

# Indian River Lakes CONSERVANCY

Protect • Learn • Enjoy • Forever

Newsletter

Winter 2022



# Save Special Places, Save Special Species

In early November of last year, I read an article in the Chesapeake Bay Journal that disturbed me greatly. It was about the recent extinction of the Maryland Darter. Neither IRLC nor I have a direct connection to this particular stream dwelling minnow, however the principles that guide us in our conservation efforts certainly are relevant.

My connection to stream darters goes back to my childhood growing up on our farm in central Ohio. These mysterious rainbow-colored minnows inhabited every shady riffle of our spring fed Sycamore Creek. I spent my summers snorkeling underwater marveling at these and other stream interesting minnows such as sculpins, dace and chub minnows as we called them, but my favorites were the darters.

In due time, I grew up and moved away from our magical farm to chase my career and raise my family. When my children were small, we were crammed into a tiny apartment in Seoul, Korea for four years. As a method to keep our sanity while living in the middle of a city among 25 million people, I would share my memories of my boyhood explorations in great

anticipation of one day sharing this magical creek and its underwater world with my children when we returned to our family farm.

Upon our return to my beloved Sycamore Creek, we set off early one morning with high hopes of reconnecting with these special fish. We seined, netted, and snorkeled all of my childhood haunts and we could not find any darters. None. It was at that moment that I realized just how 30+ years of suburb expansion from Columbus's growth was impacting our beloved creek's water quality and its aquatic inhabitants.

Just upstream from our property now stood developments of hundreds of large suburban homes with individual septic system and leach fields that eventually drained into our creek. Lush green manicured lawns enabled by herbicide and pesticide application had replaced dense forests that had kept the creek water cool while also serving a nutrient filter and natural buffer that protected water quality and wildlife that called our stream their home. All of the trees that had once provided the necessary shade to keep water temperatures cool had been bulldozed away.

Each day, I wish that this special area had been protected in perpetuity in the same way that over 2,500 acres of IRLC forests, wetlands and streams are protected.

Land protection is an essential cornerstone of the IRLC mission. Through habitat preservation, we also protect inhabitants- all the flora and fauna that call this special place home too.

The human drumbeat of progress continues, and we often don't notice the pressure caused by development on our landscapes until the consequences are irreversible. Therefore, it is essential to continue to expand the scale and pace of land conservation. Even here in the North Country the reality of population growth and associated development is very real. We must do everything we can to protect land so that our children and their grandchildren can experience the same wonders we have each time we hike through one of our preserves.



*James Wylie Huffman III*  
*Executive Director*





# 22 for 2022

THIS IS OUR  
LEGACY

## "I don't know about you, but I'm feeling 22!"

If you are feeling 22 too, then you must be part of our '22' for 2022 campaign! If not, then it's time you join the growing number of supporters who are one of the '22'.

How does it work? Become one of the first '22' by making a donation to our campaign. We're looking for 22 - first time donors, 22 - \$25/month donors, 22 - \$250 donations and 22 - \$1,000 donations. It's as simple as that and you'll be one of the '22' supporting IRLC initiatives in 2022.

Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmental activist and the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize believes that "We owe it to ourselves and to the next generation to conserve the environment so that we can bequeath our children a sustainable world that benefits all."

Your belief in and support of the IRLC mission is inspiring. We continue to protect the extraordinary landscape of rocky, wooded uplands and the teaming wetlands, lakes and

streams that are the Indian River watershed. At the same time, we are nurturing a new generation so they understand and believe in the importance of protecting our region's natural resources.

A special thanks to our Supporters who are already part of the '22' for 2022. They all know that giving is not just about making a donation, it's about making a difference.

If you want to make a difference, become one of the '22' for 2022 at [IndianRiverLakes.org](http://IndianRiverLakes.org).



# Celebrating the Indian River Lakes for 24 Years

Make sure to save the date for this year's Celebration of the Lakes!

This year's Celebration will be at the Thousand Islands Winery on the evening of Saturday, August 20th.

Once again, we look forward to bringing people together, to enjoy one another's company, and to have the opportunity to share and celebrate all of IRLC's accomplishments in protecting the land and lakes that we all love.

The venue will be an outdoor event and Funkadelphia will provide the entertainment, performing from an outdoor bandstand.

We are excited to provide the most delectable barbeque in the entire northeast with Dinosaur Barbeque from Syracuse!

The highlight of the evening will be both our silent and live auctions, which will offer an interesting variety of fun bundles and packages.

Celebration of the Lakes is our favorite evening of the entire year because we get to share the evening with you, the most fantastic supporters on the planet.

We look forward to seeing you there!

If you enjoy planning parties, meeting new people, and would like to be a part of Celebration's success, we invite you to join our Celebration of the Lakes Committee. If interested, please contact us at 315-482-4757 or [info@indianriverlakes.org](mailto:info@indianriverlakes.org).

## Conserving Precious Land

"The purpose of Conservation: The greatest goods to the greatest number of people for the longest time." Gifford Pinchot

Are you interested in donating land to IRLC? The IRLC accepts land gifts to include conservation lands as well as residential, industrial, or commercial properties. Land donations such as these will likely qualify for a tax deduction for the full value of your gifts.

Land donations are one of the finest legacies a person can give to both humanity and wildlife in perpetuity. In IRLC's 24 years of existence, we have been fortunate that a few people have generously donated large tracks of land that we know today as Redwood Hill Preserve,

Grand Lake Reserve, and Baker Woods Preserve.

These gifts have enabled our entire community to enjoy over 20 miles of trails traversing boreal forests, teeming wetlands, and unspoiled lake shorelines that are as beautiful today as they were hundreds of years ago.

IRLC also acquires land through federal grant programs such as North American Waterfowl Conservation Act (NAWCA) and Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). These programs provide funding for land trusts to purchase critical shoreline, wetland and forest habitats. IRLC has used these funding sources to acquire portions of Grand Lake Reserve,

Baker Woods Preserve, and Indian River Preserve. Properties sold to IRLC through these grant programs can offer tax incentives for the seller through "Bargain Sales" in which the land is sold to the land trust for less than fair market value.

As conservationists, we take great solace in knowing these protected lands will never be subdivided or developed and that the properties will only continue to become wilder and more pristine through the gentle stewardship of time.

If you are interested in making a land donation to IRLC, please email Wylie Huffman, our executive director, at [jwhuffman@indianriverlakes.org](mailto:jwhuffman@indianriverlakes.org) or call 315-482-4757.



# Water Quality Conference takes a Community Focus

It's hard to believe that on June 10th, 2022 IRLC will be hosting our fifth annual water quality conference! Over the years our conference has grown in size and the content presented continues to address our lakes and their challenges, thanks to the input we have received from our Lake Associations and quarterly Lake Leaders Summits.

This year's conference will address Hazardous Algal Blooms (HABs) and new technology emerging out of Clarkson University that may be able to mitigate the bloom's effects on our ability to enjoy our lakes. A second session on natural shorelines will

empower lakeside property owners to take action to improve water quality on their lakes by planting native aquatic plants that help stabilize shorelines, improve wildlife habitat, and filter nutrient runoff from septic systems. Our conference will also address the emerging invasive species threat of Water Chestnut and its imminent spread into the Indian River Lakes to include a hands-on aquatic invasive plant identification session.

The afternoon session will be facilitated by IRLC volunteer Mike Lovegreen, enabling participants to identify values relevant to their lake in regard to water

quality and lake related recreational activities. The day will wrap up with a social and networking "mixer" held on our Butterfield Lake Overlook Deck. The following morning, attendees will regroup to begin developing plans of action that their lake associations can implement to protect their identified values from the day prior.

Remember to save the date and registration information will be forthcoming in the early springtime. We look forward to your partnership as we fight to maintain and improve the water quality in our Indian River Lakes!

## Nurturing the Hearts & Minds of our Children in the Outdoors

Nature is an ultimate teacher when it comes to learning about our world and ourselves. Time spent connecting with nature can impart wisdom to us about balance, reciprocity, growth, abundance, community, and even love.

One lesson that I find comfort in learning over and over starts with the emotive realization of our smallishness in the presence of expansiveness ecosystems.

Just how many tree rings old are you? In the forest, beholding the mighty Oak, we learn that he has earned his title after many seasons of life. But how do you truly answer a question like, "Momma, how old is the River?"

How is it that looking up-close at a vernal pool can make you both gigantic, yet so meager in relation to its awesomeness and the years of evolution that have created such a symbiotic community of critters?

It occurs to me that we often speak of our missions - both individual and organizational - as needing to make a big impact, but what if all that we are meant to do is make a small and meaningful impact?

After all, a small impact on a small person could make a big ripple.

*Heidi Sourwine*  
Program Coordinator



*Thank-You to our 2022 Sponsors who signed on early to support Youth Environmental Education in our Community. Ask us about becoming how you can become a business sponsor or partner in our Youth Programming.*

# In Gratitude for your Support in 2021

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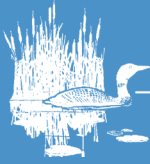


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# Indian River Lakes CONSERVANCY

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## Join us for an upcoming event...

**Nature Talks: Raptor Migration** April 2<sup>nd</sup>  
*Anna Stunkel presents on Zoom*  
*in partnership with the Depauville Library 10:00 am*

**Club WHIRL Spring Hike** April 9<sup>th</sup>  
*Teens are invited to Baker Woods 10:00 am - 1:00 pm*

**North Country Bird Club Event** April 13<sup>th</sup>  
*First Part of a Two Part Series, (Part 2 on May 14<sup>th</sup>)*

**Spring Stewardship Day** April 23<sup>rd</sup>  
*Grand Lake Reserve at 9:00 am*

**Birds, Blossoms, & Bugs Hike** May 7<sup>th</sup>  
*Dr. Thomas Langen, Grand Lake Reserve at 9:00 am*

**Home-Scale Forest Gardening** June 4<sup>th</sup>  
*with Dani Baker at Cross Island Farms 10:00 am*

**Water Quality Conference** June 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>  
*Redwood Hill Preserve 9:00 am*

## Save the Date...

**Member Meeting** June 21<sup>st</sup>

**Black Lake Water Chestnut Pull** June 25<sup>th</sup>

**Kids' Nature Camp** July 19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup>

**Celebration of Lakes** August 20<sup>th</sup>

Events are regularly added. For a full listing of events and event details, visit [indianriverlakes.org](http://indianriverlakes.org).



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**Watertown Savings Bank**



Front Cover: Wolf Moon over Lake of the Woods © Nate Serafine

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