



Indian River Land Trust

Annual Report – July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

The Power of Preservation – Fostering a Legacy of Nature

**In every walk
with nature one
receives far more
than he seeks.**

-John Muir

The Indian River Land Trust remains dedicated to protecting the natural beauty of our beloved Indian River County environment. Our mission is to protect, improve, provide access to, and promote the preservation of waterways, open spaces, and green places in Indian River County for the benefit of all today and tomorrow.

The Moor Family At Lagoon Greenway



We envision Indian River County as a place where

- Drinking water sources are protected and waterways are healthy and clean
- Aquatic life and wildlife have room to thrive
- Preserved waterfront and scenic areas provide a backdrop of beauty and tranquility
- All people can access and experience the splendors of nature and expand their knowledge and appreciation of the natural world

The Land Trust inspires and engages the community to protect and restore the health of the Indian River Lagoon, recognizing how critical the estuary is to the area's economic vitality and quality of life.

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Year after year, your generosity makes a difference.

Your support has preserved 1,300 acres, encompassing more than 40 acquisitions, including 12 miles of Indian River Lagoon shoreline.

Photo By Jacob Askin

Dear Friends,

Some of you may wonder – What is the Power of Preservation? To us, it's the enthusiasm, determination, and ability of our community to collectively fuel the conservation efforts of the Land Trust and others to protect the irreplaceable wildlife, waterways, and green places that we all enjoy. It's a shared commitment to safeguarding nature as a legacy for those who, long after we are gone, will walk our trails, hear the birdsong, and seek harmony beneath the trees.

At a time when development pressure is growing and natural areas are diminishing, preservation is more than a mission – it's a necessity. Every property we protect tells a story of creating a sanctuary for wildlife, of maintaining clean water for our residents, and of connecting people with the natural world.

Over the past year, the Indian River Land Trust continued to harness the power of preservation in our community. With your generous support, you helped:

- Acquire two additional properties of important greenspace on the Indian River Lagoon
- Preserve 20 additional acres with majestic cypress forest on the St. Sebastian River
- Commence construction of a Living Classroom at IRLT's Coastal Oaks Preserve
- Convert more septic systems to sewer to protect the Indian River Lagoon
- Engage in ranchland protection efforts in the western region of our county
- Connect thousands of people to nature through our public trails and conservation tours

The pages ahead highlight the lasting impact that your support is making in our community – from the Indian River Lagoon out to the four corners of our unique and beautiful county. They showcase the powerful results of a community united by a shared vision, whose collective support is ensuring that the natural lands we treasure today remain protected forever.

Thank you for being a member of our growing Land Trust family!

Yours truly,

Meg Steiner
Board Chair

Ken Grudens
Executive Director



YOUR SUPPORT

Fosters a Legacy of Nature by Expanding our Conservation Footprint

With your continued generosity, the Land Trust extended its conservation vision beyond the Indian River Lagoon, out to the four corners of Indian River County. In the summer of 2024, IRLT began engaging several owners of important ranchlands west of I-95 in discussions about protecting their ranches which contain critical habitat for wildlife species such as deer, black bear, bald eagles, Crested Caracaras, and even the endangered Florida Panther. These picturesque, working ranches are still intact, yet vulnerable to future development as more people move to our area and expansion continues westward.

Additionally, the Land Trust expanded its conservation efforts east of I-95. In January 2025, IRLT completed the acquisition of an additional 20 acres along the St. Sebastian River, protecting more ancient cypress forest bordering the City of Sebastian. The river corridor in this area is imminently threatened by new development, so each property that is protected creates an important buffer for the fish and wildlife that rely on it. Land Trust staff also expanded efforts with several partners to plan the St. Sebastian River Greenway with public trails and boardwalks along the river.

At the same time, the Land Trust continued to actively protect land along the Indian River Lagoon. In spring of 2025, we purchased two lagoon-front parcels totaling 15 acres, completing a conservation puzzle that began in 2009 when IRLT made its first land purchase following the protection of McKee Botanical Garden. It was hard to imagine then that the acquisition of a 1.6-acre parcel would eventually lead to the establishment of a contiguous protected area of 157 acres that safeguards the Lagoon in a now rapidly developing area of the county.

These important acquisitions could not have been completed without your dedicated support. We are deeply grateful and hope you will continue your commitment to protecting the land and water that make our community special.



Toni Robinson and Lee Moore

“Together, my mother, Toni Robinson, and I have been involved with the Land Trust for nearly four decades. As one of the organization’s founders, Toni often reminds us that when it comes to unprotected land, “once it’s gone, it’s gone forever.” Thanks to the passion and generosity of our dedicated supporters, the Land Trust is honoring her words by working diligently to protect and preserve the unspoiled beauty of our community.”

- LEE MOORE

IRLT Board and Land Acquisition Committee Member

“**Along our journey of learning about the Indian River Lagoon, we came to better appreciate the native lands that flow into this incredibly diverse estuary, and the importance of protecting it for future generations. Acting on our interest in native Florida, we have committed to removing invasive species on Land Trust properties, and our love of native plants and landscapes along the Indian River Lagoon has led us to conducting native plant walks as volunteer tour guides. It has been our privilege to pass along our knowledge and passion to others.**”

- CHARLIE AND CARLA FLOURNOY
Land Trust Members and Volunteers



IRLT Members enjoying a morning stroll at Lagoon Greenway

YOUR SUPPORT

Fosters a Legacy of Nature by Building Connections to our Environment

At the heart of the Land Trust's mission is a deep belief that providing access to nature with opportunities for research and education is essential to preserving our community's natural areas. We believe the best way to inspire conservation is to experience nature firsthand, whether through a walk on a trail or learning about native habitats.

The Land Trust's trails are cherished by local residents and visitors, offering meaningful ways to connect with the natural world. Lagoon Greenway, one of our most popular trails, was expanded this past year with a new 1.5-mile loop, adding to the original 2.5-mile path. Families, hikers, birders, dog walkers, and cyclists alike have embraced the expansion, making it a treasured place to discover, explore, and engage with nature.

With more than 5,500 visits made to the Toni Robinson Waterfront Trail last year, the Land Trust offered people of all ages a chance to experience the scenic beauty of the Indian River Lagoon and its

wetlands. With the installation of a new trail counter, we can now track the trail's usage. We plan to expand trail counter technology to all our public trails in the coming years to gather accurate data on their usage. This information will help us enhance our trails for visitors.

Our Conservation Tours continue to be a powerful way to educate and connect people with our preserves and the wonders of nature. Last season, IRLT hosted 27 tours across five Land Trust properties led by our dedicated and knowledgeable volunteer guides, drawing hundreds of enthusiastic participants.

These experiences strengthen the connection between people and nature, helping to unite a community in protecting these lands for generations to come. We invite you to explore our trails and join us for an upcoming Conservation Tour. Your support helps keep these green places healthy, thriving, and accessible to all.



YOUR SUPPORT

Fosters a Legacy of Nature through Focused Habitat Restoration

Habitat restoration is a key tool that the Land Trust uses to care for its conservation lands. Native habitats and the wildlife they support struggle from invasive plants and animals and the pressures of human impact. Seagrass beds have been suffering a devastating die-off from nutrient-driven algae blooms, while high salt marshes, pine flatwoods and oak-palm hammocks have become increasingly rare. After conservation lands are acquired, habitat restoration is critical to their long-term health and function, and the Land Trust is always working toward the goal of helping these habitats thrive.

This past year, the Land Trust was awarded \$562,000 from the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program through a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to restore aquatic habitat at its Bee Gum Point Preserve. The project, which involves a living shoreline and improving water quality in the wetlands, will benefit seagrasses and iconic gamefish at the preserve.

Research scientists from Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute (HBOI) and Bethune-Cookman University are monitoring the project's success and working to bolster

Lagoon-wide seagrass restoration efforts using Bee Gum Point where widgeon grass supports ducks, diamondback terrapin and fish species such as tarpon and snook.

Additionally, with three grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service totaling \$110,000, the Land Trust has eradicated hundreds of invasive Brazilian pepper trees at Coastal Oaks Preserve to facilitate the re-establishment of 20 acres of high salt marsh that supports rare species such as diamondback terrapin, salt marsh snake, and an elusive bird called the black rail. The success of these efforts was monitored by the Junior Scientist Fellows under the guidance of faculty and staff from HBOI and IRLT. These high school students, as well as participants in other education programs, will soon benefit from a Living Classroom currently under construction at the Land Trust's Coastal Oaks Preserve. The Living Classroom's amenities will afford visitors an opportunity to explore the wide array of native and restored habitats that Coastal Oaks Preserve offers.

If habitat restoration resonates with you, please consider joining the Land Trust's volunteers by registering online for a trash cleanup or an invasive plant removal event.



Dr. Cho at Bee Gum Point Preserve

“The Land Trust’s Bee Gum Point Preserve serves as a unique and valuable backwater source habitat for our research, and it plays a critical role in sustaining seagrass and supporting the overall health of connected waterways. Thanks to the unwavering stewardship of the Indian River Land Trust, Bee Gum Point Preserve is helping to advance restoration techniques that can be applied in similar settings throughout the Lagoon.”

- DR. HYUN “J.” CHO

*Department of Integrated Environmental Science
Professor at Bethune-Cookman University*



We are grateful to those who choose to invest in the Indian River Land Trust's mission through their contributions to our organization. This list represents gifts made between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. We make every effort to ensure the accuracy of this list.

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The Indian River Land Trust envisions an Indian River County where drinking water is clean, wildlife thrives, scenic shorelines remain unspoiled, and everyone can experience the splendors of nature. Your support makes this vision possible—helping to protect, restore, and provide access to the lands and waterways that sustain our community today and will inspire generations to come.

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Together, we are preserving the beauty, health, and vitality of Indian River County—creating a lasting legacy that will sustain its people, wildlife, and natural treasures for generations to come.



“Supporting the Land Trust is one of the most effective ways each and every one of us can help make a lasting difference towards ensuring the protection of our local natural environment. Do you enjoy being on or near the Lagoon or other local waterways, exploring our local nature trails, or just appreciating the calm and peace of open spaces and undeveloped woodlands? These are just some of the treasures that your support helps safeguard through the work of the Land Trust.”

- CHUCK AND FRANCIE CRAMB
Land Trust Members



Financial Highlights

(July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025)

From Audited Financial Statements*



Statement of Financial Position (6-30-2025)

ASSETS

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 973,670
Investments: Operating	\$ 349,623
Investments: Campaign	\$ 3,012,151
Investments: New Otter Marsh Endowment	\$ 300,000
Investments: Land Stewardship Endowment	\$ 5,605,229
Grant Receivable	\$ 894,645
Unconditional Promises to Give	\$ 380,750
Conservation Land & Improvements	\$ 26,617,467
Other Property, Equipment and Other Assets	\$ 86,159

TOTAL ASSETS \$38,219,694

LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$ 2,644
Other Liabilities	\$ 32,143

TOTAL LIABILITIES \$ 34,787

TOTAL NET ASSETS \$ 38,184,907

Statement of Activities

REVENUE

General Gifts, Appeals & Contributions	\$ 918,225
Bequest	\$ 171,431
Contributions for Conservation: Purchase, Protection & Restoration	\$ 367,970
Grants & Other Support	\$ 895,459
Fundraising Events (net)	\$ 334,587
Interest and Other Gains	\$ 954,811

TOTAL REVENUE \$ 3,642,483

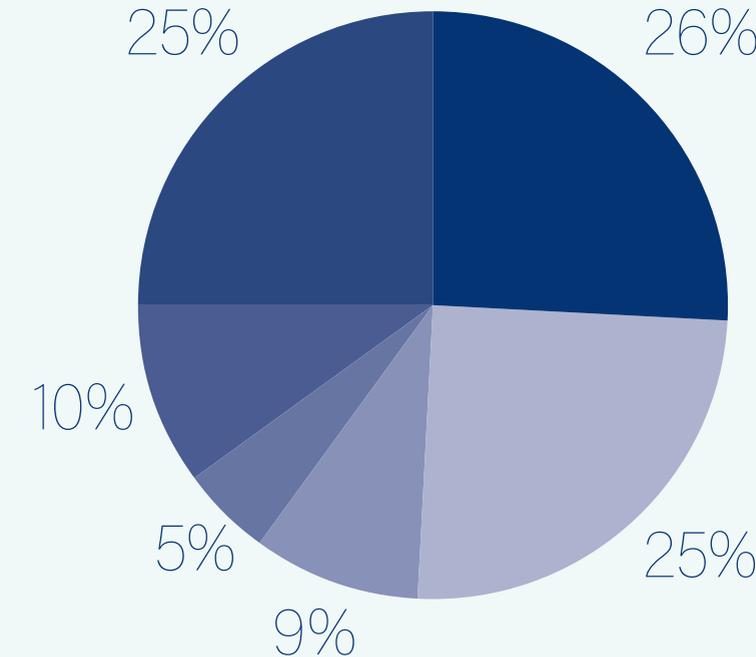
OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

Programs: Land Protection & Management	\$ 1,038,712
General & Administrative	\$ 212,852
Fundraising: Marketing & Development	\$ 224,139

TOTAL EXPENSES \$ 1,475,703

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL REVENUE

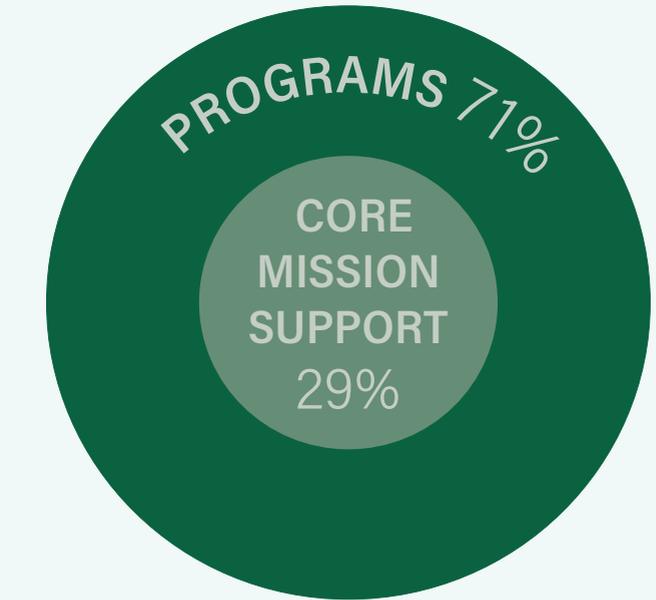
\$3,642,483



- GENERAL GIFTS / 25%
APPEALS & CONTRIBUTIONS
- CONTRIBUTIONS FOR CONSERVATION / 10%
PURCHASE, PROTECTION & RESTORATION
- GRANTS & OTHER SUPPORT / 25%
- BEQUEST / 5%
- FUNDRAISING EVENTS / 9%
- INTEREST & OTHER GAINS / 26%

PERCENTAGE OF OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

\$1,475,703



- PROGRAMS / 71%
LAND PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT
- CORE MISSION SUPPORT / 29%
GENERAL & ADMINISTRATION / 14%
FUNDRAISING: MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT / 15%

* For a complete copy of the IRLT's Financial Statements please contact our office.



Photo By TK Bond – Righteous Scenes



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