

## SAVE OUR INDIAN RIVER LAGOON CITIZEN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

The Brevard County Board of County Commissioners is soliciting applications for four seats on the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee. Volunteers are sought to represent four fields of expertise: Education/Outreach, Real Estate, Tourism and Technology.

### **Basic Requirements and Duties of Oversight Committee Members**

Applicants must commit to serving the public interest by providing stewardship of Lagoon Trust Funds, especially in relation to restoring health to the Indian River Lagoon, and must demonstrate expertise and experience in one or more of the following fields: real estate or tourism. Knowledge of water quality issues and the major sources of pollution affecting the lagoon are highly desirable.

Members and their alternates oversee progress and make recommendations to the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners on spending an estimated \$486 million from sales tax revenue to **Reduce** pollution sources to the lagoon, **Remove** legacy pollution from the lagoon, **Restore** natural systems within the lagoon, and **Respond** to new information by recommending annual amendments to the Save our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan (SOIRLPP).

Duties include participation in meetings to evaluate progress towards plan implementation and lagoon health, review technology and alternative project proposals for reducing pollutants and improving water quality, assess the cost-effectiveness of projects and recommend plan revisions accordingly. The Committee addresses questions, concerns, and ideas from the public to improve the SOIRLPP. Applicants must be willing to ensure that the SOIRLPP reflects the most effective, timely and responsible means to restore the Indian River Lagoon and that the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Trust Fund is managed in the best interest of the public.

Applications with resumes and letters of recommendation or endorsement should be submitted no later than **December 27, 2018**. The Space Coast League of Cities will review applications for Real Estate and Tourism expertise on **January 14, 2019**. The Brevard County Board of County Commissioners will review applications for Technology and Education/Outreach expertise and finalize all four appointments at their regular meeting on **January 22, 2019**.

As part of the application process the Board of County Commissioners requires each applicant to answer in writing each of the following questions:

**Name**  
**Mailing Address**  
**City, State, Zip Code**  
**Phone**  
**Email**

Please complete the following questions and statements.

1. Do you reside in Brevard County Yes No Number of Years
2. Are you willing to serve on the Committee for a minimum of two (2) years and be available to attend monthly weekday meetings? Yes No

3. Please check next to one or more of the following that best matches your expertise:

Science            Economics/Finance            Education/Outreach            Lagoon Advocacy  
Technology       Real Estate                        Tourism             LAGOON COMMERCE 12/2024

**FOR THE QUESTIONS BELOW, RESPONSES MAY BE UP TO ½ PAGE EACH  
AND ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NEEDED**

4. Please list one or more reasons why you are personally interested in applying to serve as a member of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Oversight Committee

5. Please provide a brief overview of your background and experience (education, professional experience, and community volunteer experience) as it relates to your understanding of the SOIRLPP and the restoration needs of the Indian River Lagoon.

6. Please describe what character, judgement, analytical, communication, and group consensus building strengths you would contribute to the purposes and duties of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee.

7. Please describe the importance of committee members putting public interests first and avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest in making recommendations for expenditure of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Trust Funds.

### **Additional Requirements**

In addition to completing the application posted at <http://www.brevardfl.gov/SaveOurLagoon>, a resume and at least one letter of recommendation are required. The letter of recommendation can be a personal recommendation from a professional in the same field and/or an endorsement by a reputable nonprofit organization.

**Send your application, resumé, and letter(s) of reference to:**

Natural Resources Management Department, Carol Gerundo, Administrative Assistant to the Director  
[Carol.Gerundo@brevardfl.gov](mailto:Carol.Gerundo@brevardfl.gov)

**Phone:** 321-633-2016

## Laurilee Thompson

Age: 65

Years in Brevard County: 65

Education: AA Oceanographic Technology, Florida Institute of Technology

Employer: Dixie Crossroads Seafood Restaurant

Position: Owner/Manager

### Current Appointments:

Brevard County Tourist Development Council: 2000 - Present; Chair 2003, 2010, 2015

Indian River Lagoon Council Management Board: 2016 – ongoing

Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program Selection and Management Committee: 2014 - ongoing

### Current Affiliations:

Member: Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Panel for South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council

Board Member: Brevard Nature Alliance; Founding Member

Board Member: Merritt Island Wildlife Association; Current Vice-president

Board Member: Space Coast Chapter Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association; President 2013

Board Member: Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association

### Awards and Recognitions:

- Laurilee was selected as the **1998 Titusville Area Chamber of Commerce Woman of the Year** in recognition for her work in the business of eco-tourism.
- First recipient of the annual **Allen David Broussard Conservation Award**, in recognition of efforts to demonstrate the economic value of conservation through the Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival. The award was presented at the **1999 National Watchable Wildlife Conference** in Ft. Myers.
- The **Titusville Area Chamber of Commerce 1999 Home-based Business of the Year Award** went to Laurilee's guided kayak tour business, Osprey Outfitters.
- The **Titusville Area Chamber of Commerce 1999 Small Business of the Year Award** went to the family business, Dixie Crossroads Seafood Restaurant.
- Recipient of the **Titusville Area Visitors Council 1999 Hospitality Award**.
- Recipient of the **2001 Florida Outdoor Writers Association, Florida Sportsman Biff Lampton Memorial Conservation Award** for Outstanding Conservation Efforts on behalf of the Florida Outdoors.
- Recipient of the **2002 DAR Citizen of the Year Award**, presented by the Daughters of the American Revolution, Indian River Chapter in recognition for educational efforts concerning Florida Scrub Jays.
- First Recipient of the annual **Brevard County Conservation Leadership Award**, presented by the Board of Directors of the Brevard Nature Alliance (March, 2003).
- Recipient of the **2003 Harry R. Lee Memorial Award**, presented by the City of Titusville in recognition of outstanding community service for founding the Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival.
- Recipient of the **2003 Bob Owens Memorial Award**, presented by the St. Johns River Water Management District for outstanding citizen service to the St. Johns River WMD.
- Recipient of the **2005 National Daughters of the American Revolution Conservation Medal** in recognition for outstanding achievement for environmental awareness.
- Recipient of the **2006 East Central Florida Junior Achievement Business Leadership Award** in recognition of the Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival and tourism work.
- Recipient of the prestigious **2006 Audubon Florida Guy Bradley Award** recognizing demonstration of a personal, public and consuming commitment to natural resource protection in Florida.
- Recipient of the **2006 Space Coast March of Dimes Woman of Achievement Award** for community service.
- The **Brevard County School Board 2006 Small Business Partner of the Year** award went to Dixie Crossroads.
- The National Restaurant Association's **2007 Florida Restaurant Neighbor Humanitarian of the Year Award** went to Laurilee for her community service.

- **2008 Canaveral Boy Scout Golden Eagle Dinner Honoree** in recognition for environmental leadership.
- **2010 Space Coast Chapter American Red Cross Honoree** in recognition for environmental leadership.
- **Southeastern Fisheries Association 2010 Paul Herring American Freedom Award** for standing up on behalf of fishermen and fishing communities.
- **Miami Corporation 2012 Friend of Conservation Award** in recognition of extraordinary efforts to protect and conserve habitat corridors in Brevard County.
- **Marine Resources Council 2013 Stan Blum Award** for lifetime service to the Indian River Lagoon.
- First Recipient of the **Brevard Nature Alliance Legacy Award (2013)** in recognition of outstanding leadership advocacy for protection of Brevard County's natural resources.
- **Southeastern Fisheries Association 2013 David Harrington Semper Fi Award** for tirelessly working to provide honest information on fisheries issues to the State and Federal Government.
- 2015 recipient of the **Charlie Corbeil Conservation Award** at the annual event that awards Space Coast individuals for their exemplary contributions to conservation.
- 2015 recipient of the **Patriot Award** from the Honor America Board at the Liberty Bell Museum in Melbourne.
- In November, 2016 the family businesses, Dixie Crossroads Seafood Restaurant and Wild Ocean Seafood Market, were each recipients of a **Change Award** to honor Everyday Superheroes of North Brevard County. The category was "Superpower of Corporate Citizenship."
- Southeastern Fisheries Association **2017 SFA Member of the Year Award** for meritorious leadership in restoring grasses in the Indian River Lagoon and liaison with the Hospitality Industry to save the culture of the Seafood Industry.
- Dixie Crossroad is a member of the Indian River National Estuary Program **Indian River Lagoon Innovators and Investors Network** for 2017 and 2018.

Laurilee's diverse background includes an Associate Degree in Oceanographic Technology from Florida Institute of Technology, design and production of nautical themed furniture, custom boat fabrication, commercial fishing boat captain, and restaurateur. Living and working on and near the sea instilled a lifelong passion for the preservation of these natural areas and the diverse species that are dependent upon their perpetuity.

After leaving the ocean in 1987, first-hand experience in stressed Gulf of Mexico fisheries led Laurilee to take part in preservation efforts closer to home. When overfishing threatened the habitat and future supply of rock shrimp, she encouraged her entire family to step in and lead the efforts to end trawling in the fragile Oculina Reef and put a management plan in place for the rock shrimp fishery. The result was a first for the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council when they approved a fisheries management plan for the shrimping industry that was based upon input from the industry itself. Laurilee continues to make yearly trips to Washington DC to educate members of Congress about the U.S. commercial fishing industry.

While transitioning from a seafaring lifestyle, Laurilee developed an intense desire to connect people with nature. This led to a seat on the Brevard County Tourist Development Council and many eco-tourism endeavors. The most notable is the **Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival**, which Laurilee founded in 1997.

This annual event, Florida's first major birding festival and now one of the top birding festivals in the nation, is heralded as a model for festivals nationwide due to the exceptional lineup of seminar presenters and high-quality field trips. Birders of all levels, wildlife enthusiasts, biologists, ornithologists and international birding and adventure tour operators travel from all over the world to support this benchmark tradition. Laurilee has attended a

wide variety of forums and addressed many organizations to raise awareness of the benefits that nature-based and heritage tourism can bring to a community.

1997 was also the year that Laurilee started the first guided kayak eco-tour operation in Brevard County, Osprey Outfitters. It has since been through three owners and a name change. A Day Away Kayak Outfitters is now one of the most successful guided kayak tour businesses in the state, introducing thousands of people each year to the wonders of the Indian River Lagoon.

During early development of the Great Florida Birding Trail, Laurilee was instrumental in securing for Brevard County 21% of the site nominations out of the 18-county East Florida Section by personally filling out 45 lengthy nomination forms and escorting Julie Wraithmell, Birding Trail Coordinator, for site inspections. This resulted in the placement of 32 Brevard County sites on the Great Florida Birding Trail Map. Five additional Brevard County sites were added when the East Section of the Great Florida Birding Trail was updated in 2008. Brevard County has more Great Florida Birding Trail sites than any other county in Florida.

Laurilee has been an outspoken advocate for the establishment of a network of multi-use bike trails in Florida. The business core of downtown Titusville is experiencing revitalization due to the presence of three major multi-use trails that will soon pass through the city. Laurilee was recognized as a “Trail Champion” at the 2016 annual meeting of the Florida Trails Foundation.

Lately her emphasis during public speaking has shifted from talks about the benefits of nature-based and heritage tourism to talks about what it was like growing up on the Indian River Lagoon and the critical importance of bringing it back to its former beauty and productivity. A rabid proponent for restoration of her beloved Indian River Lagoon, Laurilee gives talks to anyone that will listen.

Because of the vital importance of sea grasses to Indian River Lagoon restoration, Laurilee was the major funder and driving force behind a successful pilot project to introduce nursery-grown sea grass into the Banana River Lagoon near the Merritt Island Airport. It is her hope that this technology will be used to hasten sea grass coverage when water quality improves sufficiently for sea grasses to survive in the Lagoon. She has developed a presentation about the sea grass project too.

Through her business, as well as her personal life, Laurilee is an important advocate for the promotion, protection, and use of our natural resources in a responsible manner. She says, “The Indian River is the heart and soul of our community. Our economy and our quality of life depend on her survival.”





Ocean Partners Associates, LLLP  
dba Marriott Courtyard & Hampton Inn - Cocoa Beach  
3425 N ATLANTIC AVE.  
COCOA BEACH, FL 32931

Ocean Partners Hospitality, LLLP  
dba Best Western Oceanfront & Days Inn - Cocoa Beach  
5500 N ATLANTIC AVE.  
COCOA BEACH, FL 32931

December 21, 2018

To: Space Coast League of Cities

Re: Appointment of Laurilee Thompson to  
Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan Advisory Committee

Space Coast League of Cities,

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Laurilee Thompson for the above committee. I have had the honor and pleasure of working with Laurilee for the past decade on tourism related issues, including fostering support for the lagoon, as well as examining ways to strengthen the health of our lagoon.

Laurilee's active participation in environmental issues pre-dates the years I have known her. She has a long and well known history of passionate perseverance in the defense of our county's, and our state's, environmental resources.

I can think of no one more qualified, or dedicated, to participate in the plan to preserve, protect, and enhance the well being of our lagoon than Laurilee Thompson.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding your decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Williamson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tom Williamson  
General Manager  
Ocean Partners Associates  
President- Cocoa Beach Area Hotel and Lodging Association





## *Merritt Island Wildlife Association*

P.O. Box 2683, Titusville, FL 32781 Phone: 321-861-2377

Fed ID# 59-3289841

Website: [www.merrittislandwildlife.org](http://www.merrittislandwildlife.org)

*A 501 (C) (3) Cooperating Association for the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge*

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**To:** Space Coast League of Cities

**Date:** Dec 25, 2018

**From:** Merritt Island Wildlife Association (Non-Profit 501c3)

**Subject:** Endorsement of Laurilee Thompson to serve on the Tourism seat on the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan Citizen Advisory Committee.

The Merritt Island Wildlife Association is submitting our endorsement for Laurilee Thompson to serve on the tourism seat on the Save Our Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Project Plan Citizen Advisory Committee.

Ms. Thompson exemplifies the purpose of the Merritt Island Wildlife Association by promoting conservation, awareness, and appreciation of the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and providing assistance to Refuge programs. Her years of experience as a life long Brevard County citizen, commercial and recreational fisherman and restaurant owner demonstrates her understanding of the impacts of the refuge on tourism and the quality of life for the citizens of counties that live on the Indian River Lagoon.

The Merritt Island Wildlife National Wildlife Refuge (MINWR) contains 22% of the IRL shoreline (129 miles) and understands the impact of refuge activities that support tourism in Brevard, Orange and Volusia Counties. The economic impact data from the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation report totaled \$60.4M. (Based on Per-person per-day expenditure for the Refuge in Brevard, Orange, and Volusia Counties)

The Merritt Island Wildlife Association endorsement is based on Laurilee's professionalism, experience in tourism, environment, conservation and years of support to the Merritt Island Wildlife National Wildlife Refuge.

We will be glad to provide any additional information to support Ms. Thompson's selection on the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan Citizen Advisory Committee.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Fairey". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Chris Fairey  
President, Merritt Island Wildlife Association