

Boards Application Form

Profile

If interested in one of these boards please fill out this application and submit.

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee: Submitted

_____	Mark	_____	Schrope
Prefix	First Name	Middle Initial	Last Name

mschrope@schmidtmarine.org
Email Address

8592 Sylvan Dr. _____
Home Address Suite or Apt

Melbourne _____ FL 32904
City State Postal Code

Mobile: (407) 376-4678 _____ Business: (321) 956-8431 _____
Primary Phone Alternate Phone

How long have you been a resident of Brevard County?

23 years

To which Commissioner are you applying?

District 5

Do you consent to a standard criminal background check?

Yes No

Interests & Experiences

Please tell us about yourself and why you want to serve.

Question applies to Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee

Applicants must commit to serving the public interest by providing stewardship of Lagoon Trust Funds, especially in relation to restoring health to the Indian River Lagoon, and must demonstrate expertise and experience in a field listed in the drop down menu below. Knowledge of water quality issues and the major sources of pollution affecting the lagoon are highly desirable.

Members and their alternates oversee progress and make recommendations to the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners on spending an estimated \$542 million from sales tax revenue to Reduce pollution sources to the lagoon, Remove legacy pollution from the lagoon, Restore natural systems within the lagoon, and Respond to new information by recommending annual amendments to the Save our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan (SOIRLPP).

Duties include participation in meetings to evaluate progress towards plan implementation and lagoon health, review technology and alternative project proposals for reducing pollutants and improving water quality, assess the cost-effectiveness of projects and recommend plan revisions accordingly. The Committee addresses questions, concerns, and ideas from the public to improve the SOIRLPP. Applicants must be willing to ensure that the SOIRLPP reflects the most effective, timely and responsible means to restore the Indian River Lagoon and that the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Trust Fund is managed in the best interest of the public.

In addition to completing the application, a resumé and at least one letter of recommendation are required. Resumés and recommendation letters should be a minimum 12 point, sans-serif font (e.g. Arial, Calibri, Veranda) and uploaded below in Word or pdf format in order to meet American Disabilities Act Section 508 compliance requirements. The letter of recommendation can be a personal recommendation from a professional in the same field and/or an endorsement by a reputable nonprofit organization. Scanned resumes and recommendation letters cannot be accepted due to Section 508 compliance requirements.

Question applies to Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee

Are you willing to serve on the Committee for a minimum of two (2) years and be available to attend monthly weekday meetings?

Yes No

Question applies to Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee

Please check next to one or more of the following that best matches your expertise: *

- Science
- Technology

Question applies to Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee

Please list one or more reasons why you are personally interested in applying to serve as a member of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Oversight Committee.

I love the water and I have enjoyed spending time on and around Indian River Lagoon for the majority of 53 years, as a boater and fisherman. It has been painful to see the lagoon's decline over the past several years and I would like to make a positive contribution to reversing that trend. I also believe that my current work, as detailed below, will enable me to bring new ideas for improving lagoon health from areas around the country and the world.

Mark Schrope

Question applies to Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee

Please provide a brief overview of your background and experience (education, professional experience, and community volunteer experience) as it relates to your understanding of the Save our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan (SOIRLPP) and the restoration needs of the Indian River Lagoon.

My life and career have always revolved around the water. I began my career working as a chemical oceanographer after receiving my master's degree from Florida State University. At my first job as a lab manager at the College of William and Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science, I studied the causes of pollution-related algal blooms in the Chesapeake Bay region. I left Virginia and moved back home to Florida to begin working full-time as a writer. This included about a decade as a freelance journalist writing for publications such as Nature and Popular Science, and for several years as the communications writer for Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution in Fort Pierce. Those jobs gave me the opportunity to study all aspects of coastal waters, and to personally learn about a wide range of Indian River research efforts. Ten years ago I shifted to philanthropy and now work as the director of Schmidt Marine Technology Partners, a program of The Schmidt Family Foundation that funds the development of technologies to address ocean problems. In that capacity I have visited and learned about distressed coastal systems around the world, and I have personally overseen the distribution of millions in funding for the development of technologies to address these problems. All of this I believe will give me a unique and broad perspective on ways to solve Indian River Lagoon health issues.

Question applies to Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee

Please describe what character, judgement, analytical, communication, and group consensus building strengths you would contribute to the purposes and duties of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee.

Through my work as a writer I've learned to take a step back from difficult issues to take in the full context and the ranges of opinions that typically exist. This helps me avoid snap judgements to hopefully focus on the roots of and solutions for problematic issues. I also consider myself something of a peacemaker, able to interact respectfully with a wide range of people and often make good connections between them based on taking the time to deeply understand an issue.

Question applies to Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee

Please describe the importance of committee members putting public interests first and avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest in making recommendations for expenditure of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Trust Funds.

In my own work I value the input of people who might have a particular conflict of interest on a given topic, but I believe that, whenever possible, it is essential that people with no such conflicts make final decisions on major funding decisions. Because my salary comes from a California-based group, and I have absolutely no financial ties to any relevant technologies, I believe I'll be able to provide that kind of objective input.

Question applies to Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee

Please provide a short (one paragraph) bio. This will be posted for the public to view on the Save Our Indian River Lagoon website should you be selected to join the committee. Examples of existing bios can be viewed on the Save Our Indian River Lagoon website.

Mark Schrope is the director of Schmidt Marine Technology Partners, which provides long-term support for the development of promising solutions for ocean health problems. Since its founding in 2015, Schmidt Marine, a program of the Schmidt Family Foundation, has funded more than 80 development efforts. Mark began his career studying deep-ocean carbon cycling and harmful algal blooms at The College of William and Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science, after receiving a B.S. in biology from Wake Forest, and an M.S. in chemical oceanography from Florida State. Later he shifted to ocean and tech focused journalism and communications. Mark's articles have appeared in Nature, Scientific American, Popular Science, The New York Times, The Washington Post, IEEE Spectrum, Chemical & Engineering News, and numerous other publications. Assignments took him to the seafloor by submersible, to remote islands, and by plane through the eye of a hurricane. He also consulted for clients such as the Scripps Research Institute, Sea Grant, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, and Yale University. He has worked on over a dozen research vessels on expeditions around the world, and is a fellow of the Explorers Club.

Question applies to Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee

Select one of the following in order to achieve transparency with the public we list the contact information for the Citizen Oversight Committee members on the Save Our Indian River Lagoon website so the public may contact them with questions or comments. Please provide either or both of the following information you wish to share publicly should you be selected to join the committee. *

Email

Question applies to Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee

[Mark_Schrope_rec_1_.pdf](#)

Upload a Reference Letter

Are you currently serving on any State, Regional or Brevard County board, council, or committees? If so please name.

No

Do you have or hold any employment or contractual relationship with any business or any agency which is subject to the regulation of or is doing business with Brevard County? If so, please explain.

No

Please explain your interests and experiences.

My life and career have always revolved around the water. I began my career working as a chemical oceanographer after receiving my master's degree from Florida State University. At my first job as a lab manager at the College of William and Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science, one task was studying causes of pollution-related pfiisteria and other algal blooms in the Chesapeake Bay Region. I left Virginia to begin working full-time as a writer, including about a decade as a freelance journalist writing for publications such as Nature and Popular Science, and for several years as the communications writer for Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution. Those jobs gave me the opportunity to study all aspects of coastal waters, and to personally research and witness a wide range of Indian River research efforts. Ten years ago I shifted to philanthropy and now work as the director of Schmidt Marine Technology Partners, a program of The Schmidt Family Foundation. In that capacity I have had the opportunity to visit and learn about distressed coastal systems around the world, and I have personally overseen the distribution of millions in funding for the development of technologies to address these problems. All of this I believe will give me a unique and broad perspective on ways to solve Indian River Lagoon health issues.

Please explain your background, including education, work experience, civic or community organization memberships and positions, and any professional licenses or memberships, and how this applies to the function of the Board, Council or Committee that you are interested in serving on.

As noted above, I have a master's degree in chemical oceanography, and have done ocean-related work my whole career. This has allowed given me a deep understanding of the issues facing Indian River Lagoon. I also worked for many years as a writer covering numerous challenging scientific and technical topics. This helps me to understand difficult issues and explain them clearly to a broad range of people.

Brevard County Board of County Commissioners strives to promote diversity and provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. If you are requesting an accommodation, please indicate below.

none

[Schrope-resume-12-2024.doc](#)

Upload a Resume

Agreement

Advisory committees are subject to the Florida open meetings (Sunshine) and public records laws; your response with a completed application with your contact information is a public record; if chosen as a member of the committee, any communications to you from the County or from you to the County in regard to the committee will be a public record.

Please Agree with the Following Statement

I understand the responsibilities and commitment of time associated with an appointment to a Brevard County board, council or committee.

I Agree

Mark Schrope

MARK KEVIN SCHROPE

8592 Sylvan Dr., Melbourne, Florida 32904
Office: (321) 956-8431
Mobile: (407) 376-4678
mschrope@schmidtmarine.org

- 2015 - present** **Director, Schmidt Marine Technology Partners, San Francisco.**
We created this program within the Schmidt Family Foundation to enable and accelerate development of technologies that solve a range of problems in the marine environment (www.schmidtmarine.org). I oversee all aspects of the program, including managing two full-time employees, multiple business and other consultants, and a San Francisco office space (though I remain Florida based). My work for the program has included surveying the field to seek out the most promising marine technology ideas, evaluating potential, and leading the distribution of a \$15 million annual grants budget.
- 2000 - 2015** **President, Open Water Media, Inc., Melbourne, FL.** I founded the company to provide outreach, public relations, and other services to groups seeking to reach target audiences with materials and messages that were easily understandable, technically accurate, and engaging. Clients included The Scripps Research Institute, Duke University, the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, Yale University, the National Sea Grant Program, Pew Charitable Trusts, The Living Oceans Foundation, NASA, Schmidt Ocean Institute, and the Ocean Research and Conservation Association.
- 1998 - 2016** **Freelance Journalist & Photographer.** I wrote hundreds of articles for general and scientific audiences, the bulk of which focused on ocean topics. My work has appeared in *Nature*, *Outside*, *New Scientist*, *Scientific American*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Popular Science*, *Science News for Students*, *Popular Mechanics*, *Sport Diver*, *Scuba Diving*, *Slate*, *Caribbean Travel & Life*, *NationalGeographic.com*, *Smithsonian.com*, and other publications. My photographs appeared in a number of these outlets as well including *Nature*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*. I was a co-author of *The Science Writer's Handbook: Everything You Need to Know to Pitch, Publish, and Prosper in the Digital Age*, and I have appeared as a non-partisan ocean science expert on *PBS Newshour*, *The Rachel Maddow Show*, and various regional TV and radio shows. For a nearly complete list of past articles, please visit the "Clips" section of: www.MarkSchrope.com.
- 2002 - 2006** **Science Writer (Public Relations Director), Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, Fort Pierce, FL.** I designed and implemented strategies for raising the institution's profile regionally, nationally, and internationally. This included extensive work with media and documentary groups, and production of related print and web materials in collaboration

with the institution's Media Lab. I also acted as spokesperson and was responsible for promoting educational programs and drawing public and political attention to critical environmental issues. Some of my specific tasks included pitching Harbor Branch stories to national networks, NPR, and major magazines and newspapers, and in many cases arranging logistics for such groups to spend time in the field with Harbor Branch scientists, including aboard the institution's research vessels and submersibles during expeditions.

- 2002** **Adjunct Professor, Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne.**
I taught a combined graduate and undergraduate science journalism course.
- 1999** **Intern, *New Scientist Magazine*, San Francisco office.**
- 1999** **Intern, *Popular Science*, New York.**
- 1995 - 1998** **Laboratory Specialist Advanced, College of William & Mary, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Gloucester Point.** As the manager of a research program focused on deep-ocean chemistry, I handled logistics for, and spent several months at sea on, expeditions in the Southern, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans. I also conducted research on water quality and toxic plankton blooms in the Chesapeake Ba regiony.
- 1993 - 1995** **Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Oceanography, Florida State University, Tallahassee.** My research focused on the effects of global change on wetlands. This allowed me to experience, among other wonders, the joy of a heated greenhouse during a Florida summer. As a member of the FSU Science Diving Team, I took part in research projects in the Gulf of Mexico, which was substantially cooler.

EDUCATION

- 1998 - 1999** **Certificate in Science Writing** from the Univ. of Calif., Santa Cruz, graduate Science Communications program. Awarded two merit fellowships.
- 1993 - 1995** **Master of Science in Chemical Oceanography** at Florida State University under Dr. Jeffrey Chanton. GPA: 3.9.
- 1989 - 1993** **Bachelor of Science in Biology** at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC. Graduated cum laude.



OCEAN RESEARCH & CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION, INC.

Brevard County Commission
2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way (Building C)
Viera, FL 32940

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to enthusiastically recommend Mark Schrope for a position on the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee. Mark's combination of deep affection for the Indian River Lagoon and his extensive background in science makes him an ideal candidate to contribute meaningfully to the board's mission of overseeing the ½-cent sales tax spending for environmental restoration and conservation efforts.

I have had the privilege of knowing Mark for over 20 years and can personally attest to his integrity, dedication, and deep commitment to environmental stewardship. Throughout this time, I have seen his unwavering passion for the Indian River Lagoon and his consistent efforts to support its health and sustainability.

Mark has dedicated much of his professional career to science writing, effectively translating complex scientific concepts into clear and compelling narratives for a wide range of audiences. His ability to communicate with precision and clarity ensures that he will be an asset in evaluating proposed projects and sharing critical insights with both board members and the public.

Mark's ability to approach issues analytically, coupled with his clear dedication to environmental stewardship, ensures he will provide thoughtful, balanced, and informed guidance. I am confident he will uphold the integrity of the committee's mission while contributing fresh perspectives and unwavering commitment to the health and sustainability of Brevard County's natural resources.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at ewidder@teamorca.org or 772 528 9729 should you require any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edith Widder".

Edith Widder
CEO & Senior Scientist