate that seagrass planting is a viable restoration technique that can be expanded on a wider scale when water quality improves to jumpstart natural expansion of seagrass communities."

The project is a collaboration between St. Lucie County, the IRLNEP and Sea & Shoreline, and will utilize volunteers from the County to help hand-plant seagrass shoots into the Lagoon's substrate.

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About Sea & Shoreline

Sea & Shoreline, LLC is a Florida-based aquatic restoration firm with two decades of experience restoring fresh and saltwater habitats to healthy and self-sustaining ecosystems. Sea & Shoreline has completed over 150 habitat restoration projects. Services include dredging, seagrass/submerged aquatic vegetation restorations, oyster reef restorations, propeller scar restorations, living shorelines, vegetated retaining walls, wetland plantings, and seagrass mitigation banking. For more information, please visit seaandshoreline.com

About IRLNEP

The Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program (IRLNEP) is hosted by the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Council, which was established in February 2015 as an independent special district of Florida. The IRL Council includes representatives of five counties bordering the Lagoon (Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie, and Martin counties), the St. Johns River and South Florida Water Management Districts, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection . The U.S. EPA provides guidance to the Council. For more information, visit onelagoon.org

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