



LANDMARKS



Annual Membership Event Brings Record Attendance

Guests Enjoy Unique Behind-the-Scenes Look At Local Ranches

Over 200 guests joined the Indian River Land Trust and ranch owner hosts Ray and Beth Smith and Varley and Linda Grantham on Saturday, April 5 for what was undoubtedly one of the most exciting events of the season for our organization. Guests arrived by bus, car, and – yes – even horseback to enjoy an authentic cowboy barbecue provided by our hosts at the Smith’s ranch house. Throughout the day, a variety of opportunities were offered to experience the beautiful Padgett Creek Ranches – from swamp buggy tours of the Triple S Ranch to guided wilderness hikes along the Padgett Creek. After lunch, guests were witness to a cattle drive of over one hundred head of Brangus cattle.

The location was chosen to connect people with the land that the Indian River Land Trust has participated in protecting. The two ranches that make up the Padgett Creek ranches, which total over 1,600 acres, are located 20 miles west of downtown Vero Beach. The ranches contain the Padgett Creek or Padgett Branch, an environmentally important creek that flows into the nearly 7,000-acre Blue Cypress Lake

to the north of Route 60. Blue Cypress Lake forms the headwaters of the St. John’s River, an important river for wildlife and recreation as well as a valuable drinking water source for several major cities to the north.

Indian River County recently entered into a conservation easement agreement with the ranch owners which will protect the property from development in perpetuity. The Indian River Land Trust conducted extensive baseline documentation for the easement. In addition to upholding the strong agricultural heritage of our county and state, the Padgett Creek ranches play an important role in the protection of our precious open space, water quality and wildlife habitat thanks to their meticulous day-to-day management by the ranch owners. As a result, the properties are home to an abundance of native wildlife, including nesting bald eagles, and are an important corridor for the endangered Florida Panther. In addition to its wildlife habitat, these two ranches are direct recharge zones for our deep water Floridan aquifer and provide miles of important open space vistas along State Route 60.

In This Issue:

- The Role of a Land Trust
- State Legislature Funds Florida Forever
- 2008 Conservators Party



- South Prong Preserve



- Save the Date! Fall Benefit to Celebrate Conservation

...and much more!



of land and water encompassing our local heritage and the land on which it lies. We want to protect that which makes this country a special and desirable place to live.

How will we accomplish our vision? We will do it with a unique set of partnerships, and by leveraging resources to our heritage to life and protect our natural resources for everyone to enjoy. We are strategically protecting a set of critical properties that will conserve fragile land and water resources, promote our connection to the land, and engage our community in celebration of our lives here.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Do not go where the path may lead; go where there is no path and leave a trail." I hope you will join us in blazing a trail to make a difference and keep Indian River County forever unique.

— Ken Grudens
Executive Director

A Letter from our Friends at TNC

Indian River County has development opportunities with The Nature Conservancy. We are excited to meet with you in Florida. We would like to share our letter following our ongoing



March 18, 2008
Mr. Ralph Monticello
Land Protection Manager
Indian River Land Trust
1904 12th Court
Vero Beach, FL 32960

Dear Ralph:

Mike Izzarone and I appreciate the recent visit with you, Ken Grudens, and the fine staff of the Indian River Land Trust. Exploring the many issues and opportunities of mutual interest was a real pleasure for us.

Our discussion was enlightening in the realization that both our organizations are committed to habitat preservation and ranchland protection using many of the same tools and programs. The Nature Conservancy in Florida has enjoyed some very rewarding endeavors using two of the Farm Bill easement programs, the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), and we hope our experiences were of benefit to you. Similarly, we are obviously on the same track with our mutual concerns for the future of critical programs, such as Florida Forever, the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act, conservation tax law reform, and the prospects for private donor support.

We look forward to working with you as our organizations progress in their respective but very similar missions. As you know, interaction with Florida ranches and landowners is a case by case experience, so it is difficult to forecast where collaborative opportunities might arise. At a minimum, I would be very happy to be a resource for you as you get into the workings of the federal programs. Having been through the drill of WRP and FRPP, I realize you can't know it until you do it. So please feel free to contact me with any question or just to discuss the great protection opportunities I know you will encounter.



The Nature Conservancy
1501 Corporate Drive
Ste. 210
Boynton Beach, Florida 33428

Mr. Ralph Monticello
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Indian River Land Trust
1904 12th Court
Vero Beach, FL 32960

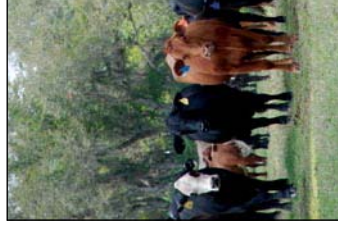
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Land trusts are independent, nonprofit organizations that include in their mission the active conservation of land. We accomplish this through a variety of methods, most frequently through conservation easement acquisition and stewardship. Land trusts work closely with land owners who are interested in either donating or selling their development rights on a property under mutually agreeable terms designed to protect the property's important land and water resources in perpetuity. As in the case of agricultural conservation easements which we support here in Indian River County, this allows owners to continue to operate their land under easement with oversight of the easement terms by the land trust.

The majority of land trusts work closely within the communities or regions in which they operate, focusing on properties that may not be large enough to attract the attention of national conservation organizations but which are critical to the preservation of natural resources at the community level. In fact, national conservation organizations rely on land trusts to supplement their efforts at the local level to protect and preserve as many of our natural resources as possible.

As private organizations, land trusts can act more quickly than public agencies to protect environmentally significant land. Additionally, because of our nonprofit status, land trusts may provide donors with a variety of tax benefits when donating land, conservation easements, or funds to assist with preservation. These benefits are often the incentives that help landowners make the leap into conservation.



LAND TRUSTS
A nonprofit organization that protects land through the acquisition of property. A variety of methods, including the use of long-term stewardship, are used to ensure that the land is preserved in a fully protected

IRLT Pursues Conservation Buy

Conservation Buyer Programs have been used for many years by land trusts and other conservancies across the country as a means to protect properties in private ownership. By informing conservation-minded buyers about available properties with scenic, historic, agricultural, or ecological values, non-profit organizations like the Indian River Land Trust assist interested "conservation buyers" in acquiring these properties, thereby ensuring their long-term protection.

Though a variety of models exist for such a program, the model IRLT is considering



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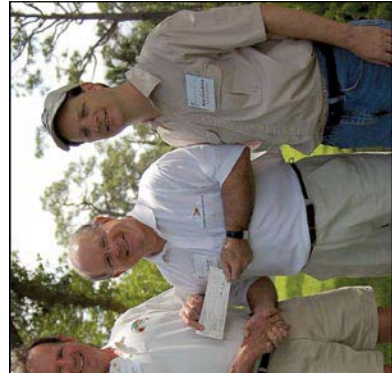


Photo: Paul Mansy

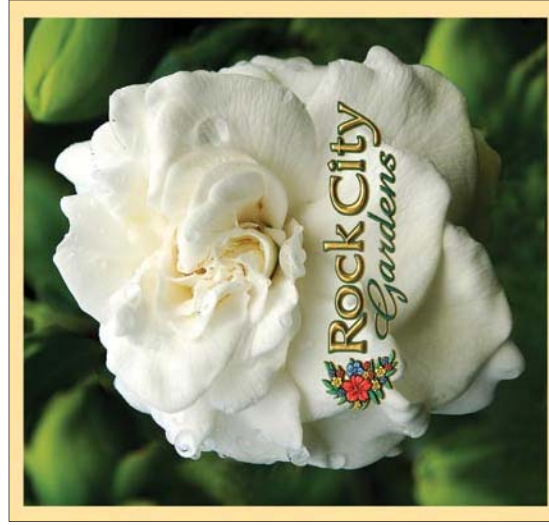
Membership Meeting in support of the Indian River Land Trust. And for those who were to put it on your calendars for next year...we'll keep you posted as plans are made for our

member, you may contact us at 772.794.0701 or download a donation form dtrtrust.org. Thank you in advance for your support of our important conservation

First Corporate Member



He joined IRLT Board President, Bill Helmly, and Director, Ken Grudens, for an official check during our Annual Membership Meeting.



The 2008 Conservators Party for major donors to the Indian River Land Trust was held this year at the John's Island home of Stephanie and Orin Smith. Over sixty guests gathered to learn about upcoming projects and initiatives of the Land Trust while enjoying the company of other lead contributors to the organization. Many thanks to our hosts for their hospitality and generosity in opening their home for the event, to all who joined us, as well as to those Conservators who were unable to attend. Your ongoing support of the Land Trust initiatives to conserve and protect our community's natural resources greatly impact our ability to continue moving forward in our mission.



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and similar deleterious impacts.

Three primary trails have been included in the interpretive plan. The first is the Cypress Loop Trail which runs through the rich cypress swamp area and connects to the Oak Loop Trail. Together, they provide over two miles of continuous hiking. The third, located to the north across Route 510, is the shorter and less vigorous Slough Loop Trail. This trail system provides entry to a variety of habitats in a beautiful and easily accessible part of Indian River County.

The Land Trust and the Environmental Learning Center are in the early stages of a partnership to establish this property as a model conservation area to educate children and adults alike about the importance of the St. Sebastian River as it relates to the Indian River Lagoon. The next step is to begin removal of extensive exotic vegetation that chokes out native habitat and to begin work on trail design in hope of running a pilot educational program on the Preserve in 2009.

an Interpretive Plan?

the vision for a project and to identify its unique features. The purpose of the plan is to them the historic and environmental importance of a property.

reauthorize funding of the Florida Forever program for a total of \$3 billion over the next 10 years, state conservation efforts will continue to have access to important financial resources, even in these difficult economic times. Created in 1999 by the State Legislature, Florida Forever began as a ten-year land acquisition program that allowed the issuance of up to \$3 billion in bonds for land acquisition, water resource projects, and the preservation and restoration of greenways. The reauthorization extends the program, set to expire in 2010, and provides \$10.5 million annually for the purchase of conservation easements on farmlands.

conservancies and part – has been wo of this program fro staff spoke before th adoption of a resol spring, IRLT staff H wide conference ca of Florida Forever. We applaud the taining this import protect our fragile a

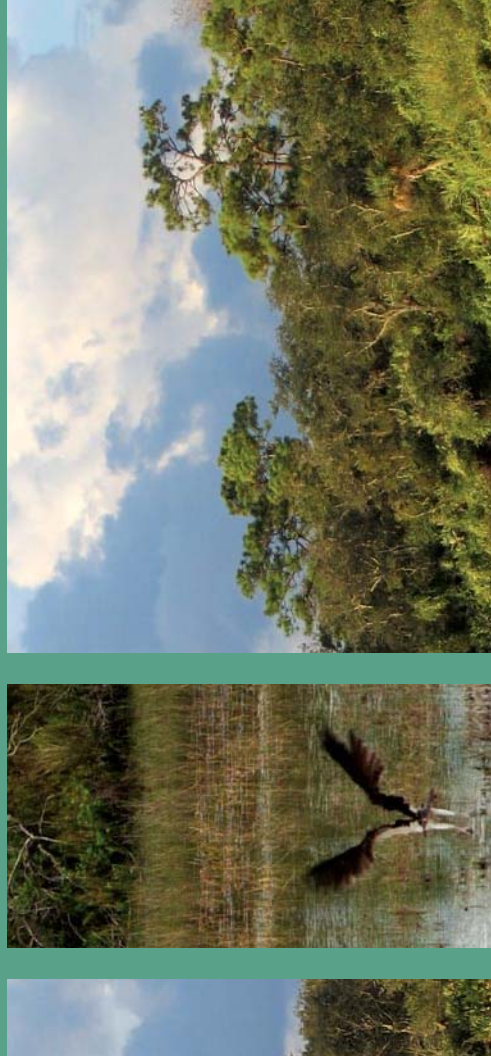
IRLT Mission

The mission of the Indian River Land Trust is to promote the preservation, conservation and improvement of Indian River County's natural resources and special places for the benefit of the general public and future generations.

Our vision is to help retain the character that makes this county unique by protecting environmentally important land and conserving its wildlife habitat and water quality. Protected land provides important public benefits. Residents can learn about and enjoy our natural environment and local agricultural heritage, and they can take advantage of our protected waterways for boating, fishing and its abundant marine life.

County Conservation Area Off

In early March, County Commissioners and several Land Trust members participated in the official opening of the North Sebastian Conservation Area. This 407-acre scrub property, purchased by the County in the 1990s, is now easily accessible to the public from the Sebastian City Hall complex via boardwalks and a multi-segment trail system.



CELEBRATE CONSERVATION

Save the Date for the IRLT Fall Benefit:

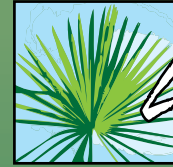
When: Thursday, November 13
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. or “until the cows come home”

Where: Rock City Gardens

What: Experience the very definition of the IRLT mission during a festive fall frolic in the lush greenery of Rock City Gardens. Enjoy bluegrass, barbecue, cowboys and campfires while strolling with a cocktail, sampling our “locally grown” menu from the kitchen of Elizabeth Kennedy, and dancing to the sounds of swing.

Who: Anyone with a heart for conservation!

Cost: \$75/person; \$125/pair...so bring a friend!
Sponsorships begin at \$250.



Land



Water



Wildlife

Join us for the party formerly known as Puzzlement...all of the casual fun of past events with a few new additions to make this the most memorable annual benefit ever for the Indian River Land Trust. We hope to see you there!

(Invitations will be mailed in late summer, so please be on the lookout! If you would like to reserve your tickets in advance, or if you are interested in sponsoring the event to offer even more support of our mission, please call Ginny Blossom at 772.794.0701.)



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