



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

LFIR # 2589

1. Project Title
2. Senate Sponsor
3. Date of Request

4. Project/Program Description

This project will restore 62 acres of seagrass in the Fort Pierce area of the Indian River Lagoon (IRL), expanding on a multi-year project that has proven that despite poor water quality, wave energy, and grazing pressure, seagrass can re-establish itself in the IRL. Seagrass cleans the water, stabilizes the sediment, provides critical habitat and food for many species, and sequesters carbon. By expanding into a third phase of this project, the seagrass in Fort Pierce can reach a critical mass scale and naturally expand, resulting in double, triple, or even quadruple growth outside of planted areas. Planting sites will be located in areas that encourage natural recruitment into surrounding barren areas; have adequate light availability; and have stable salinity conditions and sufficient water quality necessary for survival and widespread expansion. Herbivory exclusion devices will be placed over planting units to protect them from grazers until the grasses' roots become established.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds
- State Agency contacted?

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

| Type of Funding | Amount |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Operations | 3,945,454 |
| Fixed Capital Outlay | 0 |
| Total State Funds Requested | 3,945,454 |

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (including matching funds available for this project)

| Type of Funding | Amount | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------|
| Total State Funds Requested (from question #6) | 3,945,454 | 94% |
| Matching Funds | | |
| Federal | 85,000 | 2% |
| State (excluding the amount of this request) | 0 | 0% |
| Local | 152,158 | 4% |
| Other | 0 | 0% |
| Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 | 4,182,612 | 100% |

8. Has this project previously received state funding?

| Fiscal Year (yyyy-yy) | Amount | | Specific Appropriation # | Vetoed |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| | Recurring | Nonrecurring | | |
| 2023-24 | 0 | 1,426,310 | HSE Form # 2010 | No |

9. Is future funding likely to be requested?
- a. If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.

b. Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.

A grant application for an FDEP Indian River Lagoon Water Quality Improvements Grant has been submitted (8/2023); awaiting award notification.



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10. Has the entity requesting this project received any federal assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

If yes, indicate the amount of funds received and what the funds were used for.

Complete questions 11 and 12 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

11. Status of Construction

a. What is the current phase of the project?

- Planning
 Design
 Construction
 N/A

b. Is the project "shovel ready" (i.e permitted)?

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

12. List the owners of the facility to receive, directly or indirectly, any fixed capital outlay funding. Include the relationship between the owners of the facility and the entity.

13. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

| Spending Category | Description | Amount |
|--|---|------------------|
| Administrative Costs: | | |
| Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits | Administration, Contracting, and Public Outreach | 108,000 |
| Other Salary and Benefits | NA | 0 |
| Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other | Hotels, fuel/mileage, Per Diem for site visits, outreach/education events. Production of educational materials. | 68,000 |
| Consultants/Contracted Services/Study | Grant assistant manager, accountant (payroll, tax prep), and audit. | 171,200 |
| Operational Costs: Other | | |
| Salary and Benefits | NA | 0 |
| Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other | NA | 0 |
| Consultants/Contracted Services/Study | Nursery grown seagrass production, permitting, installation of seagrass, protection of planting units using herbivory exclusion cages, maintenance of herbivory exclusion cages for three years, monthly monitoring for three years, and regular progress reporting to provide updates on seagrass expansion. | 3,598,254 |
| Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation: | | |
| Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering | | 0 |
| Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6) | | 3,945,454 |

14. Program Performance

a. What specific purpose or goal will be achieved by the funds requested?



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The goal of this project is to expand on previous phases of seagrass restoration in the Fort Pierce area of the IRL. By expanding into a third phase of this project, the seagrass in the Fort Pierce area can reach a critical mass scale by which it can naturally expand on its own resulting in double, triple, or even quadruple growth outside of planted areas. Seagrass can reset an ecosystem and prevent the need and costs associated with mitigating harmful algal blooms (HABs). Enhanced meadows will also stabilize sediment, improve water quality, enhance fish habitats, and provide a sustainable source of foraged for starving manatees.

b. What activities and services will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds?

An area of approximately 62 acres within the IRL will be restored. Nursery-grown seagrass will be planted, protected, and monitored. Planting sites will be strategically located in areas that encourage natural recruitment into the surrounding barren areas; have adequate light availability; and provide stable salinity conditions and sufficient water quality necessary for seagrass survival and widespread expansion. The long-term goal of this project is to demonstrate the effectiveness of using nursery-grown planting units, while helping to create a replicable model for estuaries nationwide that are suffering from seagrass loss. Project updates will be given on social media, distributed in eNewsletters, press releases, and articles. Key messages will focus on water quality improvement through natural habitat restoration. Project will be monitored monthly for three years and regular project reports will document project success.

c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?

This project will provide water quality improvements to the IRL by restoring 62 more acres of seagrass. Restored seagrass will provide habitat and protection for fish and other marine life, while providing a continual food source for manatees. Robust seagrass communities help reduce the risk of flooding, while sequestering carbon (up to 35 times more than terrestrial forests), to build resilience and mitigate the effects of climate change. Seagrass also creates drag in the water column, which attenuates wave energy and reduces erosion in high-energy environments. Enhanced ecosystem services will draw more locals and tourists outdoors for recreational opportunities. Numerous studies have documented the mental health benefits of spending time outdoors. All industries dependent on ecotourism and healthy waterbodies will benefit from enhanced seagrass meadows in the IRL.

d. Who is the target population served by this project? How many individuals are expected to be served?

The IRL has been renowned for its recreational activities since the turn of the 20th century. Currently, over 15% of Florida's restaurants and hotels are located in proximity to the lagoon. By enhancing the health of the IRL, the cultural experience of water-based recreational activities will be protected and enhanced for future generations. According to the EPA's Environmental Justice Mapper (<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>), there are multiple communities that fall within low income brackets and contain high percentiles of people of color. Bolstering the local economy will serve these disadvantaged communities as well as any Floridian or tourist visiting the area.

e. What is the expected benefit or outcome of this project? What is the methodology by which this outcome will be measured?

According to studies by state agencies, the IRL has lost 58% of its seagrass since 2009. In the area immediately south of the inlet, approximately 200 acres have been lost since 2009. FDEP released a Unit Management Plan (UMP) for Fort Pierce Inlet State Park in 2021 with objectives to monitor and document imperiled plant species, including seagrass. Restored seagrass meadows in the IRL will create a natural filtration system, oxygenate the water, and reduce nutrients, sediments, and pollutants that otherwise could lead to HABs. This project will help achieve the objectives of the UMP. This project is designed as a sustainable long-term restoration and ongoing maintenance is not required (the project will be maintained for 12-months and monitored for three years to ensure its success).

f. What are the suggested penalties that the contracting agency may consider in addition to its standard penalties for failing to meet deliverables or performance measures provided for the contract?

If deliverables are not achieved, full monies allocated to the deliverable should be withheld.

15. Requester Contact Information

a. First Name **Last Name**

b. Organization

c. E-mail Address



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d. Phone Number (561)707-8923 Ext.

16. Recipient Contact Information

a. Organization Angler Action Foundation, Inc.

b. Municipality and County Saint Lucie

c. Organization Type

- For Profit Entity
- Non Profit 501(c)(3)
- Non Profit 501(c)(4)
- Local Entity
- University or College
- Other (please specify)

d. First Name Brett Last Name Fitzgerald

e. E-mail Address brett@angleractionfoundation.org

f. Phone Number (561)707-8923

17. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name Natalie Fausel

b. Firm Name Anfield Consulting

c. E-mail Address natalie@anfieldflorida.com

d. Phone Number (561)317-0889

Please complete the questions below for Water Projects only.

18. Have you applied for alternative state funding?

- Waste Water Revolving Loan
- Drinking Water Revolving Loan
- Small Community Wastewater Treatment Grant
- Other (please specify) FDEP Indian River Lagoon Water Quality Improvements Grant
- N/A

19. What is the population economic status?

- Financially Disadvantaged Community (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)



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- Financially Disadvantaged Municipality (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)
- Rural Area of Economic Concern
- Rural Area of Opportunity (s. 288.0656, Florida Statutes)
- N/A

20. What is the status of construction?

Construction has not begun, but design is completed

21. What percentage of the construction has been completed?

0%

22. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

12/31/2025