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Indian River Lagoon Observations

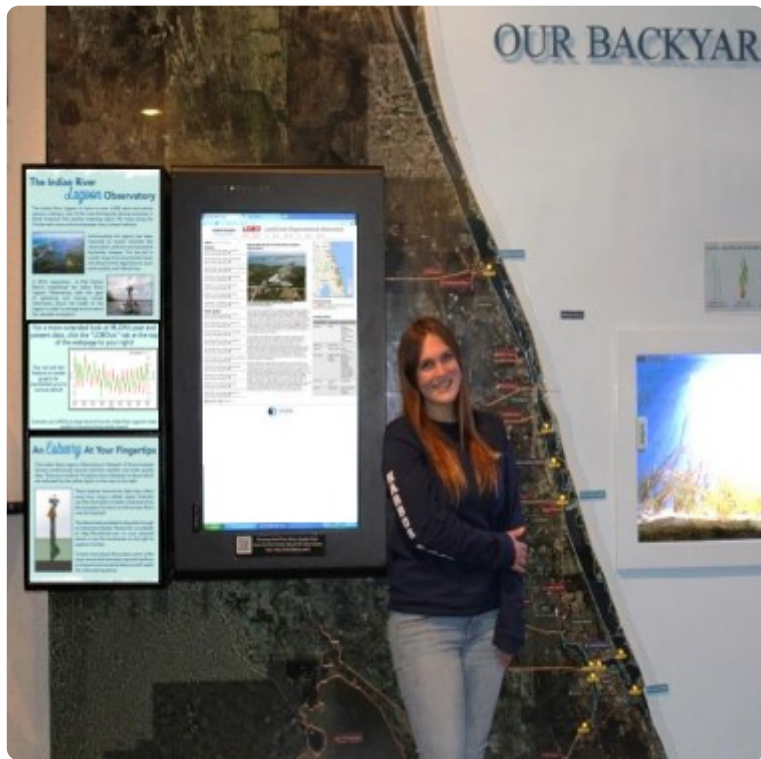
August 24, 2017: An Estuary at your Fingertips: Connecting the Community to Environmental Data

Audrey Sellepack

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and 2017 Harbor Branch Summer Intern



Harbor Branch's Ocean Discovery Visitor's Center houses interactive exhibits, small aquaria, a video theater and other displays exploring the marine environment and depicting the research efforts of the Institute.



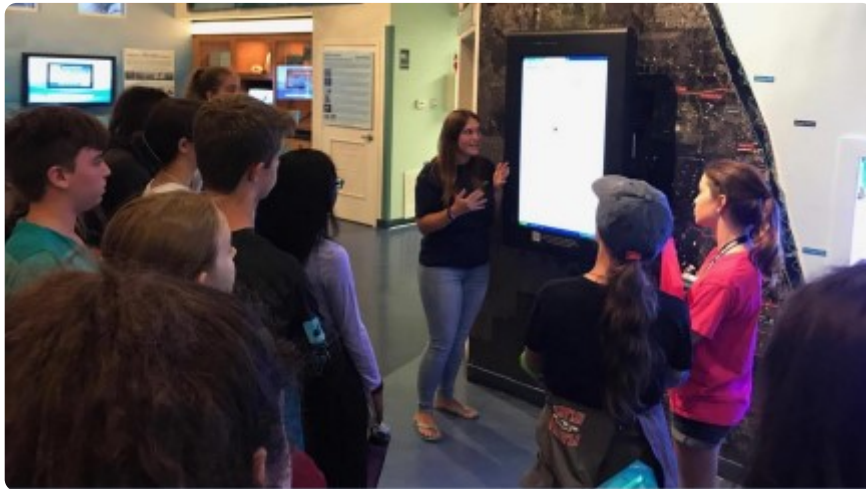
Audrey Sellepack remodeled an exhibit at the ODC to inform the public about the Indian River Lagoon Observatory Network of Environmental Sensors (IRLON) for her 10 week-summer intern project.

Overall, this project was a very successful experience. The ODC received positive reviews of the exhibit from visitors, and the IRLON data were effectively conveyed to the public. I was the first summer intern to conduct an outreach project at the ODC. The outcome of this exhibit shows just one example of how essential outreach is for the scientific community. During a time when our environment is constantly changing, it is important to keep the public informed on how scientists are studying that changing environment, and what the public can do to help.

This summer, I had the privilege of completing an outreach project through Harbor Branch's summer internship program (</hboi/education/internship.php>). My position was centered at the Ocean Discovery Visitor's Center (ODC) (</hboi/education/internship.php>) – a place for Harbor Branch students, scientists, and engineers to showcase their research to the public. Here, there are five exhibits, and each one displays a specific area of research. My project revolved around the Marine Ecosystem Health Exhibit. My Project Mentors were Dr. Gabby Barbarite, who leads the ODC, and Dr. Dennis Hanisak, who leads the Indian River Lagoon Observatory. (</hboi/irlo/index.php>)

This exhibit's primary focus is the Indian River Lagoon (IRL), a biodiverse estuary that covers around 40% of the Florida east coast. This dynamic system is constantly undergoing environmental issues due to urbanization and pollution of the watershed. In 2013, Harbor Branch established the Indian River Lagoon Observatory Network of Environmental Sensors (IRLON) (</hboi/irlo/irlon.php>) to monitor some of these issues. This network contains 10 stations with water quality sensors located throughout the Lagoon from Sebastian to Stuart, and each one is transmitting real-time water quality data hourly to the IRLON data website (<http://www.irlon.org/>). Some of the stations also collect atmospheric data, which can help determine the current weather at that station. The IRLON data can be very useful for both scientists and the community. Individuals can now understand the water quality of the lagoon – both in the present and how it was in the past.

The new IRLON exhibit at the ODC aims to bridge the gap between IRLON's data and the community. Here, visitors can get an overview of IRLON, how it acquires and transmits data, and how to access it through LOBOviz. I transformed the aerial image of the lagoon into a map that allows visitors to visualize the IRL region and where the sensors are located. The final component of renovating this exhibit was to create a tutorial video showing visitors how to access and interpret IRLON's data. If you'd like to learn more about the IRLON sensors and how to use their data to your advantage, come by the ODC for a closer look!



The new exhibit has been very well received by our visitors at the ODC.

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

Water quality and weather parameters are measured every hour and transmitted to a website.

<http://fau.loboviz.com>

LOBOviz displays real-time water quality and weather data collected from the IRLON sensors. These data are available to anyone with an internet connection!



Using the touch screen to your right, click any site listed on the left...

...and it'll pull up the site's most current weather or water quality data!

Here's an example from the Audrey's tutorial video that shows visitors how to access and interpret IRLON's data.

(/hboi/irlo/may26_2016.php)

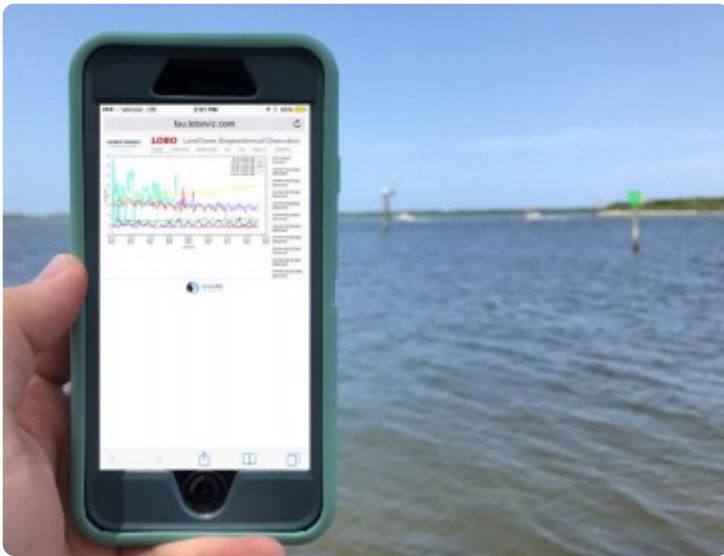
June 29, 2016: St. Lucie Estuary Algal Blooms (/hboi/irlo/june_29_2016.php)

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)



The new exhibit shows how with IRLON provides an estuary at your fingertips: IRL data can be accessed real-time by anyone, from any place.

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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