



Indian River Lakes
CONSERVANCY
Protect • Learn • Enjoy • Forever

Fall 2023

**"Teach the student to see the land,
understand what he sees, and
enjoy what he understands."**

– Aldo Leopold



Gilles Rivest

They're here for the summer, then they're gone

Protecting lands and inspiring conservation for a thriving future

In the heart of the Indian River Lakes region, where our community flourishes during the summer months, lies a hidden ecological gem—a slice of paradise that we are privileged to call home.

The Frontenac Arch is a critical portion of the Algonquin to Adirondack (A2A) landscape and a geological wonder that plays a vital role in the North American migration corridor. This corridor extends from the Adirondack Park in New York State to the majestic Algonquin Provincial Park in Ontario, serving as a lifeline for countless species.

While it may seem obvious, all animals share the basic need for safe wild spaces to thrive. Some of our favorite wildlife on our lakes, like our beloved loons, are here for the summer and then travel south. Others may wander all season long throughout our portion of the A2A landscape calling the Indian River Lakes region their home, such as the elusive black bears, bobcats, and martins.

Yet the land and water they depend on is increasingly at risk.

Pockets of suitable habitat between the two parks, along the Frontenac Arch, are gradually transforming into isolated islands separated by vast roads and towering buildings. Tragically, this fragmentation hampers the natural flow of wildlife.



Roger Erickson

Golden-Winged Warblers are becoming increasingly uncommon and threatened across New York State. Indian River Lakes Conservancy (IRLC) is actively managing Golden-Winged Warbler breeding habitat on Grand Lake Reserve.

In a world where human development continues to encroach upon natural landscapes, it is now widely recognized by scientists, local conservationists, and landowners that we need to work together to proactively preserve and nurture large swaths of wildlife habitat.

Our work is therefore multi-faceted, encompassing the conservation of habitats that support animals like Golden Winged Warblers, bobcats, and the occasional moose.

There's good news

Several landowners have asked for our assistance to conserve their land. Others are exploring how they might donate land to establish new public conservation areas or help fund new projects.

As we continue to build new partnerships with local landowners, Lake Associations, and communities to ensure wildlife habitat connectivity, we are exploring new avenues to expand our protected areas, reduce habitat fragmentation, and enhance clean water.

And the new Red Lake Preserve is igniting hope for further expansion of our wildlife habitat project in that area.

As a community-based organization, the success of these efforts depends on the generosity of those who care. Thanks to the unwavering generosity of our supporters, we have been able to contribute to the broader North American effort to address this critical issue.

By granting public access to our region's special places, providing environmental education, and offering recreational opportunities, we are creating opportunities for a harmonious coexistence between nature and people.

Your continued support is the engine to make the seemingly impossible happen: protecting land and fostering an ecologically interconnected landscape. Together we are working towards a future that sustains native wildlife and enhances the quality of life for generations to come.

“Louise and I have spent a lifetime enjoying the uniquely beautiful A2A region. We support IRLC not only for its dedication to protecting the lands and waters that we love, but also for its commitment to fostering the next generation of stewards to carry on that essential work.”

– Mark Scarlett
Rossie, NY



DSS Images

“Wildlife and humans alike have found this area to be a productive and nurturing refuge. This region is special, benefiting us locally as well as being part of a larger wildlife corridor with high-quality aquifers and buffers for the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes Region.”

– Mike Lovegreen
Clear Lake



Gerald Corsi

For the Love of Nature

Planting seeds today grows the love of nature for our tomorrow

The Elizabeth May Duvall Nature Grows Kids Camp continues to inspire outdoor play with intentional lessons and curriculum developed by volunteers.

The summer 2023 theme was "Welcome to the Neighborwood," building a tapestry between nature and community showing children how their worlds are intertwined with nature and the outdoors.

Caroline Smith, a mother of a camper said, "It's been wonderful watching our now 10 year old daughter grow and she has learned about nature through IRLC's programs."

Kids Need Nature, Nature Needs Kids

Children are spending more time indoors than ever before and are termed the "indoor generation" due to the digital era. New technology is captivating, but it's essential we do not underestimate the important affect nature has on kids.

Seeing the pure joy of kids playing and learning outside gives us hope that the seed planted today for the love of nature continues into the



Kara Dry Photography LLC

Camp volunteer tickled by pipe cleaner caterpillars made by pre-schoolers during the Elizabeth May Duvall Nature Grows Kids Camp.

future. Elizabeth Duvall's mother, Patricia Esford who volunteers as the Kids Camp Nurse shared one of her fondest memories of her daughter Elizabeth.

"The night before two Lafargeville second grade classes were to hike a scavenger hunt in Redwood Hill Preserve's beautiful woods, I was helping Liz find the 7 oak trees on the Seven Oaks Trail. The fact that it was raining and that dusk was upon us did not phase Liz, as we

ran from tree to tree. Elizabeth was so pumped up anticipating the excitement of those kids in nature."

If we fail to introduce children to nature, land and water protection is at risk of decline in the future

Through discovery, we instill a sense of curiosity about our environment and how our actions affect the world around us. Like a barn quilt pieced together to create a magnificent picture, the same can be true about how our actions impact the lands around us.

If we fail to introduce children to nature, land and water protection is at risk of decline in the future. Introducing kids to a sensory experience in nature makes a difference for a better and brighter tomorrow.

Children completely immersed in the outdoor classroom environment during Kids Camp.



Rich Applebaum

With special thanks

Inspiring and equipping future generations

Mat Webber, founding member of the WHIRL Project

For the past five years, Mat has helped to make the WHIRL project possible and unforgettable for teens in our area.

As a WHIRL founder, Mat is an avid conservationist and educator who is involved with the Izaak Walton League. Many have benefited from his depth of knowledge, passion for protecting aquatic habitat, and unmatched wit.



Tom Hughes



Wylie Huffman

Project WHIRL

It wasn't long ago that Henry, an incoming high school senior, was spending his summer leading tours on the historic Sackets Harbor Battlefield.

As an eager student with a growing interest in pursuing archeology and geology in higher education, this was a great summer job for Henry.

Having grown up in the greater Indian River Lakes region, Henry had long since understood the vast outdoor opportunities at his doorstep. While a summer on the historic battlefield may have seemed like a good fit, Henry wanted something more from his summer experience.

Henry enrolled for his second time in Project WHIRL, a summer program hosted by the Indian River Lakes Conservancy. Funded by the generosity of the conservancy's donors, as well as modest contributions by parents to ensure all children of the North Country can afford to participate, this program, which stands for Protectors of Water and Habitat on the Indian River Lakes, is a game changer for many. For Henry, his desire to participate was enough for him to quit his summer job.

"WHIRL is fun and educational at the same time, and it helps me understand the real-world application of science."

"WHIRL is fun and educational at the same time, and it helps me understand the real-world application of science."

– Henry

Through WHIRL, teenagers make lasting connections with each other, the lakes, and natural resource professionals who volunteer their time and talent as program leaders.

Henry reflects on his WHIRL experience, stating that "even though I had a summer job working at Sackets Harbor Battlefield, I realized I couldn't do both that and WHIRL. I wanted to learn more about the Indian River Lakes watershed and geology. WHIRL was the place for me."

This year, thanks to your generosity, more teenagers enrolled in Project WHIRL and connect to loons, the Lakes, and each other. Along the way, they've become lifelong advocates for the wellbeing of water, wildlife, and the community.

GIVING TUESDAY

SAVE THIS DATE FOR GIVING

Tuesday, Nov. 28th

Our Wilderness and Wildlife depend on your support!

Please remember Indian River Lakes Conservancy on Giving Tuesday. For People, For Wildlife, Forever.



It's a neighborhood thing

Volunteers in the Lakes Region are making a difference

Conservation is a community effort, and Indian River Lakes Conservancy (IRLC) has a community like no other.

Take Lisa O'Driscoll. Lisa is a long-time resident of this area and a volunteer on our education committee. For her, volunteering has been "an absolute joy to help give children unforgettable nature-based experiences." Lisa brings ideas to life. Through her training as an educator, appreciation for the natural world, and whimsical creativity, the conservancy has been able to impact the hearts and minds of hundreds of youngsters in this region.

Or how about Rob Sartwell? Rob learned early on that helping hands make all the difference through watching his father invest his time and energy in their community. Rob joins new friends and neighbors to help keep the preserves in top notch condition. Rob is eager to help with trail maintenance and always has ideas to widen the IRLC reach. "I want to share my knowledge of these amazing places and encourage others to enjoy them as much as I do."

And then there's Emma. She's one of our younger volunteers, stepping up from being a camper at IRLC's Elizabeth May Duvall Nature Grows Kids Camp to be a group leader and teaching assistant. Always ready to lend a hand, she also helped her grandmother this year at the annual Celebration of the Lakes event. "Summering at Millsite Lake I've gained an appreciation for the special people and wildlife here, and like my family, I want to be involved in the community."

We couldn't conserve the special places you love, and maintain them year-after-year without you.

Thank you to everyone who is part of the change.



Would you like to volunteer?

Everyone is welcome. You can also learn new skills, meet new friends, and know you are making a difference.

Check out our website for ideas and give Anna Hardiman at IRLC a call or email to explore what is the right match for you.

Taking Action to Protect Water Quality

Lake associations make a difference

Joyce Brunet grew up on Hyde Lake as a child. She learned to swim in its crystal waters as did her children and grand children.

It's where generations of her family caught their first fish. And it's where she's spent countless days with family and friends gathering together to enjoy and relax along Hyde's shorelines.

These activities, that we all associate with lake life on a healthy lake, are under threat; not just on Hyde Lake, but on all of our Indian River Lakes. Even though these lakes have existed for millennia, their resilience is being challenged due to climate change.

Joyce has seen a huge shift on the lake's water quality and invasive species over time.

"When I was a teenager, we never had Hazardous Algal Blooms. Now, for sometimes weeks on end, my family is unable to even get close to the water because it isn't safe."

Hyde Lake's challenges with water quality may be a harbinger of what the future holds for the rest of our Indian River lakes if we don't act now.

Joyce has been involved with monitoring the water quality on Hyde Lake for decades. Recently, she and other Hyde Lake residents



Pam Brunet

Professor Brad Baldwin of St. Lawrence University spent a day teaching Preservation Alliance of Hyde Lake volunteers about the critical role zooplankton plays in the food chain and impact on overall health of the lake.

came together to revitalize their lake association, the Preservation Alliance of Hyde Lake, to help raise awareness and take steps to protect water quality.

Land conservation protects lakes

Land protection is another critical step to protecting and improving water quality in our rivers and lakes. Indian River Lakes Conservancy's land conservation program is focused on improving habitat connectivity and protecting migration corridors for wildlife.

These conservation practices are a huge boost for protecting water quality as well.

The future of our lakes, our wildlife, and our children are at stake. Through your support, together, we make for a better tomorrow.



Pam Brunet

This is a Harmful Algal Bloom on Hyde Lake during the 2023 summer.

What you can do to help water quality on the Lakes:

- Plant more native trees and shrubs, especially along the shoreline.
- Reduce the use of household chemicals.
- Keep litter out of the lakes by disposing of plastic waste responsibly.

To learn more, save the date for IRLC's annual Water Quality Conference on June 7th, 2024!



Petr Šimon



UPDATE

Vital Corridors of Life

Protected land benefits people and wildlife

In the heart of the Indian River Lakes region lies a treasure trove of lakes, natural beauty, and actual sanctuaries for people and wildlife.

The Indian River Lakes Conservancy has five beautiful and diverse preserves: Redwood Hill, Baker Woods, Grand Lake, and the all-new Ferrone Woods and Red Lake Preserves for people and animals to thrive with each season bringing new discoveries.

These pristine spaces are vital corridors of life, essential for the survival of countless species and the vital protection of the Indian River watershed.

The challenges we face due to a changing climate, intense run-off, invasive species, and human development threaten what we cherish most.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the preserves is the role they play by providing access for all and maintaining our natural environment.

However, the challenges we face due to a changing climate, intense run-off, invasive species, and human development threaten what we cherish most.

When you protect land, you protect water by caring for the land around it.

You're also protecting the habitats of iconic species like loons and white-tailed deer, and you're safeguarding lesser-known, but equally important, amphibians, insects, and native plants that play a crucial role in a healthy ecosystem.

Our preserves wind through dense forests, trek along the shorelines of pristine lakes, and cross footbridges to boggy wetlands, providing opportunities to connect you with nature.

Spending just 5 minutes a day outside is shown to elevate your mood and heighten your serotonin levels.

It's what keeps driving people like long-time volunteer and avid outdoor enthusiast, Steve Goobic. Steve has hiked over 8,000 miles since 2002 and his goal is to make it to 10,000 miles.

Inspirational stories, like Steve's, are one of the many reasons we're all striving to protect more land, and create a strategy for trails that provides for exploration and enlightenment.

When you take time to share these resources with your children and grandchildren, you're leaving a legacy of love. You'll have a new generation of caretakers, guardians, and protectors of this special place.

Our preserves and watershed are part of something bigger—a vital



migration corridor for the critters we love and a refuge for wildlife and plants. Their protection is essential for the well-being of our entire region.

Let us pledge to care deeply about this special place.

Together, we can ensure that they remain vibrant and thriving for generations to come.

I pledge to be a steward of this place

To make no scars upon the rocks

To leave each flower or artifact as I discovered it

To respect its creatures

To treasure the quiet spaces where only nature's sounds echo

So that each succeeding generation might enjoy the loveliness of this wild place

– Author unknown

Did you know?

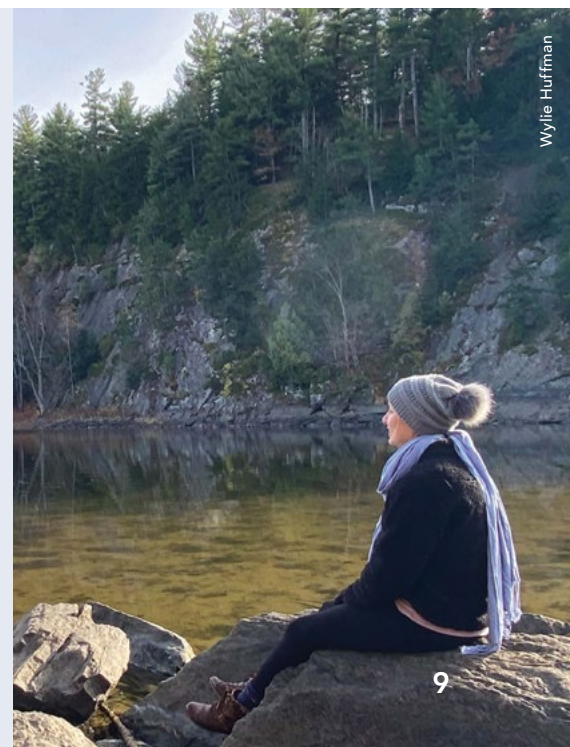
“You should sit in nature for 20 minutes a day... Unless you're busy, then you should sit for an hour.”

– Zen Proverb

A recent study, published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, asked participants to spend time in a place that ‘brings a sense of contact with nature’ for intervals of at least 10 minutes, three times per week for eight weeks.

The researchers found that participants, who immersed themselves in a ‘nature experience’ for at least 20 minutes, had significantly reduced levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

What's more, if they bumped the time to 20 and 30 minutes, the rate at which cortisol levels reduced was even higher. At 30+ minutes, de-stressing still continues, but at a slower rate.



Wylie Huffman



“Educating children and developing programs that focus on taking care of our lands and lakes is essential to conservation in the Indian River Lakes Region. If we do this, our children and grandchildren will share the incredible memories of this special place from our past into their future.”

– Bob Andrews, Butterfield Lake



Thank you to everyone who is making conservation possible

You make conserving land in the Indian River Lakes Region possible through your generosity and support.

Your tax deductible donation enables the protection of sensitive wildlife habitats and migration corridors to counter recent declines in bird and animal populations.

You enable the caretaking of 2,700 acres and 30 miles of public access trails and nature education programs for people of all ages.

Your support enables all people to have access to our preserves which improves quality of life and also improves community health.

Your gift ensures that land and water quality is protected for your children and your grandchildren forever.

Land is our legacy and the future of our Indian River Lakes; all of the fish and wildlife that call this area their home, and, our forever, depend on you.

Working together, we can continue to make positive change for a more sustainable and protected wild future for everyone.



Kara Dry Photography LLC

MONTHLY GIVERS

Lake Guardians make a difference!

What are guardians? Guardians are defenders, protectors, and keepers of our lakes!

Did you know that signing up for monthly giving is convenient for you and beneficial to the Indian River Lakes Conservancy (IRLC)? Monthly giving helps save our organization time and money on expensive retention mailings and packs a big punch! It allows for the IRLC to have some financial security and consistency when it comes to individual contributions.

When you become a Guardian by giving monthly, you're making a difference for people, for wildlife, forever!

Thank you to the following monthly donors who are making a difference:

John Allen	Spencer Busler	Shawn & Joann Maher
Stacey Bristow	Jacob Clark	James Muhs
Scott & Lynn Brown	Michael & Janice Douglass	Tyler Malotte
William Buck	Richard Edgar	
Janet Burrows	Timothy Hennekey	

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Margie & Sandy Hillback

In Memory of

Moolee Bunnag
Warren Curtis
Earl Halback
David A. Johnson
Rod & Muriel Kabel
Marge Kearney
Aunt Marge
Mike & Jean Ogden
Nancy Thornton



Did you know?

Donating appreciated stock is one of the easiest ways to give more to causes you really care about.

Gifting stock to a charity is one of the most tax-smart ways to give. Check with your financial advisor, and give your portfolio a health check.

Donations of stock should be done before year-end to take advantage of any possible tax savings. We hope you'll consider the IRLC in your year-end giving strategy.



Jordan Wirth

STAY CURRENT WITH US!

IndianRiverLakes.org

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Cover Photo: Children immerse themselves in the world of ferries at Redwood Hill Preserve's Fall Family Fun Day by Kara Dry Photography LLC.

Newsletter Design: W Design



Join us...

The Night Tree

Friday, December 22

4:30-6:30 pm

Redwood Hill Preserve

Mark your calendars for a festive event! There will be an outdoor story around the campfire, Hemlock tree lighting, and all-natural ornament-making.

For a full listing of events and details, visit IndianRiverLakes.org.

Have you ever asked yourself: "If not now, then when?"

With a year-end gift to the Indian River Lakes Conservancy, **you will strengthen efforts to preserve additional lands.** We've identified additional properties in need of protection in 2024; **support community outreach and education; and, enhance the Lakes' water quality!**



Erin Ermine