



# Landmarks

Winter 2021

PROTECTING THE LAND THAT PROTECTS THE LAGOON

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## The Land Trust at Your Service

The COVID-19 pandemic put a premium on nature in 2020. The great outdoors was not only nice to have, it became vital to our mental and physical well-being. During an unprecedented year, our team, considered essential personnel, worked hard to maintain and improve the twelve miles of Lagoon shoreline IRLT owns and manages. Here are a few examples.

The popular Lagoon Greenway, managed jointly with the County Parks and Recreation Department, remained open for the duration so our county's residents (and their dogs) could stretch their legs while enjoying one another's company and maintaining everyone's safety.

More local residents and their families discovered the 50-acre Toni Robinson Waterfront Trail, aptly named after the founder of the Land Trust 30 years ago. The Land Trust replaced the preserve's aging mangrove boardwalk and pier that overlooks the Lagoon,

ensuring folks could continue to safely enjoy the trail's quiet, natural surroundings.

The Land Trust also continued to assist the County with the development of new trails and boardwalks at Oyster Bar Marsh. With your generous support, IRLT acquired two key parcels of land on this 165-acre peninsula several years ago, finally enabling the entire property to be transformed into a recreational trail system. After the addition of a landscaped parking area, we look forward to welcoming the first guests to this wild and special place later this year.

Thanks to your continued support during the challenging times of 2020, the Land Trust not only continued to Protect the Land that Protects the Lagoon, but provided critically important access to the great outdoors for our residents, young and old, two-legged and four-legged!



Oyster Bar Marsh



# Picnic to Protect the Lagoon 2020







Photos by Denise Ritchie

# Indian River Land Trust our Picnic to Protect the Land

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# Thanks all who sponsored Lagoon on November 5, 2020

Mr. and Mrs. J. Gary Parker  
Mr. and Mrs. Derwin F. Philips  
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## Special Thanks

Wine from Alimentari Gourmet Market  
Lighting by East Coast Encore  
Baskets donated by The Stephen and  
Carla Hahn Foundation  
Paintings by Kathryn Hamill  
Potted plants by Rock City Gardens

# Keeping Our Members Informed:

## Bringing Back Rare Salt Marsh along the Lagoon

Thanks to you, our generous sponsors, the Indian River Land Trust has protected nearly 1,200 acres of conservation lands along the Indian River Lagoon. As one of the most biologically diverse estuaries in North America, the Lagoon is home to 2,100 plant species and 2,200 animal species within its watershed.

Many of IRLT's safeguarded sanctuaries, such as Winter Beach Salt Marsh, Narrows Marsh, and New Otter Marsh contain increasingly rare high salt marsh. Salt marshes are one of the most productive ecosystems in the world; biological supermarkets, if

you will. For example, wetlands harbor an increasing number of birds while populations in most other ecosystems are dwindling at an alarming rate. Much of the historic salt marsh along the Indian River Lagoon, and across Florida, has been lost to development or converted to forested wetlands in an effort to control salt marsh mosquitos. Their loss also mean the loss of important services to us – water filtration, storm buffers, and floodwater control.

Winter Beach Salt Marsh is part of the largest remaining high salt marsh in Indian River County.



Aerial view of Winter Beach Salt Marsh showing restored salt marsh area Feb 2020.



Burning of invasive Brazilian peppertree at Winter Beach Salt Marsh May 2019.



This 60-acre wetland, situated north of Grand Harbor, has been the focus of a Land Trust effort to restore salt marsh that was overrun by Brazilian pepper, the most widespread invasive plant in Florida. After removing and burning a nearly impenetrable thicket that was displacing valuable plant and animal habitat, the salt marsh rejuvenated from the existing seed bank and nearby salt marsh. The results have been remarkable. The Land Trust intends to duplicate this effort next at its Coastal Oaks Preserve. Meanwhile, the restored salt marsh continues to harbor many species valued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which provided a matching grant for the project.

IRLT stewardship staff will continue to monitor the restored marsh to document this success. The Land Trust also plans to improve the fish and wildlife habitat of the salt marsh and adjoining mangrove swamp by breaching a man-made shoreline berm to enable better water exchange with the Indian River Lagoon. This will improve the ecological value of these wetlands as a nursery for aquatic species and as a water quality filter for the Lagoon.

By reclaiming salt marsh, great things are happening on the ground at IRLT properties!



Salt grass meadow following removal of  
Brazilian peppertree May 2020.

Salt marsh growth following removal  
of Brazilian peppertree May 2020.



# Chelsea's Stay at Home Fundraiser





## February – May 2021

Indian River Land Trust is partnering with Chelsea's for our annual Stay at Home Fundraiser. Protect the Lagoon, support a local business and treat yourself or someone you love to a night off of cooking!

Please send us \_\_\_\_\_ certificates at \$100.00 each.

Certificates are valid until June 15, 2021.

Each certificate includes the following from Chelsea's daily selection:

-  Two dinner-sized entrees
-  Two side-dishes
-  Two desserts
-  One bottle of wine from the IRLT collection

Add \_\_\_\_ 12" pizza(s) for our children (\$9.00 each) \_\_\_\_ Cheese \_\_\_\_ Pepperoni.

### Payment information:

\_\_\_\_ By check payable to Indian River Land Trust

\_\_\_\_ By credit card as follows:

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expires \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Chelsea's  
Gourmet



**Thank you!** Send in this registration form or call the office to purchase your certificates and we will mail them to you along with your donation receipt.



## Welcoming New Advisors and Staff

The Land Trust is pleased to announce the addition of five new Advisors: Joseph Huber, Ted Michael, Sheila Rockwell, Louis Schacht and Kate Weeks. We look forward to getting them more involved in the Land Trust. Additionally, three former Advisors joined the Board of Directors: Bill Broadbent, John Johnson, and Chris Ryan. IRLT Chairman, Chuck Cramb and the Board welcomed everyone at the January Board meeting.



The Land Trust also recently hired a new Director of Marketing and Philanthropy, Christine Walker. Christine, who has nearly two decades of experience in non-profits, comes to IRLT from the Bay Area

of California where she spent the last seven years raising funds and awareness for land conservation initiatives. This experience in the preservation of agricultural, wild and park lands will serve her well in this critical role.

## A Fond Farewell

After decades of involvement on the IRLT Board of Directors, Gena Grove and Warren Schwerin have handed down the torch from their long-held posts. It is amazing how much enthusiasm and support two people can provide as much as Gena and Warren have for the Land Trust. We will miss Gena and Warren's participation, but wish them the best.

## Engage, Participate, Learn

### Trail Mix

We love every acre of the land we protect, it holds incredible stories of natural and human history. Our public field trips have been a treasured way of sharing the nooks and crannies of our Lagoon, the stories of how we came to protect them and why it's so important to do so.

With your safety in mind, Indian River Land Trust is pausing our in-person conservation tours until the pandemic is safely in our rear-view mirror.

But while we can't bring you out to the land, we want to bring the land to you. This year, we will introduce you to land trust-protected properties through our new Trail Mix video series. We hope you'll tune in and then, more importantly, get out on the trail!

Sign up for our e-news or check our Facebook page for new installments of Trail Mix with some familiar faces introducing you to special places.

### Sip and Shop

March 12, 2021 at J. McLaughlin in the Village Shops

A portion of every purchase made at this J. McLaughlin location on March 12 will go back to Indian River Land Trust. Single serve sips and social distancing will keep shoppers safe as they come out to shop for a cause. With thanks to J. McLaughlin and all of you for the many ways you help Protect the Land that Protects the Lagoon.

# Nutcracker on the Indian River

It was a privilege to host Ballet Vero Beach performers in a magical interpretation of the classic Nutcracker, filmed on Land Trust conserved properties with costumes and choreography that celebrate our wild paradise.

Finding the meeting point between the arts and conservation has been a highlight of this collaboration and we look forward to more opportunities to magnify both endeavors through future partnerships. In the words of American biologist, E.O. Wilson, "an alliance is overdue."

Photos by Joe Semkow



***Check out our web site at [www.irlt.org](http://www.irlt.org) for more opportunities to connect***



# The Mighty Mangrove

Native to the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem are three species of mangroves: red, black, and white. These fascinating trees, all protected by Florida state law, are uniquely adapted as salt-tolerant, allowing them to thrive in the intertidal zone where land meets sea.

Characteristic of red mangroves are their dramatically arching prop roots, the looks of which lends them the nickname, “walking tree.” Black mangroves can be identified by their dark-colored bark, salty leaf undersides, and snorkel roots (pneumatophores) that stick up from the surrounding sediments and help them “breathe.” Finally, white mangroves can be recognized by their light-colored bark and rounded leaves, the bases of which display a pair of tiny nodes (glands) where salt is excreted. Remarkably, all three species are viviparous, meaning the parent plant bears live young in the form of germinated seeds

(propagules) that fall off when conditions are just right for dispersal.

The Indian River Land Trust owns and protects approximately 800 acres of mangrove forest along the Indian River Lagoon, accounting for over 1 million pounds of carbon uptake from the atmosphere annually. In fact, mangrove forests account for more carbon sequestration than any other forest type worldwide. Other important ecosystem services provided by mangroves include shoreline stabilization, nutrient cycling, and providing habitat for a variety of animal species such as crustaceans, oysters, and fish.

The world needs mangroves and they need us. Habitat loss poses the biggest threat to these true natives, and your support for the Indian River Land Trust helps us continue to preserve these treasured resources.

Red Mangrove



Black Mangrove



White Mangrove





## Special thanks

*A special thanks to Cathy Ferrell for donating the beautiful Snowy Egret sculpture to IRLT! Cathy takes her inspiration from Florida's natural beauty and her work is exhibited and collected internationally.*

Visit our website!

For more information on the projects and events described in this newsletter, visit us at [www.irlt.org](http://www.irlt.org).



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