



Newsletter September 2021

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Commissioner Doug Smith Requests Another A1A Traffic Study

In May, District 1 Martin County Commissioner Doug Smith contacted the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to request a safety study of State Road A1A on Hutchinson Island from the Jensen Beach North Roundabout to the Hutchinson Shores Resort and Spa to determine if lighting is justified in that area.

A similar safety study was completed in 2017 by FDOT for the entire stretch of A1A on Hutchinson Island in Martin County. That study, which can be viewed on our website, found that road lighting was not justified. A small group of island residents, however, convinced FDOT that all residents wanted the lighting, and FDOT notified residents in the spring of 2018 that 472 seventeen foot light poles were to be installed every 50 feet along A1A.

That attempt to light up A1A was defeated when the Martin MPO was overwhelmed by residents who complained they not only opposed the project, but knew nothing about it until notified by FDOT. Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission also disapproved of the project because the planned lighting was in violation of lighting requirements in sea turtle nesting areas. From this grassroots effort to defeat the planned lighting project, HIPI was born.

HIPI found the request for this safety study on the Martin County website's public email page and contacted Commissioner Smith and FDOT for additional information. Additionally, HIPI has notified FDOT of our concerns about the need for any additional lighting on the island

The results of this study are scheduled to be presented October 25 at the Martin MPO meeting. Please monitor our website and social media pages for updates.



Save Florida's Waters

An Update from Paul Laura, HIPI Environmental Officer

Background:

There are a number of initiatives focused on addressing changes to Florida's federal and state water related regulations. These changes are urgently needed due to:

1. The significant increase in population and reduced availability of clean drinking water.
2. Continued building on land that is no longer available to capture water, replenishing our aquifers. Instead, the water is entering our waterways as runoff and exiting into the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico.
3. Waste Treatment plants are antiquated and are overwhelmed and have limited options for handling our solid waste. You cannot export solid waste out of state.
4. The solid waste is spread on farmland, eventually due to rain runoff, phosphorus, nitrogen, herbicides, pharmaceuticals and other materials find their way back into our local waterways. Nitrogen and phosphorous compounds are a food source for bacteria and algae resulting in large blooms every summer due to the increased sunshine and higher water temperatures.
5. Large algal blooms such as "red tide", blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) create health hazards to marine life (large die-off), pets (e.g., dogs) and us. We do not understand the long-term effects due to exposure. The blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) can be seen, for example by satellites to cover large parts of Lake Okeechobee.
6. Controlling the above harmful elements of phosphorus, nitrogen, pharma and herbicides entering our waterways are urgently needed.
7. Additionally, we need to control the large amount of water during the wet season that comes from the northern part of Florida and enters Lake Okeechobee where the Army Corps of Engineers regulate the level and under current federal regulations maintain the safety of the dike system that is set up for Lake Okeechobee. Maximum and minimum levels have been established to keep the lake safe by law. Billions of gallons are often discharged every year to our St. Lucie River and the Caloosahatchee River to maintain legal safe levels (i.e., LORS federal regulation).
8. These discharges to the East (St. Lucie River) and to the West (Caloosahatchee River) are responsible for the significant loss of seagrass vital to marine life (e.g., manatees) and bring the blue-green algae (cyanobacteria), phosphorus, nitrogen compounds, pharma and remnants of herbicides with it.

Latest Developments:

- The Army Corps is updating the LORS water regulation and is called LOSOM (Lake Okeechobee Service Operation Manual). It is to be completed in late 2022
- After more than two years of meetings, modeling, debates and advocacy, the Corps whittled down the list of potential new "playbooks" to manage Lake Okeechobee (Lake O) to plan CC. This plan will be further refined/optimized over the next few months.
- Plan CC will reduce discharges to the St. Lucie River by 50%; subject to change.
- Problem: To reduce discharges, the Army Corp must send more water south of the lake!! But there is not enough capacity to handle water south of the lake. One solution is building of a EAA Reservoir which has begun construction.
- South Florida Water Management is collaborating with the Army Corps to make more storm treatment areas (STA's) available south of the lake to clean water for discharge into the Everglades which badly needs more water and must meet the 10 parts per billion max nutrient limits. They are also needed to clean water when the EAA reservoir is completed. Currently, there is not enough capacity.
- North of the lake, the Army Corps has announced completion of the Kissimmee River project which entailed return of the winding river configuration to allow it to slow down the flow and allow for some reduction of the nitrogen and phosphorus contained in the water.
- The Army Corps has also been charged with finding a solution to reduce the blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) blooms. We are still in the early stages.
- The State of Florida is working to develop a model to control nitrogen/phosphorous levels in our waters, the food-stuff for algae and bacteria.
- Martin County and South Florida Water Management have partnered on a new county reservoir (C44 reservoir) to be readied by end of 2021 that will be used to clean water from Lake O and local runoff. This will further reduce the harmful effects of Lake O discharges.
- Martin County is also reviewing purchase of more land to hold additional water for cleaning before it gets to the Indian River Lagoon/St. Lucie River.
- Martin County is applying for grants to provide for oysters and seagrass to be added to the St. Lucie and Indian River Lagoon. Seagrass is essential if the St. Lucie and Indian River Lagoon are to be returned to their prior pristine state.
- Local federal Representative have been petitioned requesting for the EPA and Federal Wildlife Dept to provide grants for increasing oyster beds and seagrass plantings.

August 10, 2021 Letter from Rep. Brian Mast Regarding Announced “Optimization” of Selected LOSOM Model CC



“A few weeks ago, we got good news regarding the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM).

The Army Corps has selected Balanced AlterCC as the next operating schedule. But we’re far from the checkered flag, and we cannot let our foot off the gas.

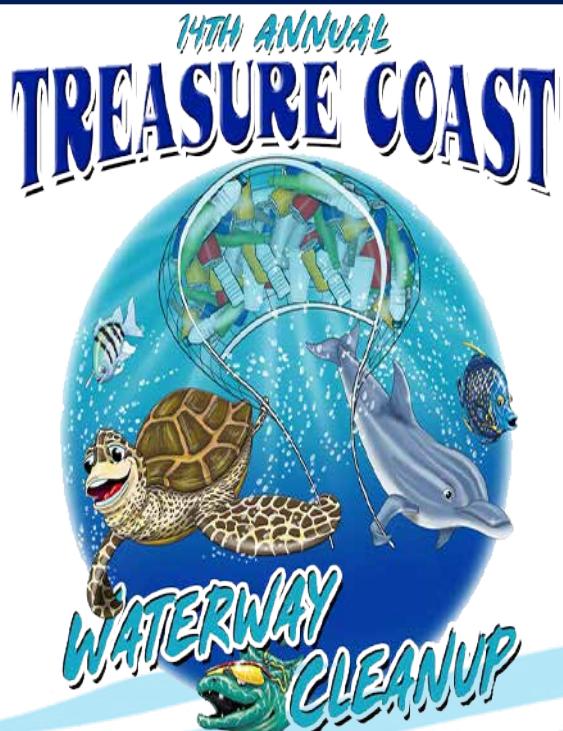
The Army Corps is still “optimizing” the plan, and unfortunately, we’re at risk of a bait-and-switch that could do irreparable harm to our communities. The sugar industry just got a sweet deal from the Army Corps while leaving communities on Florida’s east and west coasts at severe risk of toxic discharges.

Here’s what happened: Since the original announcement last month, communities on the east coast sought a commitment from the Army Corps that the “optimization” process wouldn’t result in more discharges to the St. Lucie, but the Army Corps refused to make that commitment. Instead, the Army Corps promised the sugar industry that they would maintain their near perfect level of performance no matter what other changes are made to the plan.

The message was clear: irrigating sugarcane is more important than protecting public health on Florida’s coasts. Plus, this could lead to severe harm for the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee. Providing a guaranteed level of performance for the sugar industry will make it harder for the Army Corps to reduce discharges.

The communities on the east and west coasts must work together to ensure that any changes made to Alternative CC will improve public health, the economy and the environment, not put a finger on the scale in favor of the sugar industry.

The Army Corps is still soliciting public comments, and you can share your opinion by emailing LakeOComments@usace.army.mil.



HIPPI Sponsors 14th Annual Treasure Coast Waterway Cleanup

HIPPI was honored to serve as a Blue Crab Sponsor of the 14th Annual Treasure Coast Waterway Cleanup.

HIPPI volunteers were on site Saturday, July 24 to help with the cleanup along the Jensen Beach Causeway, one of 24 cleanup sites on the Treasure Coast. During this week long event, 3.76 tons of trash and debris were collected by 1022 volunteers in Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin Counties. Almost one ton of that trash was collected in Martin County.

To view event photos and videos and learn more about next year’s event, visit www.tcwaterwaycleanup.com.



HIPPI Sponsors the First Meeting of the Hutchinson Island Presidents' Council of Martin County

Jim Foley

On July 14, the first meeting of the Hutchinson Island Presidents' Council of Martin County took place virtually, with several of the island's condominium associations participating. At the meeting, Charles Grande from St. Lucie County spoke about some of the work the President's Council of Hutchinson Island St. Lucie County has accomplished and applauded us for establishing a similar organization here in Martin County.

Thanks to everyone who was able to make the first meeting. For those who weren't able to do so, a recording of the meeting is available on the HIPPI website.

We still have work to do to get this group fully up and running but we didn't want too much time to go by without reaching out to you about next steps.

First, we are creating a membership directory that will be issued to each of you. We hope this directory will make your life a little easier by enabling you to more easily reach out to other association presidents for help with questions about things like construction and repair contractors, landscaping contractors, legal expertise, property management arrangements, cable service, marina issues, etc. If for some reason, you would prefer that your name and contact information not be included in the directory, please let us know by email no later than September 10.

We are in the process of scheduling a second virtual meeting and arranging for a guest speaker. Although no date has been identified as yet, those who participated on the first call told us that Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. is the preferred meeting time so we will work to accommodate that request. If you have suggestions for topics you would like included on the agenda, please let us know by email.

Upcoming Martin County Commissioners Meetings and Martin MPO Meetings

9/14 9:00 BOCC	10/14 9:00 BOCC joint meeting with school board
9/14 5:00 BOCC First Public Budget Hearing	10/19 9:00 BOCC
9/20 9:00 Martin MPO	10/25 9:00 Martin Martin
9/28 9:00 BOCC	11/2 9:00 BOCC
9/28 5:00 BOCC 2nd Public Budget Hearing	11/16 9:00 BOCC Reorganizational Meeting
10/5 9:00 BOCC	

All meetings will be held at the Martin County Administrative Center, 2401 SE Monterey Road, except the 10/14 joint meeting with the school board, which will be at the Blake Library.

Join HIPI!
There's strength in numbers! We need your help!

When developers have tried to make changes to Hutchinson Island that threaten the four story, 40 foot height limit, or endanger our animals and waters, HIPI has been instrumental in preventing those changes.

Our efforts stopped the 2018 project that would have installed hundreds of lights along A1A. Our questions and website and social media posts also prevented new construction on Hutchinson Island that would have included a 50+ ft tower. We were able to stop these changes to our beloved island because of the help of thousands of supporters who love Hutchinson Island and who publicly denounced these changes with us. When we speak together, our collective voices are loud and clear.

Your membership in HIPI allows us to show that you, too, care about preserving and protecting Hutchinson Island in Martin County. Your membership adds your contact information to our data base, so we can send you information about activities on the island that may affect Hutchinson Island. And, most importantly, you will be the first to know when we issue or endorse an urgent call to action. Dues are only \$20/year and help pay for operational costs, facilities rental and other expenses.

If you're already a member of HIPI, THANK YOU! Please renew your membership and continue to help us preserve and protect Hutchinson Island in Martin County. Visit our website, www.hipi.ch2v.com, to pay online or mail the membership form below.

*First Name _____

*Last Name _____

*Email _____

*Membership Category

_____ HUTCHINSON ISLAND MARTIN COUNTY RESIDENT MEMBER

_____ MARTIN COUNTY ASSOCIATE MEMBER

_____ NON-RESIDENT ASSOCIATE MEMBER (INCLUDES SEASONAL RENTERS)

_____ HUTCHINSON ISLAND MARTIN COUNTY BUSINESS ASSOCIATE MEMBER

_____ BUSINESS ASSOCIATE MEMBER

*Name of HOA (or please type private residence) _____

Name of Business, if applicable _____

Address _____

Condo or Unit Number, if applicable _____

*City _____ *State _____ *Zip _____

*Member Opt's in for Emails _____ Yes _____ No _____

Phone _____

Interested in Serving on Committee? _____ YES _____ NO _____

*Payment Type: CASH _____ CHECK # _____

*Name on check if different than member's name: _____

Please mail dues payments of \$20/member/year to

HIPI

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