



# INDIAN RIVER LAGOON AQUATIC PRESERVES

**Kaitlyn Britton**

Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserves  
Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection  
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Keep Fort Pierce Beautiful | April 18, 2023



# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

## About The Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The DEP is the state's lead agency for environmental management and stewardship, protecting our air, water and land. DEP is divided into three primary areas:

- **Land and Recreation.**
- **Regulatory.**
- **Ecosystems Restoration.**

DEP's mission is to protect, conserve and manage the state's natural resources and enforce its environmental laws.

DEP's vision is to advance Florida's position as a world leader in protecting natural resources while growing the state's economy.



# OFFICE OF RESILIENCE AND COASTAL PROTECTION

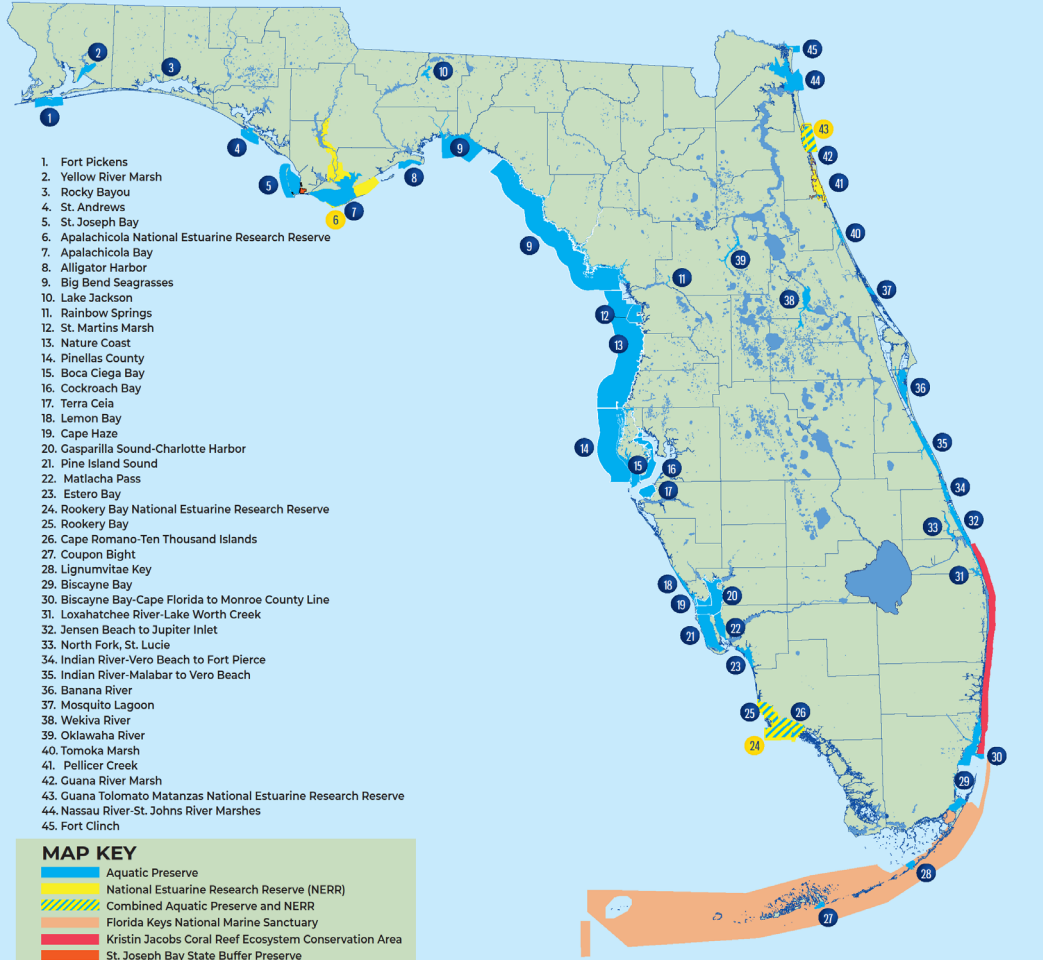
## Mission Statement:

To conserve and restore Florida's coastal and aquatic resources for the benefit of people and the environment.





# OFFICE OF RESILIENCE AND COASTAL PROTECTION



Manages more than 4.9 million acres of submerged lands and coastal uplands in Florida, including 42 Aquatic Preserves and 3 National Estuarine Research Reserves.



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# IRLAP IN ACTION: RESEARCH

Seagrass

Microplastics

Oysters

Horseshoe  
crabs

Coastal birds

Diamondback  
terrapins





# IRLAP IN ACTION: CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION



Maintaining spoil islands  
within the IRL Aquatic  
Preserves

Creating and restoring  
habitat for estuarine  
fauna and flora

Monitoring in-house  
and collaborative  
restoration projects



# IRLAP IN ACTION: EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



Presentations

School groups

Community groups

Volunteer events

Citizen science



# RECREATION IN COASTAL FLORIDA





# LOCAL IMPACTS OF RECREATIONAL USE



Photo: Iain Cartwright



Photo: Ryan Anderson



Photo: von Arx Wildlife Hospital



Photo: Greg McGrath-Gouldie



# LOCAL IMPACTS OF RECREATIONAL USE

Animal health

Water quality

Habitat damage

Invasive species





# APPLYING LEAVE NO TRACE LOCALLY

## INDIAN RIVER LAGOON AQUATIC PRESERVES SPOIL ISLANDS

**1000+**  
People  
Educated

**300**  
Pounds of Trash  
Removed

**101**  
Volunteer  
Man Hours



- Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserves named a 2017 and 2018 Leave No Trace Hot Spot.
- Leave No Trace incorporated into management and education programs.
- Goal: Make Leave No Trace a consistent outdoor ethics program throughout the IRL Aquatic Preserve System.



# UNDERSTANDING LEAVE NO TRACE



## The Seven Principles of Leave No Trace

1. Plan ahead and prepare.
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
3. Dispose of waste properly.
4. Leave what you find.
5. Minimize campfire impacts.
6. Respect wildlife.
7. Be considerate of other visitors.



# WHAT DOES LEAVE NO TRACE LOOK LIKE?



Photo: Malcolm Denmark, Florida Today



# B.A.R.K. RANGER PROGRAM

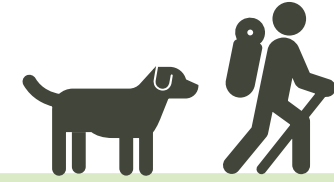


A fun way to protect wildlife and public lands while having a “pawsitive” experience with your pet in the outdoors.

B.A.R.K. Rangers and their owners must follow the principles of B.A.R.K. at all times while enjoying the Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserves and other surrounding pet-friendly preserves.



# PRINCIPLES OF B.A.R.K.



**Bag your pet's waste.**

**Always leash your pet.**

**Respect wildlife.**

**Know where you can go.**



# SPOIL ISLAND PROJECT



## The “Adopt-a-Spoil Island” Program

- One-year commitment.
- One island cleanup per quarter (minimum 4 each year).
- Island cleanup reports.
- Adopters receive an Island Adoption Kit after their first logged clean up.

**SLC Islands open for adoption as of April 2023:**

- SL5, SL6, SL12B, SL13A, SL13B, SL14B.



# ISLAND ADOPTERS AND VOLUNTEERS





# THANK YOU!

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Contact:

772-429-2995

[Kaitlyn.Britton@FloridaDEP.gov](mailto:Kaitlyn.Britton@FloridaDEP.gov)