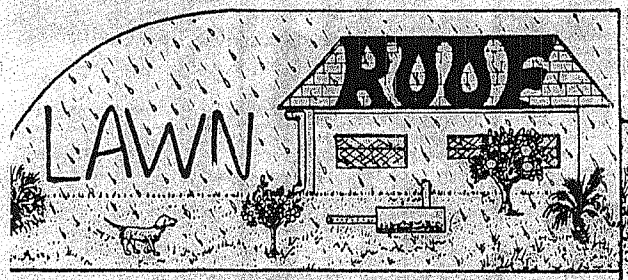
How you can help protect the Indian River Lagoon.

Each of us, in our daily lives, are connected to the Indian River Lagoon. Decisions you make today will determine the future of the lagoon. Enjoy the beauty of the Indian River Lagoon, but learn to protect it.

Lawn and Garden

* Landscape with native and drought resistant plants
* Reduce fertilizer use, fertilize in damp ground on non-windy days
* Compost leaves and grass clippings instead of adding to trash
* Wean grass to use less water
* Set mower blade to two inches
* Water once a week or when leaf blades are folded in the morning
* Use ground cover rather than grass



Pest Control

* Increasing the strength of pesticides beyond levels recommended causes far reaching problems, so use the least amount necessary
* Use biological controls (praying mantis, ladybugs, etc.)
* Use bug repellent plants (marigold, garlic)
* Use detergent to wash off aphids, spidermites
* Buy only the chemicals you will use, don't store large quantities

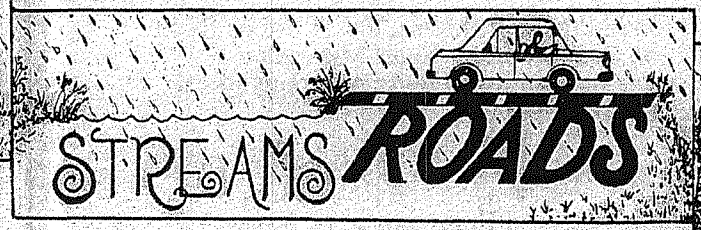
Shorelines

* Keep natural shorelines instead of building seawalls
* Plant and maintain mangroves
* Terrace banks and slopes

* Landscape to minimize rainfall runoff and erosion
* Hold water in muck soils, install gravel trenches along paved patios, walks, driveways
* Use paving blocks, brick or stones to percolate water into the ground
* Direct rain gutters away from paved surfaces

Run Off and Drainage

* Vegetate or mulch bare ground
* Don't sweep soil into streets or drainage ways
* Use swales and depressions to retain and slow water flow.



Water Conservation

* Fix leaky faucets
* Use low flush toilets or put bricks or weighted plastic jugs in the toilet tank
* Limit shower time
* Never irrigate during the hottest part of day

Car Maintenance

* Recycle oil
* Wash cars on grass or sandy areas
* Fix oil leaks
* Use unleaded gasoline

Pools

* Use care in pool maintenance, chlorine is dangerous to marine life
* Drain pool infrequently
* Drain pump backwash onto grass or land, not directly into a canal, creek, or lagoon

Septic Tanks

* Have system checked every three years
* Don't dispose of grease, cooking oil, or car oil down the drain
* Don't use garbage disposals
* Keep heavy vehicles clear of drain fields and tanks
* Enhance tank bacteria with nutrient additives

Chemical Spills

* Read labels to dispose of solvents, cleaners, and paints
* Dispose of toxic or hazardous materials carefully; save materials for free disposal on amnesty days

By using these simple techniques, you can enjoy the experience of living on the Indian River Lagoon, while helping to safeguard the quality of this important, yet fragile, environment for the future.

YOU will make the difference in the future of the Indian River Lagoon!

What you can do at home:

- Reduce fertilizer use
- Use drought resistant native plants
- Reduce the use of pesticides
- Hand weed instead of using herbicide
- Reduce run-off
- Reduce erosion
- Plant trees
- Conserve water
- Check septic tanks
- Recycle oil
- Use care in car maintenance

What you can do in your neighborhood or community:

- Plan a neighborhood composting project
- Clean up streams and canals
- Remove litter and obstructing debris
- Adopt a park
- Revegetate eroded shorelines
- Recycle
- Support local government programs to protect the lagoon, like local comprehensive plans
- Support SWIM and become involved in SWIM projects
- Support programs for land acquisition, waterfront access, and habitat preservation

SWIM

Surface Water Improvement and Management Program

In 1987, the Florida Legislature and Governor Bob Martinez enacted into law the SWIM program, to provide clean-up, restoration, and protection of Florida's vital water resources.

The St. Johns River and the South Florida Water Management Districts, the state agency leaders for the Indian River Lagoon, have identified these problems:

* Storm water runoff into the lagoon
* Abnormal salinity fluctuations
* Poor water quality
* Accumulation of sediments
* Loss of seagrass and mangroves
* Inadequate rules and lack of enforcement
* Protection of endangered habitats and species

To combat these problems, the St. Johns River and the South Florida Water Management Districts have initiated these programs to help improve the lagoon:

* Improvement of Water and Sediment Quality
* Habitat Preservation and Restoration
* Regulation and Enforcement of Rules
* Public Awareness and Environmental Education

Prepared by the
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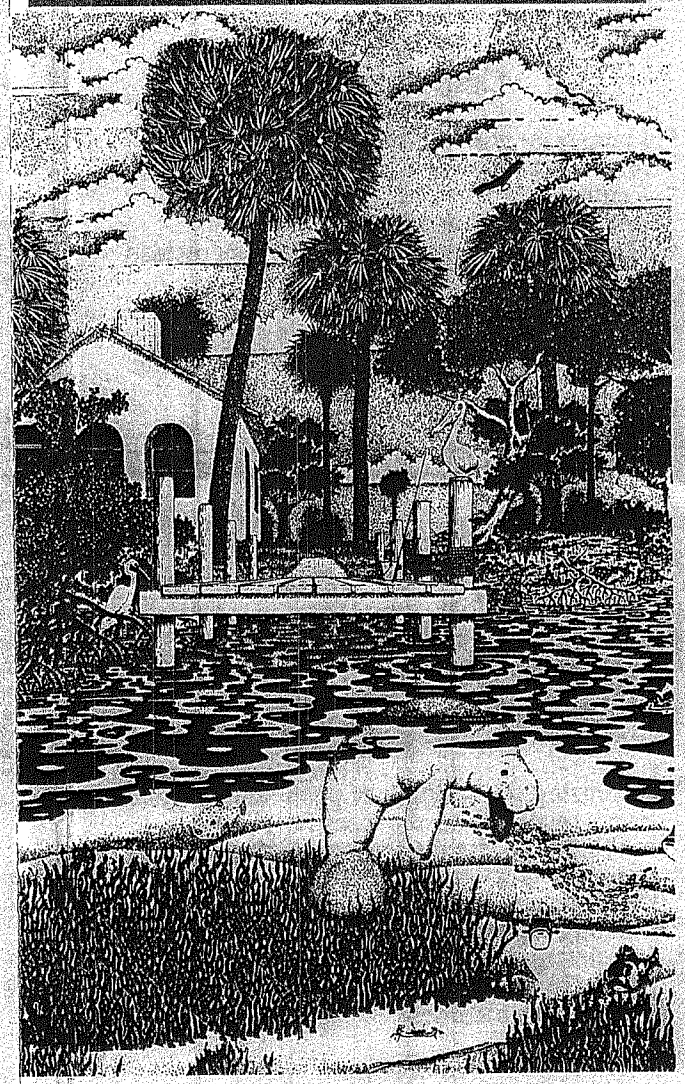
Homeowner's Guide to the Indian River Lagoon



SWIM
St. Johns River Water Management District