



EMBRACING THE FUTURE OF CONSERVATION

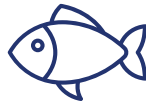
2024 – 2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR VISION

The Indian River Land Trust envisions 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

OUR MISSION

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.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Building awareness: We believe the Land Trust's success is contingent upon raising awareness of the value of a healthy natural environment within the communities we serve.

Fostering Trust: We will be an inspiring, scientifically grounded, and trusted voice in conservation matters.

Nature Sustains Us: We believe that individual physical, psychological and spiritual well-being and the well-being of communities are nurtured by experiences in beautiful and natural landscapes.

Support for Wildlife: As responsible stewards, we are committed to a healthy environment for wildlife populations as they live and travel through our lands and waterways.

Thoughtful Urgency: The natural assets we need to thrive, that contribute to our resilience, and which draw people to the region and Indian River Lagoon are at risk. It is our duty to act expeditiously to protect them before it is too late.

Interdependence: We understand that the health of the waterways and the land which abuts them (the watersheds) are linked; neither can flourish without addressing the watersheds as a whole.

Connecting Community: We work to bring people together to explore, learn, and care for the lands and waters that contribute to our collective quality of life.

Collaboration: We believe that we can accomplish more working together than alone. The Land Trust will partner with a broad and diverse network of other organizations, agencies and individuals to accomplish shared goals.

Access for All: We believe that access to beautiful and healthy natural environments is a basic human right, and we work to make conserved land accessible and welcoming to individuals of all backgrounds and abilities.

Commitment to Future Generations: We accept responsibility as one caretaker of our natural assets for its current inhabitants and future generations.

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From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

For decades, the Indian River Land Trust has strived 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. Bold new programs, including a septic to sewer conversion initiative and the creation of a living classroom at Coastal Oaks Preserve, are the cornerstones for the Land Trust to raise awareness and address the health of the Lagoon.

Despite this important work, our county's natural lands and green places are quickly disappearing. In the face of unprecedented growth, we listened to you, our conservation community. You told us that you care about our natural world and urged us to engage in important collaborative conservation throughout the county.

The Land Trust is up to the challenge. Within these pages, we are delighted to present our new mission, vision, guiding principles and strategic goals. Our mission is bold because of the urgent need to protect land and water in this county. Our vision is expansive because we must work together to ensure the living creatures in our county flourish. Our principles guide us when making tough decisions and choices. Over the next five years, we will set the foundation for innovative public and private partnerships that strategically protect the water and preserve more land. We will continue building an impressive network of hiking and biking trails. We will employ land management and scientific research that improves water quality and enhances fish and wildlife habitat.

Our 2024 – 2028 Strategic Plan will allow the Indian River Land Trust to be relevant throughout the county, to ensure our sustainability, and to guarantee the protection of our county's preserved lands and important natural resources.

With your continued support, we will be able to save our natural land and water forever!

With gratitude,



Ken Grudens
Executive Director
October 2023



LAND PROTECTION

Photo Credit: Ned Dayton

1

Increase the pace of protection and expand conservation priorities to enhance the quality of life and wildlife habitat.

STRATEGIES:

DEVELOP A STRATEGIC CONSERVATION PLAN to identify and prioritize critical natural areas for acquisition throughout the county.

CONTINUE TO PRIORITIZE the pursuit of Lagoon properties.

EXPAND PROTECTION TOOLS employed by the Land Trust, including conservation easements.

PARTNER WITH agencies and private stakeholders to protect high-priority properties.

ANTICIPATED RESULTS:

A total of 4,000 acres conserved throughout the county in connection with the Land Trust. This preserved acreage will protect critical wildlife corridors, sustain our drinking water recharge areas and safeguard our local waterways.

A photograph of a dense forest of tall, slender pine trees. The trees are closely spaced and reach high into a clear blue sky. The ground is covered with a thick layer of green, spiky-leaved plants, likely a type of groundcover or understory vegetation. The lighting suggests a bright, sunny day.

LAND STEWARDSHIP

2

Employ comprehensive land management tools to improve and restore wildlife habitat, public access, and the health of the Lagoon and other waterways.

STRATEGIES:

PURSUE PARTNERSHIPS with nonprofit organizations and government agencies for public access, habitat restoration, environmental education, research, and water quality improvement.

IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS to Land Trust properties for non-motorized trail activities.

EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES to filter polluted stormwater running into the Indian River Lagoon.

STRENGTHEN LONG-TERM CARE of conservation properties to enhance wildlife habitat and improve water quality.

ANTICIPATED RESULTS:

- Formal land management partnerships are expanded with agencies and other non-profits.
- The living classroom for education and research at Coastal Oaks Preserve is completed and enjoyed by the community.
- Opportunities for enhanced access to newly protected Land Trust properties are explored and prioritized.



**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

3

Provide the community with more opportunities to learn about the area's natural lands and waterways through outreach, engagement, and outdoor recreation.

STRATEGIES:

BROADEN ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES and the use of Land Trust properties.

GROW THE LAND TRUST'S COMMUNITY FOOTPRINT, allowing for more and new ways for people of all backgrounds and abilities to connect with nature.

EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS with community organizations to advance educational awareness and experiences on Land Trust properties.

ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS to explore opportunities for more recreational trails in the community.

ANTICIPATED RESULTS:

- Partners, schools and community organizations are regularly using Land Trust properties for educational enrichment and leisure activities.
- Land Trust trails, properties, and digital content are all being utilized, allowing for increased outreach within the community and beyond.
- An increasing number of volunteers are engaged, helping the Land Trust expand its reach.
- More people know and recognize the Land Trust and the important work it accomplishes.
- More community members fully embrace and invest in the Land Trust.



ADVOCACY

4

The Land Trust informs and influences community land use and environmental protection decisions and is viewed by governments and community organizations as a welcomed collaborator.

STRATEGIES:

MOTIVATE MUNICIPAL, STATE AND FEDERAL LEADERS to advance land conservation and water quality priorities.

CREATE AND DEVELOP PILOT PROGRAMS to incentivize conversion of septic systems to central sewer lines.

BUILD SUPPORT FOR LOCAL, COUNTY, AND STATE-LEVEL POLICIES AND FUNDING to accelerate improvements in the water quality of the Lagoon.

ANTICIPATED RESULTS:

- The Land Trust is recognized as an effective collaborator amongst municipal, state and federal leaders in advancing land protection and the health of important waterways.
- Initial pilot septic-to-sewer incentive programs are successfully completed, propelling emphasis on further program funding.
- More local, county, and state-level policies are in place to support septic-to-sewer conversions and to improve Lagoon water quality.



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