

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Elliott Hillback, IRLC President

Another spring in the Indian River Lakes area that we love, enjoy and protect! Amazingly, spring 2012 started in December/January and, despite some recent relapses into winter-like weather, that springtime feeling has been in the air ever since. It will be interesting to see how the plants and creatures large and small (think bugs) in the Indian River Lakes Region will adapt to these odd weather patterns. In any case, we always enjoy spring because of the new growth and almost magical changes it brings to the natural world around us.

This is also a period of rapid change and growth for the Indian River Lakes Conservancy (IRLC). As we drive to become a truly sustainable organization we are continuing to expand our capabilities, our membership, and our programs and activities. All of these actions are focused on accomplishing Our Mission:

***“To preserve the natural character of the Indian River Lakes area, to improve the environmental quality of its lands and waters, to protect its diverse flora and fauna, and to maintain the scenic vistas on and around our region’s lakes and rivers.*”**

To educate ourselves and the community, about the natural habitat in which we live and about good conservation practices, and to increase the everyday use of this knowledge and these techniques.”

Last year, as you probably remember, we received a significant New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP) Grant which we have been using in a number of ways to help us grow and evolve. We started by gathering the needs, interests, opinions and ideas from a significant number of you who live,

work and play in this area. Based on our assessment of that information and with help from an expert consultant funded by our grant, we developed a clear Mission Statement and a multi-year Strategic Plan for the IRLC and immediately began to implement that plan. With grant support and member's donations, the Outreach Team is significantly enhancing and expanding our outreach/education programs. For example, we held our first ever winter hike which was originally planned to be on skis/snowshoes but... With its post hike hot chocolate and s'mores it was fun, educational and very well attended. The Stewardship Team is planning extensive trail improvements in a number of areas including: trail safety, trailside seating, modified signage, and general trail upkeep. Some trail extensions are also in the planning stages. Also based on grant and donor support our Admin Team is acquiring computer hardware and software to help us manage our growing membership list, our volunteer base and related training programs, our fundraising efforts and a number of other basic support programs.

Last fall we applied for two grants from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) through the New York State Conservation Partnership (NYSCPP). The first is a follow-up Capacity Grant to the one we received last year which will help us continue to build our capabilities and capacities across a wide range of areas. The second is a Transaction Grant which is focused on several of our recently acquired properties. It will help fund the development of multi-year land management plans, support building public access facilities (docks) in several places along our shores, and help us design, create and install new educational and directional trail signage.



Hapatcong photo by Stephen Diehl.

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President's letter (cont.)

At a statewide announcement event in Rochester we were very pleased to learn that we were awarded approximately \$25,000 which was %100 of our Transaction Grant request and 90% of our Capacity Grant request. We are very proud to receive these significant and very competitive 2012 grants. The IRLC has now been awarded major grants for six years in a row.

To effectively utilize these new grants to carry out our mission and achieve our goals, we need to greatly expand the IRLC's base of members and volunteers who get directly involved in our activities. All skills and interests are welcome: trail work and boundary marking; design and creation of educational programs, educational material and trailside signs; planning and/or managing fun and educational events; helping visiting scientific teams identify and catalog the flora and fauna of our region; working in the office; or who knows what – there is something that everyone can do to help us all achieve our common mission. Let us know what you would like to do or contact any of our officers to find out more about what we are doing and what sounds interesting to you.

This is OUR all-volunteer land trust; it is YOUR all volunteer land trust. We have an amazing opportunity to make a significant difference in the Indian River Lakes area where we live, work and play and have fun doing it. We also have a tremendous responsibility to PROTECT our local environment while we help people LEARN about and ENJOY the natural world around us. Thank you for being involved and for all you have done and will do. We look forward to seeing you very soon. Happy Spring!



Join the conversation on Facebook

Type "Indian River Lakes Conservancy" in the Facebook search box, or follow the link on our website.

Join Us for a Spring Hike!

Bring family and friends to explore the trails of IRLC's Grand Lake Reserve on a *Birds and Blooms* hike, Saturday May 19, from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm (rain date: Sunday, May 20).

Botanist Anne Johnson and other naturalists will lead small groups for an intimate experience of the spring landscape. See and hear thrushes, warblers, nesting eagles, ravens and more. And, weather permitting, the opportunity to observe and ID smaller flyers, the dragonflies. Enjoy and photograph the beauty of spring blooms such as trillium, bloodroot, jack-in-the-pulpit, sugar maple and bladdernut trees. Delight in the fresh greens of new leaves and emerging ferns, sedges and grasses. With over 4 miles of trails and a diverse landscape, there is something for everyone!

To join the outing, meet at the large IRLC parking lot on Burns Road at 10 am. Bring your own lunch and IRLC will provide beverages and snacks. Wear boots, as parts of the trails may be wet. Please let us know you plan to come by emailing indianriverlakes@gmail.com so we know how many cookies are needed.

From the village of Redwood: travel Cottage Hill Road for 3 miles, then bear left on Burns Road driving 1.75 miles to the IRLC parking lot, P2 (it's the 2nd parking lot on the left). Directions are also available on the IRLC website: [indianriverlakes.org/IRLC Trails](http://indianriverlakes.org/IRLC%20Trails). The parking lot appears as "P2".



The IRLC held its first-ever winter hike on the Butterfield Lake Trail in January. The event was attended by more than 20 adventurous souls and led by Kim Cullen from The Minna Anthony Common Nature Center and Naturalist Vici Diehl. Despite a lack of snow for skiing or snowshoes, the day was perfect.

IRLC Stewardship News

Volunteers Needed

With more than 1600 acres under conservation, the Indian River Lakes Conservancy is seeking volunteers to help us maintain our properties and trails. Many different types of maintenance need to be performed, which means anyone from a young adult to a senior can be a steward.

This past fall and winter surveyors have been marking IRLC property lines with ribbons and pins in the woods and marshes. This spring we have been scrambling to paint the trees on these newly surveyed property lines before leaf growth obscures our ability to follow the surveyor's markings. As the leaves have now come out, it is time to switch functions to trail maintenance, which is where our need for volunteers is greatest.

Trail maintenance starts out being easy and fun. You walk the trail looking for obstructions. Typically you find a tree that has blown down, crossing the trail. This is when the work starts. Many of the obstructions can be moved by hand. The larger trees need to be cut and moved. This is where experience and skill with a chainsaw comes in. This skill is the most in need. It takes skill to cut a large tree with a tangle of branches lying on the ground, and even more skill to cut trees hung up in other trees. The skill and, most importantly, the experience to know how to do it safely are valuable to our program.

If a chainsaw is not your thing, we have other tasks that would make the conservancy lands more hospitable for our members and guests. Do you have woodworking skills? Would you like to make a bench for the trail? There are times when any of us would enjoy a moment sitting on a handcrafted bench along our trails to rest or take in an especially great view.

We are also looking for Team leaders. When we accumulate enough volunteers we will be seeking people

who have the ability to manage a group of people who are assigned a task. This would probably be a group assigned to do trail maintenance of a specific trail. This task would be a spring time task and again in the fall.

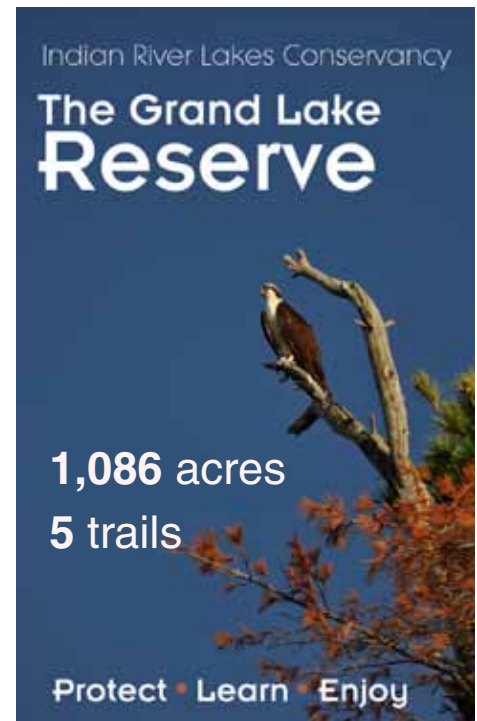
Have you read this far and not found your place? Walking with a set of hand pruners is another valuable service to our trails. Every year small understory plants and brush grow into our paths. Walking along with a friend and cutting away brush that protrudes into the path makes the hike more pleasant for those who come after you.

Or, consider being a family of Stewards. Yes, if you are looking to spend time with your family, why not adopt a trail as your family project? This would involve walking together and clearing understory with pruners, reporting downed trees requiring chainsaw work to the Stewardship chairperson, restocking trail kiosk printed materials, reading the trail log at the kiosk and reporting important messages to a board member. What a family bonding experience!

If anything that was written here has pushed your buttons to become a volunteer, contact Rick Lopez by email at Rdwd77@yahoo.com or by phone at (315) 405-1464.



The Grand Lake Reserve



The Grand Lake Reserve, established in 2003 with a gift of more than 880 acres by Henry Carse, has grown to include over 1,000 acres and 7 miles of trails for public use. Land acquisitions were made possible through State and Federal grants and by the generosity of individuals committed to preserving the pristine nature of the Indian River Lakes area. Conservancy holdings now reach beyond the Grand Lake Reserve. The Conservancy protects an additional 540 acres of wetlands and shoreline elsewhere on Butterfield Lake and on the Indian and Oswegatchie Rivers.

Renew your membership. Don't miss out on our 2012 Newsletters!

____ Renewal

INDIAN RIVER LAKES CONSERVANCY
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM - 2012

____ New Member

Name: _____ E-Mail _____

Permanent Mailing Address: _____ Phone: _____

Seasonal Mailing Address: _____ Phone: _____

Total Amount
Enclosed:

\$ _____

Membership Levels:

Dragonfly - \$25.00

Warbler - \$50.00

Whip-poor-will - \$100.00

Loon - \$250.00

Osprey - \$500.00

Eagle - \$1,000.00 and above

\$ _____ Scholarship Fund

\$ _____ Endowment Fund

\$ _____ Stewardship Fund

This is a Donation in Memory/Honor of _____

This is a Gift Membership for _____

Please send an acknowledgement to: _____

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

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

Please contact me: regarding Conservation Easements with information about including IRLC in my will I have included IRLC in my will

If you prefer to keep your newsletter intact, this membership form is also available online at www.IndianRiverLakes.org

2012 Filled with IRLC Events

The IRLC's Marketing and Outreach Committee has put together a 2012 season filled with new events.

Following our very successful winter hike, we have planned a spring version that will combine information on spring plants, birds and dragonflies with the opportunity to enjoy the Conservancy's trails (*see article on page 2*). Hikes will be led by naturalists with specialties in a variety of areas.

On Saturday, July 14th we'll hold our first ever **Family Picnic**. We will provide the fire, beverages and dessert and you are invited to bring a picnic and a canoe or kayak for a paddle on Mud Lake or other surrounding waters. Plans are still being finalized, but we hope to hold the picnic at the Redwood Community Park from noon until 4:00.

On Saturday, August 11th, plan to join us for our **Festival of the Lakes**. This year's event will be held at Coyote Moon Vineyards, Clayton from 4 pm to 8 pm. This annual fundraiser will

include a vineyard tour followed by a pig roast dinner and silent auction.

Also planned is a Fall Nature Photography Workshop in October. The workshop will be led by noted photographers Stephen and Vici Diehl. The all-day workshop will feature morning instruction, lunch, and afternoon field work.

Updated information for all events will be posted on the events calendar on our website (www.indianriverlakes.org) and on our Indian River Lakes Conservancy Facebook page.

Please note that we are always looking for more involvement by interested IRLC members. If you have a topic or idea for an event or class, or would like to help in another way, we would love to hear from you! Please email us at indianriverlakes@gmail.com.

www.IndianRiverLakes.org

Keep abreast of Indian River Lakes activities, news and events by visiting www.IndianRiverLakes.org often.

Submissions of photographs for the site and appropriate events for the calendar are always welcome. They can be submitted to IndianRiverLakes@gmail.com, and please write "website" in the subject line.

www.IndianRiverLakes.org

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.



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ODE NOTES

Springtime Darners; An Ancient Dragonfly Species in Modern Times

Just in time for spring and the onslaught of blackflies and mosquitoes, large numbers of dragonflies are found in the Indian River Lakes region... along the edges of our lakes, rivers and streams. From the beginning of May these numbers include many species of Baskettails, Clubtails and just a few species of Emeralds and Darners.

The earliest of the Darners to make an appearance is the aptly named Springtime Darner. Surveying in the first week of May, at the mouth of a small stream emptying into Sixberry Lake, we watched as several nymphs (larvae) crawled out of the water onto vegetation and the adults emerged. Similar encounters have occurred along the Indian River and the outflow of Millsite Lake and they are magical events to witness.

The Springtime Darner is one of 20 species of the darner family (Aeshnidae) found in NY State and one of 14 darner species we have found, so far, in and around the Indian River Lakes. At 2" to 2.5" in body length it is one of the smallest Darners. Not as flashy as the late summer and fall darners, the Springtime has a brown thorax and abdomen with small paired, bright blue markings. The wings of the male are clear; the female has amber tinged wings and both have small brown basal spots.

After two or more years developing underwater, Springtime Darner

nymphs leave their aquatic environment and climb up to 6 feet from water to begin their transformation. This process is weather dependent and can take a few to several hours from nymph to a "hardened" flying adult. As with all dragonflies and damselflies, this is a very vulnerable time; ants, spiders, and birds view them as easy meals. Once an adult has hardened and is capable of flying, it can be seen hunting from early morning to dusk. Flying zigzag patterns low over water or along the edges of water and forest margins, Springtime Darners gobble down about one-third of their body weight each day with a diet rich in blackflies, mosquitoes, and other flying insects. They are fast, eat while flying, and rain does not stop them!

Most Springtime Darners have mated, laid eggs and vanished by late July. After mating, the female seeks out slow moving woodland streams, rivers, or highly oxygenated lake waters with sparse aquatic vegetation. Landing on a reed, she will submerge the tip of her abdomen and insert one egg at a time into the vegetation in a precise vertical pattern.

This is fascinating to observe. We have watched as a female landed on a reed and backed down its length inserting an egg every ¼ inch or so, continuing until only her eyes were above water! Crawling back up the reed, she vibrated her wings to remove water, flew to another reed, and started again.

What is in a Name?



The prefix *basi* in the scientific/genus name tells us this is a basic or primitive species and not as evolutionarily advanced as other darners. The Springtime Darner is the only species in this genus making it "monotypic". *Janata* may be a reference to the Roman God, Janus, from which the month, January, comes, perhaps an acknowledgement of the Springtime's early emergence.

Beyond NYS, Springtime Darners occur in the eastern half of the US and the lower eastern half of Canada. From 2005-09, during the New York State Natural Heritage Program's Dragonfly and Damselfly Survey, Springtime Darners were found in only 22 of the state's 62 counties. In the Indian River Lakes region, populations appear secure, while they are possibly rare in other parts of their range. They are further evidence of the unmatched biological richness of the Indian River Lakes Conservancy service area and why protecting this watershed is so very important.



*Female Springtime Darner emerges from her final larval skin. Fluid is pumped into her wings. Wings and exoskeleton harden and the adult flies away, leaving behind an exuvia or "skin".
photographed at Millsite Lake*

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Local Lyme Disease UPDATE

Faith Lustik, Health Planner, Jefferson County Public Health Department

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection transmitted by a tick. The numbers of cases have risen dramatically in Jefferson County, from 57 human cases in 2008 to the record high in 2011 of 199 human cases. Lyme disease is transmitted through a bite from a specific type of tick. The animals that most often carry these insects are white-footed field mice, deer, raccoons, opossums, skunks, weasels, foxes, shrews, moles, chipmunks, squirrels, and horses. Those are the same animals that are found in most of the Northeast so there is really no escaping the threat but we can diminish the risk.

For optimal health, people need to enjoy the outdoors as much as possible and do so safely. Deer ticks live in shady, moist areas at ground level so we must protect ourselves in the following simple ways – just as we have learned to protect ourselves from mosquitoes:

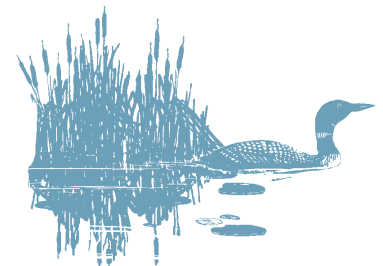
- Wear repellent.
- Check for ticks daily.
- Shower soon after being outdoors.
- Call your medical provider if you get a fever or rash.

For more information visit www.jcphs.org and see Vector Control under Preventive Services.

Additional detailed information can be obtained through the American Lyme Disease Foundation: <http://www.aldf.com/>

About the IRLC

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 the Land Trust Alliance, a national organization



IRLC 2012 Highlights

- May 19** Birds & Blooms Spring Hike on the Grand Lake Reserve - 10:00 am
- July 14** IRLC Family Picnic at the Redwood Community Park (location may change) noon - 4:00 pm
- Aug 11** "Festival of the Lakes" Coyote Moon Vineyards, Clayton - 4:00 - 8:00 pm
- October** Fall Nature Photography workshop

check www.IndianRiverLakes.org for more information and updates.