



INDIAN RIVER LAND TRUST

Conserving Land and Water

Winter 2010

LANDMARKS

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and Activities*



Land Protection



LAND WATER WILDLIFE



...and much more!

Lagoon Lands Protected



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On the cover:

IRLT's new Lagoon property
Photo by Ralph Monticello

From the Director



Good news is on the horizon! The Indian River Land Trust is moving forward with its Lagoon Waterfront Initiative. Using your donations to our Land Protection Fund, we have acted quickly to complete strategic acquisitions of two parcels along the Indian River Lagoon south of the Wabasso Bridge. These two purchases will allow IRLT to provide public access to a 40-acre block of publicly managed parcels of tropical oak hammocks, dwindling native scrub forest and essential mangrove swamps, with beautiful views of the Lagoon.

Through strategic purchases and ongoing partnerships with local and state government agencies, our vision is to protect more environmentally important lands along the Indian River Lagoon while land values remain low. Time may be short, but we are prepared to act fast with your support.

Your membership has already made a difference in our county, and with your continued generosity IRLT will be able to protect vulnerable waterfront lands of our most cherished resource, the Indian River Lagoon. Together we can continue the legacy of conservation in this unique part of Florida.

— Ken Grudens
Executive Director

IRLT Welcomes New Staff Member



The Land Trust is pleased to announce the addition of our new full-time Development Director, Kelley Williams who joined IRLT in early January. Kelley graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in marketing and most recently worked for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Indian River County as the Director of Marketing and Special Events.

Welcome Kelley!

Lagoon Lands Protected

Thanks to the support of our membership, the Indian River Land Trust recently acquired two critical pieces of land to establish a new trail project along the Indian River Lagoon in Winter Beach. In its first land acquisition project since McKee Botanical Garden, IRLT purchased a 1.6-acre parcel of native oaks for the gateway to a 1-mile trail loop through a variety of native landscapes. A small parking area and trailhead will lead trail users onto existing public, but previously inaccessible, land to a second 6.7-acre parcel IRLT purchased in December. This parcel contains a ¼ mile boardwalk through a native mangrove swamp, and a dock extending into the Indian River Lagoon that will allow walkers, bird watchers, and others a quiet

scenic stroll in a natural setting.

Early in 2009 the IRLT Board of Directors determined that protection of the Indian River Lagoon was of the utmost importance, especially in light of the declining real estate market and resulting slowdown of development projects near the Lagoon. Given this direction, IRLT staff utilized a strategic approach for identifying Lagoon parcels at risk. A computer mapping process, funded by the Elizabeth Ordway Dunn Foundation and Dorothea and Brad Endicott, allowed staff to prioritize undeveloped parcels larger than two acres using a wildlife habitat ranking system developed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission in 2008.

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IRLT Benefit One of a Kind

Nearly 350 IRLT friends in attendance at our six annual benefit – Land, Water, Wildlife: Along the Greenway Trail – would agree that frolicking butterflies, dancing frogs, a farmers market, and a bonfire with s'mores amidst the lush Rock City Gardens were the perfect ingredients for a one-of-a-kind event. Thanks to major sponsors Rock City Gardens, Laura and Bill Buck, The Peter W. Busch Family, Vero Beach Magazine, Long Shadows Cattle Co., Windsor Properties, George E. Warren Corporation, Brown-Forman and Dr. and Mrs. William King Stubbs, and all of our corporate and individual sponsors, IRLT surpassed all of its previous fundraisers for net proceeds.

The funds IRLT raised this year are helping to facilitate the Land Trust's work coordinating a multi-partnership effort to create the Lagoon Greenway with miles of trail and boardwalks and views of the beautiful Indian River Lagoon. The benefit's "Greenway Trail" weaving through the grounds of Rock City Gardens highlighted the importance of our Lagoon as well as other areas IRLT is working to protect.

The Indian River Land Trust extends its thanks to everyone who attended, volunteered, and sponsored this event to make the evening a true success.



Along the Greenway Trail





One set of parcels stood out to the IRLT Land Committee, over 40 acres of public and private “conservation” lands with a well maintained trail and boardwalk hidden from the public. A landowner had already approached IRLT staff about purchasing one parcel, so with approval of the Board of Directors, staff conducted preliminary research and ordered appraisals to establish valuation on both privately owned parcels. After considerable negotiations and legal work, the purchases followed several months later.

The funding for this project would not have been possible without the donations IRLT members made to our Land Protection Fund. And the involvement of various private and public entities greatly increased the benefit of the purchases. IRLT staff is working closely with the St. Johns River Water Management District and the Florida Inland Navigation District, owners of the adjoining parcels – and the Indian River Mosquito Control District has agreed to assist IRLT in maintaining the trails and boardwalk. Pickering Surveyors and Knight, McGuire & Associates provided pro bono surveying and engineering assistance.

IRLT will be holding its 2010 Annual Membership Event at this new project area in March to celebrate this important set of purchases.



Join us out on the land as our Land Protection Manager, Ralph Monticello, Executive Director, Ken Grudens and IRLT volunteers lead tours of the native landscape of Indian River County. RSVPs will be required for all outings which are free and open to the public. Note that IRLT members will receive priority registration. To RSVP or to confirm dates, times, and locations, please contact our office at 772.794.0701.



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Treasure Hammock Ranch:

Enjoy an easy but somewhat extensive walk along sandy farm roads and cattle fields, accompanied by naturalists who will describe the area, its conservation value, and its importance to the Indian River Land Trust. Guests will observe birds and other native wildlife within this 500 acre ranch property just east of I-95.



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Padgett Creek:

Alight on one of the Padgett Creek buggies for an extensive tour of the pristine 1,600 acre Florida ranchland property, accompanied by guides who will provide an overview of the easements and its importance to the conservation efforts in our community. Guests will have the opportunity enjoy the beauty surrounding this important fresh water feeder system to Blue Cypress Lake. Expect bird watching and other native wildlife observation.



THURSDAY, MARCH 4
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Schacht Groves:

The Schacht family welcomes our guests for an informative grove and packing house tour, accompanied by experts in the fields of land management, water quality, agriculture and the history of citrus in our community. At the end of the tour, enjoy a taste of their fresh squeezed juice and a sample of their delicious hand-picked fruit.



FRIDAY, MARCH 12
8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Spoonbill Marsh:

Enjoy an easy stroll on boardwalks past manmade marshes and along the Indian River Lagoon. Naturalists will accompany you to describe this new unique project designed to clean well-water brine and enhance bird habitat. Guests will observe birds and other native wildlife within this 45 acre preserve.

SAVE THE DATE!

Annual Membership Event on the Indian River Lagoon

- When:** Saturday, March 20, 2010; 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Where: New IRLT Land, US Hwy 1 near the Wabasso Bridge
What: Food, music and educational tours
Who: IRLT members and their guests
Cost: Free for members; \$20 per guest

Please join us for this unique opportunity to learn about the Indian River Lagoon and IRLT's newest trail project. We invite you to call us for more information. *Invitation to follow.*



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