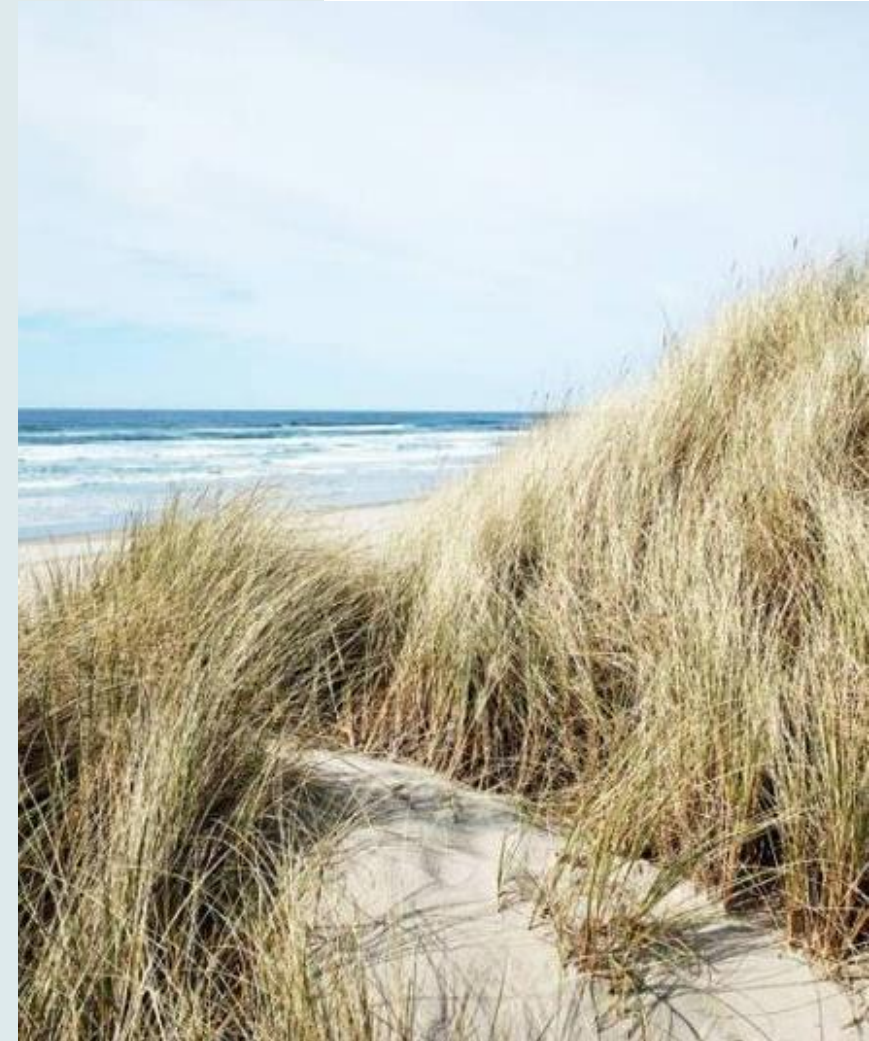


# ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Laura Lovins, Chair 6/23/2026





## Our Vision

To work towards making the IOP the coastal leader in environmental best practices.



# OUR MISSION

To advise city council on matters of environmental impact, protections, conservation, and sustainability by exploring best practices and data.

# Focus on Four Areas

Reduction of  
litter, waste,  
and pollution

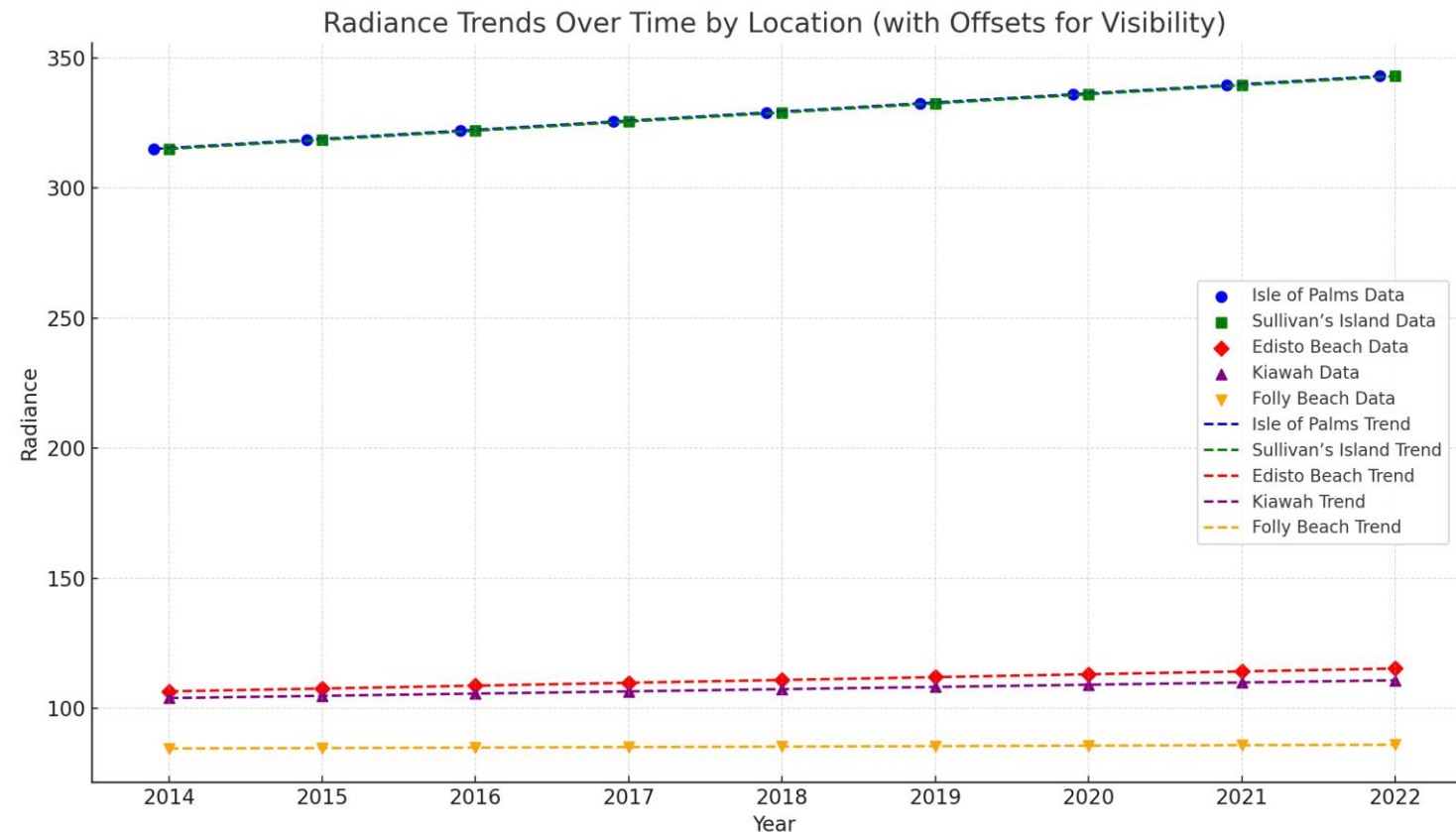
Protection of  
wildlife and  
habitat

Advocacy/  
leadership in  
climate action

Maintenance  
of water  
quality

# LITTER AND WASTE – LIGHT POLLUTION

- IOP is experiencing light pollution increases of 4% PER YEAR since 2013.
- Other Lowcountry barrier islands have adopted ordinances that minimize light spillage and “sky glow” across the island.
- IOP can leverage existing best practices across the Lowcountry to better manage this challenge
- The EAC is currently drafting proposed changes to existing IOP ordinances light ordinances (which were established in the 1990’s!) with the goal of approval by City Council by end of 2026



# LITTER AND WASTE

- Continuing the partnership with SMART Recycling for food scrap composting, with bins at Carmen Bunch Park and marina
- EAC will continue to give out compost bins at IOP Farmers Market events starting summer of '26
- The Compost bin liner dispensers from SMART Recycling at Carmen Bunch Park and the Marina are still being maintained



take their food scraps to designated drop sites for FREE thanks to a partnership between the City of Charleston, Charleston County, Folly

Beach, Isle of Palms, Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island!

**Sign-up is required.** You will learn what items are accepted for composting and get instructions to access the carts.

[SIGN-UP TO COMPOST](#)

[EXPLORE WORKSHOPS, TOURS and TRAININGS](#)

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 charleston-sc.gov



# LITTER AND WASTE

- Implementation of the EAC's new hybrid approach to litter removal from IOP's 55 beach access points, the front beach commercial area, & cans in the municipal parking lot began in the Fall of 2025
- The current litter removal program is through Trident Waste Management
- The new plan replaces the yellow cans with no lids that were located on the beach with roll cans with lids in corrals streetside and cans with lids at beach access paths, as well as behind dune lines & the front beach commercial area
- As of June 2026, there are two (2) corral areas – 25th and 26A beach path entrance, with more to be introduced throughout this year





# LITTER AND WASTE

- In September of 2025, Mujeres Latinas de Carolina del Sur gave a presentation to the EAC committee for their “Waves of Change” cleanup station and toy bin. They are a non-profit organization that focuses on their members finding ways to promote the protection and education of safeguarding the environment
- Their proposal was to install cleanup stations with toy bins along beach access paths on IOP. This could encourage families to keep track of toys and beach items brought to the beach, and potentially reduce the number of forgotten toys that turn into litter
- The City’s Community Enrichment Task Force suggested that the City “explore” adding these types of toy bins and cleanup bucket trees at “high traffic” beach access points
- The EAC passed a motion to have one “test” station installed at the 25<sup>th</sup> Ave. beach access path for the summer season, and have it monitored by the IOP Clean Up Crew and Public Works Dept. to see if it is successful
- If there are positive results, more stations will be added

# HABITAT AND WILDLIFE

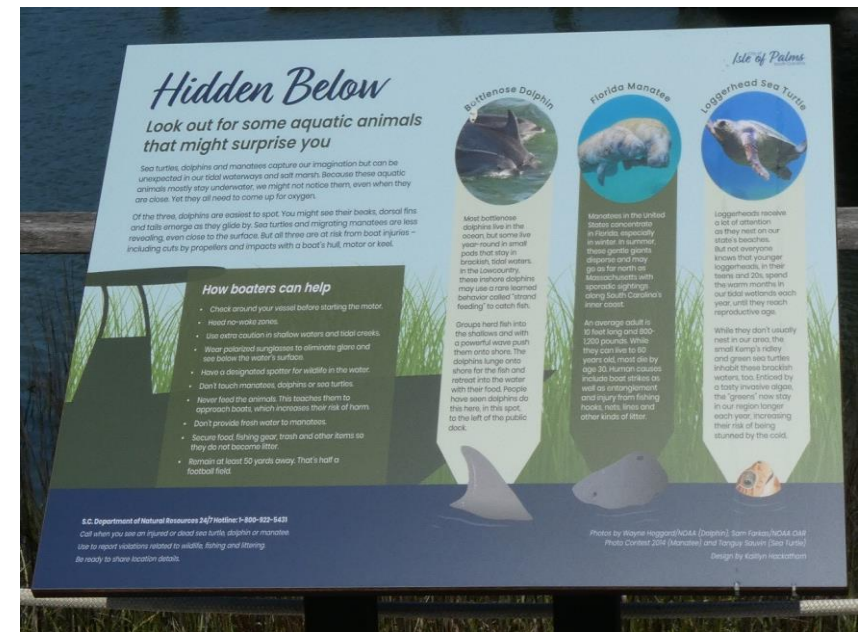


- Our native plant garden is in its third season at 7<sup>th</sup> and Palm, thanks to Sharleen Johnson with *Native Plants to the People*, EAC committee members, and members of the Exchange Club who donated benches.
- We have 16 families of Purple Martins (up from 14 last year) at the garden! Mary Pringle, former EAC member had SC Audubon out last month to get the nestlings banded so we can, again, see if they return next year.
- 61 eggs were laid, and 59 have hatched as of June 17th



# HABITAT AND WILDLIFE

- Just 14 months after the new IOP public dock was unveiled, the EAC completed a nature-based interpretive sign installation along the dock and adjacent walkways
- There are fourteen (14) signs that highlight local wildlife and ecosystems in the surrounding salt marsh and waterways
- The signs were designed and illustrated by Kaitlyn Hackathorn, who previously worked for SCDNR. EnviroSigns handled sign production-they were chosen due to their extensive work with interpretive signs in U.S national parks
- Along with the City of IOP, financial support for the project came from The Outpost at IOP Marina, Islander 71, and Barrier Island Eco Tours
- A ribbon cutting and celebration for the installation is being planned for this Fall



# HABITAT AND WILDLIFE



- In the Spring of '25, The EAC started working on language to ban the use of Glyphosate (i.e. RoundUp TM) on City owned or managed properties, to leverage best practices from 11 other states
- The City of IOP currently uses RoundUp sparingly on weeds in tough areas, like gravel parking lots.
- On 10/28/25, Ordinance 2025-11 to ban Glyphosate on City property was ratified by IOP City Council



# Climate Action

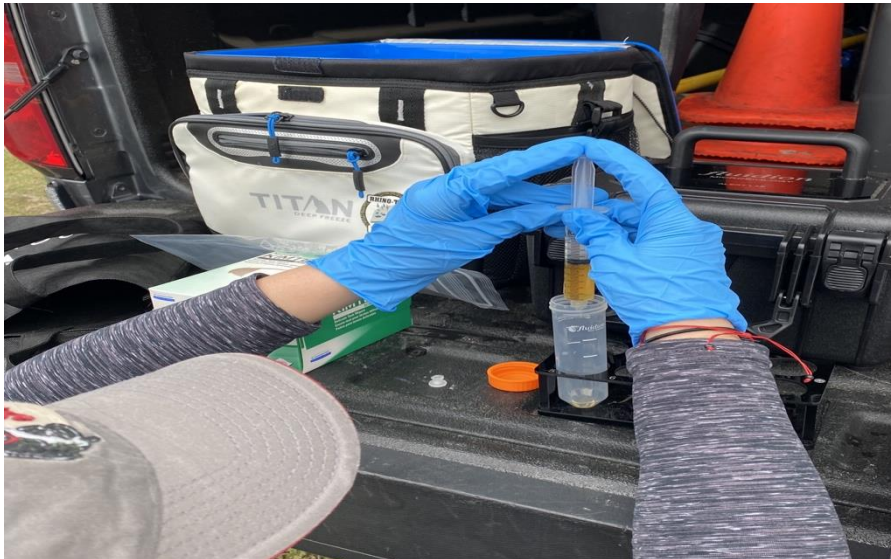
- So far, from Fall of '25 up through June of '26, The EAC has completed and is in the process of completing several of the climate action items that were identified by the Community Enrichment Plan put forward in early 2025:
- The EAC partnered this year with the SC Aquarium's SeaRise citizen science program- five (5) signs have been purchased and three (3) have been placed to date to help monitor areas on the island most susceptible to sea level rise, flooding, and storm surge
- The EAC is currently working on a Native Tree Guide as well as looking into updating current IOP tree ordinances to help educate residents and commercial entities on how planting and protecting native trees will have a positive effect on our island's climate by increasing our tree canopy
- The EAC is coordinating with Catherine Min of SC Office of Resilience on a Resilience 101 training for EAC committee members, IOP Council, and IOP Planning Commission members this Fall
- In July of '25, the EAC became a member of SASMI –the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative. In August of '25, Chair Laura Lovins attended a SASMI workshop at SCDNR's Fort Johnson site to learn more about how important our salt marshes are for indicating changes in our climate

# MAINTENANCE OF WATER QUALITY



- Many neighborhoods and areas of the island regularly experience flooding, not just during major storms, but also during “sunny day’ rain events
- There are approximately 1,150 septic systems on IOP, and there are over 200 grinder pumps due to development. There are currently no ordinances requiring inspections of septic systems
- In ‘24, EAC unanimously approved a proposal for monitoring water quality at eight (8) drainage outfalls
- Parameters of interest included total and fecal coliform, nitrogen, phosphorous, oil and grease, pH, and suspended solids- analysis was performed by Trident and Gel Labs
- In early ‘25, the analysis report was delivered, and three (3) outfalls from the testing came back with unhealthy “levels of concern”
- **25<sup>th</sup> Ave** – extremely high nitrates & total nitrogen suggesting run-off pollution
- **36<sup>th</sup> Ave/Forest Trail** – elevated nitrogen, phosphorus and suspended solids
- **Myrtle Ave** – elevated sediment and phosphorus

# MAINTANANCE OF WATER QUALITY



- To determine if human waste was contributing to any of the contamination at these three (3) outfalls, the EAC and City contracted with Woolpert Inc. to do targeted DNA testing from additional water samples at the outfall sites
- Water samples were collected under both dry-weather and major rain-event conditions and screened for *E. coli*. If the bacteria levels were high enough, DNA testing would be performed to identify sources
- Under both conditions (dry and rain-event weather), the bacteria levels did come back high enough, so DNA testing was initiated
- The DNA sources chosen were: human, dog, elk/deer
- The final DNA results from both tests detected **dog waste only – no human-source *E. coli* was found in either sample**
- The current conclusion: there is no widespread human sewage problem on IOP-animal waste, particularly from dogs, is the primary source of fecal contamination

# MAINTENANCE OF WATER QUALITY



- Our pet waste contamination is a problem – when pet waste is not picked up, it washes into our outfall drains and into our marshes
- The excess, harmful *E. coli* can damage marsh grasses, such as *Spartina*, and harm fish and shellfish habitats
- The EAC plans to retest island outfalls in two (2) years to evaluate changes following a pet-waste education and cleanup initiative called Doody Calls, which is being planned for 2026
- Additional attention will be given to marsh health and resilience, through coordination with SAMSI (South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative) as well as possible salt marsh water testing through Woolpert

# COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Laura Lovins, Chair

Todd Murphy, Vice Chair

Eric Cicora

Britton Foy

Sean Popson

Lucinda (Cindy) Marrs

Susan Hill Smith

Charlotte Meredith Webster -  
student member

