



East Merritt Island Association Since 1963

OCTOBER 8th speakers are:

Trish Bass, Debbie Fisher and Alexis Gragg. They will be here to discuss Medicare, ACA Marketplace Health Insurance along with senior living placement / home services. Trish & Debbie will highlight some of the basics of health insurance and share local resources that are available to Brevard residents. Alexis will share information on Care Patrol, which helps families with various levels of care for aging mom and dad..... for seniors when they need to consider their options for additional care. Whether that is finding the right assisted / independent living facility or receiving personal care at home.

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The 360° of Our Community

As I scan the horizon from my home off of North Banana River Drive (NBD) looking east over the Banana River, I see dynamic growth. Starting with the Space Center with plans for nearly 200 launches in 2025 to the Port with ever bigger ships with an expected peak 45,000 daily transitioning passengers, the new aquarium, Jetty Park, & Cocoa Beach entering a development stage with new hotels & restaurants. But I'm not done yet. Facing south I see an old hospital with the vacated site offering possibilities and then moving westward to the new hospital site & becoming a catalyst for renewal in an area that has flatlined for the last 30 years. Finally, I turn northwest and envision the Brightline Cocoa train station, which will provide opportunities to connect to other parts of Florida. Quite a picture!. This growth will bring as many challenges. While the lagoon appears to be stabilizing, there is still so much that has to be done to preserve what is the natural resource that makes our slice of Merritt Island so special. Infrastructure in terms of septic, storm water mitigation, & roadways will be contentious (& expensive).

So being in the middle of all this, where do we, as a community stand? We are in an unincorporated area of Brevard County, which means we are subject to the jurisdiction and spending decisions outside of our immediate community. Our interests are often relegated to the agenda of the broader Brevard County concerns. It is for these reasons that the Eastern Merritt Island Community Association exists as a way to stay informed and when appropriate, make our collective voices known. We are a grass-roots organization and depend on membership and sponsor donations. Please consider becoming a member.

-- Richard Cripps

 **EMIC & EAST MERRITT ISLAND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**
Please join our facebook group for all the up-to-date information & interactive discussions among our community

Join us at our monthly meetings (excluding June, July, August & December)

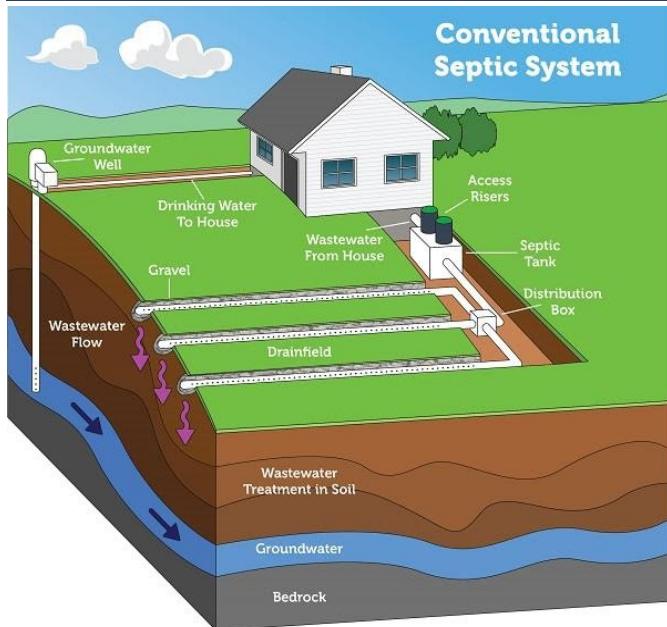
MEETING TUESDAY, OCT 8th @ 7pm, Lighthouse Church, 1250 N Banana River Dr

OCTOBER, 2024



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SEPTIC SOLUTIONS FOR THE INDIAN RIVER LAGOON



Please note: Septic systems vary. Diagram is not to scale.

the Indian River Lagoon? The Save Our Indian River Lagoon (SOIRL) Program gets that question a lot, and the answer might surprise you! Conventional septic systems are designed to protect human health, not designed to stop nutrient pollution. Here's how they work: wastewater enters a septic tank, where solids sink and fats rise. The liquid in between is sent to a drain field, where it seeps into the soil. If the drain field elevation is high enough above the groundwater, microbes that live in the soil above the water table will help kill harmful pathogens—but that's where the protection ends.

While conventional septic systems remove some nitrogen pollution, up to 90% can still reach groundwater and flow directly into the lagoon, feeding harmful algae blooms. Even worse, older, low elevation systems, poorly maintained systems or failing systems, can leak even more pollution. With over 53,000 septic systems treating over 1 billion gallons of sewage a year in Brevard County's lagoon watershed, that adds nearly 400,000 pounds of nitrogen to the lagoon annually, making septic systems the third largest source of new nitrogen pollution. It's time to take action and protect our lagoon from septic pollution.

Brevard County Save Our Indian River Lagoon Program

GET TO KNOW YOUR LAGOON

The Save Our Indian River Lagoon (SOIRL) Project Plan is a lengthy document consisting of 338 pages covering over 432 projects. It can be overwhelming to read and understand all the details. However, we're here to break it down for you.

This month we will look at Seagrass Planting (Section 4.3.4) Seagrasses are vital to the health of the Indian River Lagoon (IRL), providing food & shelter to a variety of animals. However, more than 60,000 acres of seagrass have been lost since 2011 due to harmful algal blooms. The IRL's seagrasses help filter nutrients like nitrogen & phosphorus, stabilize the ecosystem & prevent harmful algae blooms, but when seagrass is lost, these nutrients instead fuel harmful phytoplankton & algae growth.

Seagrass restoration efforts are critical to reviving the IRL's health. Pilot projects in Brevard County, supported by state and local grants, aim to replant seagrass across 1.5 acres, testing different planting methods and monitoring the success of various techniques. These projects will help refine approaches for large-scale restoration.

Restoring seagrass is challenging, but with pollution control, strategic planning, site selection, and lessons from pilot studies, Brevard County is



committed to ensuring successful seagrass recovery in the IRL.

SOIRL team members preparing seagrass shoots to be planted to restore the Indian River Lagoon's vital ecosystem



Brevard County Save Our Indian River Lagoon Program

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK



If you have ever walked past Veterans Memorial Park here on Merritt Island, you may have noticed a unique and awe-inspiring oak tree located in the park's southeast corner just next to the rain garden. This

oak is one of many cared for and special for many reasons. The shape and composition of this tree is a natural phenomenon referred to as inosculation — where trunks, branches or roots of multiple trees grow together. It is biologically similar to grafting and such trees are referred to in forestry as gemels, which derives from the Latin word meaning "pair". Recently, the City Arborist identified a recently exposed cavity in the eastern most trunk. A sonic tomography scan (similar to an ultrasound) was performed to assess the overall health of the tree and after close inspection, determined that the cavity resulted from a lightning strike that occurred roughly 20 years ago. In addition to helping identify the cause of the cavity, the scan showed that — despite that strike — the tree is in good health and structurally sound. It also helped estimate the age of the intertwined trees... which for some trunks was upwards of 250 years old! How appropriate that a tree in Veterans Memorial Park was likely a sapling during the War for Independence! Due to the trees' historical status, the City will be erecting a small fence to preserve and protect the integrity of this majestic oak for generations to come.

-- Cheryl Hanson

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Our Next Meeting
IS October 8th
At 7PM

f EMICA
East Merritt Island
Community Association

OCTOBER, 2024



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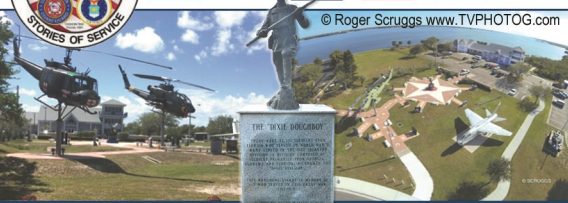
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