



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 1905

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

4. Project/Program Description

The purpose of this project is to plant, protect, maintain, and monitor 20 acres of seagrass in the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) at Preachers Hole and Big Slough in Indian River County. Using scientifically validated methodologies that have been successfully demonstrated elsewhere in the IRL, this project will complement other efforts underway to create seagrass nurseries and out-planting projects within the Lagoon. Aside from water quality benefits, this habitat restoration project aims to restore critically important seagrass meadows within the IRL. Restored seagrass is vital to a healthy aquatic ecosystem and will provide essential habitat for fish and other marine life as well as a continual food source for manatees and green sea turtles. Once this vegetation has established and reaches a tipping point, it will expand and continue to grow on its own spreading beyond the project area. Scope of work includes permitting, planting, protecting, maintaining, and monitoring seagrass.

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

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	975,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	975,000

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	975,000	40%
Matching Funds		
Federal	1,073,506	45%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	360,000	15%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026	2,408,506	100%

8. **Has this project previously received state funding?**
- If yes, provide the most recent instance:**

Fiscal Year (YYYY-YY)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		

9. **Is future-year 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.**
-



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Complete questions 10 and 11 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

10. 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?

e. What funding stream will be used for ongoing operations and maintenance of the project?

11. 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.

12. 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.	87,000
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Operational Costs		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Nursery grown seagrass production, permitting, installation of seagrass, protection of planting units using herbivory exclusion cages, monthly maintenance of herbivory exclusion cages for one year, monitoring for three years, and regular progress reporting to provide updates on seagrass expansion.	888,000
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		975,000

13. Program Performance

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



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The purpose of this project is to plant, protect, maintain, and monitor 15.6 acres of seagrass in the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) in Preachers Hole and Big Slough in Indian River County. Using scientifically validated methodologies that have been successfully demonstrated elsewhere in the IRL, this project will complement other efforts underway to create seagrass nurseries and out-planting projects within the Lagoon. The ultimate goal is seagrass expansion beyond the 15.6-acre project area that could create a greater return on investment within three years. Seagrass meadow expansion will stabilize the sediment, improve water quality, reduce algal blooms, enhance fish habitats, sequester carbon, and provide a sustainable food source for starving manatees.

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

Enhancing habitat will enhance water quality which will reduce harmful algal blooms (HABs) and the need to dredge muck from decaying plants and animals, and/or incur the costs of the effects of manatee starvation. Seagrass cycles out excess nutrients (N & P) that, if left unaddressed, could result in HABs that will rob the IRL of oxygen and choke off all plant and animal life. Similar projects in Florida have shown a 30% reduction in nutrients. Restored meadows will provide a source of food for manatees. Scope of work includes permitting, planting, protecting planting units from grazers until their roots become established, maintenance and monitoring (for three years).

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

Seagrass meadow expansion will stabilize the sediment, improve water quality, reduce algal blooms, enhance fish habitats, and provide a sustainable food source for starving manatees. Sportfishing, boating, and other water-based recreational activities will be enhanced with improvements in water quality and habitat. Numerous studies have shown that being in nature can improve mental wellbeing. As opportunities for outdoor recreational activities are improved, mental health will improve. Robust seagrass meadows also build resilience against climate change. Seagrass can sequester up to 35 times more carbon than terrestrial forests. Meadows also create drag in the water column, attenuating wave energy to reduce erosion in high-energy environments.

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. The lagoon supports 1/7 of the region's economy and generates more than \$300M in boat and marine sales annually, according to a report by the IRLNEP. Currently, over 15% of Florida's restaurants and hotels are located in proximity to the IRL. By enhancing the health of the IRL, water-based recreational activities and cultural experiences will be protected and enhanced for future generations. Improving the health of the lagoon's waters will improve the economy, boat and marine sales, ecotourism, commercial and recreational fishing opportunities, and hotels and restaurants near the la

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

The Central IRL BMAP cites an economic study prepared by East Coast Florida Regional Planning Council & Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (2016) that estimated a ROI of 33:1 for achieving water quality and seagrass restoration targets. The BMAP states that investing in projects that meet these goals is important not only for environmental considerations, but also to improve the regional economy. Similar projects also have shown a 30% reduction in nutrients levels (TN and TP).

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 in the contract?

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

14. Is this project related to mitigation, response, or recovery from a natural disaster? No

a. If Yes, what phase best describes the project?

- Mitigation (reducing or eliminating potential loss of life or property)
- Response (addressing the immediate and short-term effects of a natural disaster)
- Recovery (assisting communities return to normal operations, including rebuilding damaged infrastructure)

b. Name of the natural disaster (or Executive Order # for events not under a federal declaration):



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15. Has the entity applied for or received federal assistance for this project?

- Yes, Applied
- Yes, Received
- No
- No, but intends to apply

a. If yes, provide the FEMA project worksheet ID#:

b. Provide the total project cost listed on the FEMA project worksheet:

16. Has the entity applied for or received state assistance for this project (other than this request)?

- Yes, Applied
- Yes, Received
- No
- No, but intends to apply

a. If yes, specify the program and state agency (ex. Local Government Emergency Bridge Loan, Department of Commerce):

Please complete questions 17 through 21 for Water Projects only.

17. Have you been awarded or applied for alternative state funding for this project?

- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Resilient Florida Grant Program
- Wastewater Revolving Loan
- Drinking Water Revolving Loan
- Small Community Wastewater Treatment Grant
- Other (please specify, ex. Alternative Water Supply Grants)
- N/A

18. What is the population economic status?



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

19. What is the status of construction?

Ready

20. What percentage of the construction has been completed?

0%

21. What is the estimated completion date of construction? 05/01/2027

22. Requester Contact Information

a. First Name Brett **Last Name** Fitzgerald

b. Organization Angler Action Foundation

c. E-mail Address brett@angleractionfoundation.org

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

23. Recipient Contact Information

a. Organization Angler Action Foundation

b. Municipality and County Palm Beach

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 **Ext.**

24. Lobbyist Contact Information



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a. Name

b. Firm Name

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number

The information provided will be posted to the Florida Senate website for public viewing if sponsored by a Senator.