



Brevard County Board of County Commissioners

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson
Way
Viera, FL 32940

Legislation Text

File #: 1467, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Memorandum of Agreement Between East Coast Zoological Society of Florida (Brevard Zoo) and Brevard County for Countywide Oyster Gardening Program

Fiscal Impact:

FY19-20: Stormwater Fund 1110, \$150,000

FY20-21: Stormwater Fund 1110, \$150,000, if contract is renewed

Dept/Office:

Natural Resources Management Department (NRM)

Requested Action:

It is requested that the Board of County Commissioners: 1) authorize the Chair to execute a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Brevard Zoo to continue the County-wide Oyster Gardening Program; 2) authorize the County Manager or designee to execute up to two annual renewals, future amendments and change orders; and 3) authorize budget change requests as required to support the Brevard Zoo's implementation of work under this MOA.

Summary Explanation and Background:

On October 17, 2013 the Board of County Commissioners launched a local Oyster Gardening program to engage the public in helping to restore the natural filtration by shellfish and thereby improve ecosystem resilience within waters of the Indian River Lagoon (IRL). The Oyster Gardening Program is executed through a partnership with the Brevard Zoo. This MOA would renew the program using funds approved in budget to continue this program.

Background: Oyster Gardening is a citizen-based oyster propagation program where juvenile oysters (spat) are raised under lagoon-front homeowner's docks. These oysters are grown for six to nine months and then used to populate constructed oyster reef sites. Oyster Gardening participants receive spat-on-shell oysters plus all supplies needed to care for their oysters until they are placed at new reef sites in the lagoon. Oyster Gardening workshops are held throughout the county to increase and accommodate public interest, and to provide training and education about oyster gardening, oyster reef living shorelines, and issues facing the lagoon.

To date, over 1,400 waterfront property owners have been trained as citizen scientists and equipped with oyster garden supplies. Public interest and participation has been exceptional. This interest provides a unique opportunity to increase public engagement and knowledge of lagoon issues. Oyster Gardening has proven successful in producing hundreds of thousands of robust oysters annually. Oysters collected at the end of each

oyster gardening season have been deployed as a “live” top reef layer at constructed oyster reef sites in Brevard, including shorelines located throughout the county in the North Indian River, Banana River, Newfound Harbor, and Central Indian River. These reefs filter and clarify lagoon waters, reduce erosion, provide habitat, and remove nitrogen from the water through denitrification. The oysters raised by oyster gardeners will be used to populate oyster bar living shorelines installed as part of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan.

Clerk to the Board Instructions:

Please execute two original MOAs.