



Summer 2014

# Landmarks

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## IRLT Membership Makes a Difference

On April 12th more than 150 Land Trust supporters gathered under the cool shade of the oaks at the Toni Robinson Waterfront Trail to celebrate IRLT's success of protecting nearly nine miles of shoreline along the Indian River Lagoon. IRLT members listened to the music of Blue Cypress Bluegrass Band and enjoyed donations of pastries by the Patisserie, fresh squeezed orange juice of Schacht Groves and water from Gould Cooksey Fennel, P.A. Board Chairman, Louis Schacht, thanked everyone for their support in raising more than \$10.3 million to protect over 870 acres of scenic shoreline and critical wildlife habitat. The IRLT's Campaign to Save Our Indian River Lagoon was a great success. Even while the crowd reveled in IRLT's success of becoming an important force for land protection in our county, members were already taking their love for the Lagoon to the next level. During the entire 2 ½ hour event, IRLT members and guests, under the guidance of several volunteers from the Vero Beach Power Squadron and the Coastal Conservation Association, made over 70 oyster mats for the Lagoon.

In an effort to remove unwanted nitrates and toxins from the Lagoon's water column, several organizations in the region have

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## Vote YES for Conservation

This November 4th the Florida elections ballot will include a number of proposed constitution amendments. Amendment 1, if approved by the voters, will create stable and long-term funding for conservation programs in Florida, ensuring that we can safeguard our most treasured waters and lands for future generations.

The Indian River Land Trust endorses this proposed Amendment to the State Constitution which will re-direct approximately \$10 billion in existing state revenues over 20 years to the acquisition and restoration of critical wildlife habitat and important water resources across Florida. These revenues had provided "Florida Forever" funding for land conservation from the early 1990s until 2010. The Amendment will not increase any state or local taxes. If successful, monies will be made available through state conservation programs, and by way of grants, for municipalities and land trusts such as IRLT.

We encourage everyone to learn more about Amendment 1 by visiting the website for Florida's Water and Land Legacy campaign at [www.VoteYesOn1FL.org](http://www.VoteYesOn1FL.org) or by calling the campaign headquarters at 850-629-4656. It is believed that Amendment 1 will be greatly boosted by absentee voters. Please remember to mail in your absentee ballot if you are a Florida resident, but expect to be located elsewhere on November 4th. And remember to "Vote Yes on 1."



Board Chairman, Louis Schacht

teamed up to make hundreds of oyster mats for strategic placement in the Lagoon. These mats can help failing oyster beds rejuvenate by encouraging oysters to seed in the oyster shells on these mats installed near the existing beds. On average, one oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water a day.

The Campaign funding IRLT has been able to raise for preserving our shoreline is tremendous. Executive Director, Ken Grudens, amazed at what can happen in five short years, thought it fitting that members were able to gather this year right where it all began. This 1.6 acre property of mature native oaks and palms, now the gateway to the trails and boardwalks of this nature preserve was slated for development of five homes in 2009. Instead, it became the first of IRLT's fifteen Lagoon acquisitions that have gone a long way toward forever preserving the green shoreline of Indian River County. Together, we have made a difference.



Participants, young and young at heart, enjoy the festivities.







Jim Shea (left) working with other volunteers at Bee Gum Point.

## Meet: Jim Shea – Land Steward Volunteer

I have always been interested in wildlife and habitat conservation issues. I am an avid birder who also tries to stay fit. By volunteering at Bee Gum Point Preserve I can ride my bike 25 minutes each way to the preserve and then spend a tranquil hour or so recording birds and other wildlife for the Land Trust. A month-by-month and year-by-year

account will help establish a census which will tell us whether work by the Land Trust is beneficial to the Preserve. Birds and other wildlife at Bee Gum include bobcats, otters, rabbits, raccoons, opossum, crabs, snakes, butterflies and various species of fish. The goal is to preserve and enhance the habitat for the resident species and migrants that visit our area. I try to get to the preserve two or three times each week. The Land Trust has a great mission and anything we volunteers can do to help is certainly a worthwhile endeavor.

-Jim Shea

**To volunteer call our office — 772.794.0701.**



Volunteers work on Bee Gum Point - Busting Brazilian Pepper as a part of a Day of Service.



## Indian River Land Trust

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## Save the Date:

### *Land Water Wildlife:* *Celebrate 25 years of Conservation*

Thursday, November 6, 2014

Join us at 6:00 PM for a festive evening.

Tickets \$175 per person

Sponsorship opportunities are available.

For more information call: 772.794.0701



## Special thanks to:

- Adventure Kayaking
- Complete Cleaning
- Clements Pest Control
- Florida Power & Light
- Kennedy Groves
- Orchid Island Bikes & Kayaks
- Patisserie Vero Beach
- Sequin
- Shells & Things
- Very Orange





## The Ladies of the Lagoon

With the knowledge that women are a powerful force and can effect change, long-time Land Trust Board members Stephanie Smith and Kathleen Schulke launched the Ladies of the Lagoon this past spring. Their goal is to motivate women to understand the importance of the interconnectivity of the land to the water of the Indian River Lagoon.

Encouraged by guest speaker Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch to, “make a change, a lasting difference,” attendees were asked to join the Ladies of the Lagoon as Founding or general members. To-date, the Ladies of the Lagoon have raised over \$16,000 with a membership of 55 interested and enthusiastic women.

All of the proceeds from the Ladies of the Lagoon will go directly to fund fish studies being coordinated by the Land Trust under the auspices of Dr. Grant Gilmore, a renowned fisheries scientist of the region. One study is looking at the relationship between economically important Lagoon fish and the degree of connectivity of water in the mosquito impoundment at Bee Gum Point, a 111-acre Land Trust nature preserve on the Lagoon.

## The Science of Fish in the Lagoon

The Land Trust has a unique opportunity to study and improve the wildlife habitat of nearly nine miles of coastal wetland properties on the Indian River Lagoon. Fortunately, fish populations in the lagoon are still the richest and most diverse in the United States, with more than 600 species, but their habitat has been compromised. Over the past 60 years most of the Land Trust’s properties were altered with impoundments to control mosquito populations, often eliminating the hydrological connections with the lagoon.

New scientific research emphasizes the importance of these coastal wetlands as important breeding grounds for millions of young fish each year. As a result, IRLT is conducting scientific studies at Bee Gum Point with fisheries scientist Dr. Grant Gilmore to better understand what the fish and other organisms need to thrive during their life cycles.

The Land Trust is trying to determine the best way to connect the wetlands with the lagoon for the benefit



Julie Hanson and Dr. Gilmore conducting fish studies.

of multiple species while allowing for the control of mosquito populations. Using custom made fish nets and box traps, staff and volunteers are assisting Dr. Gilmore in conducting surveys that verify the presence of various species of fish, including snook, pipefish, mosquito fish, tarpon, and mangrove snapper at various locations around the impoundment. Also, with support from the Ladies of the Lagoon, IRLT recently purchased a digital meter that measures water quality parameters in conjunction with the fish surveys.

These studies will provide a better understanding of fish movement during different water cycles on the Lagoon, and where restoration and enhanced connections should occur. This will allow IRLT to better manage our wetlands throughout Indian River County.



**875 acres** in Indian River County, **8 miles** of Lagoon shoreline, **7 acres** of fresh water ponds,  
**2 family-friendly nature preserves** open to the public, **370 species** of birds, **685 species** of fish

*Your efforts, your dedication, your persistence.  
Our appreciation, gratitude and thanks.*

INDIAN RIVER LAND TRUST

