



LANDMARKS



Conservation Easements: Beneficial for Everyone

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Annual Benefit



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A Hidden Gem



- New Staff at IRLT

- and MORE!

In 2007, with extensive assistance from the Indian River Land Trust, conservation easement purchases were completed for three local ranches – Treasure Hammock Ranch, Triple S Ranch and Long Shadows Ranch. IRLT is confident that the wisdom of purchasing conservation easements on these properties will become apparent to county residents as they see the impact that the easements have on maintaining the “Old Florida” character in this unique part of the state. In fact, it is likely that as time passes people will question why Indian River County did not protect more of this critically important land.

Because of the easements placed on these properties, more than 2,000 acres of ranchland will be free of development forever. The properties will remain as open grasslands, pine flatwoods, oak hammocks, wetlands and streams. The easements will protect an abundance of wildlife and billions of gallons of water that will continue to filter naturally into the Floridan aquifer and the Indian River Lagoon each year.

What is a Conservation Easement?

A conservation easement is a legal deed recorded in the county land records that protects

our important natural and agricultural resources from potential development. An easement “runs with the land” and upon resale of the property insures the conservation features will be maintained for future generations.

How Does a Conservation Easement Work?

When an easement is purchased by a governmental agency, the landowners retain title to the land and agree to the terms of the easement. Selling conservation easements enables landowners to be compensated for relinquishing the development potential of the land. This exchange greatly decreases the value of the land, thereby reducing or eliminating estate taxes that often force heirs to subdivide and sell large properties after a landowner’s passing. Some landowners donate conservation easements to land trusts and are often rewarded by substantial income tax benefits for the charitable donation.

What is the Purpose of a Conservation Easement?

The primary purpose of conservation easements is to protect agricultural land and other valuable natural resources such as wildlife habitat, clean water, clean air and scenic land.

(cont. inside)

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Message from the President



As I ponder my new role as president of the Indian River Land Trust, I am struck by the complexity of the challenges that lie ahead for Indian River County in 2008 and beyond. At the same time, I am energized by the opportunities the Land Trust has to make a difference.

Most of us live in Indian River County not by happenstance, but as a result of a very deliberate and informed decision to do so. We were attracted by the natural beauty, clean air and water, the smell of orange blossoms drifting through the countryside, abundant recreational opportunities, friendly people, and the relaxed lifestyle that we all enjoy and want to retain. Others have discovered this Florida oasis as an alternative to the massing rooftops, parking lots, and crowded roadways of the densely populated areas to our south.

Regardless, as we experience inevitable population growth, we must give thoughtful consideration to what we are losing in the process and develop public and private alternatives to protect the unique environment that attracted us to Indian River County in the first place.

I believe the Land Trust has a responsibility to be a torchbearer for land conservation and smart development alternatives. We must be pro-active in restraining the pressures that negatively impact our natural resources, especially the watershed properties of the Indian River Lagoon. We have to educate the general public, our government officials, elected representatives, and private landowners about land conservation issues and collaborate with them to develop long-term solutions for protecting our unique and environmentally sensitive places. For once those places are gone, they are gone forever.

Fortunately, we have a very capable staff and committed board to help us execute our mission. Most importantly, we have members like you who share our commitment to preserve the quality of life we enjoy in Indian River County. With your support, I am confident that we will succeed.

— William H. Helmly
President, Indian River Land Trust

New to the Land Trust

At our 2008 Annual Board Meeting, the Indian River Land Trust Board of Directors instated William H. Helmly as our new President. The Land Trust is fortunate that Bill, who has served on the Land Trust's Board of Directors and Advisory Board for two years, could step into this critical role of our growing organization. Bill has been a year-round resident of Vero Beach for six years and is the Regional Director of BNY Mellon's Vero office.

In addition, the Land Trust is pleased to announce that several members of our

community have joined the IRLT Advisory Board. In November 2007, Ned Dayton, Migdalia O'Leary, Grant Withers, Louis Schacht, and Dorothy Hudson were elected as our newest advisors. Char Higgins, Barry Sullivan, Bonnie Veron, and Paula Knier were recently elected to the Board of Directors after serving on the Advisory Board last year. The Board and staff welcome Bill as our new President and the new directors and advisors who have agreed to volunteer their time and expertise for IRLT.

Conservation Easements (cont.)

Landowners who give up these 'development rights' continue to privately manage the land at their own expense and agree to maintain the conservation values associated with the land. In Florida, land owned outright by a public agency requires substantial funding for management, which includes staffing, vehicles, and equipment to support extensive programs. When land is placed under an easement, these management and maintenance costs are free to taxpayers because they remain the responsibility of the landowner.

Benefits of Conservation Easements

When agricultural and natural lands are protected with easements, we:

- Permanently protect land from development
- Maintain the land's conservation values
- Allow properties to remain on the tax rolls
- Keep management responsibilities and costs with the landowners

As a result, we help preserve our way of life for future generations. For more information on donating easements to IRLT please contact us at 772-794-0701.



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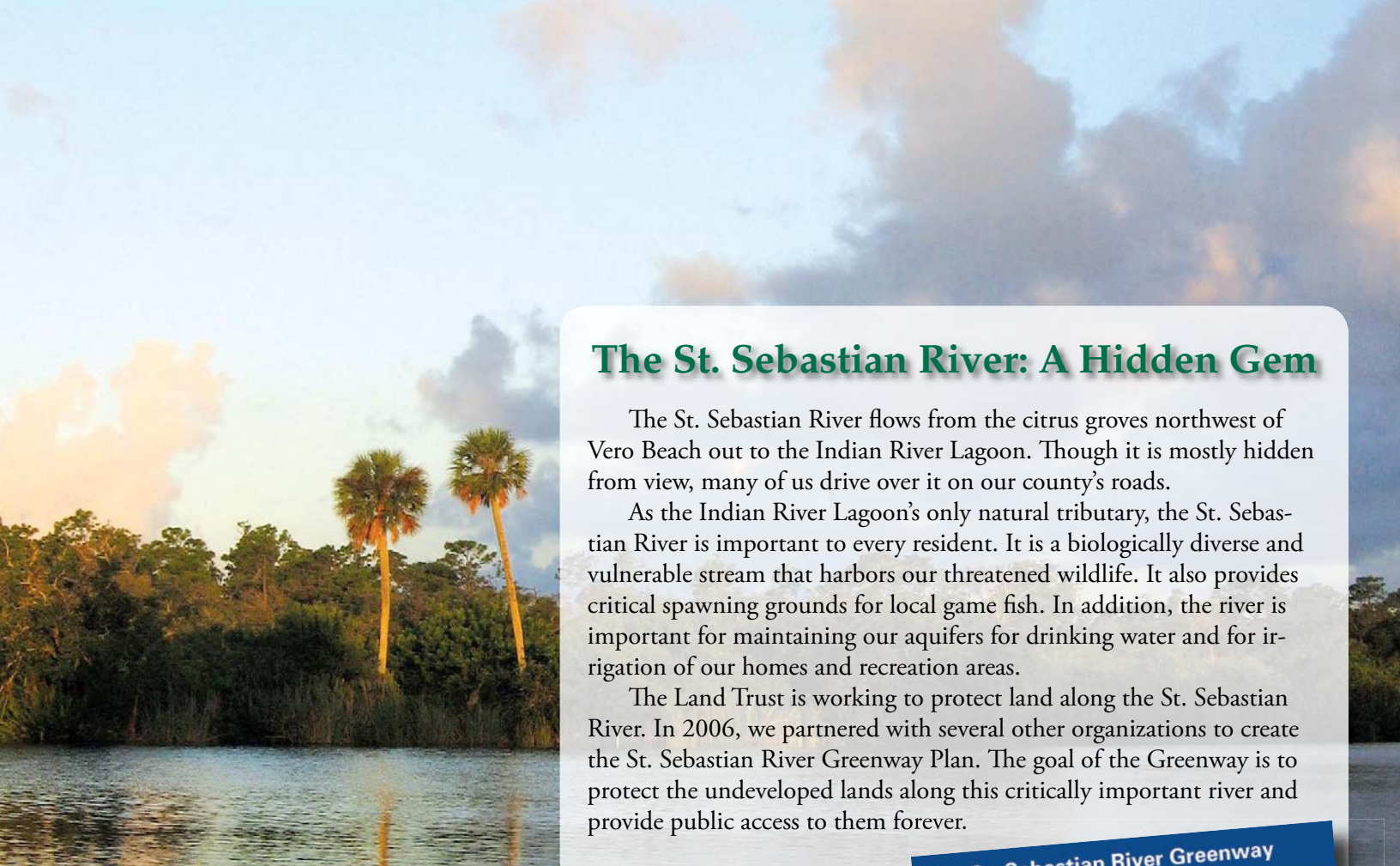
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The St. Sebastian River: A Hidden Gem

The St. Sebastian River flows from the citrus groves northwest of Vero Beach out to the Indian River Lagoon. Though it is mostly hidden from view, many of us drive over it on our county's roads.

As the Indian River Lagoon's only natural tributary, the St. Sebastian River is important to every resident. It is a biologically diverse and vulnerable stream that harbors our threatened wildlife. It also provides critical spawning grounds for local game fish. In addition, the river is important for maintaining our aquifers for drinking water and for irrigation of our homes and recreation areas.

The Land Trust is working to protect land along the St. Sebastian River. In 2006, we partnered with several other organizations to create the St. Sebastian River Greenway Plan. The goal of the Greenway is to protect the undeveloped lands along this critically important river and provide public access to them forever.

To promote the importance of the St. Sebastian River Greenway, IRLT recently published a full-color map of the river. The map shows how to access the river for paddling or boating, and illustrates the important areas still vulnerable to development. To obtain a free copy of this 16" x 23" folding map or to request a tour of the area, please call our office at 772-794-0701. We encourage you to visit the river and support IRLT in its efforts to protect this "Old Florida" landscape.



Land Trust Welcomes New Staff

The Land Trust is pleased to announce the addition of two new full-time staff members to our organization. Dana McDougall joined the Land Trust in November as our new Administrative Assistant. Dana, a Vero Beach native, has several years of professional experience in the administrative field. She will be managing our office operations and maintaining our new database program.

Ginny Blossom joined IRLT in January as our first Director of Marketing and Philanthropy. Ginny, a seasoned expert in marketing, membership and event planning, was recently



Ginny Blossom and Dana McDougall

the Manager of Marketing and Development at the Indian River Medical Center Foundation. Previously, she owned her own planning and marketing company and spent several years in New York City in the public relations field. Ginny holds a Masters degree in Advertising & Communications and a Bachelors degree in Art History & English. She will assist IRLT with outreach activities and help bolster our increasing land protection work in Indian River County.

We are excited to have both Dana and Ginny on board to help meet our future land protection goals!

“It’s A Puzzlement”

Annual Benefit Raises Critical Funds for Land Trust Projects

The 4th Annual “It’s A Puzzlement” benefit event for Indian River Land Trust was a wonderful success, thanks to all who contributed and attended in support of our important conservation projects. We are proud to announce that the event netted over \$22,000, which will be invested back into the community as we work to protect our wildlife, water quality and beautiful native landscape.

Amid the beauty of Rock City Gardens, guests enjoyed a live jazz trio, conversation with good friends under Chinese lanterns, seemingly limitless hors d’oeuvres, and the chance to win

several exciting raffle items. The raffle included a private condo in Colorado, a two-night stay at Chateau Adolot in France, a trip to Key West in a private plane, a yacht cruise on the Indian River Lagoon, and a Buggy Tour & Treehouse Cocktails at “The Ranch.” Thanks are extended to our friends, volunteers, members and local businesses – especially our venue host, Rock City Gardens, without whom the event’s success would not have been possible.

We would like to thank all of those who came together for our 2007 benefit. For a full list of supporters, please see our donor list.

2007 Event Committee

Char Higgins, Event Chair
 Carol Webb, Event Co-Chair
 Karen Abell
 Carole Brashears
 Dan Crisafulli
 Holly Dill
 Gena Grove
 Jane Goss
 Rhonda Lowe
 Tom Lowe
 Keith Pelan
 Marie Roberts
 Toni Robinson
 Kathleen Schulke
 Nicole Williams
 Sherry Wilson



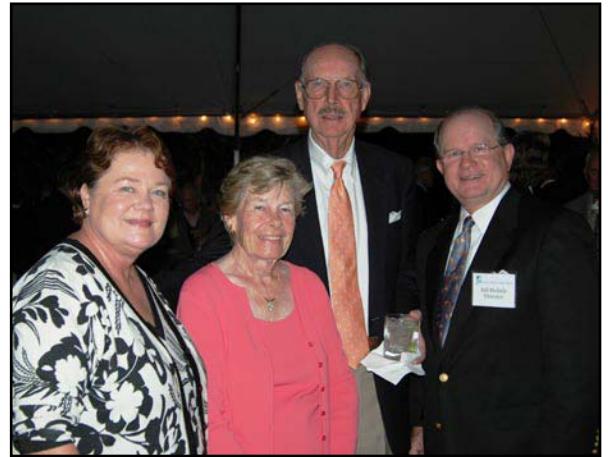
Puzzlement Attendees Arriving



Peter Moor Announcing Raffle Winners



Ken Grudens and Janet Baines



IRLT President Bill Helmly (right), Laura Helmly (left) and Cynthia and Jerry Vantuyl (center).

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.

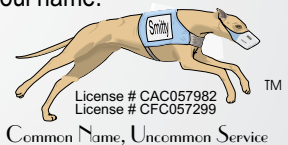
Our vision is to help retain the character that makes this county unique by protecting environmentally important land and conserving its wildlife habitat and water quality. Protected land provides important public benefits. Residents can learn about and enjoy our natural environment and local agricultural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

We’ll Donate Money To The IRLT In Your Name

During March and April 2008, purchase equipment and we’ll donate 5% of the cost to the IRLT or utilize our maintenance service and we’ll donate 10% of the cost of service to the IRLT.

Just call (772) 589-7666 to schedule your service. You must ask for Doug Fisher or Chip Woody and mention this ad before scheduling your appointment so that we can properly credit the donation to the IRLT in your name.

SMITH SERVICES, INC.
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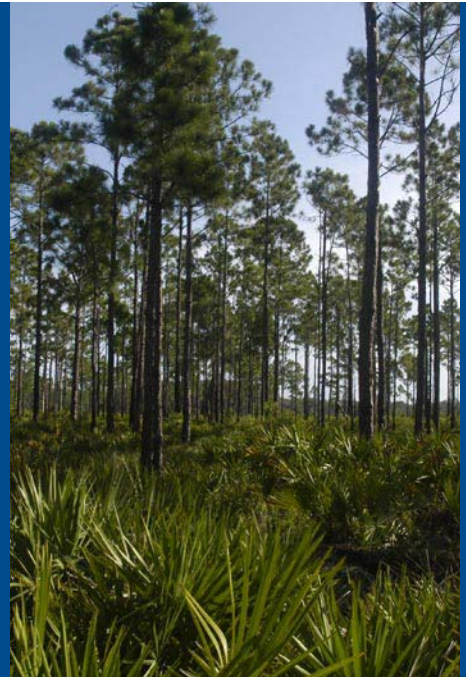
SAVE THE DATE!

Annual Membership Meeting with a Rare Behind-the-Scenes Tour

- When: Saturday, April 5
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- Where: Padgett Branch ranches
- What: Access to scenic hiking trails
Private buggy tours of 1,600 acre Florida ranchland property
Old Florida barbeque luncheon
Photographic tour of agricultural and natural lands
- Who: IRLT members and their guests
- Cost: Free of charge! Transportation provided

Please join us for this unique opportunity to view firsthand one of the important conservation resources that IRLT has assisted in protecting.

We invite you to call for more information or to RSVP. Invitation to follow.



Ranch Photos: Virginia Best



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