



Virginia H. Barker, Director
Brevard County Natural Resources Management Department

Virginia Barker completed undergraduate degrees in Science and Math at Duke University and returned to Duke after 5 years of professional work to pursue a Masters in Coastal Environmental Management. Her thesis was in Resource Economics. She has worked in Sri Lanka for US AID, as a research diver for the Florida Department of Natural Resources, and in marine and environmental management positions for Monroe County and Brevard County.

Ms. Barker currently serves as the Director of Brevard County's Natural Resources Management Department. During her 20+ years with the County, she has been responsible for beach management, the stormwater utility program, mosquito control, Indian River Lagoon efforts and numerous other environmental initiatives and programs.

In 2016, Virginia spearheaded development of the science-based Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan and establishment of a Citizen Oversight Committee. The Project Plan and Oversight Committee guide how a new ½ cent sales tax that was approved by Brevard voters will fund nearly \$500 million of pollution elimination efforts to restore healthy conditions to the Indian River Lagoon. Implementation of the 10-year Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan began in 2017.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Virginia Barker, Director
Brevard County Natural Resources Management Department
2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Building A
Viera, FL 32940
Phone (321) 633-2016
Email Virginia.Barker@brevardfl.gov
Leadership Brevard Class of 2017

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).

In 1989, Duane helped to secure U.S. EPA National Estuary Program designation for the Indian River Lagoon (IRL). In September 2015, his career came full circle when he was named Executive Director of a new independent special district of the State of Florida (IRL Council) that was created to serve as the host of a reorganized Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program. In this 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 restoration strategy for one of the nation's most threatened estuarine ecosystems.

Previous career experience includes: First program director for the Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program (1991-1998); Vice President of Florida Research for Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (1998-2008); Faculty appointment with 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 (2008-2009); 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 science and intellectual property development associated with the company and its nutrient remediation technologies and applications.

Duane currently serves on several national and statewide advisory boards: Board of Directors for the Association of National Estuary Programs; Board of Directors for the Florida Ocean Alliance (Vice-Chair); Governor Rick Scott appointment to CareerSource Florida Inc. Board of Directors; and Governor Ron DeSantis appointment to the Florida Harmful Algal Bloom Task Force for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Previously Duane served as a Governor Jeb Bush appointee to the Nature and Heritage Tourism Committee of Florida. At a local level, Duane serves as a volunteer for numerous organizations throughout the region, including the Brevard Zoo – The "Aquarium Project" Task Force. He has been a speaker to Lead Brevard classes annually for over 2 decades

Dr. De Freese has been honored with numerous awards of recognition during his career. He is an avid surfer and waterman dedicated to a healthy Florida ocean and coastal lifestyle.

Email: ddefreese@irlcouncil.org

LEAD Brevard's 2020 Rodney S. Ketcham Leadership Icon Award Recipient