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Indian River Lagoon Observations

July 8, 2016: Connecting Users to IRL Data

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Today I gave an invited presentation to the IRL Council Board of Directors which manages the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program. (<http://www.irlcouncil.com/>) The main focus of my talk was to report on Indian River Lagoon Observatory's *Connecting Users to IRL Data Initiative* (/hboi/irlo/irl_data_workshop.php). Good timing, as I had just picked up the first batch of printed copies yesterday! So my talk became the official release of that report.

The *Connecting Users to IRL Data* initiative examined how IRL scientific data are collected, translated and shared with users and how to improve those processes. We convened a workshop on December 7-8, 2015, at Harbor Branch, with primary financial support from the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation, Inc., and River Branch Foundation. Participants represented federal, state and local agencies, academia, non-profit entities, elected officials and the business sector, and included estuarine scientists, urban planners, weather forecasters, resource managers and educators.

The initiative also included a pre-workshop online survey to help define how we collect, use, translate and share data for the Indian River Lagoon. More than 95 data collectors and/or users completed the survey, revealing what data are available and what new pathways (e.g., social media, web publishing, file sharing and storage) will allow more effective data sharing and dissemination to end users. The survey results and future outcomes of this initiative are available here.

(</hboi/irlo/docs/IRLDataSurveyResultsReportFinal20160710.pdf>)

This workshop was the first organized effort to answer, where is IRL data housed? What types of data are collected? How are we using the data? And can we do a better job at collecting, organizing, translating and

INDIAN RIVER LAGOON OBSERVATORY

Connecting Users to IRL Data



sharing the data? We need to answer these questions. If we do, then we may be able to understand how we can all work better together to share the knowledge and make changes in how we manage the Lagoon in the future.

Here are the consensus recommendations of the workshop:

1. Work collaboratively to obtain the funding needed to maintain long-term data collection programs to

North & Central IRL Basins



South IRL Basin



A pre-workshop survey helped identify the major data providers in the IRL (Image credit: Amy Adams)
meet scientific demands

2. Use scientific data to identify pollution source locations in the IRL watershed and stop the flow of pollution into the Lagoon
3. Identify and maintain an inventory of historic and ongoing IRL data sets
4. Increase efforts to archive IRL data sets and make them accessible to users
5. Organize and maintain a centralized listing of available IRL data sets and information on how to access them
6. Develop observation and prediction systems as tools that can be used by a variety of user groups
7. Identify threshold levels for critical environmental IRL data parameters and develop a way to automatically trigger flags when a threshold is exceeded
8. Process and translate the science data to inform and engage the community

The whole report is available here. (</hboi/irlo/docs/IRLODataInitiativeFinalReport.pdf>)

We will be moving forward on converting these recommendations, working with many others in the IRL community. Next steps include:



The workshop included three panel sessions: 1) Data collectors and its users; 2) IRL data: What do end users want? and 3) The benefits of sharing data: a new approach. (Image credit: Brian Cousin)

1. Initiate a listing of IRL data sources and data stewards and post on our IRLO website
2. Utilize IRLNEP's Science, Technology Engineering and Modeling Advisory Committee (STEM AC) to advance and implement the consensus recommendations and to develop a long-term plan for IRL monitoring and research
3. Work with other estuarine researchers to develop national standards for data acquisition, QA/QC, and management
4. Inform and engage the community: tell more stories that are meaningful!

5. Work with other IRL stakeholders to develop a substantial, stable, recurring source of funding to support the long-term monitoring needed to properly manage the Lagoon

Stay tune for progress on this initiative!

Observations Archive

- › April 6, 2016: You can observe a lot by just watching (/hboi/irlo/april06_2016.php)
- › April 27, 2016: Our Tenth IRLON Site (/hboi/irlo/april27_2016.php)
- › May 12, 2016: Barnacle Busting (/hboi/irlo/may12_2016.php)
- › May 26, 2016: Future of Water Quality Research in Florida Workshop (/hboi/irlo/may26_2016.php)
- › June 29, 2016: St. Lucie Estuary Algal Blooms (/hboi/irlo/june_29_2016.php)
- › July 08, 2016: Connecting Users to IRL Data (/hboi/irlo/july08_2016.php)
- › October 11, 2016: A Brush with Hurricane Matthew (/hboi/irlo/oct11_2016.php)
- › January 17, 2017: Martin County Youth Leadership Environmental Day (/hboi/irlo/jan17_2017.php)
- › March 3, 2017: St. Lucie Estuary – What A Difference A Year Makes! (/hboi/irlo/mar03_2017.php)
- › June 12, 2017: Here Comes the Rain – 2017’s First Flush (/hboi/irlo/june12_2017.php)
- › August 24, 2017: An Estuary at your Fingertips: Connecting the Community to Environmental Data (/hboi/irlo/aug24_2017.php)

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