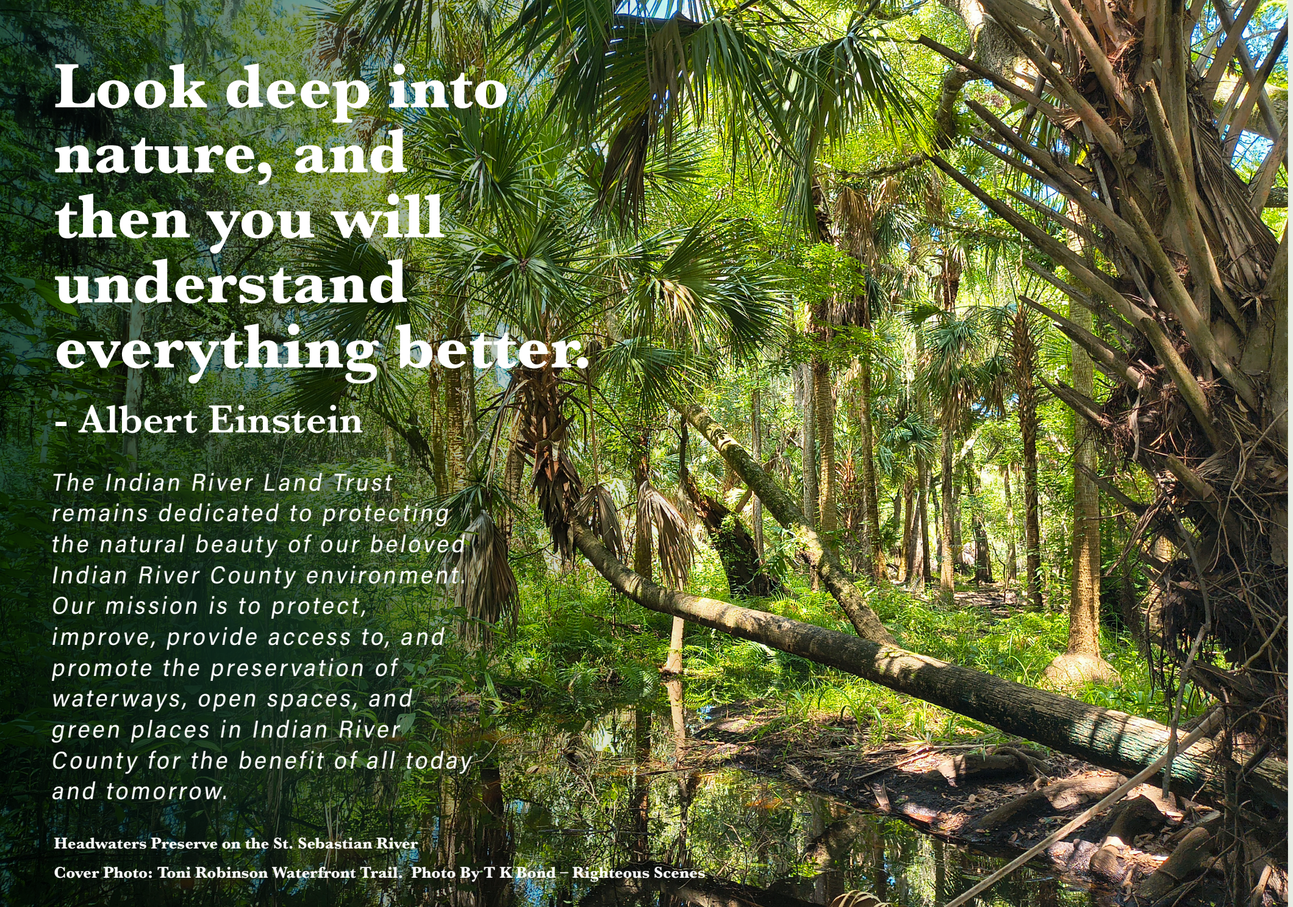


Indian River Land Trust

Annual Report – July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Our Land and Water – Your Legacy



Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.

- Albert Einstein

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.

Headwaters Preserve on the St. Sebastian River

Cover Photo: Toni Robinson Waterfront Trail. Photo By T K Bond – Righteous Scenes

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

Dear Friends,

The health of our land and water is essential to our community's quality of life, and your commitment to protecting our irreplaceable wildlife, waterways, and green places truly makes a difference. Through your generosity, the Indian River Land Trust has preserved many special places, forever, and they are your legacy.

The following pages capture recent Land Trust projects that are making that difference in the community. With your support, the Land Trust:

- Is transforming our largest conservation area, Coastal Oaks Preserve, into a living classroom, beginning with the completion of a large-scale native plant restoration project in Fall 2025
- Acquired a keystone property on the St. Sebastian River needed for the development of a St. Sebastian River Greenway trail system, now underway
- Provided vital funding for an effort that doubled septic to sewer conversions to safeguard the Indian River Lagoon
- Collaborated with Indian River County and the Clean Water Coalition to start a boat-septage pump-out program that will improve water quality in the Lagoon

Every year, development pressures continue to build and the opportunity to protect our remaining green places becomes more limited. Fortunately, there are still outstanding natural areas in our community that can be preserved before they are lost forever. And there is you, who understands the importance of saving these natural spaces.

We could not have accomplished this important work without your steadfast support.

OUR LAND AND WATER – YOUR LEGACY
THANK YOU!

Yours truly,

Scott Alexander
Board Chairman

Ken Grudens
Executive Director



A Vision Taking Root at Coastal Oaks Preserve

Not long ago, Coastal Oaks Preserve looked dramatically different.

Following years of thoughtful planning, the first signs of an extraordinary transformation are unmistakable. Part of the preserve that was a former citrus grove aggressively overtaken by invasive Brazilian pepper has been **restored with more than 80,000 native trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers**—an inspiring achievement in the creation of the Indian River Land Trust's Living Classroom.

Spanning 226 acres and nearly a mile of Indian River Lagoon shoreline, Coastal Oaks Preserve protects a mosaic of habitats, including freshwater wetlands, pine flatwoods, ancient oak hammocks, mangrove forests, seagrass meadows and salt marshes. Together, these ecosystems offer opportunities for hands-on environmental education, scientific research, and long-term conservation stewardship.

While the preserve is not yet open to the public, progress over the past year represents far more than a restored landscape. It is the foundation of a place where future generations will learn from the land itself and experience the remarkable diversity of Florida's coastal ecosystems.

This year also marked a significant philanthropic milestone. Thanks to the generosity of donors, foundations, and community partners, the Indian River Land Trust successfully completed its $1 million Community Match Challenge, securing a total of more than $2 million needed to advance Phase One of the Coastal Oaks Preserve Living Classroom. Every contribution—of every size—helped unlock matching support and move this vision forward.

With that target achieved, construction is now underway on the gathering pavilion, outdoor learning spaces, technology-equipped wet lab, boardwalk and trail connections, and other infrastructure that will support education and discovery for decades to come.

Every milestone reached at Coastal Oaks Preserve reflects a shared belief that protecting our land and water is one of the most meaningful legacies we can leave.

Although amenities at Coastal Oaks Preserve are still taking shape, it is already a place of learning and discovery. Students and researchers, including participants in our Junior Scientist Fellows program, are engaging with its landscapes as restoration and improvements continue across the property. With each acre restored and each native planting completed, your legacy and the vision of a living classroom are taking root.



Coastal Oaks Preserve Groundbreaking Ceremony

> **"I am proud to continue to be a part of this extraordinary project for our community. The Land Trust's vision for Coastal Oaks Preserve will create a legacy for generations to come. With more development expected along U.S. Hwy 1, a half-mile stretch of green native landscape that reaches all the way to the Lagoon will forever be a sanctuary for exploring the natural habitats that once defined the Florida coast."**
>
> **- DICK BRICKMAN**
> *Land Trust Board Member*

We feel an obligation to our grandchildren and future generations, so we support the Indian River Land Trust to help protect our land and the environment. Volunteering with clean-ups, conservation tours, and educational outreach is a really enjoyable way to help out while connecting with nature."

- JIM AND TERRY BYRNES
Land Trust Members and Volunteers


Jim and Terry Byrnes



Connecting our Community to Nature

Conservation is about more than protecting land - it creates lasting connections between people and the natural places that define our community. Every trail explored, every child who discovers wildlife for the first time, and every person who experiences the peace and beauty of nature, builds a society that values conservation and is inspired to preserve our natural heritage.

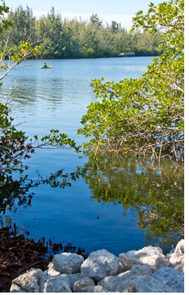
This past year, the Land Trust created meaningful opportunities for thousands of people to experience nature firsthand. More than 400 guests joined us for our Annual Members Event held at our Bridgeview property and our "In The Field Friday" open house held at Bee Gum Point Preserve. While these preserves are not normally open to the public, the events offered unique chances to experience their scenic landscapes and abundant wildlife.

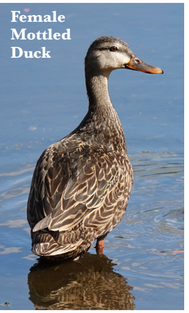
Additionally, the Land Trust's three public trails provide welcoming green places where residents and visitors can explore Florida's natural beauty year-round. Trail counters at two of these trails recorded a total of nearly 30,000 visitors last year.

Education continues to be at the heart of our mission to connect people with nature. This past season, the Land Trust hosted 26 free guided Conservation Tours, introducing more than two hundred participants to the diverse habitats found in our region and deepening their understanding of why protecting them matters.

Last, but not least, for the 12th year, the Land Trust proudly partnered with Florida Atlantic University (FAU) Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute to host the Junior Scientist Fellows program at Coastal Oaks Preserve. Sixteen local high school students conducted hands-on research under the guidance of FAU scientists and Land Trust staff, gaining experiences that contribute to the protection of our land and water and inspire the next generation of conservation leaders.

Every protected acre tells a story, but its greatest impact is found in the lives that it touches. Thank you for making it possible to protect the places you love and to create opportunities for people of all ages to experience, appreciate, and care for the natural world. Together, we are building a lasting conservation legacy that will benefit our community for generations to come.





Female Mottled Duck



Restoring the Indian River Lagoon for Future Generations

The Indian River Lagoon holds a treasured place in the hearts of the Land Trust's members.

That is why our organization was excited to provide funds toward Indian River County's recent purchase of a boat-septage pump-out vessel. This free service is for boats moored on the Lagoon to ensure that their wastewater safely reaches the County's sewer treatment system and does not pollute the Lagoon from overboard discharge. This valuable partnership includes the Clean Water Coalition of Indian River County, which provided funds for operating the pump-out vessel.

This is the Land Trust's latest effort to restore the Lagoon's health by combatting nutrient pollution from wastewater. In another partnership with the Clean Water Coalition, the Land Trust is providing funds for converting septic systems to public sewer for income-challenged homeowners in the City of Vero Beach. To date, more than 70 homes have switched over, eliminating nutrients that leach through the soil into the Lagoon and can potentially lead to algae blooms, seagrass die-offs, and fish kills. The Land Trust is also providing funds to cover the County's impact fees for septic to sewer conversion projects for approximately 150 homes in two Lagoon-front neighborhoods adjoining its conservation lands. The Land Trust is "paying it forward" since the impact fees are used to expand the County's sewer system for future conversions.

The combination of these water quality improvement projects, along with similar efforts in the region to reduce nutrient pollution, are yielding positive results. The State recently published an encouraging study that shows a 72% increase in seagrass meadows throughout the lagoon in recent years. The Land Trust is thrilled to make important contributions to this restoration success story and was proud to receive the Clean Water Coalition's Lagoon Champion Award for these efforts last spring. Of course, this could not be done without your support to establish a lasting legacy for our cherished Lagoon.



"Public-private partnerships such as the one that made the pump-out boat program possible are a godsend for our community. Private donations inspire local government to think outside-the-box and encourage us to optimize tight budgets in the service of our community's best interests. I offer my heartfelt thanks to the generous, dedicated individuals supporting the Indian River Land Trust and the Clean Water Coalition for making this project possible."

- LAURA MOSS, INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Longtime advocate of the environment and a strong supporter of the pump-out boat cost-sharing project





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, 2025 and June 30, 2026. We make every effort to ensure the accuracy of this list.

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Leave Your Legacy

Protecting the places you love can be one of the most meaningful gifts you leave behind. A legacy gift to the Indian River Land Trust—through your will, trust, or a simple beneficiary designation on your IRA or retirement account—helps ensure that our land, water, and wildlife will be protected for generations to come.

When you include the Land Trust in your estate plans, you'll be welcomed into the Lagoon Legacy Society, a special group of supporters who have chosen to leave a lasting conservation legacy.

If you have included the Indian River Land Trust in your estate plans, please let us know so we can say Thank You during your lifetime.

To learn more, please contact Melissa DePriest, CFRE, Chief Development Officer, at 772.794.0701 or mdepriest@irlt.org.

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"The Indian River Land Trust's efforts and resources toward land conservation and preservation of open spaces make Indian River County a very special place to live and very important to my wife, Louise, and me. We are concerned about the world that we will leave behind to our children and grandchildren and want to do our part in ensuring ongoing support of the mission and good work of the Land Trust to save the natural beauty, wildlife and waterways that have brought our family so much enjoyment. We have decided to make a "beneficiary designation" of part of our IRA to allow us to leave a legacy gift that will continue to protect the natural spaces in Vero Beach that we love to explore as a family. It is a simple and easy process to set up an IRA charitable beneficiary designation, and we hope others will consider this vehicle of ongoing support of this important work."

- JOE AND LOUISE HUBER
Land Trust Lagoon Legacy Society Members



Joe with his grandson, Alexander, and his dog, Max.

Financial Highlights

(July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026)

From Audited Financial Statements*

Statement of Financial Position (6-30-2026)

ASSETS	
Cash	$ 481,228
Investments: Operating	$ 3,972,252
Investments: Campaign	$ 1,431,274
Investments: New Otter Marsh Endowment	$ 308,186
Investments: Land Stewardship Endowment	$ 6,775,898
Unconditional Promises to Give	$ 1,139,551
Conservation Land & Improvements	$ 27,987,540
Other Property, Equipment and Other Assets	$ 113,403
TOTAL ASSETS	**$ 42,209,332**
LIABILITIES	
Accounts Payable	$ 2,862
Other Liabilities	$ 34,966
TOTAL LIABILITIES	**$ 37,828**
TOTAL NET ASSETS	**$ 42,171,504**

Statement of Activities

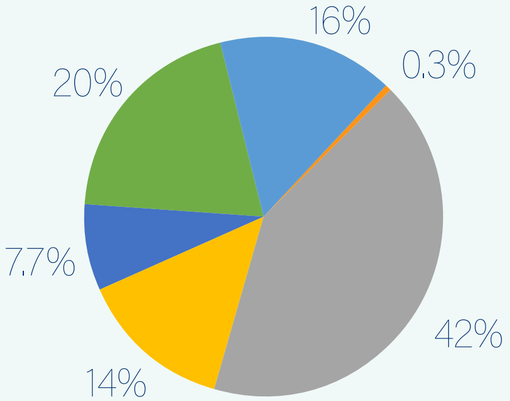
REVENUE	
General Gifts, Appeals & Contributions	$ 1,052,778
Bequest	$ 21,292
Contributions for Conservation: Purchase, Protection & Restoration	$ 2,876,952
Grants	$ 965,956
Fundraising Events (net)	$ 528,472
Interest and Other Gains	$ 1,330,275
TOTAL REVENUE	**$ 6,775,725**
OPERATIONAL EXPENSES	
Programs: Land Protection & Management	$ 1,322,624
General & Administrative	$ 218,777
Fundraising: Marketing & Development	$ 353,082
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$ 1,894,483**

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

PERCENTAGE OF

TOTAL REVENUE

$6,775,725



- **CONTRIBUTIONS FOR CONSERVATION / 42%**
  PURCHASE, PROTECTION & RESTORATION
- **INTEREST & OTHER GAINS / 20%**
- **GENERAL GIFTS / 16%**
  APPEALS & CONTRIBUTIONS
- **GRANTS / 14%**
- **FUNDRAISING EVENTS / 7.7%**
- **BEQUEST / 0.3%**

PERCENTAGE OF

OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

$1,894,483



- **PROGRAMS / 70%**
  LAND PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT
- **CORE MISSION SUPPORT / 30%**
  GENERAL & ADMINISTRATION / 12%
  FUNDRAISING: MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT / 18%







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Indian River Land Trust

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