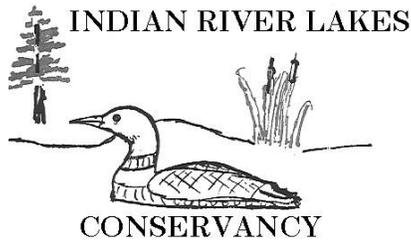


# **Newsletter IRLC** *Indian River Lakes Conservancy*

SPRING/SUMMER 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**

Central to the mission of the IRLC is the responsible stewardship of the land in its care. Appropriately, the IRLC's new Strategic Plan calls for a "detailed stewardship plan for the Grand Lake Reserve" that will make it "a showplace for exemplary stewardship practices." Last year, in a first step toward meeting that objective, DEC Forester Glenn Roberts provided the IRLC Board with the first extensive inventory of the forests on the Grand Lake Reserve.

During his travels on the Reserve, Glenn also sketched out several potential trails for development. With thoughtful planning and management, we hope the public access afforded by such trails will help raise awareness of the importance of

conserving the very special water, land and biological resources found in the Indian River Lakes, which is also an Education objective of IRLC's Strategic Plan.

## **MEMBERSHIPS**

Your support is your commitment to preserve, protect and improve the community that you live in

Please renew your membership now if you have not already done so for this year. Also, consider honoring the memory of a loved one or friend with a gift to the Conservancy.

## **SUMMER EVENTS**

### **ANNUAL MEETING**

**Sunday, July 23 1:00 P.M.**  
Meeting at the Grand Lake Reserve Parking area on Burns Road followed by walk in the woods.

### **WINE & CHEESE FUNDRAISER**

**Saturday, August 26 4:00**  
Always a "Grand" event!  
Cruise the shoreline of the Reserve and enjoy wine & cheese from around the world, graciously donated by Sandy & Marge Hillback. To be held at the Butterfield Lake summer home of Harold and Shirley Carpenter, on Roger's Road. \$30.00/couple or \$20.00 per person, please come join the fun.

## **TRAIL CLEARING DAYS**

**8:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.**  
**Friday, June 30<sup>th</sup>**  
**Tuesday, July 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**Saturday, July 29<sup>th</sup>**  
**Saturday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>**

We have scheduled four trail clearing half-days to help develop the first of the proposed new trails on the Grand Lake Reserve. The days are planned from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM, to be followed by a BYO picnic lunch on Grass Lake. Volunteers are encouraged to join us on those days whenever and for however long they can. Good footwear, long pants, long sleeve shirts, gloves, a dollop of ambition and an even larger dose of good humor are encouraged. We look forward to some healthy work, cheerful company and wonderful scenery, capped off each day by lunch with friends, new and old, by the waters of Grass Lake.

The new trail will start on Burns Road near the top of the hill just above the old logging road access to Grass Lake. The trail will connect with that logging road at Grass Lake and complete a loop that runs through some rather dramatic forested uplands, including an old sugar bush and some beautiful views of Grass Lake. Limited parking will be available just off Burns Road near the new trailhead and at the large parking area at the Burns Road trailhead to Butterfield Lake. Look for signs on Burns

Road during those work days. For additional information contact Mark Scarlett, Stewardship Committee Chairman at 324-5240.

For those participating in the hunting program...this will qualify toward your 16 work hours.

### **SCHOLARSHIPS**

We are in the process of selecting scholarship winners for this year. The donations directed to this fund go to deserving local and IRLC family member students to help cover college level environmental science tuition costs. The generosity of our members enables us to maintain the level of award each year. Please consider a donation to the scholarship fund.

### **HUNTING PROGRAM Fall 2005 Hunting on the Grand Lake Reserve**

About a dozen hunters participated in this past season's permitted hunting program on the Grand Lake Reserve. The primary purposes of the IRLC permitted hunting program are to manage the deer population on the Reserve and to provide community access for the enjoyment of recreational deer hunting activities.

Hunters agree to spend at least 16 hours assisting in the maintenance of the Reserve. These activities include posting signs, removing unwanted or unauthorized items [such as trash, permanent tree stands or other structures], and

maintaining Reserve trails and borders. The IRLC is grateful to all hunters who contribute time and labor to help maintain the Reserve. Also, special thanks are once again given to last season's IRLC hunting program coordinators, Dave Gascon, Guy Hunneyman and Terry Panunzio.

It is likely that a number of openings will be available for those wishing to obtain a permit to hunt on the Reserve next season. If interested in obtaining a permit, contact the IRLC by email [IRLC1998@aol.com], or mail [IRLC, P.O. Box 27, Redwood, NY 13679]. Also, questions or comments about the hunting program are welcome.

### **SEPTIC SYSTEM UPGRADE GRANTS AVAILABLE**

Grants to upgrade failing septic systems in cottages on the lakes are available again for the 2006 season. Cottage owners may apply for individual grants which will reimburse them for 25% of their costs up to \$1000. The terms are exactly the same as last year. Applicants must fill out the application which includes having a certified lake water quality representative make an inspection and approve the proposed upgrade. The Jefferson County Water Quality Coordinating Committee will be accepting applications until the deadline date which will probably be about August 1<sup>st</sup>. If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity to

improve your septic system, please contact Shirley Carpenter at (315) 686—9889 before Memorial Day or (315) 482 – 5250 after Memorial Day. She will provide you with the application form and all other necessary information. If you have any interest in this reimbursement program, you should act as quickly as possible -- certainly before June 30<sup>th</sup>. Several cottage owners have benefited from this opportunity to upgrade or improve their septic systems so if you suspect that your system may be inadequate or failing, now is the time to act.

### **CHARISMATIC BIRDS OF THE INDIAN RIVER LAKES REGION**

Part 2

By: Gerry Smith

*Now about the Bald Eagle: Bald Eagles were uncommon regular breeders and more common as migrants and wintering birds in the region prior to the DDT era. From just after the Second World War through the 1970s, eagle populations declined precipitously in eastern North America, including our area. The ban on chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides in the early 1970s initiated a gradual recovery that began in earnest in the mid-1980s. Increased reproductive success and survivorship led to rapid increases in birds from Canada migrating through and wintering in our region by the mid-1990s. While the recovery of the New York State breeding populations lagged a bit behind Canada, nesting numbers statewide rose from a single pair in the mid-1960s to more than 120 pairs by 2005. The return of this native to our shores is a direct result of intensive protection and management combined with legislative*

action banning DDT and providing additional conservation tools through the federal Endangered Species Act. Forty years ago it was in doubt if eagles would inhabit the Indian River Lakes Region in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Fortunately, with wise stewardship of our land and water resources, generations of future lake residents can enjoy these magnificent creatures.

In 2006 it is possible to see Bald Eagles in the region at any season although they are least common at times when cottage residents are most common. This is because there are no known nests in the area, although breeding locally is likely. The only way to be certain eagles are breeding in an area is to see them associated with a nest. Simple presence of adult birds in an area during the summer months is not proof of local nesting. Eagles present at the lakes in summer could be the avian equivalent of human snowbirds that spend September through May in Florida. There is a sizeable Southern Bald Eagle population that nest in Florida and elsewhere on the Gulf coast from October to April. Many of these birds, including newly flying full-grown young of the year, head north in May and early June and return south in August and September. The evolutionary reasons for such a long journey, especially by young birds, are unclear. I certainly can think of many practical reasons to leave Florida in summer. These summer visitors mix with the still relatively small New York breeding populations in areas with water during the late summer and early fall before heading south. Since they are wandering birds in search of food and a good night roost site, they can turn up anywhere in the lakes region in summer, so keep your eyes open.

From my standpoint, the most interesting time for eagle watching occurs after many cottagers have followed the Florida Bald Eagles to more southerly climes. From November through early April, our region is visited by migrant and wintering Bald Eagles from the Boreal

forests as far away as western Canada and possibly Alaska. These are brawny Bald Eagles, noticeably larger than their southern cousins and well suited to surviving our northern winters. With few leaves on the trees and lakes and rivers freezing, these birds are concentrated in areas with open water where fish abound or at other food sources. A deer carcass on the ice, in a field or a winter fish kill may bring as many as a dozen eagles to a site to squabble over the food. If the carcass is large and suitable white pine or other conifer exists at an undisturbed site nearby, some wonderful eagle watching will ensue. Unlike we humans, a white scalp is well respected in the world of Bald Eagles. With females larger than males, adult females are dominant at food sources, followed by adult males, immature females and immature males. Immature males receive little respect at an eagle banquet. Since it takes eagles until their fifth year to get the white head and tail of an adult, gatherings of eagles often contain many different age classes and associated plumages. Also, since adult birds are very competent at obtaining food and juveniles are not, the presence of even a temporary abundant food supply can mean the difference between death and survival through the winter for a young bird. This results in all sorts of machinations between individuals, including food related aggressive mugging of each other, attempting to sneak up and grab morsels while no other bird is looking, etc.. Watching feeding eagles in winter can be a real treat, so a winter visit to the cottage as the lakes are freezing may prove worthwhile, especially if a deer carcass appears on the ice nearby.

It is possible to see a Bald Eagle at any season in the Indian River Lakes region. Migrants from northern populations are present October to April with migrants from southern populations present much of the remainder of the year. While nesting, Bald Eagles have a critical requirement of avoiding human disturbance near the nests. Eagles at

other seasons have three basic needs. These are food ( usually fish or waterfowl), large perch trees near food sources and a secluded roost area( usually white pines away from human caused disruption). If these requirements are met, and humans give eagles their space, these visitors will liven up the local scene with their magnificent presence.

Most persons in the lakes region thrill to the sight of any Bald Eagle, but particularly the view of an adult in it's national symbol plumage. Most of us wish the bird well and only hope to see it again. Unfortunately, an incident that occurred this winter in the town of Rossie reminds us that there are still benighted fools at large who would deprive us of our view and the bird of its life. An adult Bald Eagle was illegally shot and the perpetrator is still at large. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have offered a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the shooter. Since adult eagles can live more than 25 years in the wild, this one thoughtless criminal act has removed a bird from our wintering population for many years to come. While shooting of eagles occurs much less than in the distant past, due to the public being better educated about birds of prey, it is still a much too frequent cause of death for eagles.

No doubt, since eagles have been known to eat Great Blue Heron for breakfast, that other charismatic bird of our region will not miss the lost eagle. More on the Great Blue next time...

## 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** **Total Check Enclosed \$** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Circle One** **Membership [\$20.00]** **Supporter [\$35.00]**

**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*



