

A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE CONSERVATION ALLIANCE OF ST. LUCIE COUNTY

- 1972** The inlet beach known as The North Beach was about to be sold to a condominium developer. The Alliance joined with the Home and Neighborhood Development Society to gather thousands of signatures to petition the County Commission for a \$10 million Beach Bond referendum. St. Lucie County residents backed this effort; the final result was the State purchase of Inlet State Park and bond money purchase of beaches on both North and South Hutchinson Island.
-
- 1973** The Alliance launched “Save the Savannas.” The first major result was a decree for removal of the Twin Banyan Causeway that had been built across the Savannas, impeding flow.
-
- 1973** The Annual Awards dinners began, with guest speakers such as the late Art Marshall and Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, and “Environmentalist of the Year” awards. In 1994 the “Permelia Pryor Reed Award” was added to honor the late namesake.
-
- 1977** The State cabinet approved purchase of 3,800 acres of the Savannas, and all-terrain vehicles were banned in the park. The Alliance participated in cleanups, in securing a Park Ranger, and supported the newly formed Savannas Reserve Endowment organization. Today 6,000 acres are protected, making the Savannas reserve the largest remaining freshwater coastal marsh in the United States.
-
- MID-70S** The Alliance participated in many public hearings on nuclear power, resulting in crucial increased safety requirements at the island's new nuclear power plant such as the storm surge barrier.
- The Alliance objected to the County's use of Lawnwood Recreational Complex property for a County Administration Building. The County built the administration building anyway but as a concession, also built the St. Lucie County Civic Center.
- The Alliance began and has continued a successful campaign to show that impact fees should be placed on new construction to provide money for new schools, parks, fire and police protection, and water and sewer service. The Alliance worked with the Citrus and Grove organizations as well as the ranchers to get the County to work towards that end. Seeing thousands of trees being felled by developers, the Alliance in 1973 pushed for a protection ordinance. Commissioners set up a County Tree Protection Ordinance Committee to draft language which is now part of the County's Comprehensive Plan.
- The Alliance has consistently supported the efforts of the Ft. Pierce Sportfishing Club and the Florida League of Anglers to protect and enhance fish populations in Florida waters. The Alliance was foremost in the campaign for the no-gill netting Amendment which passed with over 80% of the vote in St. Lucie County and 73% Statewide.
-
- 1980s** The Alliance's North Fork of the St. Lucie River Preservation Committee took their boats and catalogued the pollution of the river coming from citrus processing plants. Because of their efforts, major improvements were made to correct the situation.
- The Conservation Alliance worked for the establishment of the Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserve and supplied the office with an underwater camera, an aquarium, three canoes and a cash contribution.
-
- 1982** Under the Conservation Alliance umbrella “The Turtle Mothers,” a state-certified sea turtle nest relocation team was organized. By 1986, the team had successfully relocated 28,000 sea turtle eggs.
-

1986	Alliance members helped write the award-winning St. Lucie County Sea Turtle Protection Ordinance. The resulting cooperation of the beachfront businesses and homeowners in turning off or shielding beachfront lights during nesting season made it possible to leave most nests where the sea turtles deposited them. In 1991 only 15 nests required moving; since 1992 the beach has been patrolled daily during the nesting season to provide hatch success data for state records.
1986	The Alliance hosted the first Treasure Coast Environmental Workshop with speakers from state and local agencies. Through their efforts, in 1996, the Port Advisory subcommittee evolved a comprehensive Recreational Port Plan.
1989	Helped assure passage of \$10 million bond to purchase 6 beaches in St. Lucie County, including the Dollman tract, which became known as John Brooks Beach. (So named as Jane Brooks led CASLC's effort to preserve the tract.)
1990	The Alliance continued its push with efforts for passage of the Preservation 2000 bill that led to the celebration recently of the 1 millionth acre of sensitive lands purchased.
1994	<p>The Conservation Alliance, through its Land 4U2 Campaign, helped inform voters of the desperate need to save environmentally sensitive lands in St. Lucie County. A \$20 million bond issue passed with over 67% of the vote, the highest percentage in the state for this issue.</p> <p>The annual Party in the Park environmental festival was first held in 1994. The Alliance, looking for a place to celebrate Earth Day, found the ideal spot: The Ft. Pierce Inlet State Park, the very place earlier saved from developers through the Alliance's "Save the Beaches" campaign.</p>
1999/2000	Led a successful action to prevent the Walton Road Bridges through the Savannas Preserve State Park and over the Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserve from moving beyond the proposal stage. (This is the proposed terminus of the Crosstown Parkway in Port St. Lucie.) Demanded an EIS be conducted for the entire Parkway corridor from I-95 to Hutchinson Island.
2001	The County Commission appointed a representative from the Conservation Alliance to work with consultants to develop a new Airport Master Plan for the St. Lucie County International Airport.
2002	The Alliance entered into a unique partnership with the City of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County to successfully apply and receive a \$25, 000 grant to begin an Adopt-a-Beach program in the county.
2010	The Alliance challenged the injection of industrial waste into the aquifer near a drinking water source for the City of Ft. Pierce. This case was won.
2011	The Alliance urged the protection of a 20-acre undisturbed parcel in Port St. Lucie, and "adopted" and helped name the Mariposa Cane Slough Preserve. Activities include conducting tours, species surveys, and exotic plant removal.
2012	The Alliance and the Indian Riverkeeper registered their opposition with the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation against the proposed route 1C of the Crosstown Parkway Bridge over the North Fork of the St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve and through the Buffer Preserve of the Savannas Preserve State Park, also known as the Halpatiokee Trails unit.
2013	Attended meetings to prevent polluting industries from leading Ft. Pierce port development.
2014	The CASLC successfully challenged the first South Florida Water Management District's permit to begin destruction of the Halpatiokee unit.

2015

The Alliance and the Indian Riverkeeper filed the initial brief against the FHWA and DOT, claiming that the agencies violated the law against taking parklands for road infrastructure. An appeal was eventually lost in 2017 at the 11th circuit court.

The Alliance, with help from biologist Beverly Yoshioka and fish scientist Dr. Grant Gilmore, Ph.D., assisted the defeat of proposed Army Corps permits for proposed developments for the Island Willow and Island Garden projects that would have impacted tidal mangrove wetlands and sea grass beds on the Indian River Lagoon.

Participated in the opposition to USA Compost Facility in Port St. Lucie.

2016

Two members of the CASLC served as expert witnesses in administrative hearings regarding SFWMD's Environment Resource Permit to destroy Halpatiokee unit, challenged by the St. Luce County Audubon.

2017

Served on Advisory Group committee for the Savannas Preserve State Park Unit Management Plan review.

Participated in opposition to Sunbreak Farms spreading bio-solids on its 6,000-acre farm.

The Conservation Alliance has repeatedly objected to "out of watershed" mitigation projects which have allowed wetland-impacts in our County to be offset to watersheds in other counties.

The Conservation Alliance has been diligent in its efforts to participate in "Smart Growth" seminars stressing quality development in St. Lucie County.

The Conservation Alliance and the Waterfront Council were instrumental in bringing Scott Pearson and his underwater slides of the area to Ft. Pierce. Scott does beautiful work for the National Geographic Society.

Members of the Alliance have worked with the Comprehensive Plan Study Group to improve the County Comprehensive Plan. The Alliance is also represented on the County Land Acquisition Selection Committee, the Blueway Advisory Committee and the Restudy Coordination Committee.
