Term	Definition
Influent Wastewater	Influent is the untreated wastewater flowing into the lagoon system from a municipal or domestic source.
Treated Effluent	Effluent is the treated wastewater flowing out of the lagoon system. After the water in the lagoon is treated for pollutants, it is discharged to the environment, typically to a stream. Some lagoons do not discharge effluent, and the water evaporates instead.
Sunlight	The sun provides light for algae to grow. This creates oxygen needed for aerobic bacteria to break down organic waste.
Wind / Air Movement	Wind provides oxygen needed to support the growth of beneficial bacteria and promotes mixing within the lagoon to help break down organic waste.
Oxygen	Oxygen moves above and below the lagoon's surface through wind or mechanical aeration. This oxygen is consumed by aerobic bacteria to break down organic waste.
Algae	Algae are microscopic plants living in the water that use sunlight and carbon dioxide to generate energy and oxygen. This provides the oxygen needed for aerobic bacteria to break down organic waste. However, sunny, warm climates may periodically experience algae overgrowth, which interferes with normal lagoon operations.
Aerobic Bacteria	Aerobic bacteria are the oxygen-dependent bacteria near the surface of a lagoon that help break down waste into carbon dioxide and water.
Anaerobic Bacteria	Anaerobic bacteria are the bacteria near the bottom of a lagoon that don't require oxygen to help treat the wastewater. They convert waste into gases like hydrogen sulfide, nitrogen, and methane.
Sludge	Sludge is the mixture of solids that falls to the bottom of the lagoon as part of the wastewater treatment process. The accumulated sludge needs to be periodically removed.
Dike	A dike or berm is an earthen bank constructed to control or confine wastewater within a lagoon. Erosion control measures, including the management of burrowing animals, are important to protect structural integrity.
Liner	A liner is a nearly water-tight barrier used to prevent wastewater from seeping into the groundwater. Managing the growth of long-rooted plants (e.g., cattails) along the lagoon's perimeter can help prevent infiltration.