Executive Summary

Project Title: Project H2O Phase III: Citizen Science Engagement

Project Applicant and Partners: Marine Discovery Center, Marine Resources Council, Volusia County Environmental Management, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Amount of Request: $31,950

Other Funding Sources and Amount of Total Match: $41,350 in cash and in-kind match from Marine Discovery Center, Volusia County Environmental Management, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, trained volunteers

Brief Project Description

- Project description narrative: Project H2O, Phase III aims to expand citizen science efforts in Volusia county. By partnering with existing citizen science programs throughout the Indian River Lagoon, Project H2O will provide increased communication among environmental organizations and fill gaps not covered by other monitoring efforts. The proposed budget and timeline will provide funding for a coordinator to develop citizen science programs and engage both partners and volunteers.

- Project Location (Latitude and Longitude): 29.036129, -80.918038

- IRL Location Map: Figure 1

- Project Boundary Map: Figure 2

- CCMP Action Plans addressed by project:
  - Public Involvement and Education Action Plan (PIE): to facilitate implementation of the IRL CCMP through public involvement.
  - Monitoring Action Plan (MON): to develop and maintain a monitoring network which will provide adequate and reliable data and information on water quality, sediment quality and the biological resources of the Indian River Lagoon to support mapping, modeling and management decisions.

- Project Outputs (Deliverables) and Outcomes:
  - **Deliverable**: Partner with Lagoon Watch to train 30 volunteers to collect water quality samples in Volusia County. **Outcome**: Additional citizen scientists to complete a network of Lagoon Watch volunteers throughout the entire length of the Indian River Lagoon.
  - **Deliverable**: Partner with the FL Microplastic Awareness project to engage 20 citizen scientists in the collection and analysis of estuarine water and air for microplastics. **Outcome**: Increased awareness of the presence of single-use plastics and microplastics in our estuarine waters and methods to prevent plastic pollution.
  - **Deliverable**: Train 35 citizen science volunteers in the techniques for monitoring restored living shorelines and monitor the health of key estuarine species in natural and restored marshlands. **Outcome**: Increased awareness of the relationship of living shorelines and key species to a healthy Indian River Lagoon.
  - **Deliverable**: Quarterly and final reporting of progress. **Outcome**: Documentation of progress.

- List of CCMP Action Plans Addressed by Project: PIE-1; PIE-3; PIE-4; MON-1; and MON-2.
Section 1: Title Page

1. Project Title: Project H2O Phase III: Citizen Science Engagement
2. CCMP Action Plans Implemented by this Project:
   PIE-1 Implement and expand public involvement and education projects or programs.
   High
   PIE-2 Develop, implement and refine a communications plan to inform stakeholders and government officials about the resources of the IRL, the economic value of these resources and threats to the continued viability of these resources. High
   PIE-3 Increase public awareness of programs which protect and restore the Indian River Lagoon. High
   PIE-4 Increase public and governmental involvement in activities designed to protect and restore the resources of the IRL. High
   MON-1 Continue projects related to monitoring the resources of the IRL and address gaps in data as needed. High
   MON-2 Continue the Citizens Water Quality Monitoring Program. High

3. Applicant Information:
   • Chad Truxall, Executive Director, Marine Discovery Center, 520 Barracuda Blvd, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169 chad@marinediscoverycenter.org, 386-428-4828
   • Jessy Wayles, Conservation Science Coordinator, Marine Discovery Center, 520 Barracuda Blvd. New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169 jessy@marinediscoverycenter.org, 386-428-4828
   • Ginger Adair, Environmental Management Director, Volusia County, 123 W. Indiana Avenue DeLand, FL 32724 gadair@co.volusia.org, 386-736-4347; Fax 386-740-5193

Section II: Project Specifics

A. Project Goals and Objectives

Fig 1.0- Project H2O Central Themes
Project H2O aims to expand citizen science efforts in Volusia county. By partnering with existing citizen science programs throughout the Indian River Lagoon, Project H2O will provide increased communication among environmental organizations, help to complete data gaps and eliminate redundant monitoring efforts.

**Goal 1: Coordinate Project H2O meetings and partnerships.**
- **Objective 1/Output:** Conduct 12 steering committee meetings, 2 general partner meetings and 2 strategic planning meetings.
  - **Short-term Outcomes**
    - Increased partner knowledge base through the active sharing of scientific findings and coordinated participation in meetings and events.
    - Addition of Project H20 partners (CCA, SE Volusia Visitor Center, SE Volusia Chamber, Edgewater Boats).
  - **Mid-term Outcomes**
    - Efficient use of local resources to promote improved water quality in the Indian River Lagoon.
    - Active cultivation of long-term relationships between local governments, universities, and nonprofit organizations with an emphasis on leveraging resources to protect the Indian River Lagoon and garner funding for priority projects.
    - Increased coordination between state and local governments and within divisions of local governments when solving problems for surface water quality restoration.
    - Improved identification of effective projects through stakeholder decision-making and priority-setting processes.

**Goal 2: Expand Citizen Science throughout northern IRL (Volusia County)**
- **Objective 2A/Output:** Partner with Lagoon Watch to train 30 volunteers to collect water quality samples in Volusia County estuarine waters.
- **Objective 2B/Output:** Partner with the FL Microplastic Awareness Project to engage 20 citizen scientists in the collection and analysis of estuarine water and air for microplastics.
- **Objective 2C/Output:** Train 15 citizen science volunteers in the techniques for monitoring restored and naturally occurring living shorelines.
- **Objective 2D/Output:** Train 20 citizen science volunteers to monitor the health of key estuarine species in natural and restored marshlands.
  - **Short-term Outcomes**
    - Additional citizen scientists to complete a network of Lagoon Watch volunteers throughout the entire length of the Indian River Lagoon.
    - Increased awareness of the presence of single-use plastics and microplastics in our estuarine waters and methods to prevent plastic pollution.
    - Increased awareness of the relationship of Living Shorelines (salt marsh, mangrove forests, oysters and seagrass beds) to a healthy Indian River Lagoon.
    - Increased awareness of interdependence of key Indian River Lagoon species and their habitat requirements.
  - **Mid-term Outcomes**
    - Expanded citizen engagement and understanding of Indian River Lagoon threats and opportunities.
    - Enhanced public awareness of pollutant sources, pollutant impacts on water quality, and corresponding corrective actions.
    - Enhanced understanding of basin hydrology, water quality, and pollutant sources.
B. Technical Merit and Justification

Location: 29.036129, -80.918038

Project Scale: 55 miles

Demonstrated need: Project H2O is a successful multi-institutional initiative to promote healthy habitat through outreach to citizens in Volusia County. Phases I and II of Project H2O created a consortium of governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, universities, and k-12 schools that partner on water quality and habitat outreach programs within the IRL basins. Project H2O has focused on the historic boundaries of the IRL NEP and now covers the expanded IRL NEP planning area that reaches north through Volusia County to the Flagler County line. Coordination of partners and projects has proven to be a successful strategy to expand research, education and restoration. This proposal aims to continue this strategy with the addition of an identified central theme, citizen science to address existing data gaps and serve as a test model for other regions in the state. See Fig 1.0- Project H2O Central Themes.

Enhances Existing Programs: This proposal aims to address existing data gaps and serve as a test model for other regions in the state. We will focus on the following:

- **Lagoon Watch** – MDC currently has 25 volunteers conducting bimonthly water quality tests but the methodology is not quality controlled and quality assured. By partnering with the Marine Resources Council, we can standardize citizen science water quality testing throughout the entire length of the IRL.

- **FL Microplastic Awareness Project** - As a regional coordinator of the FMAP in 2016-17, MDC trained 50 citizen scientists to analyze estuarine waters for microplastics. Additional sampling is needed to understand all sources of microplastics and raise awareness about the impact of single-use plastics on our estuarine environments.

- **Living Shoreline Monitoring** – MDC staff and volunteers have been assisting FWC, SJRWMD, UCF and others in the monitoring of a 5-acre restored salt marsh and adjacent naturally occurring living shoreline. Additional monitoring is needed to understand how sea level rise and climate change impact restored vs. naturally occurring living shoreline.

- **Seagrass** - MDC staff and volunteers have also worked with FWC and SJRWMD to conduct quarterly seagrass samples in Mosquito Lagoon. As funding for seagrass sampling decreases, citizen science volunteers will play a vital role in the monitoring of this critical habitat.

- **Horseshoe Crabs** – baseline spawning data for horseshoe crabs is minimal throughout the state of FL. MDC staff and volunteers have been working with UF and FWC to develop citizen science protocols that can be duplicated statewide. Additional monitoring is needed to determine spawning locations, spawning preference (intertidal or subtidal) and the possibility of a FL sub species.

The proposed budget and timeline will provide funding for a coordinator to develop and implement citizen science programs and engage both partners and volunteers. The coordinator will be responsible for providing project deliverables in a timely manner, aiding communications between Project H2O partners, gaining a multitude of new partners, and implementing citizen science volunteer programs to collect a viable data base. Additional budget items include the cost of materials and supplies for programs. This project will be completed within the proposed budget timeline.
C. Benefits to the IRL
Citizen Science programs are an integral part to educating local communities about the importance and perils of the Indian River Lagoon. Marine Discovery Center (MDC) has provided education and outreach to the local community for two decades in the form of “hands on, feet wet” programs that both educate and engage guests in Volusia County about marine ecosystems. Trained volunteers assist staff members to collect data for partners such as Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, University of Florida, University of Central Florida, among others. Project H2O citizen science programs provide increased outreach and education opportunities for local schools, universities, and adult education programs. Programs provide valuable data for researchers and practitioners who work in the Indian River Lagoon and rely on monitoring data for grant funding and research ideas.

The benefits of Project H2O to the Indian River Lagoon can be measured in terms of capacity-building outcomes:

- Development of a watchful community of ambassadors through citizen science programs – **85 citizen scientists**
- Increased public awareness regarding water quality issues in the Northern IRL, including the “Be Floridian” program and information about climate change adaptation – **85 citizen scientists**
- Enhanced public awareness of exotic invasive species – **85 citizen scientists**
- Expanded public involvement in restoration, conservation and research efforts – **85 citizen scientists**
- Completing data gaps and needs through citizen scientists, partnerships and data sharing - **85 citizen scientists**
- Match research, restoration, and education needs with available resources – **12-15 partnerships**

Methodologies used to quantify the project benefits are listed in Section F – Project monitoring/evaluation and maintenance plan.

D. Local Commitment
Project H2O combines the synergy and power of local environmental organizations:

- Volusia County Environmental Management
- Marine Discovery Center
- Marine Resources Council
- Bethune-Cookman College
- Daytona State College
- Stetson University
- St. Johns River Water Management District
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Blue Spring Alliance
- University of Florida/IFAS Extension
- Save the Manatee Club
- University of Central Florida
- Volusia County Schools Project IBIS

Project H2O objectives align with the Northeast Florida Estuarine Habitat Restoration Plan, Volusia County Sustainable Action Plan, Blue Community Consortium, Volusia County Dynamic Master Plan and Water Quality Plan. We look forward to future partnerships with other local universities, businesses and municipalities.
E. Project Readiness
Marine Discovery Center has a proven track record of receiving and managing grant awards that focus on community building and engagement through a stakeholder approach. Grant awards include federal, state and local sources from NOAA, FDEP, SJRWMD, IRL NEP, City of New Smyrna Beach, Volusia County and private foundations. MDC is positioned to manage this project as well as providing the base of operations.


Permits: Permits for Scientific Research and Collection within Canaveral National Park boundaries for horseshoe crab monitoring surveys have been secured for 2017-2018.

Major project tasks: tasks include horseshoe crab nesting surveys conducted during quarters 1 and 3, sea grass monitoring surveys conducted during quarters 2 and 4, shoreline monitoring conducted quarterly, water quality samples collected weekly, and microplastics samples collected monthly.

F. Project Monitoring/Evaluation and Maintenance Plans
The success of Project H2O will be measured by:
- Quarterly reports: Assessment of project success to meet goals and objectives.
- Comprehensive database of citizen science data available to our partners.
- 85 volunteers trained in physical, habitat, and biological diversity monitoring programs.

G. Citizen Engagement and Outreach Components
Project H2O will continue education through an enhanced and interactive website, social media, and partner meetings. Project H2O volunteers will be trained through program specific workshops ranging from one- two hours. Citizen science volunteers will become engaged and able to inform others in their communities on the IRL and the impacts affecting its health, and will be trained to assist Marine Discovery Center staff by volunteering with education programs to provide information about citizen science programs to over 3,500 students in Volusia County schools. The success of this program will be demonstrated by monitoring data collected by the trained citizen science volunteers.

H. Experience and Past Performance
Marine Discovery Center (MDC), a 501(c)3 not for profit focuses on education and conservation opportunities for guests and volunteers. Serving over 21,000 visitors and 850 volunteers in 2016, Marine Discovery Center has established itself as a premier eco-tourism destination for visitors from around the world. Marine Discovery Center staff and Project H2O partners have decades of experience in implementing citizen science programs. The Marine Discovery Center has previously received NEP funding for the creation and implementation of Project H2O to establish a communication network and outreach campaign for the IRL. The MDC has also received funding for several other programs including Adopt-An-Estuary and Shuck and Share program. MDC has partnered with various governmental agencies and conservation groups including Volusia County, City of New Smyrna Beach, the Nature Conservancy, Florida DEP, St. Johns River Water Management District, Florida Fish and Wildlife, University of Central Florida, Sea Grant, and NOAA to implement education and restoration projects.
I. Special Requirements
Project H2O assists in building climate change awareness through its communications plan. The enhanced website, social media presence, campaign materials, public presentations and enhanced Project H2O citizen science programs will build on the importance of adapting sea level rise and climate change for Volusia’s IRL communities. While Project H2O does not directly contribute to the implementation of a BMAP, the development and education will be available through a comprehensive lagoon wide water quality database.

Section III: Project Funding

A. Partnership and Cost Sharing
Major project partners are the Marine Discovery Center, Marine Resources Council, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, University of Central Florida, and Volusia County Environmental Management. All match listed has been committed. Marine Discovery Center is providing in-kind funds to supervise a coordinator ($3,000), fringe cash ($2,400), materials ($2,500) and 1,122 hours of trained volunteer time at $22.14/hr ($24,850). Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is providing the use of a john boat for monitoring events ($3,600). Volusia County Environmental Management is providing materials for programs ($5,000).

Requested Grant funds: $31,950

Value of In-Kind Match: $41,350

Match Fund Costs: $41,350 (cash + in-kind)

Match as percentage of total project: 60% =

B. Budget

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Summary Cost

| Total Project Cost | $69,100 |

C. Funding for projects under this RFP consist of: EPA Section 320 Funds
Statement of Work

Project H2O Phase III: Citizen Science Engagement

I. Introduction/Background

Project H2O is a multi-institutional initiative to promote healthy habitat through outreach to citizens in Volusia County. The project focuses on the northern IRL and nearby estuarine waters and targets education, citizen science, habitat restoration, reduction of nutrient inputs and research. Project H2O aims to provide stakeholders the northern IRL region opportunities for collaborations that will enhance their existing projects, maximize available resources, increase funding through joint grant proposals, and improve communications. The current project is based out of the Marine Discovery Center, located in the Fish and Wildlife Commission’s Mosquito Lagoon Marine Enhancement Center. The facility provides access to meeting rooms, laboratories, and the waters of the IRL at New Smyrna Beach.

Citizen Science programs are an integral part to educating local communities about the importance and perils of the Indian River Lagoon. Marine Discovery Center has provided education and outreach to the local community for two decades in the form of “hands on, feet wet” programs that both educate and engage guests in Volusia County about marine ecosystems. Trained volunteers assist staff members to collect data for partners such as Florida Fish and Wildlife, University of Florida, University of Central Florida, among others. However, gaps exist in collecting data on a variety of physical and biological habitats. Project H2O aims to expand citizen science efforts in Volusia county.

II. Objectives

- **Goal 1: Coordinate Project H2O meetings and partnerships.**
  - **Objective 1:** Conduct 12 steering committee meetings, 2 general partner meetings and 2 strategic planning meetings with emphasis on creating a management plan in coordination with the CCMP.

- **Goal 2: Expand Citizen Science throughout northern IRL (Volusia County)**
  - **Objective 2A:** Partner with Lagoon Watch to train 30 volunteers to collect water quality samples in Volusia County estuarine waters.
  - **Objective 2B:** Partner with the FL Microplastic Awareness project to engage 20 citizen scientists in the collection and analysis of estuarine water and air for microplastics.
  - **Objective 2C:** Train 15 citizen science volunteers in the techniques for monitoring restored shorelines and natural habitat.
  - **Objective 2D:** Train 20 citizen science volunteers to monitor the health of key estuarine species in natural and restored marshlands.
III. Location of Project

Project H2O, Phase III aims to expand citizen science efforts in the Northern Indian River Lagoon within Volusia County. By partnering with existing citizen science programs throughout the Indian River Lagoon, Project H2O will provide increased communication among environmental organizations and eliminate redundant monitoring efforts. The project boundary includes citizen science projects as far north as Daytona Beach and as far south as Oak Hill, Florida.

![Project Location](image1)

![Project Boundary](image2)

Figure 2: Project Location

Figure 2: Project Boundary

IV. Scope of Work

Project H2O will train 85 volunteers on techniques for monitoring habitat and biological factors, as well as collection of water samples for water quality and microplastics at the Marine Discovery Center (MDC). MDC will partner will Marine Resources Council to implement Lagoon Watch and Sea Grant to continue the Florida Microplastics Awareness Project. Citizen science volunteers will become engaged and able to inform others in their communities on the IRL and the impacts affecting its health, and will be trained to assist Marine Discovery Center staff by volunteering with education programs to provide information about citizen science programs.

Project H2O will continue to focus on engaging local partners, increase public awareness regarding water quality issues in the northern IRL, enhance public awareness of exotic invasive species, and expand data sharing and knowledge of available resources.
V. **Task Identification**

Task 1. Quarterly Progress Reports. The recipient shall submit quarterly progress reports starting after the first quarter following contract execution and continuing to project completion.

Task 2. All work required to supervise a Coordinator.

Task 3: All work required to purchase program equipment including but not limited to: tools, office supplies, website updates, and volunteer event materials.

Task 4: All work required to train citizens in different monitoring techniques for physical, biological, and habitat monitoring programs and interpretation.

Task 5: Project Administration and Final Report. The recipient shall complete 100 percent of the project and submit a project final report.

VI. **Deliverables and Time Frame**

Task 1: Recipient shall submit quarterly reports.  
Deliverable due into the district office by the last business day of each quarter.  
*Deliverable: Electronic transmission of quarterly reports and supporting documentation.*

Task 2: Recipient shall supervise a Coordinator.  
Deliverable due into the district office by October 15th, 2017  
*Deliverable: Electronic notification of employment.*

Task 3: Purchase project supplies.  
Deliverable due into the district office by September 30th, 2018  
*Deliverable: Detailed documentation of supply purchases and copies of receipts.*

Task 4: Train citizens in different monitoring techniques for physical, biological, and habitat monitoring programs and interpretation.  
Deliverable due into the district office by September 30th, 2018  
*Deliverable: To be included in the Project Final Report: Summary total of the numbers of hours spent on outreach, training, and monitoring. Recipient shall provide the number of hours worked by volunteers and copies of volunteer sign-in sheets.*

Task 5: Project administration and final report.  
Deliverable due into the district office by September 30th, 2018  
*Deliverable: Project administration and a final report that shall include: detail of monitoring programs and a summary total of all volunteers who participated in volunteer events.*
## VII. Budget

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May 18, 2017

Mr. Frank Sakuma
Chief Operating Officer
Indian River Lagoon Council
1235 Main St. Sebastian, FL 32958
sakuma@irlcouncil.org

Dear Mr. Sakuma,

This letter is in support of Project H2O's proposal, titled “Project H2O Phase III: Citizen Science Engagement”, which encompasses ongoing efforts by multiple partners in Volusia County in a comprehensive citizen-science program. The program will streamline protocols between groups, broaden outreach, eliminate redundant efforts, and connect with local residents through hands-on data collection.

The Marine/Estuarine Sub-section of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission recognizes the need for local stakeholder support for estuarine research and restoration, and sees citizen science as a critical tool for achieving that support. Additionally, Project H2O provides valuable coordination between partners to ensure common messaging to a diverse audience, and facilitates collaborative projects to address water quality issues in the northern IRL.

We will support the citizen science programs by providing a vessel that will allow Project H2O staff and volunteers to access sites within the Indian River Lagoon for aquatic habitat and shoreline monitoring. A minimum of twelve days of boat time, valued at $3,600 ($300 per day based on local rental fees for a comparable vessel), will allow Project H2O staff and volunteers to expand their citizen science monitoring efforts to locations that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Thank you for your consideration of Project H2O Phase III, which will continue coordination that has already resulted in the Protect Our Lagoon Academy, Be Floridian Now campaign, Protect Our Lagoon yard signs, strategic requests to City and County Councils, ongoing presence at community events, and more across Volusia County. FWC has been a member of Project H2O since its inception, and will continue to support regional planning for water quality issues.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Annie Roddenberry
Biological Scientist III
Marine/Estuarine Subsection
Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Restoration
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Annie.Roddenberry@myfwc.com
386-428-4828
May 17, 2017

Frank Sakuma Jr.
Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program
1235 Main Street
Sebastian, FL 32958

Re: Project H2O Phase III: Citizen Science Engagement

Dear Mr. Sakuma,

I am pleased to partner with the Marine Discovery Center to expand citizen science efforts in the Northern Indian River Lagoon through Project H2O Phase III. Marine Resources Council will partner with the Marine Discovery Center to train 30 volunteers in the Lagoon Watch program and if IRLNEP funding is secured, MRC will provide to MDC the materials for 35 new monitoring kits. The standardized collection methods will provide a comprehensive database that can be used lagoon wide by a variety of organizations.

Citizen Science programs are an integral part to educating local communities about the importance and perils of the Indian River Lagoon. Marine Discovery Center has provided education and outreach to the local community for two decades in the form of “hands on, feet wet” programs that both educate and engage guests in Volusia County about marine ecosystems. Project H2O aims to expand citizen science efforts in Volusia county.

By partnering with existing citizen science programs throughout the Indian River Lagoon, Project H2O will provide increased communication among environmental organizations and eliminate redundant monitoring efforts, and I eagerly anticipate collaborating on this project.

Sincerely,

Leesa Souto, Ph.D.
Executive Director
May 16, 2017

To the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program grant review committee:

I am writing this letter in support of Marine Discovery Center’s grant proposal to expand their citizen scientist program. I have had the honor to work with their staff and volunteers over the past three years on a variety of projects in Mosquito Lagoon, including shoreline monitoring, bird surveys, and living shoreline restoration. Marine Discovery Center has attracted a knowledgeable and hard-working group of volunteers, with more passion and dedication to protecting the Lagoon than any group I have worked with to date. They have been an invaluable resource in collecting data to document the change in the restored wetland at the Center’s property in New Smyrna Beach. Our previous work has educated a core base of volunteers to lead this new citizen scientist program and allowed for field testing of methods to identify best data collection techniques, both of which will ensure success going forward.

In addition, your support for this proposal will allow Marine Discovery Center and their volunteers to continue documenting the development of the restored wetland, building a long-term data set. This data will further our understanding of restored wetlands and provide valuable information to guide wetland restoration in this region in the future. For these reasons, I encourage you to support Marine Discovery Center and their citizen scientist project.

Sincerely,

Dr. Melinda Donnelly
Post-Doctoral Research Scientist
Department of Biology, University of Central Florida
May 17, 2017

Frank Sakuma Jr.
Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program
1235 Main Street
Sebastian, FL 32958

Re: Project H2O Phase III: Citizen Science Engagement

Dear Mr. Sakuma,

Volusia County is a proud partner of Project H2O, which was provided NEP grant funding in the 2016 work plan cycle. We continue to support the project and the goal to expand citizen science efforts in the Northern Indian River Lagoon through Project H2O Phase III.

Citizen Science programs are an integral part to educating local communities about the importance and perils of the Indian River Lagoon. Marine Discovery Center has provided education and outreach to the local community for two decades in the form of “hands on, feet wet” programs that both educate and engage guests in Volusia County about marine ecosystems. Project H2O aims to expand citizen science efforts in Volusia county.

This project furthers the IRL NEP’s Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan by raising awareness, improving understanding, and fostering sustainable behaviors among a variety of stakeholder groups and target audiences. The project will complement Volusia County’s long standing commitment to the IRL, which includes comprehensive water quality monitoring, ecosystem-scale restoration projects, and regulatory programs that protect and enhance the natural resources of this county. The project will also complement Volusia County’s Green Volusia initiative (greenvolusia.org) by promoting clean water and coastal ecosystems as priceless resources.

Volusia County is committed to further protecting the health of the Mosquito Lagoon, Halifax River, and the IRL through this innovative partnership. Volusia County can commit $5,000 in kind matching funds to support this proposal.

Sincerely,

Ginger Adair
Environmental Management Director
May 19, 2017

Frank Sakuma
Chief Operating Officer, IRL Council
1235 Main Street
Sebastian, FL 32958
VIA email: sakuma@irlcouncil.org

Mr. Sakuma:

Please accept this letter as the Marine Discovery Center’s formal submittal and endorsement of the attached “Project H2O Phase III - Citizen Science” project application and request for FY 2017-2018 Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program Citizen Engagement And Education Projects funding. This letter is also a formal confirmation of the matching fund commitment from our project partners, who have provided letters of support for this project.

Project H2O is a successful multi-institutional initiative to promote healthy habitat through outreach to citizens in Volusia County. Phases I and II of Project H2O created a consortium of governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, universities, and k-12 schools that partner on water quality and habitat outreach programs within the IRL basins. Project H2O has focused on the historic boundaries of the IRL NEP and now covers the expanded IRL NEP planning area that reaches north through Volusia County to the Flagler County line. The project’s home base will continue to be at the Marine Discovery Center located on the shore of the IRL in New Smyrna Beach. In addition to this request, Project H2O partners are active participants in shoreline restoration projects, invasive species removal, active research projects, formal water quality sampling and analysis initiatives and pollution prevention programs.

Major project partners include the Marine Resources Council, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, University of Central Florida, and Volusia County Environmental Management. This project is requesting $31,950 for FY 17-18 of IRL NEP funding and will provide $41,350 in matching in-kind support. The match for this program is 60% of the total project cost and, therefore, this project is extremely cost effective. The MDC will comply with all grant requirements upon award of this request.

Sincerely,

Chad Truxall, Executive Director, Marine Discovery Center