Jensen Beach to Jupiter Inlet

AQUATIC PRESERVES

"From the time of the Ais Indians, the Indian River Lagoon has been and remains an important feature that continues to shape the lives of those who reside near it, recreate within it, and earn a livelihood from it."

Laura Herren, Aquatic Preserve Manager

Key Accomplishments

- Community water quality and shoreline concerns have been addressed through a series of management initiatives including larval oyster recruitment, survivorship, and reef formation studies.
- A partnership with St. Johns River Water Management District has improved monitoring efforts on seagrass species diversity and density between Fort Pierce and St. Lucie Inlets.
- A Coastal Zone Management grant award has provided for the identification and production of engineer drawings for five potential Indian River Lagoon seagrass restoration projects.
- CAMA's support of restoration on a St. Lucie County spoil island has contributed to the creation of nearly 10 acres of mangrove and seagrass habitat.
- Restoration of the mangrove fringe along the shorelines of this preserve is being addressed through CAMA's Indian River Lagoon Shoreline Restoration Project.

Boy Scouts planting mangroves at Blind Creek.

Project Spotlight

Shoreline Restoration Project

Since the mid-1900s, mangrove habitat in the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) has declined. Mangroves provide valuable services such as shoreline stabilization, filtration of run-off, nursery habitat for juvenile fishes and nesting birds, and contribute to the economies of many coastal counties in the state. Restoration and mitigation efforts of disturbed mangrove habitat have had mixed results over the long-term, yet many projects continue to focus exclusively on planting mangroves. The Shoreline Restoration Project (SRP), started in 1995, aims to re-establish and maintain fringing mangrove habitat along the IRL while fostering community involvement and environmental awareness. DEP-CAMA's Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserves Field Office has managed the project since 2008. CAMA staff have expanded the project to test the best planting techniques and incorporate saltmarsh grass plantings to help restore ecosystem function as well as shoreline stabilization.

Junior ROTC workday at the mangrove nursery.

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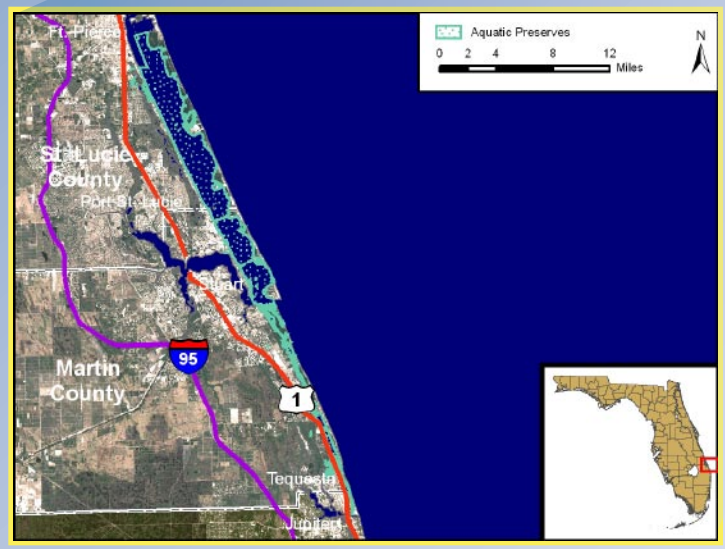
Location:

East-central Florida in St. Lucie and Martin counties

Acreage:

37 miles long and encompassing 22,000 acres



Local Contact:

Laura Herren
Aquatic Preserve Manager
3300 Lewis Street
Fort Pierce, FL 34981
(772)429-2995
www.aquaticpreserves.org
www.spoilislandproject.org

Jerry Metz

Many marine organisms spend a portion of their lives seeking food and shelter in seagrass beds, such as this turtle grass.

Jerry Metz

Due to their ability to efficiently dissipate wave energy and provide essential fish habitat, red mangroves are commonly used in natural shoreline stabilization projects in the southern Indian River Lagoon.

Aquatic Preserve Facts:

- The Indian River Lagoon is one of the most biologically diverse estuaries in the nation.
- One of 28 estuaries in the country in Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program, the Indian River Lagoon is the only estuary with this designation (1990) on the east coast of Florida.
- Supports seagrass beds, mangroves, drift algae, salt marshes, oyster bars, tidal flats, and spoil islands which serve as important spawning and/or nursery grounds for commercially important species, such as shrimp, groupers, snappers, snook and drum.
- Popular activities include boating, recreational and commercial fishing, wildlife observation, snorkeling, and photography.
- Spoil islands provide visitors with camping, fishing, picnicking, hiking, snorkeling, and birding opportunities.

Recreational spoil islands are ideal settings for camping, snorkeling, picnics, and fishing.

Seagrasses, such as this paddle grass, often grow in areas colonized by other benthic organisms such as sponges and algae.

NOAA

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