



Environmental Learning Center Annual Report 2021-2022





A Letter from our Executive Director

Dear ELC Friends,

Fiscal Year 21-22 was a banner year for the ELC!

- Visitation increased by 79%
- Program hours increased by 78%
- Pontoon guests increased by 66%
- Membership increased by 58%
- Six times the number of scholarships were awarded
- Over 6,000 volunteer hours were contributed
- All 3rd and 4th-grade public school students were served
- Many other grade-level field trips took place
- We hosted many community gatherings as a unique event venue
- Outreach programs continue to expand

The campus is teeming with life - including plants, animals, and humans! We love it! Thank you to our staff, volunteers, members, donors, guests, and program participants for being a part of our ELC family.

Our 64 acres of wild Florida habitat sit in the heart of the Indian River Lagoon. The ELC is at the heart of education, the heart of conservation, and at the very heart of our community.

As our population surges and technology creeps into every part of our daily lives, our work to connect people to the natural world and inspire environmental stewardship and human health is more important than ever. We are committed to continuous improvement to serve you and we invite you to be an even bigger part of our success by volunteering in one of our dozens of roles, supporting us at a leadership level, and helping spread the word about this community gem to your sphere of influence.

Contact me to talk about how you can get plugged in at your ELC.

In gratitude and service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barb".

Barbara Schlitt Ford
Executive Director
Barb@DiscoverELC.org

Our Mission

Our mission is to educate, inspire and empower all people to be active stewards of the environment and their own well-being.

Our Vision

The ELC is an attractive destination for people of all ages to frequently return to for adventure, learning and wellness. Our visitors will experience and appreciate the benefits of immersion in nature, understand the value of a healthy environment and be inspired to create a sustainable world.

- Environmental Programs
- Field Trips and Camps
- Interactive Exhibits
- Aquarium & Touch Tank
- Wellness Programs
- All-Terrain Wheelchairs/Walkers
- Kayak Tours and Rentals
- STEAM Programs (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math)
- Bird and Plant Walks
- Facility Rentals
- Community Events
- Pontoon Boat Tours
- Canoe Tours
- Walking Tours
- Over 2.5 Miles of Trails

The ELC fosters community awareness, appreciation and concern for the environment. We promote the use of 21st century knowledge and skills to make informed decisions, solve current environmental problems and prevent new ones.

Not only do we educate people about these issues, we empower people to be a part of the solution. **Because everyone deserves a healthy planet.**

*We need nature.
Nature needs us.*

Leadership

Fiscal Year – 2021-2022 Environmental Learning Center Board

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Don Barr, Vice Chair
Tyler Puttick, Secretary
Tarik Kawi, Treasurer
Tim Buhl, Director
David Griffis, Director
Shirley Nichols, Director
Carol Lincoln, Director
Barbara Schlitt Ford, Ex-Officio

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Don Barr, Vice Chair
Tyler Puttick, Secretary
Tarik Kawi, Treasurer
Rich Brennan, Director
Tim Buhl, Director
David Griffis, Director
Carol Lincoln, Director
Shirley Nichols, Director
Megan Osteen, Director
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Barbara Schlitt Ford, Ex-Officio



A Letter from our Board Chair

Dear ELC Friends,

In the fiscal year 2021-2022, we made great strides at the ELC. We dramatically increased program revenues and visitation, made many long overdue improvements to our campus infrastructure, launched our new Thomas R. Schidel Education and Events Pavilion with an exciting Restoration Gala, delivered immersive hands-on feet-wet education experiences for all Indian River Counties 3rd and 4th graders, had sold out summer camps, and continued to promote sustainable environmental practices leading to improving the health of the Indian River Lagoon as well as personal health.

None of this would be possible without the hard work of our dedicated staff, thousands of volunteer hours, the tireless leadership of our Executive Director Barbara Schlitt Ford, our terrific ELC Inc. and Foundation Boards, and the contributions of our many wonderful donors. To all of you I say thank you.

The Indian River Lagoon is fragile. Students of all ages can all learn to be better stewards of this amazing environment we live in. We have a lot of challenging work to accomplish to carry out our mission. The ELC cannot thrive without more volunteers, Committee and Board members, and financial contributions. Please reach out to Barb to learn more about ways to support our cause.

Respectfully,

John L. Daniels
Board Chair

Environmental Learning Center Foundation

Fiscal Year – 2021-2022

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Current Board Members

Todd Fennell, Chair
Alice Cole, Vice Chair
John Daniels, Treasurer
Don Barr, Director
Tim Buhl, Director
Haydn Cole, Director
David Griffis, Director
Barbara Schlitt Ford, Ex-Officio

The Environmental Learning Center (ELC) Foundation, Inc. is a separate not-for-profit corporation that serves as a sole support organization to the Environmental Learning Center, Inc. and manages both funds designated by the board for long-term investment and funds permanently restricted by donors for investment in perpetuity. The ELC Foundation utilizes an internal committee of financial stewards who manage the Foundation's assets. Through prudent oversight, this Investment Committee has ensured rates of return that have performed solidly over a ten-year period.

Financial Statement

Fiscal Year July 1, 2021- June 30, 2022

Revenue

Contributions	\$2,050,464
Programs/Special Events	\$249,039
Other	\$93,111
Investment Change	(\$908,301)

Total Revenue	\$1,484,313
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Expenses

Program Services	
Educational Programs	\$1,144,463
Support Services	
Management and General	\$110,316
Resource Development	\$159,803

Total Expenses	\$1,414,582
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Net Assets

Beginning of the Year	\$8,357,242
Change in Net Assets	\$69,731
End of the Year	\$8,426,973



OUR ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Highlighting the successes of our purpose-driven mission

Looking Back

Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022



20,802
Visitors



3,054
Pontoon Boat
Passengers



4,347
Educator Run
Program Hours

727
Members



289
Maggie Bowman Fund
Scholarship Beneficiaries



4,145
Educational Program
Participants Served



You Can Make a Difference!
Volunteer Opportunities Include:

- Aquaria Touch Tank & Discovery Station Docent
- Campus Maintenance/Gardening
- Roving Nature Guide
- Pontoon Boat Guide
- Greeter
- **And more!**

Volunteers



6,387

Hours Volunteered



\$191,290.65

Total Value of
Volunteer Service

Want to become a volunteer?

Email Volunteer@DiscoverELC.org or call (772) 589-5050

Fill out our online application at DiscoverELC.org/volunteer

2021-2022

Thomas R. Schidel Education and Event Pavilion

The highlight of the 2021-2022 year was the completion of a major capital project. The new Thomas R. Schidel Education and Event Pavilion opened in April of 2022. This multi-purpose facility is being used as an outdoor classroom for environmental education, lectures, community events, dramatic and musical performances, and festivals.

The construction was designed to be energy efficient and eco-friendly with solar power, a reflective metal roof, LED lighting, recycled materials, and low-flow plumbing. It features a catering kitchen and a refillable water bottle station. Drought-tolerant native plant landscaping enhances the natural environment.

The building was awarded the "Architectural Recognition-Best New Commercial Construction" by the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce at the 2022 Industry Appreciation Awards.



2021-2022

Barrows Welcome Center



The Welcome Center at ELC is home to Guest Services, The Nature Nook gift shop and ELC's Tidal Gallery for art exhibits. Bill Barrows and his family have been supporting the programs, educational initiatives and mission of the Environmental Learning Center for over twenty years. The ELC is pleased to announce that this building is now called the Barrows Welcome Center to honor their commitment.

The Ward Walk



The ELC's Boardwalk leading from the Welcome Center to the Discovery Station was rebuilt in August and September of 2022. ELC is grateful to the many donors who contributed and purchased commemorative planks to fund the project. This portion of our boardwalk is now called The Ward Walk in honor of a significant donation from the John A. and Mary Clare Ward Family Foundation and Tarik and Patricia Kawi.

Windsor Polo

The ELC was a beneficiary of the Windsor Charity Polo Cup, the flagship fundraising event of the Windsor Charitable Foundation. The biennial event featured world-class international polo players, an elegant luncheon, and a high-end raffle to raise funds to benefit the community.

The Environmental Learning Center is extremely grateful for the \$175,000 gift to support our mission.



Pontoon Dock Rebuild

The next ELC capital project will be rebuilding the 35-year-old pontoon boat dock. A new dock is essential to continue water related environmental education to children and families in the region. Funding has been secured from Florida Inland Navigation District, foundation grants and private donors. This project is slated to be completed by the end of 2023.



With Appreciation...

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Every effort is made to be accurate in our donor list. If we have omitted or misspelled your name, we sincerely apologize. Please contact Give@DiscoverELC.org or call the ELC at (772) 589-5050 so we can correct our records. Thank you for your support.

Ways to Give

Why Give?

Because everyone deserves a healthy planet.

We all know giving helps others, whether we volunteer for organizations, offer emotional support to those around us or donate to charities. Studies show that giving is also good for the giver by boosting physical and mental health.

So many ways to give...

- Invite the ELC to speak at your service club, HOA or business.
- Volunteer. Share your time and talents while supporting the ELC.
- Sponsor an event or program.
- Make an in-kind donation of goods or services.
- Make a charitable donation.
- Give the gift of membership.
- Create a lasting legacy with planned giving.
- Give appreciated assets.
- Make your mark with our naming opportunities.
- Support the ELC with Qualified Charitable Distributions.
- Make a difference with IRA Charitable Rollover.
- Match a donation with your employees or members.
- Make a memorial donation with the ELC.
- Create long-term stability by giving to the ELC Foundation Endowment.

Email Give@DiscoverELC.org or
call (772) 589-5050 for more information.

Our Collaborative Partnerships

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of Indian River County
Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Boys & Girls Clubs of Indian River County
Brevard Zoo
Captain Hiram's River Challenge Triathlon
City of Sebastian
Clean Water Coalition of IRC
Coastal Connections
Coastal Conservation Association
Cultural Council Of Indian River County
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IRC Recreation Department
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IRC Stormwater Division
IRL Aquatic Preserves
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Indian River Neighborhood Association
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Indian River Land Trust
Jabebo
Keep Indian River Beautiful
Leave No Trace
Master Gardeners UF/IFAS Extension
Mental Health Association
Moonshot Community Action
Network
Ocean Strings Studio
ORCA
Oxbow Eco-Center
Pelican Island Audubon Society
Pelican Island Conservation Society
Pelican Island National Wildlife
Refuge
Quail Valley Charities
School District Of Indian River County
Sea and Shoreline
Sebastian River Area Chamber of
Commerce
Sebastian Inlet District
Smithsonian Marine Station
St. Johns River Water Management
District
Sustainable Events Network
Sustainable Kashi
The Learning Alliance
The Willow School
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
United Way of Indian River County
Vero Beach Museum of Art
Waste Management
Youth Guidance Mentoring Academy



Our Mission

Our mission is to educate, inspire and empower all people to be active stewards of the environment and their own well-being.

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