

# Newsletter IRLC Indian River Lakes Conservancy

WINTER 2006



The goal of the Indian River Lakes Conservancy is to preserve the natural character of the area, with a focus on protecting clean water, fish and wildlife, and the scenic vistas along the shores of the lakes and the Indian River and to educate ourselves and the community about the natural habitat in which we live.

Formed in 1998 to conserve critical lands in the Indian River Lakes Area of Northern New York, the IRLC is a non-profit land trust with 501(c) (3) tax exempt status operating in a manner consistent with the published standards of "Land Trust Alliance", a national organization.

## CONSERVANCY UPDATE

2005 was a year of encouraging progress for your Conservancy. There was steady growth in membership and support that allowed us to press forward in many areas of our mission.

A new parking lot is now in place off Burns Road for access to the Grand Lake Reserve Hiking Trails.

Development of a Strategic Plan to guide the Conservancy is underway. We are improving our procedures for stewardship, assessing conservation priorities, maximizing volunteer and financial resources and participation in partnership opportunities applicable to our land preservation program.

Our members enjoyed several paddle outings led by volunteer Dani Baker. Our thanks to Dani for planning and leading these outings that get us out of our "nests" and onto the water.

Sandy and Margie Hillback have hosted a wine & cheese fundraiser at their cottage for several years. This year's party proved to be a highlight event for the summer.

Conversations with Conservancy friends, fine wine and cheese, and guided lake cruises make for a wonderful way to support our land trust. Many thanks to Margie & Sandy and to all who come and support the Conservancy.

Members enjoyed an excellent September hike on the Grass Lake side of Grand Lake Reserve. NYS DEC forester, Glen Roberts and NYS Flora Assoc. botanist, Anne Johnson, volunteered a Sunday afternoon to guide a highly informative woodland walk. We discussed and observed trees, bushes, wildflowers, ferns, lichen, birds, butterflies, mammals, local geology, freshwater springs and bees. Thank you Anne and Glen for sharing your knowledge and making for an enjoyable afternoon.

Surveying work is still progressing on the Reserve with completion expected in 2006. It has proven to be a very extensive and complex project. We thank Bernier & Carr Assoc. for working with the Conservancy in completing this project.

## GRANTS

Funding from the Paul G. and Kathleen E. Carr Foundation helped IRLC to construct a much needed parking area at the

Butterfield Lake trail head of Grand Lake Reserve on Burns Road. The crushed stone lot is large enough to accommodate several cars or up to 2 school buses. This allows for safe and convenient access to hiking trails on the Reserve.

IRLC was awarded a grant from the Northern New York Community Foundation to help fund a smaller parking area at the Grass Lake trailhead on Burns Road and to build information kiosks at both trailheads. This work will be completed in the summer.

The Board of Directors is working with consultant, Gerry Smith, to develop a Strategic Plan for the Conservancy. The Strategic Plan will help IRLC focus our efforts on improving our effectiveness in land conservation. This project is partially funded from the Land Trust Alliance/NYS Partnership Program's Conservation Capacity and Excellence Grant. Thanks to the Governor and supporting Legislators, this program is strengthening land trusts and helping to preserve New York's natural environment.

IRLC teamed with Ducks Unlimited, NYS DEC and TILT and succeeded in winning a federally funded North American Waterfowl Conservation Act Grant (NAWCA). This grant money will be used for wetland and grassland conservation work in the St. Lawrence River Valley. This important conservation effort will benefit the entire Northeastern US and eastern Canada by helping to protect and improve breeding and staging areas for waterfowl and water bird populations. NAWCA grants two dollars of match from private and other non-federal

sources for each federal dollar requested. This match may be in the form of cash, land, conservation easements or in-kind services provided by the partners within a specific time frame. Two gifts of nearly 1,000 acres on Butterfield Lake to IRLC were a critical part of raising the required local match.

This ongoing partnership should enable future acquisitions of conservation properties in the Indian River Lakes Region.

## MEMBERSHIPS

We would like to welcome our many new members and extend sincere thanks to the following members and

contributors: Robert Andrews, Phillip Bajjaly, Dani Baker & Dave Belding, Karen Bald & Nadine Gardner, John Bartlett, Keith Bates, Dave & Debbie Bearup, Bruce & Joyce Beebe, Fred & Rosemarie Belcher, Bob & Betty Belge, Peter & Sharri Berzins, Steve & Kay Bolivar, Mike & Bobbi Bolton, Jim & Gail Borkman, Mary & Bill Bostick, John & Elizabeth Briggs, Janet Buckland, Butterfield lake Association, Charles Burlingame, Harold & Shirley Carpenter, David Carse, Henry Carse, Peter Carse, Jeff & Priscilla Cashmore, Laura Cashmore, Sheila & Bill Catlin, Mike Chetwin, Robert & Beverly Cliffe, Jerry & Kathy Cole, Donald Coley, Paul & Bridgid Cook, Phyllis Dake, John & Judy Dixon, Verna Docteur, Elaine Dooling, Marlene Douglas, David Dupra, Janet Durling, John & Lauren Evans, Ingeborg Eyre, Wallace Freeland, Richard & Helen Fuhrman, Dolores Furman, Jeffrey & Elaine Garvey, David & Christine Gascon, Robert & Kathy Gibbs, Mildred Gimber, Norman Gitzen, James & Elizabeth Golembeski, Grass Lake Assoc., Elizabeth Hazen, Allen & Christina Hicks, Elliott & Marge Hillback, George Hills, Priscilla Hiter, Debbie & Fred Hoffman, Jurgen & Judy Hoomans, Brandon Hunneyman, Guy Hunneyman, Cheryl Hurley & Walter Dutcher, Donna Hutchinson, Robert & Betty Jennejohn, Anne Johnson, Judith Jones, Marjorie Kearney, Barbara Kinner, Ronald Kittleson, Elliot Klass, Henry & Jeannette Koster, Lake of the Woods Owner's Association, Jim & Susie Larkins, Lawrence LaRue, Richard LeClerc, Alex Macur & Catherine Zehr, Curtis Mahon, Len & Roberta Main, Ken & Marci Mann, Ron & Barb Mann, Mary Marcon, Dave & Gretchen Martin, Kim Martusiewicz, Joe

& Janet McChesney, Steven McDonald, Randy & Janet McDonald, Martha & Jack McFall, John & Lorry McMahan, Andrew Meyn & Luann Elizabeth, Daren Morgan, Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Morgan, Richard & Patricia Muller, Kevin Murray, William & Diane Muthig, Allan Newell, Raymond Novak, Jon Ostrander, John & Stephanie Palmer, Louis Panunzio, Terry Panunzio, Joseph & Edith Pasquini, Richard Peal, Mike Pellett, Dr. & Mrs. Dale Porter, Richard & Sonja Prenkert, Elizabeth Price, Will Ramsiere, Gail & Daniel Rizzo, George Robertson, Ed & Denise Robertson, Carl & Arlene Rode, Leon & Beverly Ross, Richard & Sally Sauer, Rev. John Scarlett, John & Elizabeth Scarlett, Louise & Mark Scarlett, Doug & Jan Scott, Shari Scott, Al & Carol Sealy, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Sheehan, Gerry Smith, George & Joan Smith, Jeff Smith, Thomas Snelson, Tom & Linda Steitler, Judy Stelljes, Chris & Tammi Stoll, Chris & Tami Storey, Don & Vicky Storey, John Sundbeck, Dr. Kenneth Thomson, Butch & Kathy Tipper, John & Paula Tobin, Daniel & Pamela Tordy, Mr. & Mrs. Roland VanDeusen, Alex Velto, Robert & Janet Wakefield, Jason & Emily Walker, Gerald Walsh, E. Mary Washburn, Edmund Waszkiewicz, Doris & Harland Waterstraat, Craig Waterstraat, D.E. Wilcox, Judith & Charles Willis, Yvonne Wimmer, Don & Phyllis Wingerath, Allan & Bonnie Wysocki, Stephen & Deborah Wysocki, Amy York Wakefield, Dave & Mary Lou Zimpfer, Sandy Zinninger

**Contributions received in memory of:** Madeline Beldue, Dorothy Hills, Kathleen Teasley

We greatly regret any errors or omissions.

## HUNTING PROGRAM

The 2005 IRLC hunting program, by reports so far, was enjoyed by participants, despite sparse sightings of mature bucks. Hunters say they enjoyed walking the land and did see a larger than expected number of doe and fawn. This observation seems to bode well for the health and population of the herds in our area.

Hunters interested in receiving permission to hunt on the thousand acre, Grand Lake Reserve, can apply to the IRLC. While there is no cost for participation and membership in the IRLC is not required, a number of rules apply. These rules pertain to such matters as safety, reporting and courtesy. There is also a sixteen-hour volunteer work

commitment required of participants. Past volunteer work has included brush hogging, clearing trails and assisting surveyors.

If you are interested in participating in the hunting program, contact the IRLC at P.O. Box 27, Redwood, NY 13679 or by email at IRLC1998@aol.com.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year we provide scholarships to two deserving students.

From Alexandria Bay Central School the winner was Scott Megan. Scott is the son of Thomas and Cathy Megan of Redwood. He will be attending SUNY Plattsburgh where he will be majoring in Environmental Science. While in high school he took many elective science courses including a college level environmental science course.

From Jefferson Community College the winner was Matthew R. Smith. Matthew is from Lacona, New York. He graduated from JCC with honors and holds an A.S. degree in Math and Science. He will be attending Hamilton College where he plans to pursue studies in Geology.

## CHARISMATIC BIRDS OF THE INDIAN RIVER LAKES REGION

by Gerry Smith

*Just like some humans are more charismatic than others, some species of birds attract human attention more than others. These are usually large conspicuous species that are easily detected on the landscape. Many have interesting behaviors or attract human attention in other ways. Often these attractive species occupy open areas, particularly near water, where they are regularly in contact with humans. In the Indian River Lakes region there are several species of birds that come immediately to mind when one thinks*

of the charismatic birds. These include:

**The Common Loon** is one of the favorite birds of everyone interested in the natural world that live in cottage country. Its loud and haunting calls, habit of vocalizing at night and spectacular plumage make it a symbolic species of the north woods lake country. In the Indian River Lakes system pairs of loons occur on several lakes from April into November providing great animation to the scene. Unfortunately the loon population of the region is small and its reproductive success variable at a level that may not be adequate to maintain the population in the long-term. This is in part due to being a large conspicuous bird living on human dominated lakes. Being a charismatic bird is a two edged sword as all the attention such an animal attracts from us is not welcome or helpful during the April to October height of the breeding season. Loon nests are easily disrupted by water level changes caused by boat wakes. Young chicks less than one-third the sizes of the adults are very vulnerable to predators particularly if separated from their parents. On lakes with increasing recreation the threat of disruption from sources such as irresponsible personal watercraft use is an increasing problem. During the critical period of 3-4 weeks, when loons have small chicks, they require undisturbed "nursery" areas where chicks may feed and grow safe from large predatory fish and other predators. These areas are usually shallow waters near shore in bays. During this period even approaching too close in a canoe, let alone racing through on a jet ski, can cause loss of any chicks. Even though adult loons may live 25-30 years repeated reproductive failure over many years can result in the elimination of a population from a given lake or system. Loons and humans can live well together if the humans are respectful of the loons needs for a degree of separation during critical periods. Education of lake residents and visitors and enforcement of existing laws to protect wildlife will assure that a place remains for loons on a given lake. The success of such efforts assures that

human lake residents can enjoy the company of this spectacular, if occasionally noisy, neighbor. Increased efforts are needed in our area to ensure continued presence of our loons.

**The Osprey** is another of the conspicuous and charismatic summer avian residents of the Indian River Lakes Region. In contrast with the loon population of the region that is not doing well, the Osprey population is thriving. Most people are familiar with the decline of many birds of prey caused by indiscriminate use of DDT and other chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides between 1945-1975. As a species the Osprey was greatly impacted and populations in many areas declined catastrophically. In New York State this species disappeared from a number of areas with the largest remaining populations in the DDT era being present in the Adirondacks. Another New York refuge for this species during that period was the Indian River Lakes Region where several pairs persisted through the darkest days of the DDT era. The likely reason for this was the general lack of intensive pesticide use in the region and the relatively uncontaminated waters of the lakes. The good condition of their breeding grounds gave our Ospreys a break period when they were not increasing their chemical load. This, in turn, helped keep an individuals overall level of contamination below the threshold that permitted successful reproduction. The results of that success are now evident throughout our region and the nearby St. Lawrence River. Following the federal ban on DDT and the increasing breakdown of these chemicals in the environment, Osprey populations throughout North America began to recover by the early-mid 1980s. Since a small but healthy population existed in the region the recovery locally has been very rapid.

Between April and September we humans can observe these birds at their conspicuous nests scattered throughout our region and watch the entire breeding cycle as they raise their young. Increasing Osprey populations are leading to a shortage of ideal nesting sites so power poles,

large buoys and similar sites are in high demand. Ospreys are fairly tolerant of human disturbance once they have young in the nest but observers should use common sense in enjoying these birds. Stay away from Osprey nests before young are present as individual pairs may abandon their nests if disturbed early in the season. Never land at a nest site to observe Ospreys as they are easily seen from a boat. When observing these birds watch quietly, do not yell and wave your arms as this may cause an adult to flush rapidly from a nest resulting damage to eggs or young. Unlike loons Ospreys can be quite tolerant of human presence and with a few simple common sense precautions peaceful co-existence is assured. Thus human and Osprey alike can enjoy the fishing on the lakes while we watch the downy white fuzz ball young grow to a size slightly larger than their parents just before they leave the nest. Then we can enjoy watching the young, whose upper back feather is scaled with white, learn to fly and fish and eventually separate from their parents. In September it may be these young birds, easily distinguished from their parents by the scaly appearance of their backs, that are the last to depart the lakes. As they depart we will wish them well to survive the fall migration to the tropics where they will remain for 18-30 months before returning to raise their own young and thus provide us with more charismatic birds to brighten our lives.

**The Bald Eagle** is another... oops, out of space. The eagles in the Indian River Lakes area will have to wait for another newsletter.

## IRLC CONTACTS

Shirley Carpenter, Executive Director

315-482-5250-summer  
315-686-9889-winter

Ed Robertson, President

315-482-3235-summer  
386-649-4876-winter

Board of Directors:  
Elliott Hillback, V.P.  
Steve McDonald, Sec/Treas  
Mark Scarlett  
Bob Wakefield

**INDIAN RIVER LAKES CONSERVANCY**  
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM - 2006

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Permanent Mailing**

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Seasonal Mailing**

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Renewal** \_\_\_\_\_ **New Member**  
**Circle One Membership [\$20.00]**

**Total Check Enclosed \$** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Conservator [\$50.00]**

**Protector [\$100.00]**

**Benefactor [\$250.00]**

**Eagle [\$1,000.00 and above]**

**\$** \_\_\_\_\_ **Scholarship Fund** **\$** \_\_\_\_\_ **Endowment Fund** **\$** \_\_\_\_\_ **Stewardship Fund** **\$** \_\_\_\_\_ **Additional Donation**

Make checks payable to: **Indian River Lakes Conservancy** and mail with this form to: **P.O. Box 27, Redwood, NY 13679.**  
Thank You.

Know someone who might be interested in joining? Please give us their name and address

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**Indian River Lakes Conservancy**

**P.O. Box 27**

**Redwood, New York 13679**

*Return Service Requested*



