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**New Program Welcomes Brevard Newcomers to
*Love it Like a Local – Be Lagoon-Friendly***

from the Brevard Indian River Lagoon Coalition

Every year thousands of people relocate to Brevard County, attracted by our natural environment, job opportunities and relaxed lifestyle. The Brevard Indian River Lagoon Coalition is launching ***Love It Like A Local – Be Lagoon-Friendly***, a new program that reaches out to new homeowners through their Realtors and employers. The goal of the project is to engage the public in ways that lead to lagoon-friendly practices and “hands on” volunteer, educational and social opportunities that help citizens and communities become informal ambassadors for a healthful lagoon.

Coming from other areas and states, newcomers may not be aware of how their daily activities impact the Indian River Lagoon and our waterways, - from lawn clippings to fertilizer use, stormwater runoff, native plantings, natural shorelines, and septic systems.

Love It Like A Local – Be Lagoon-Friendly will initially target newcomers moving to single family homes; these new residents will have the greatest impact due to behaviors (positive or negative) related to fertilizer, grass clippings, pesticides, septic maintenance and shoreline hardening. Even simple things like disposing of cooking grease and dog waste can have a negative impact if not done properly.

“Our community treasures this unique natural resource and we want our new residents to “love it like a local,” and feel like insiders from day one,” says Vince Lamb, chair of the Brevard Indian River Lagoon Coalition. Partnering with the Space Coast Association of Realtors and Coalition Partners, the program will engage newcomers via social media as well as digital and print media from their personal Realtor, often their first trusted advisor.

After the initial chaos of moving in (and lessening of Covid-19), new residents will be invited to attend Coalition-sponsored Lagoon & Lagers events at local Brevard breweries, lagoon-focused festivals, and the Coalition’s Lagoon Straight Talk forums. These popular events will give newcomers the venue to meet new people and connect with groups offering volunteer opportunities in a relaxed venue. Ongoing connections through email, social media and event reminders will help these new residents stay up to date.

“Love It Like a Local” is funded by the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program small grants program.

For more information, visit www.HelpTheLagoon.org.

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