



**Johnson Education Center
HBOI-FAU, Fort Pierce, Florida**

Friday, February 8 – A Forum on Lagoon Health

Three speakers will provide brief and differing perspectives on working to establish and sustain a healthy Indian River Lagoon, followed by an open discussion of what all of us – scientists, resource managers, decision makers, and the public – can do to improve the lagoon’s health.

0815 - 0855 Registration and Coffee & Tea

0900 - 1200 A Forum on Lagoon Health

Session Chair: Chuck Jacoby, St. Johns River Water Management District, Palatka, FL
& Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, Palm Bay, FL

0900 - 0910 Opening Remarks

Chuck Jacoby

0910 - 0925 So What? Translating Science into Management

Robert Virnstein
Seagrass Ecosystems Analysts, Palatka, FL

0925 - 0940 An Overview of Education, Outreach and Public Involvement Programs Ongoing throughout the Indian River Lagoon Region

Kathy Hill
Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, Palatka, FL

0940 - 0955 “Political Will” for Lagoon Remediation?

John Orcutt
Citizen, Vero Beach, FL

0955 - 1200 Discussion

Facilitators: Chuck Jacoby & Dennis Hanisak

A Forum on Lagoon Health

Abstracts

So What? Translating Science into Management

Robert Virnstein, Seagrass Ecosystems Analysts, East Palatka, FL

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We know a lot about the Indian River Lagoon. So what? That is, given what we now know, what should be our next step? By "our," I mean society in general and scientists in particular. We will never have "enough" research, but we have to make decisions now. Is it sufficient to control the input of nutrients, sediments, and freshwater (bottom-up control)? Or have we screwed up the food web by harvesting top predators (top-down control)? Have we even asked the right questions? I will review some successes and failures, pointing out some weak points for further discussion.

An Overview of Education, Outreach and Public Involvement Programs Ongoing throughout the Indian River Lagoon Region

Kathy Hill, Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, Palm Bay, FL

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Throughout the five counties encompassed by the Indian River Lagoon, a number of highly successful and informative public programs are being implemented. These serve to educate lagoon stakeholders about various aspects of the lagoon ecosystem while also influencing participating stakeholders to become better environmental stewards. This talk will review a variety of the lagoon-focused outreach, education and public participation programs being implemented throughout the region by agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations, and community groups, and will provide the framework for discussion of if and how organizations may work more closely to improve public understanding and concern for the Indian River Lagoon.

“Political Will” for Lagoon Remediation?

John D. Orcutt Jr., Vero Beach, FL

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Governmental entities, scientists and non-profit organizations have contributed to the knowledge of the Lagoon and its habitats, increased awareness and worked to correct some problems. However, over a two-year period the Lagoon has shown significant degradation. Citizens are saying “we need to do something about the Lagoon”; but who is “we”? There appears to be a political minefield inhibiting solutions to the problem. This raises some important questions: What organizations should take a lead role? Is there political will for Lagoon remediation? Are old paradigms going to work? Will it take citizen input to create a sense of urgency?