



*Celebrating
25 years in 2013!*



ANNUAL REPORT
2011/2012

UNPLUG...ESCAPE...DISCOVER



*“No matter how intently
one studies the hundred little
dramas of the woods
and meadows,
one can never learn
all the salient facts about
any one of them.”*

– Aldo Leopold



Chairman's Letter



To Our Members and Friends,

Sustainability is described as the capacity to endure through renewal, maintenance and sustenance, in contrast to durability, the capacity to endure through unchanging resistance to change. We at the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) not only believe in sustainability, we teach and practice it in many forms.

From our elementary school and summer ecology program curriculum to our real life Green Building Four Green Globes (the highest achievement) campus facilities, the ELC sets examples of how we can live our lives to help the earth – to reduce our environmental footprint. Every one of our educational programs helps people understand the balance of utilizing yet

conserving the land, air, water and other precious natural commodities available to them.

This past fiscal year we modified our mission statement to better reflect our sustainable attitude. Our mission is to provide stimulating environmental education programs that instill an understanding of the natural world, enrich people's lives, and inspire participants to be active stewards of the surrounding natural resources.

Financially, times continue to be challenging in the nonprofit world. To improve the ELC's fiscal sustainability, we hired a new development director who has focused on building relationships with donors who see value in environmental stewardship and education. Maintaining positive, personal relationships with like-minded people is important to the ELC's future success in continuing to improve the quality of life on Florida's Treasure Coast.

Thank you for your involvement in helping advance sustainable concepts and for believing in the ELC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom", written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas J. Spackman, M.D., Board Chair 2011 – 2012



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The ELC's mission is to provide stimulating environmental education programs that instill an understanding of the natural world, enrich people's lives, and inspire participants to be active stewards of the surrounding natural resources.



Annual Accomplishments

- Provided ELC classes to more than 2,750 Indian River County elementary school students in 1st, 3rd and 4th grades
- Have successfully graduated 201 adult students in the University of Florida Master Naturalist program
- Naturalist Rosemary Badger taught 658 Pre-K students in the Young Explorer program
- Hosted more than 625 children in our Summer Ecology Adventure series as well as providing additional summer programs for other organizations
- Provided our Nature Passport and Take a Closer Look Discovery Guides to 500 people
- Volunteers spent 1,300 hours conducting Lagoon Days for 4th grade students
- 5,925 people participated in the Touch Tank Encounter
- Welcomed 2,500 people to our annual family fun day called EcoFest
- Almost 800 people used the ELC's new self-guided audio tour
- Led by Naturalist Sarah Rhodes-Ondi, 29 Junior Interpreters and Environmental Ambassadors volunteered 523 hours to plant 750 mangroves and restore oyster habitat
- Education Director Heather Stapleton coordinated 300 EcoVentures where people went on guided boat trips, canoeing, hiking, kayaking, geocaching, beachcombing and pond exploration sessions
- 5,897 hours! That's what our 177 dedicated volunteers gave to the ELC, nurtured by Volunteer Coordinator Nancy Puglio

*Education Director
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coordinated 300 EcoVentures
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hiking, kayaking, geocaching,
beachcombing and
pond exploration sessions,
just to name a few!*



Leaving a Legacy

Connecting with the Younger Generation

In 2004, Bill and Carol Barrows committed to provide long term support to the ELC. “We believe that the younger generation needs to learn about the environment,” says Bill. Because of their strong belief in education, the Barrows gave \$500,000 to the ELC and are offering another \$1,000,000 as a matching legacy contribution to the ELC Foundation.

Both Bill and Carol appreciate the water, nature and are both animal lovers. “We’ve always been involved with the critters,” says Bill who grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio. After completing his business administration degree at the University of Cincinnati, he then went on to earn a degree in naval architecture. He has designed numerous boats and recently launched his latest design, a 65 foot vessel called the *Aluminator*.

The Barrows each have solid backgrounds in business. Bill oversaw the international operations of Fusite Corporation which was later sold to Emerson Electric. Carol, who lived outside of Rochester New York for 30 years, started her own transportation company providing automobile courier and driving services. After retirement, Carol moved to Florida to be closer to her mother, who is 99 years “young” and still loves to golf.

When they aren’t in Florida, the Barrows spend time enjoying nature at their home outside of Durango, Colorado. Or, Bill might fly their plane to their vacation retreat on Spanish Cay in the Bahamas.



Regardless of where they are, Bill and Carol are constantly thinking about education and how to prepare people to become good stewards of the earth. They are seeking to establish more collaboration and synergy between organizations such as the ELC, Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute and Carol’s alma mater, Centenary College in New Jersey.

The ELC is excited about future opportunities that are made possible by generous and committed donors such as Bill and Carol Barrows. “The ELC offers wonderful services to the community, but it’s an unknown commodity,” says Carol. “We encourage people to support it.”

For more information about the ELC Barrows Legacy Program, call the Development Office at (772) 589-5050, ext. 103.



Our Educators

Volunteer Profile

The ELC could not exist without its cadre of dedicated volunteers. If only we could feature all 170 of them! Each one of our volunteers is important to our mission of educating people how to have respect for our beautiful natural world and to become better stewards of our finite resources.

Can you believe that our volunteers donate an average of 5,200 hours a year? “There is no possible way we could accomplish what we do without our volunteers,” says Nancy Puglio, ELC Volunteer Coordinator. “We have something for everyone - phones, retail, handling

critters, or working with children one on one. We offer air conditioned comfort or outside in the heat.”

Featured in this photo are volunteers who are our front line educators. They fill the role of Naturalist Assistants, Discovery Station Docents, or Touch Tank volunteers. But, almost all of our volunteer positions involve education. Our Canoe and Kayak Guides, Nature Guides and Greeters teach people every day. We honor and recognize ALL of the hard work and time that our volunteers donate to the ELC.

Thank you!

“There is no possible way we could accomplish what we do without our volunteers.

We have something for everyone – phones, retail, handling critters, or working with children one on one.

We offer air conditioned comfort or outside in the heat.”

– Nancy Puglio



Staff Profile

Volunteer Coordinator – Nancy Puglio

Nine years ago, Nancy Puglio and her family fled the cold New Jersey weather to become established in Vero Beach. Bob, her husband who is a financial advisor, initiated the move even though it would mean he'd still have to commute back north to see clients. "The only impression that I had of Florida was Disney and high rise condos," says Nancy. "That wasn't me, and I really didn't want to move until I saw Vero."

Nancy fell in love with the Indian River County area – its lush, untouched habitat is what she enjoys most. "I walk on the beach almost every day," she says. Nancy has immersed herself in nature, and now as the ELC Volunteer Coordinator, she works to train and manage more than 170 volunteers.

"Our volunteers help make the ELC the region's premier nonprofit environmental education organization," says Nancy. "They never cease to amaze me. Their wealth of knowledge is incredible." As an example, Nancy needed an article to be written about water quality. "I searched my records and found that one of our volunteers had been a chemical engineer," says Nancy. "He did a fabulous job with the article."

With a business degree from Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison, New Jersey, Nancy worked for seven years as a business manager in finance for Ford, Volkswagen, and Buick. Next up was raising a family. She and Bob have three boys who are now ages 29, 25 and 21. The youngest son is set to graduate soon from



the University of Florida (UF), while the middle one received a UF Master's Degree in accounting and the oldest son, who graduated from Cornell University with a degree in hotel administration, now manages a restaurant in Boston.

In 2006, after spending a lot of time in the St. Edward's Parents Association, Nancy decided that it was time to go back to work. That's when the ELC quickly snapped her up as its part time Volunteer Coordinator. "This is by far, the best job that I've had," says Nancy. "It sounds hokey, but I really do love it. I totally believe in the ELC mission. It makes it enjoyable with what you are doing, in finding a place for volunteers, when you believe in the mission."



*“Adopt the pace of nature:
her secret is patience.”*

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Educational Programs



For the last 24 years, the ELC has directly served more than 320,000 people and has been a leader in making Indian River County's community

more environmentally friendly. Beginning in 1992, the ELC partnered with the Indian River County School District and has provided the elementary school environmental education programs to more than

70,000 children in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, first, third and fourth grades. These hands-on programs work towards transforming the students' behavior - to not only understand scientific concepts but to also become better stewards of the earth.

The ELC's elementary school programs engage learners in many fields, including science, by exploring the fascinating Indian River Lagoon ecosystems and by practicing hands-on, science-related activities. These programs provide positive outdoor experiences that promote environmental awareness, inspire appreciation of nature and help teachers address the required Next Generation Sunshine State Standards.



In addition to planned curriculum for school children, the ELC offers more than 450 adult and family programs each year.

Educational Programs



the ELC's EcoVentures provide exciting learning opportunities in the great outdoors. For example, Geocaching is a scavenger hunt for techies. We take participants on a nature treasures scavenger hunt with the help of Global Positioning System receivers. Our Naturalists show people how to navigate through the

In addition to planned curriculum for school children, the ELC offers more than 450 adult and family programs each year. All of

woods and down trails using these lifesaving handheld devices to find hidden treasures to take home!

All of the ELC's boating excursions are very popular. Whether it's kayaking or canoeing in the Indian River Lagoon or down the lazy St. Sebastian River, participants learn about the unique habitats of Florida and are able to spot lots of wildlife including the Florida manatee, bottlenose dolphin, endangered wood storks and much more. A sampling of other EcoVentures include seining for critters in the pond, walking on the beach or nestling in a comfy spot to listen to story hour.

To learn more about the ELC's educational programs, go to www.DiscoverELC.org.

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*“The poetry of the earth
 is never dead.”*

– John Keats



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*"In wilderness
I sense the miracle of life,
and behind it our
scientific accomplishments
fade to trivia."*

– Charles A. Lindbergh

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*“Like music and art,
love of nature
is a common language
that can transcend political
or social boundaries.”*

– Jimmy Carter

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*“The earth will not
continue to offer its harvest,
except with faithful
stewardship.
We cannot say we love
the land and then take steps
to destroy it for use
by future generations.”*

– Pope John Paul II

ELC Financial & Foundation

ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER INC. AUDITED FINANCIALS

July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012

Income	
Contributions	\$ 448,728
Program Revenue	\$ 140,127
Special Event Revenue	\$ 127,450
Gift Shop Sales, net of cost	\$ 15,633
Investment Income	\$ 34,493
Other	\$ 7,180
Total Income	\$ 773,611
Expense	
Program Services	\$ 655,048
Management & General Support	\$ 109,624
Benefit & Fundraising Costs	\$ 209,367
Total Expense	\$ 974,039



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Our Staff

Heather Askew, Events & Office Coordinator

Started in 2006 - Former Education Coordinator for the Marine Resources Council in Palm Bay. Currently attending UCF to attain a bachelor's degree in Interpersonal/Organizational Communications.

Rosemary Badger, Naturalist

Started in 1999 - Previous environmental education experience includes Gumbo Limbo Environmental Complex in Boca Raton and National Audubon Society in Miami. She has two undergraduate degrees, one in environmental studies and the other a double major in mathematics and German.

Holly Dill, Executive Director

Started in 1989 - Former long range planner for the Planning Office in Palm Beach County, Florida and Teton County, Wyoming. Also served as Executive Director of the Jackson Hole Alliance for Responsible Planning, a non-profit land use advocacy organization. Her graduate degree is in Public Administration, specialized in Growth Management.

Dan Perkins, Caretaker

Started in 2004 - His experience includes owning a home improvement business and selling real estate in New Jersey. Broad background includes plumbing, electrical, painting, and carpentry.

Nancy Puglio, Volunteer Coordinator, part time

Started in 2006 - Worked in the finance/lease end of the auto industry before raising three boys. Formerly active in St. Edwards Parent Association.

Sarah Rhodes-Ondi, Naturalist

Started in 2006 - Earned two degrees in Marine Biology, a Bachelor of Arts from New College in Sarasota, Florida and a Master of Science from Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, Florida. In 2009, Sarah became recognized by the National Association of Interpretation as a Certified Interpretive Guide.

Heather Stapleton, Education Director, CIP

Started in 2003 - Former Peace Corps Volunteer in Benin, West Africa for three years. Graduated from Indiana University with majors in Environmental Studies, Political Science and French. In 2010, Heather earned the highest professional level certification from the National Association of Interpretation as a Certified Interpretive Planner.

Camille S. Yates, Development Director

Started in 2011 - Former Curator of the Manatee Observation and Education Center in Fort Pierce. Author of Treasured Waters - the Indian River Lagoon and freelance writer for several publications. Earned a Master of Science in Ecology from the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, Florida.

Linda Weisner, Administrative Assistant, part time

Started in 2011 - Spent most of her career working for financial institutions, most recently U.S. Trust.



*“A nation that destroys its
soils destroys itself.
Forests are the lungs of our
land, purifying the air
and giving fresh
strength to our people.”*

– Franklin D. Roosevelt



*Celebrating
25 years in 2013!*

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