

CASE BRIEF | GEORGIA CONSERVANCY

Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership Enriches Membership Base, Professional Network

“IGEL has expanded the universe of people we know and can call on for expertise and partnering. Every GC staff member who has participated has called on their IGEL connections and used those relationships to further our work.” –Julie Mayfield, Vice President, Georgia Conservancy

The Challenge

For forty years, Georgia Conservancy has been at the forefront of environmental issues in the state of Georgia. Their mission is to foster stewardship of the natural environment through education, principled advocacy, and inclusive decision-making. Dedicated to preserving and improving the environment, the organization fosters dialogues with a multitude of voices across the state. But as Georgia Conservancy grew, there was a continuing need to move the company forward, to make connections, and to increase their recognition statewide. And that's no simple feat.

So, when Julie Mayfield, Vice President of Georgia Conservancy, heard about IGEL—the Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership—her interest was piqued. “I thought it sounded like a great program—an ambitious one—that if successful, could fundamentally change the way environmental policy and on-the-ground environmental change happens here in Georgia,” she says of the IGEL program.

Four years ago, Julie attended IGEL. She expected to find like minds from around Georgia, and hoped to make contacts essential for the future of Georgia Conservancy. What happened was even more striking. “What I didn't expect was how much I looked forward to our sessions, and how sorry I was when they were over. We all seemed to be better people when we were together rather than in our traditional, sometimes adversarial roles,” Mayfield explains.

The Results

The profound impact of IGEL on Mayfield and Georgia Conservancy cannot be overstated. Mayfield reports that in the four years since their first participation, the experience has been ongoing. She credits the IGEL program in

- 🌿 Building Georgia Conservancy's **reputation and awareness** statewide
- 🌿 Garnering substantive **environmental knowledge** for participants
- 🌿 Fostering an **impressive network** of Georgia-wide business, agriculture, and state leaders
- 🌿 Significantly **increased membership** in Georgia Conservancy

But the long-term changes from the IGEL experience go far beyond the benefits for Georgia Conservancy. “*I emerged from IGEL with a new job (at the conservancy) that I love, and a new determination to live the life I wanted to live and work the way I wanted to work rather than how others thought I should. I am happy to say that four years later, I am still doing that and will continue to for the rest of my life.*”

Visit IGEL's website at
<http://www.igeleaders.org>

“IGEL literally changed my life.”—Julie Mayfield



The Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership (IGEL) is a leadership program dedicated to building and sustaining a diverse network of environmentally educated leaders who will help resolve Georgia's environmental challenges. The IGEL experience creates a safe and informative forum for individuals to learn leadership skills, conflict resolution and find common ground. It brings together a diverse group of leaders from a multitude of backgrounds.