



LANDMARKS

Winter 2011

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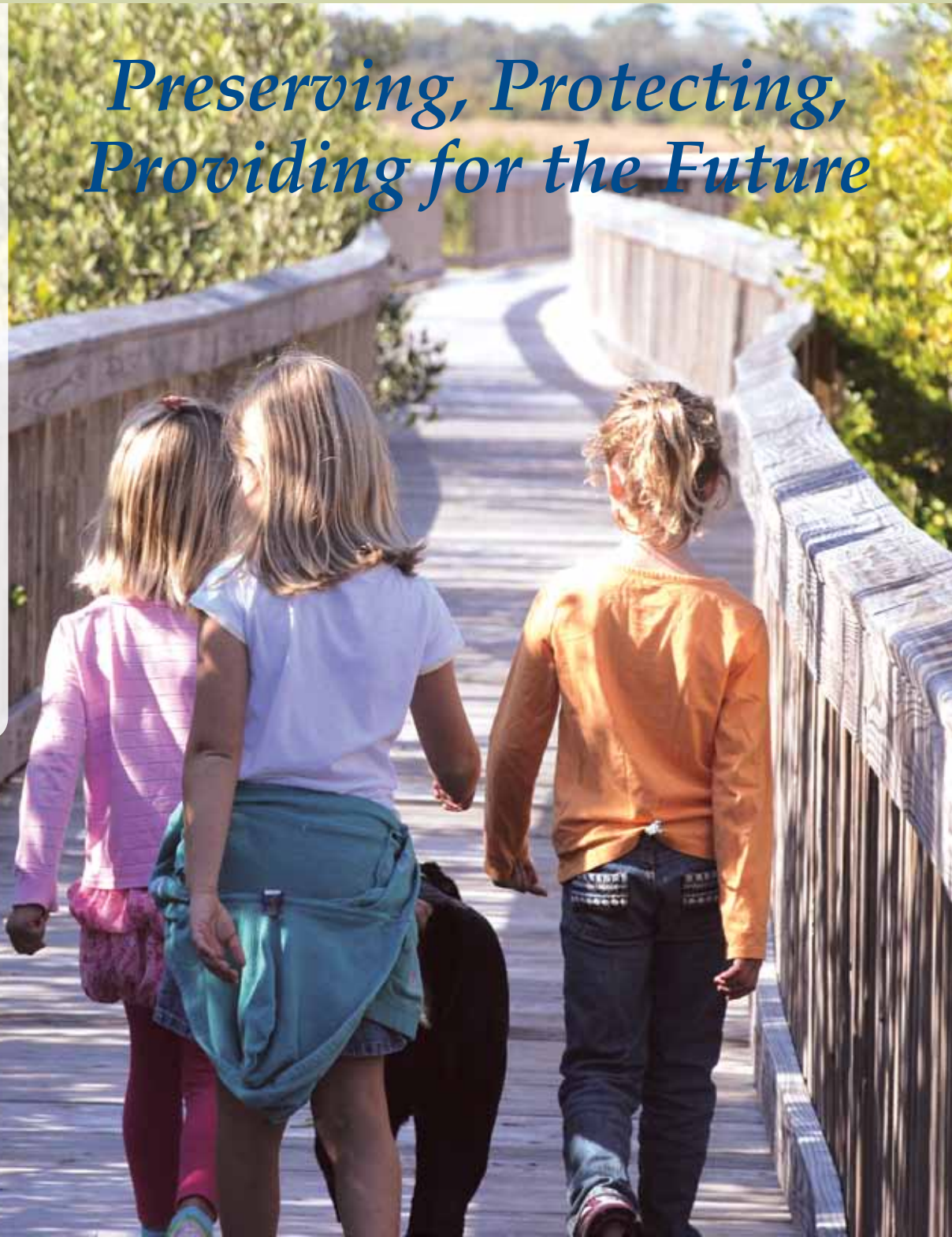
Lagoon Waterfront
Initiative



Land Water Wildlife



*Preserving, Protecting,
Providing for the Future*



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Message from Toni Robinson, Founding Board Member



I had great fortune to spend the early years of my childhood in the pastoral hunt country just outside of Detroit in the early 1940s. The rolling landscapes and its wildlife filled my senses as my family and I rode our horses over fields and through open woodlands. The rural landscape with its clean, fresh air and smells of the seasons left a deep impression in my memory and stirred the passion I carry for protecting the wildlife habitat and scenic waterfront of our Indian River Lagoon.

Unfortunately, the hunt country I grew up in did not last into my adult years. When I was in high school, our family moved – mainly because our pristine landscape, complete with foxes and hounds, was being replaced by suburban development faster than Florida was growing only a few years ago. Later, my husband, Walter, and I moved to the shores of Lake St. Clair to raise our family in an environment rich in nature and wildlife.

Protecting our environmentally sensitive and culturally significant lands is important. As a founding director of the Indian River Land Trust, formed 20 years ago to save our county's special places, including McKee Botanical Garden, I still stand by this conviction.

Today, the opportunity before us to preserve the Indian River Lagoon is tremendous. The economic slowdown has temporarily halted construction of homes on the Lagoon. This is our one chance to protect and preserve the nation's most diverse estuary. The Lagoon is home to 2,200 animal species, and is part of the Atlantic Flyway, through which millions of birds migrate each year. One-third of the U.S. population of manatees lives in the Lagoon, and fifty species of birds and animals that depend on this estuary are listed as endangered or threatened.

I hope that we will all do what is necessary to capitalize on this opportunity to preserve the unique beauty and integrity of our Lagoon. The opportunity may soon be gone.

— Toni Robinson
Director Emerita



Photos by J. Scott Kelly

On November 4th Indian River Land Trust Directors and Advisors were welcomed back to Vero Beach with a reception hosted by Board Chairman Stephanie Smith and her husband Orin. The event was an occasion to kick off the Land Trust's 20th anniversary celebration. Thank you Stephanie and Orin for a lovely evening!

On the cover: Boardwalk at Spoonbill Marsh | Photo by Ken Grudens

Preserving, Protecting, Providing for the Future

47 Acres Protected

A window has opened – a window to a world of conservation opportunities that could forever protect the character of the Indian River Lagoon in this unique part of Florida. In 2009, IRLT jumpstarted its Lagoon Waterfront Initiative and with the support of many generous contributors, has purchased four properties totaling more than 60 acres of environmentally important land along the Indian River Lagoon this past year (see map and list of supporters on page 7). The protection of these four parcels will forever preserve a mile of waterfront habitat from development, protect the Lagoon's scenic waterfront, and provide much needed recreational and educational opportunities for our citizens.

The crown jewel of these purchases is a 47-acre parcel of oaks, mangrove wetlands and an intact high salt marsh acquired by the Land Trust in November. This unique property, which contains nearly a ½ mile of frontage on the Lagoon, adjoins the County's Spoonbill Marsh. Together, these properties protect nearly 100 acres of Lagoon habitat that invoke a setting the native Ais people of this region of Florida experienced centuries ago.

The Land Trust is partnering with the County's Department of Utilities to enhance the habitat and provide access to this unique set of uplands and lowlands via a series of trails and boardwalks. In 2009, the County constructed a set of ponds conducive for wading birds such as the Roseate

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Benefit Celebrates 20 Years of Conservation

Delectable hors d'oeuvres, themed cocktails, a star filled sky, dining amidst palm trees, music floating on the air and s'mores at the bonfire set the stage for a night of celebration.

Nearly 350 friends joined us for our annual benefit – Land Water Wildlife: Preserve, Protect, Provide for the Future – to celebrate our conservation accomplishments in Indian River County over the last 20 years. The night also highlighted the vision of the Land Trust's Lagoon Waterfront Initiative to preserve wildlife habitat, protect scenic views and provide public access. The Lagoon Waterfront Initiative will forever conserve the special

qualities that make our county unique. To help tell our story, artwork from local artists was on display and available for sale in our inaugural Art Gallery.

The benefit, co-chaired by Char Higgins and Helen Johnson and supported by a dedicated committee and generous sponsors, was the most successful in our history, raising record-setting funds to support our important projects and programs.

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



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Photos by Jon Pine

Preserving, Protecting, Providing for the Future 47 Acres Protected Continued

Spoonbill. The pond system was designed to safely disperse a brine solution byproduct of the County's aquifer drinking water supply using Lagoon water.

The Land Trust's parcel, which contains about 14 acres of oak and palms adjacent to the north edge of Spoonbill Marsh, complements the habitat of this wetland system. This adjoining forest of mature trees allows for birds of prey, such as Ospreys and Bald Eagles, both of which are nesting in the vicinity, to hunt for fish and small mammals in and around the series of ponds found on the Spoonbill Marsh property.

The complete mix of upland and wetland habitats that comprise this unique part of the Indian River Lagoon create a wonderful setting for observing wildlife in its splendor and studying the interaction of man and nature. Working with County staff, IRLT hopes to expand the trail system into the salt marsh and provide a more comprehensive experience for visitors to this site. And while the window to save our Indian River Lagoon remains open, IRLT plans to continue its fundraising efforts to protect more habitat on both the east and west shores of the most diverse estuary in North America.



Great Egret

Kayak/Canoe Launch Planned

In August 2010, the Land Trust purchased four acres of conservation land on the west side of the Indian River Lagoon at the end of Quay Dock Road. The historic wagon road built in the 1890s was used by early settlers on John's Island and the peninsula to transport their produce from the Quay Dock to Quay Station, now Winter Beach. A kayak/canoe launch is planned for the property and is expected to be open to Land Trust members and guests later this year.



Board Members Char Higgins, John Johnson and Grant Withers at the site of the future kayak/canoe launch.

Map of Recently Protected Lands





JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL MEMBERS EVENT

When: Saturday, March 26, 2011; 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Where: Spoonbill Marsh

What: Refreshments, music, boardwalk tours and more

Who: Indian River Land Trust members and their guests

Sponsored by: Mr. and Mrs. Henry G. Stifel ,Toni Robinson,
Vero Marine Center



Look for your invitation in the mail!

Visit our website! For more information on the projects and events described in this newsletter, visit us at www.irlt.org.

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We would like to thank


and

Andrew Harper and Gena Grove of



for sponsoring this newsletter.