

Thank You, Shirley Carpenter

by Ed Robertson:

Since 1997, when a land trust for the Indian River Lakes area was just an idea, Shirley Carpenter's work has been crucial to IRLC's accomplishments. From those earliest kitchen table conversations until July 1, 2012 Shirley and Harold's many pecuniary donations and her priceless gift of service have had a huge influence on the conservancy's success.

For our board of directors, Shirley came with the essential qualities of principled rational thinking, a generous spirit and a delightful personality. Because of her previous vast experience in building community organizations, she brought many valuable contacts and a long record of getting things done.

After helping found the IRLC, guiding it on the right track and serving for many years as secretary, Shirley will be sorely missed on our board. It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve with her and we are deeply grateful for all she has done for this organization and the larger community.

We are also grateful for her commitment to continued service as an IRLC volunteer and supporter.

from Margie Hillback:

Shirley (and Harold) Carpenter were two of a handful of people who were crucial to the formation of the Indian River Lakes Conservancy. The task of forming a Conservancy seemed unimaginable and daunting to most everyone - but Shirley calmly encouraged us to move forward, used her connections along the river to gather advice, and was always there. She is such a positive person. With her common sense approach, Shirley helped us explore options, think long term and find information, answers, and critical help. From the beginning she has always been the strong quiet foundation of the IRLC.

Looking Back

Serendipity or a Lucky Accident

by Shirley Carpenter

Sometimes, in the excitement of moving forward, we forget to look back. This month, Shirley Carpenter, a founding member of the Indian River Lakes Conservancy announced her retirement from the board. We thought this was a perfect opportunity to gather Shirley's memories to help us document the beginnings of our organization and some of the key people who brought us to where we are today.

As is so often the case in ventures of this kind, the founding of the Indian River Lakes Conservancy was more a result of luck than a product of any kind of careful planning on the part of the founders, except, of course, for the participation of Henry Carse. Henry was a true conservationist and environmentalist. He was way ahead of his time in his understanding of the land and what it took to preserve it.

It happened that as Henry had grown older, he felt the need to divest himself of some of his holdings around Butterfield Lake, and he offered a 26 acre parcel to the Thousand Islands Land Trust. As the land was not on the St. Lawrence River or part of its watershed, they were not interested in the acquiring the land, but TILT's

Executive Director, Sissy Danforth, happened to be in my book club. She knew that I owned property on Butterfield Lake. She called me and asked if anyone on the lake might be interested. I called a few people – Sandy and Margie Hillback, Ed and Denise Robertson, Steve McDonald. Then Sissy and I met with Gerry Smith, a local nature lover and bird expert. On a crisp fall afternoon in 1997 (I think), the three of us climbed aboard my 13 foot Boston Whaler and went down the lake to explore the 26 acre parcel, Gerry found abundant plant and animal life, declared the property well worth preserving, and the rest is history. The right people had come together at the right time and place, and the Indian River Lakes Conservancy was born.