



Indian River Lakes CONSERVANCY

Protect • Learn • Enjoy • Forever

Newsletter
Spring 2019



New Initiatives, New Land, New Trails

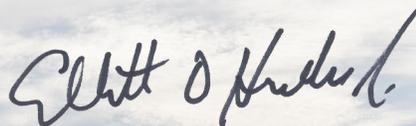
I am looking forward to an amazing 2019 spring and summer active season. Our team, led by Executive Director Wylie Huffman, is making great progress in preparation for our busiest and most exciting year EVER! Signature programs such as our significantly expanded Water Quality Conference, the IRLC Kids' Camp featuring live critters, our diverse and always interesting educational Speakers Series and a super Celebration of the Lakes are all being geared up for your education and enjoyment.

Two amazing new conservation-oriented programs are in the early-launch stage. Project WHIRL is an educator-led, water and wetlands quality-focused education and action program. It is designed to involve significant participation of local high school and college students. The other, "RTHS", is a sophisticated remote, real time, water quality monitoring system. Check out more detailed descriptions of these and other activities in the rest of this newsletter.

The dedication of the Beatrice Rosamond Overlook Trail (All Access) at the Redwood Hill Preserve will take place on July 1st. We are also excited to have recently acquired 236 more beautiful acres adjacent to the Baker Woods Preserve for you to explore. Special thanks to Gary Dake for his important support of this land acquisition.

You can find much more information about all our upcoming activities and events in this newsletter or online. I look forward to seeing you at our events this summer.

Thank you for all your support,



Community Spirit Youth Giving Challenge

The Indian River Lakes Conservancy was recognized in the Community Spirit Youth Giving Challenge. The challenge, sponsored by the Northern NY Community Foundation and the Community Bank, asked students to write an essay about the meaning of community. Then they were asked to pick an organization that embodies those qualities. Peyton Gasser's essay (below) won the hearts of the judges, and so the IRLC will be awarded a grant to continue building community and inspiring youth.

A community is to me a group of people that work and live together. As well as people who have "each others back." In my opinion this is what a community is an what it does.

And this is what I love about this Community. We together have "each others back." And with everyone having this set of mind make people think of others if they need help, advice, or even a friend. All this and other small things, makes this community a great place to live.

My chosen organization is the Indian River Lakes Conservancy because having "each others back" does not mean just people.

This organization helps keep our ecosystems beautiful. Also their volunteers are kind and committed. This is why I know that the Indian River Lakes Conservancy makes our community a better place.



Protectors of Land and Habitat on the Indian River Lakes



The Indian River Lakes Conservancy (IRLC) is kicking off a new education program. Protectors of Water and Habitat on the Indian River Lakes (Project WHIRL) is geared towards high school students interested in improving the natural environment in and around the Indian River Lakes.

This summer, students will participate in a six-week program. High school students will be mentored by field professionals and university student interns majoring in environmental science related fields. The program will consist of three tracks including watershed management, invasive species, and aquatic resources.

Components of these programs will involve students conducting invasive species surveys and creating field reports that will guide IRLC invasive species management strategies and prevention tactics on our preserves. Students will also participate in community ecological assessments, plankton surveys, water quality monitoring, and implement aspects of lake management plans.

WHIRL's curriculum also aims to provide high school students the opportunity to envision a professional future working in the environmental field. A visit to Paul Smith's limnology laboratories will highlight one possible path to continue their studies in the future. Limnology is the study of lakes and rivers.

For the last day of the program, a reception will be held during which the students will brief each other on what they learned and accomplished. Lake associations and community members are welcome and encouraged to attend. This event is scheduled for Tuesday, August 13th at 9:00 a.m.

The IRLC is excited and honored to be partnering with the following organizations to launch this spectacular program: Central New York Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America, FORCES (Friends of Recreation, Conservation, and Environmental Stewardship) from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, SLELO PRISM (Saint Lawrence - Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management), and Paul Smith's College's Adirondack Watershed Institute.

“I am inspired by the goal to create cross-generational stewards of our local waterways. We have much to learn from each other.”

- Program Advisor, Andrea Inserra

“I want to be a WHIRL mentee because of fishing! If we don't keep the lakes healthy, I won't be able to fish and I love fishing.”

- Jorden Wendt, Indian River Student

“This is the chance for me to do something good for the community and help me build my confidence so I can be successful in science.” - Melodie Moen, Indian River Student



Real-Time Hydrological Stations (RTHS)

The IRLC is looking for lakeside residents owning properties near Indian River Lake inflows and outflows who would be interested in hosting the installation of a Real Time Hydrologic Station (RTHS).

The data generated by the RTHS will help identify and isolate the conditions that precede and contribute to hazardous algal bloom outbreaks. Future “sonde” or sensor upgrades will enable the RTHS to measure nitrogen and phosphorus levels in the water column that contribute to the excessive aquatic vegetation growth and the spread of aquatic invasive species. All of these conditions are direct threats to lakeside property values and the activities that lakeside residents and locals enjoy including swimming, boating, and fishing on our beloved lakes.

Inflow and outflow locations are the mixing zones and provide the best opportunity to sample the entire water column.

The RTHS also monitors water temperature, meteorological data, turbidity, salinity, and

other aspects of water quality, and then uploads the data to <http://www.rths.us/irlc.cgi>.

The IRLC’s partner in this project, the Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries installed the first RTHS at the Mud Lake outflow in Redwood in November 2019. Other locations are currently under permit review are the Butterfield Lake boat launch and locations on Lake of the Woods and Black Lake. The institute has allocated five additional RTHS’s for the Indian River Lakes.

The RTHS system consists of a solar panel, a control box, and a battery box, all of which are mounted on a single pole. The RTHS system is solar powered and can be either placed in shallow water, or on the shoreline with a cable connecting to the underwater sonde. Selected sites should be within 300 feet of a lake inflow or outflow, have southern sky exposure, and be accessible for servicing.

If you are interested in hosting a RTHS, please contact our office.

Protecting Land AT BAKER WOODS PRESERVE + NEW ANNEX

SPRING IS ALWAYS A SPECIAL TIME at Baker Woods Preserve. Guests of the forest can saunter down trails admiring the Hemlock Grove's weighty shade or visit the pollinator garden where native blossoms attract nectar lovers of all kinds.

The preserve, located just outside the 'blue line' of the Adirondack Park in Natural Bridge, NY, was donated to the Indian River Lakes Conservancy in 2016 by Doris N. Baker. Doris traveled from New York City each summer for decades to visit her special piece of land and second home at Baker Woods. Doris donated the land in perpetuity to the IRLC when the long drive got to be too much for her.

THIS SPRING, WE HAVE EVEN MORE TO CELEBRATE. THE IRLC has added 236 acres to the Preserve thanks to a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant, partnership with Ducks Unlimited, and the generosity of the Gary Dake and Matthew Carney families.

The now 590-acre Baker Woods Preserve hosts eight miles of hiking trails, some of which are suitable for cross country skiing and snowshoeing. The new addition is located just upstream from the canoe launch and features approximately 3,800 feet of frontage on the south shore of the Indian River and 2,000 feet of frontage on Weatherhead Creek.

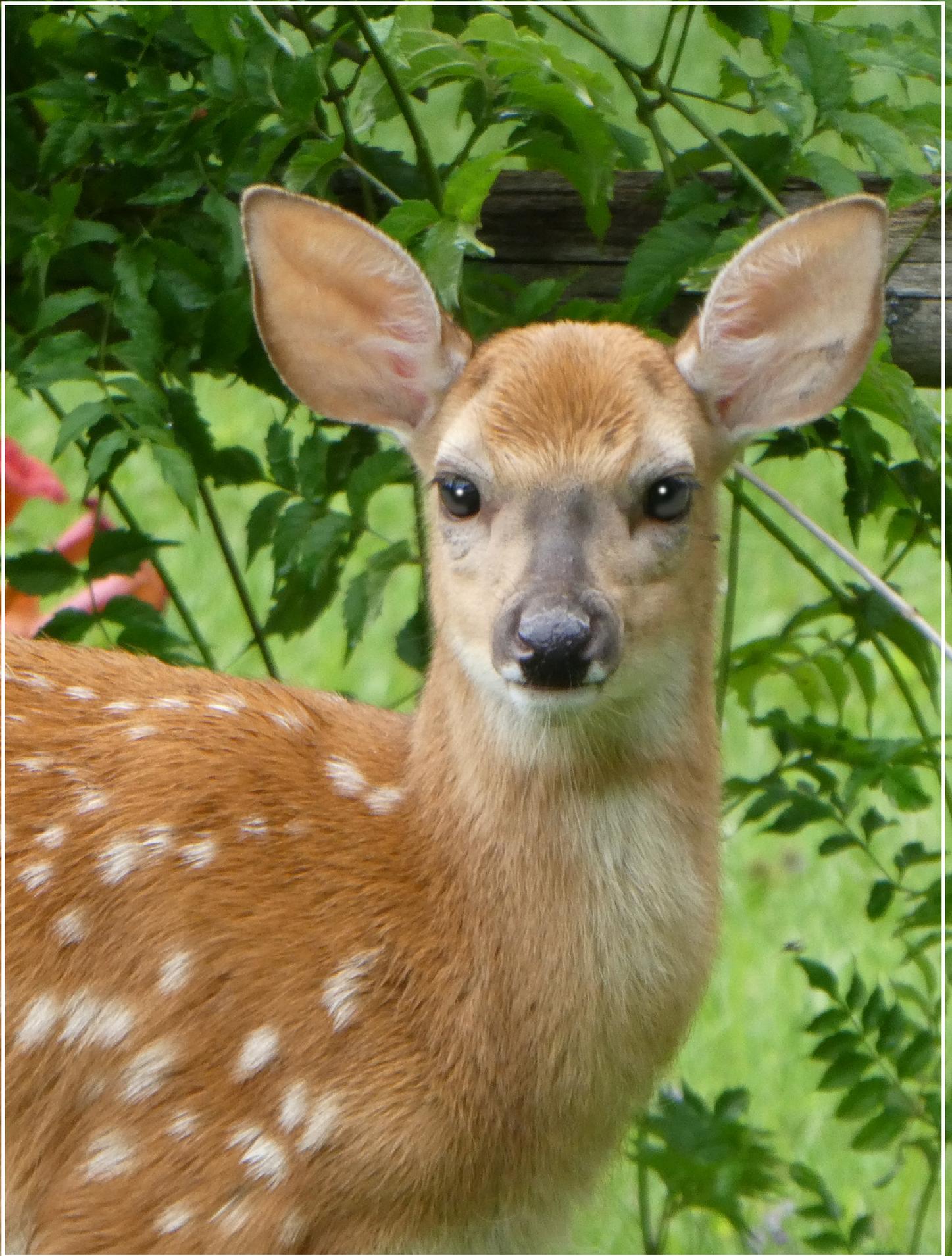
The annex contains diverse wetland, riverine and forested natural communities, providing a mosaic of habitat for a great diversity of avian species of concern including waterfowl, water birds, marsh birds, raptors and forest songbirds. Additionally the parcel provides high-quality breeding habitat for American Woodcock, Golden-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, American Bittern, and Northern Harrier.

The acquisition of this land further enhances the long-term viability and ecological integrity of the Baker Woods Preserve because it now abuts 20,412 protected acres in the Frank E. Jadwin Memorial State Forest thereby expanding habitat and opening migration corridors which will be vital for wildlife sustainability over time.

Matt Carney and his family have been steadfast stewards of the land and trails at Baker Woods. Matt, and his son Liam, spent 800 hours clearing trails and caretaking signs, benches, and other built structures during the summer of 2018.

We invite you to enjoy the trails at Baker Woods this spring. We always enjoy seeing your photos of our preserves, so please share the beautiful sites with us on Facebook, Instagram, or by email.





A Look Back...



The IRLC and the Thousand Islands Land Trust lead paddlers across Butterfield Lake to watch the rise of the 2018 Strawberry Full Moon. The moon was cast with a beautiful orange hue. This year a moonlight paddle is planned for June 18th on Payne Lake. There is nothing quite as extraordinary as gliding over water under the celestial giant.



In July of 2018, kids explored the Redwood Hill Preserve's trails during a summer camp aimed at getting children back in nature. "Teaching children about the natural world should be treated as one of the most important events of their lives." -Thomas Berry



IRLC Staff attended the Land Trust Alliance's National Rally in Pittsburgh, PA in October 2018. At the rally, they connected with other successful land trusts from across the country and learned about the best practices in conservation, stewardship, and children's nature education.



Maggie Rourke-Bay presented the Creation Story during the first "Nature Talk at Noon" in January 2019. The series is co-sponsored by and held at the Depauville Free Library. Maggie teaches language and culture at the St. Regis Mohawk School. Subsequent talks in the series included, "The Impact of Road Salt," and "The Secret Lives of Turtles."



Alexandria's Winter Carnival was resurrected this year due to the efforts of Dick Campany and friends. The IRLC joined in the fun by hosting a hike at Redwood Hill Preserve on February 9th. Julie Covey led the group over snow-covered trails, discussing local wildlife and some invasive species threats, such as the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, along the way.



Seventeen adventuresome snowshoe hikers enjoyed an afternoon in a winter wonderland on February 2nd at Baker Woods Preserve. Greg Washburn led the 2.7-mile hike and pointed out seven species of conifers, including a magnificent stand of old growth hemlock trees, and different animal tracks that were imprinted on the five-foot-deep snowpack. After the hike, the snowshoers enjoyed sharing tall tales of surviving the hike and s'mores around a warm campfire.

"In every walk with Nature one receives far more than he seeks." -John Muir

A Look Ahead...

WATER QUALITY CONFERENCE

FIGHT HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

IRLC's second annual Water Quality Conference will be held on June 7th as we continue our education and outreach efforts to build a foundation for creating our Indian River Watershed Management Plan. The conference theme is "Fight the Harmful Algal Blooms: Effective measures cottage owners, lake associations, and municipalities can take to improve water quality."

Some of this year's topics include "Connecting Communities to Watershed Planning Efforts", "The Cumulative Effects of Road Salt", "Sustainable Land Use for Improved Water Quality," and "Lakeside Septic Challenges and Solutions".

Registration will open on May 1st. You can register on our website or call the office for assistance.

REDWOOD HILL PRESERVE KIDS' SUMMER CAMP

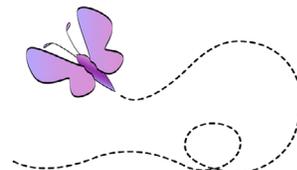
Our second annual kids' camp is already planned and we are anxiously awaiting warm weather and the end of the school year.

Each day of the three-day camp offers a different focus. Rick West, of Westy's Birds of Prey, has volunteered to bring his magnificent raptors up to our Redwood Hill Preserve to allow our campers to get up close and personal on day one! The second day will feature live, native animals from the EdZOOcation program of the NY State Zoo at Thompson Park.

On the last day, we will teach kids about water quality. The campers will get to sort benthic macroinvertebrates, catch minnows and crawfish, and learn from watershed model demonstrations regarding how to be responsible future stewards of our natural environment.

Related readings, games, and crafts will accompany each topic. If you are interested in volunteering to help with the camp please contact our office. Camp registration will open in May. You can register on our website or call the office for assistance.

"It is essential to teach the next generation to appreciate our environment if we expect them to protect our natural resources for years to come. When kids set aside their electronics and immerse themselves in the wonders of nature, it is fascinating to see their minds expand and creativity flow," volunteer and LaFargeville teacher Elizabeth Duvall observes.



Thank you for your Service

Mark Scarlett recently “retired” after serving fifteen years on our Board of Trustees. He was President for four years in our formative years. During that period his thoughtful, calm approach and his broad experience and involvement in the North Country were critical attributes that helped define our course and our style. Mark’s love of, and respect for, the natural beauty of the Indian River Lakes Watershed is infectious and he spread that love far and wide. He was also deeply involved in many of our early land acquisitions and played a pivotal role in creating and defining our Stewardship Committee and its key principles and programs. As a “World Class” grant writer, and as an excellent speaker Mark built many of our fundraising capabilities and his expertise helped to support our major programs over the years. Although Mark is officially “retired”, he is still actively involved in our land stewardship, real property acquisition, and development committees.

We would be remiss if we did not add that Mark’s wife **Louise Scarlett** was also a very active volunteer, most notably in areas such as finance, outreach and communications. We thank you both for your incredible contributions that helped built the IRLC of today and set us on course for an even more successful future in our next twenty years and beyond.

We would like to thank **Jan Douglass** for serving as an IRLC Board Member for the last four years and bringing an important point of view to the Board. She took on the challenge of organizing and leading many of our outreach programs including the Celebration of the Lakes. Long before Jan actually joined the board she served as an excellent ambassador for the IRLC. She regularly attended a wide variety of events around our service area with a folding table, IRLC handouts and her friendly smile, and she worked tirelessly to increase the public’s awareness of the IRLC’s activities. Her experience dealing with water quality issues on Millsite Lake where she and Mike have a cottage was also invaluable. Jan is also the best cookie baker the IRLC has ever had. Jan, thank you for everything you have done for the IRLC and the area we serve.

Thank you to **Matt Carney** for three years of service on our Board of Directors. We first met Matt in 2015 when Doris Baker donated 354 acres to create the Baker Woods Preserve (BWP). Matt and his family lived next to the Bakers for many years and they often walked the land with Doris and her late husband, Norman. After the land was donated to the IRLC, Matt played a key leadership role in defining how to protect this unique property. The preserve is roughly 50% wooded (think trails for walking and cross-country skiing) and 50% wetland that includes easy access to the Indian River (think paddling). Matt took on the challenge of creating ways for the public to enjoy the unique flora and fauna of the Baker Woods Preserve while protecting it for future generations. Matt, his family and a cadre of volunteers designed and built a network of beautiful trails plus several overlooks and then added trail markers and informational signage. If you have not visited the Baker Woods Preserve yet, please do – you won’t forget it, and if you see Matt please thank him for his vision and his efforts.

New to the Crew



Matt Biondolillo was recently elected to the IRLC Board of Directors. Matt is a native of Northern New York- where he grew up fishing and recreating on the Indian River Lakes, St. Lawrence River, and Eastern Lake Ontario. Here, Matt developed a deep passion for the natural environment, particularly our precious living waterways.

Matt is an environmental consultant with more than 22 years professional experience in environmental science and engineering. He has earned certifications as a Project Management Professional (PMP) and Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner (CERP).

Matt has specialized expertise in restoring aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. He has developed environmental restoration plans at the local and watershed scale for wetland, stream, pond, lake, riparian/coastal, and upland environments. In addition, Matt enjoys thought leadership and turning ideas into reality. He co-invented an oleophilic bio barrier (OBB), an innovative technology for capturing and degrading petroleum hydrocarbons to prevent oil sheens on waterways. Matt continues to develop innovative concepts to address leading environmental challenges of today, such as climate change and nutrient management. Matt brings to the Conservancy his vast operational and technical expertise in natural resource management. But, when asked about his favorite fishing spots, he hasn't much to say.



Heidi Sourwine became our first program coordinator in May 2018. Heidi holds a B.S. in Environmental Sociology from St. Lawrence University. Her career as a naturalist educator began at the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center on Wellesley Island, N.Y.

Heidi's professional experience also includes small business management, marketing, and sales gleaned from her time as manager for the Heath Photography Portrait Studio in Redwood. From 2017-2018, she utilized her talents in community building and organizational development at the Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank serving as their community assessment coordinator.

Heidi has been an environmentalist since she was a child collecting frogs, exploring wooded areas, and organizing cliff-jumping excursions. She was raised on a dairy farm just a few miles from Redwood where open spaces were easy to find. Later on as a young adult, Heidi spent summers on the St. Lawrence River giving guided tours. She has many fond memories of time spent kayaking and swimming on the Indian River Lakes including a summer spent living on Millsite Lake.

"I think we are all born environmentalists. If we are lucky, we find opportunities to cultivate that innate connection as we move through life. It is in gratitude to these experiences that many of us choose to extend our time and talents to ensure that these opportunities and spaces continue to thrive."

Welcome to new Board Member **Rebecca Reed** of Carthage who will be featured in our next edition.

Stay in Touch...

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via IndianRiverLakes.org

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Executive Director

Heidi Sourwine

Program Coordinator

Front Cover: © William Delaney.

The photo depicts Hemaris Thysbe, a hummingbird clearwing moth.

IRLC Newsletter : Spring 2019

Join us at an upcoming event...

Open House and Volunteer Social MAY 4TH 10AM

Birds, Blossoms, and Bugs Hike MAY 11TH 10AM

Memorial Day Weekend Hike MAY 24TH 10AM

Learn to Plant with Native Species MAY 30TH 1PM

Photography- "It's for the Birds" JUNE 13TH 6:30PM

Observing the Essence of a Plant JUNE 15TH 1PM

Moonlight Paddle on Payne Lake JUNE 18TH 8PM

For a full listing of summer events, visit indianriverlakes.org.

Save-the-Date...

Water Quality Conference FRIDAY, JUNE 7

Annual Members' Gathering MONDAY, JULY 1ST 5PM

& Dedication of the Beatrice Rosamond All-access Trail

Redwood Hill Summer Kids' Camp JULY 16TH , 17TH , AND 18TH

21ST Annual Celebration of Lakes SATURDAY, JULY 27TH 5PM

Volunteer Recognition BBQ THURSDAY, AUGUST 8TH 6:30PM

