



Brevard County Board of County Commissioners

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson
Way
Viera, FL 32940

Legislation Text

File #: 4997, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Approval of the Tourist Development Council (TDC) FY 2021-2022 Tourism + Lagoon Grant Program additional funding for one grant and four no-cost, time extensions.

Fiscal Impact:

FY 2021-2022: Total funding of \$97,675 from the TDC Beach Improvement fund # 1442-293100.

Dept/Office:

Tourist Development Office

Requested Action:

It is requested the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners approve the Tourist Development Council FY 2021-2022 Tourism + Lagoon Grant Program request for additional funding for one approved project:

- Derelict Vessel Removal-Natural Resources \$97,675

and grant no-cost, one-year extensions to four approved projects:

- Lagoon Recreation Field Guide-Brevard County Natural Resources, \$44,000
- Manatee Field Guide: Outdoor Signage and Distribution-Brevard County Natural Resources, \$48,000
- McNabb Park Living Shoreline - Oyster Farming- City of Cocoa Beach, \$20,000
- Titusville Causeway Multi-trophic Shoreline Stabilization and Resiliency Action Project, Phase 2b & 2c- Brevard County Natural Resources, \$250,000

Further, based on the facts specified for each grant, by approving this agenda item, the Board will make the following legislative findings: (1) the Indian River Lagoon is an estuary with multiple public access points for tourism purposes and a long history of use by tourists, and (2) each project specifically improves, maintains, re-nourishes, restores, protects or assists with erosion control in either the Indian River, the Banana River, or the Mosquito Lagoon (all part of the Indian River Lagoon); and (3) each project is authorized purpose for the expenditure of Tourist Development Tax revenue under section 125.0104(5)(a)5, Florida Statutes and section 102119(4)(a) of the Brevard County Code of Ordinances.

Additionally, it requested that the Tourism Development Office Director be authorized to negotiate and sign all necessary grant agreements and related documents upon County Attorney Office, Risk Management and Purchasing Services approval and authorize the County Manager to execute necessary budget change requests.

Summary Explanation and Background:

The FY 2021-2023 Tourism + Lagoon Grant Program projects approved by the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners on August 24, 2021. The following projects are seeking approval and this was approved unanimously at the June 28 and July 18, 2022 Beach Committee meetings and at the July 27, 2022 Tourist Development Council meeting.

(1) The project Derelict Vessel Removal was approved for the amount of \$49,900 for the FY 2021-2022 Tourism + Lagoon Grant Program for their submitted application. Brevard County is constantly combating the abandonment of vessels within our Indian River Lagoon system. Once left deserted and/or discarded within our waterways, the remnants of these vessels become debris that is a hazard to recreation, navigation and the environment. This project has a direct impact on both the health of the Indian River Lagoon and Tourism. The project goals directly align with the TDC Tourism & Lagoon Grant Program goals of improved Waterway Destinations & Access and Habitat Restoration Abandoned boats in the Indian River Lagoon and as such the Beach Committee at the July 18, 2022 unanimously voted to recommend unused funding from the FY2021-2022 cycle to be directed to this project to get more boats removed from the Lagoon. The Beach Committee and TDC recommended \$97,675 be granted to this project.

(2) The following Tourism + Lagoon Grant projects were approved by the Board on August 24, 2021. Each is requesting a no-cost extension for one-year to continue work on these projects and see them to completion.

- Lagoon Recreation Field Guide
Brevard County Natural Resources, \$44,000

Description of Project. Through a series of strategically-placed printed and digital solutions, the Lagoon Recreation Field Guide will provide access to some of the most commonly-sought lagoon-related recreation information requested by Space Coast visitors and residents. According to the 2019-20 TDC-funded Tourism + Lagoon Transparency Strategy's survey of Brevard County tourists, which gathered over 1,000 completed responses, respondents ranked outdoor recreation, adventure, and wildlife among the top four reasons for their most recent visit to Florida's Space Coast. Tourism industry personnel report that information about public kayak launch spots, public boat ramps, and public access points for enjoying the lagoon are among the highest requested information at local visitor centers. To help expand lagoon-related tourism, the Lagoon Recreation Field Guide will address the questions visitors commonly ask about access to lagoon recreation in convenient print and digital formats - content not easily found online or outside knowledgeable Space Coast tourist information centers - while providing helpful tips about enjoying and preserving the lagoon. In the 2019-20 TDC-funded Tourism + Lagoon Transparency Strategy's survey of Brevard County residents, which gathered over 1,800 completed responses, respondents reported their primary recreational activities on the lagoon are wildlife viewing (72%), boating (70%), fishing (58%), and kayaking (51%). Respondents rated their concern for the health of the Indian River Lagoon as a 9.06 on a scale from 0 (not at all concerned) to 10 (extremely concerned). Residents were also very interested in receiving additional information about lagoon health. 69% of survey respondents were interested in learning more about how pollution is being reduced in the lagoon; 68% were interested in updates on the Save Our Lagoon (SOIRL) Project Plan; and 66% were interested in how tax dollars are being used to improve the lagoon. The delay is due to personal reasons with the contractor who is overseeing the project.

- Manatee Field Guide: Outdoor Signage and Distribution
Brevard County Natural Resources, \$48,000

Description of Project. Using manatees to connect viewers to the importance of water quality, this project addresses the need to communicate critical (IRL) knowledge and vital stewardship practices to tourists and locals alike. Driven by a fascination with manatees and the desire to see them in the wild, tourists, newcomers, and residents in Brevard can use this Manatee Field Guide to locate manatees on their own while learning about the lagoon and how to do their part to protect them. The recent manatee UME (unusual mortality event) has brought national and international media attention to the state of Florida's manatees, especially manatees in the Indian River Lagoon. According to FWC data, Brevard County has experienced the largest percentage of our state's mortality rate. Humans are the biggest threat to manatees, as irresponsible boating practices, coastal construction, and pollution from sewage discharge and stormwater runoff can result in increased rates of manatee mortality. Tourism industry personnel report that information about manatees is among, if not the most highly-requested information at visitor centers. In reviewing recent media and conducting internet searches, there is no recent estimation available of the value that manatees provide to Brevard's tourism economy. This project will deliver an updated understanding of how manatees benefit tourism along with expanded information about how to enjoy and protect manatees, which will help increase manatee-related tourism, increase the quality of manatee-related tourism, and help residents and tourists safely experience manatees while also protecting manatees and the lagoon. The delay is due to personal reasons with the contractor who is overseeing the project.

- McNabb Park Living Shoreline - Oyster Farming
City of Cocoa Beach, \$20,000

Description of Project. This project will address improving water quality and aquatic habitat in the Banana River Lagoon. This project will include the farming of live oysters for placement on a living shoreline at a public park located along the Banana River in Cocoa Beach. Oyster filtration has long been accepted as an efficient and natural means of improving water clarity and water quality in the IRL. The delay is due to the oysters have not grown to the appropriate size needed for planting.

- Titusville Causeway Multi-trophic Shoreline Stabilization and Resiliency Action Project, Phase 2b & 2c
Brevard County Natural Resources, \$250,000

Description of Project. For decades the south eastern shoreline along the A. Max Brewer Memorial Parkway Bridge (Titusville Causeway) has been subjected to significant erosion. This erosion problem has resulted in several negative impacts to the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) including recreational use of this public access to the lagoon. The current strategy for protection of this important shoreline is not sustainable nor effective. The efforts to protect the shoreline along Causeway have commonly used concrete rubble along the shoreline. This strategy has not successfully reduced sand erosion, it is an eye sore and has ultimately resulted in an unsafe and unpleasant scenario for recreational use. The TDC in 2019 awarded funding for a Feasibility Study that determine that a breakwater reef with the placement of Wave Attenuation Devices (WADs) can prevent destabilization during typical rain events and especially during other storms like Irma. In addition, it will help promote ecological and recreational uses of the shoreline and preserve the use of the causeway as a recreational destination. During Phase 2a the TDC issued additional funding to prepare plans to show permitting agencies through pre-application meetings the proposed project. Phase 2a also included a seagrass survey, meetings with possible

Funding agencies, and the development of the General Bid documents and 60% plans. Phase 2b is necessary in order to develop the final construction plans. After the refinement of the shoreline breakwater design, based on the bathymetry and environmental considerations, the final location of the breakwater structures was established to request permit authorizations, the wave model was updated one more time to reflect the WADs locations. Cross sections, coordinates and elevations for the breakwater will be finalized after the permitting agencies responses to the expected requests for additional information have been completed. Then the final set of construction documents can be developed. Shovel ready projects are more successful in obtaining funding. The County has applied for Funding for the Construction of the project with the expectation that a permit and final Bid documents can continue to be worked on with this Phase 2b funding from the TDC. In addition, the Phase 2c, construction of the project, is partial funding request to the TDC. This Phase 2c funding, is also crucial to leverage additional funding for the final construction of the project. Once constructed it is anticipated that shoreline stabilization will reduce erosion and increased seagrass restoration in the Indian River Lagoon which provides habitat for a variety of estuarine wildlife including recreationally and commercially important fish, invertebrates and birds. This project will be utilized as a prototype for other shoreline stabilization projects along the causeways in Brevard County. The delay is due to permit and supply issues.

The above projects were verified by the County Attorney's Office to be viable projects to receive support with Tourist Development Tax dollars per State Statute and local ordinance. Reimbursable grant awards are available to support projects that benefit tourism on the Space Coast and promote the health of the Indian River Lagoon. These Tourism + Lagoon Grant Program projects are approved and supported through the Beach Improvement Committee plan.

The Beach Improvement Committee at their the June 28 and July 18, 2022 Beach Committee meetings and at the July 27, 2022 Tourist Development Council meeting, voted unanimously to recommended the Board to approve the requested additional funding for the FY 2021-2022 TDC Tourism + Lagoon Grant Program Derelict Vessel Removal and grant the four above mentioned projects no-cost as well as make the necessary legislative findings.

Clerk to the Board Instructions:

Please return a memo of the Board's action to the Tourism Development Office and CAO.