



*Duane E. De Freese, Ph.D.*  
*Executive Director*

*IRL Council*  
*Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program*

If you look deep enough into some of Florida's most innovative conservation initiatives, you will eventually run across Duane's name.

For over 3 decades, Dr. De Freese has been a champion of science-based, common-sense ocean and coastal conservation in Florida. He is recognized for his ability to "see and communicate the big picture" by integrating environmental, economic and social considerations into a vision for Florida's future.

Duane holds a B.S. degree in Zoology from the University of Rhode Island (1976) and M.S. (1982) & Ph.D. (1988) degrees in Marine Biology from Florida Institute of Technology. He holds special course certificates from the Roy E. Crummer Graduate School of Business, Rollins College (2002); Duke University, School of the Environment (Conservation Land Acquisition, 1991); and Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, MA. (Mariculture, 1983).

Duane was instrumental in helping to secure U.S. EPA National Estuary Program designation for the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) in 1990. In September 2015, his career came full circle when he was named Executive Director of a new special district of the state of Florida (IRL Council) that will serve as the host of a reorganized Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program. In this new role, Duane works with federal, state and local government agencies, scientific research organizations, academic institutions, elected officials, industry and the general public. The goal is to develop and implement a science-based restoration strategy for one of the nation's most threatened estuarine ecosystems.

Previous career experience includes: First program director for the acclaimed Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program (1991-1998); Vice President of Florida Research for Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (1998-2008); Advisor to the Dean of the College of Sciences at University of Central Florida to create a long-range vision for a multi-disciplinary center for coastal research and technology development in conjunction with an expanded UCF coastal & sea turtle research center located within the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge (2009); and Senior Vice President of Science & Business Development at AquaFiber Technologies Corporation (2009-2015). As an AquaFiber senior executive, Duane provided leadership and oversight for all scientific and intellectual property activities associated with the company and its nutrient remediation technology development and applications.

Duane currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Florida Ocean Alliance (Vice-Chair). He also is serving his second term as a Governor-appointed board member of CareerSource Florida Inc.

Duane has been honored with numerous awards of recognition during his career.