



The declining **Blanding's Turtle** is rare with localized populations in many parts of the northeastern United

States. Recognized by its brilliant yellow under parts, this handsome species occurs in and near the wetlands of the Grand Lake Reserve. The relative isolation of the Reserve provides Blanding's, as well as other turtle species, with a sanctuary as they search for sites to lay their eggs.



The uncommon **Stinkpot Turtle** (*Sternotherus odoratus*), with its distinctive appearance, occurs in wetland areas of the Grand Lake Reserve. As with many turtle species, even the smaller ones, a lifespan of several decades

is not uncommon once individuals reach adulthood. The mosaic of wetland, forest, and forest openings, combined with large areas of limited human disturbance, provide ideal habitat for these slow moving, long lived reptiles.

**Our region's unique geology has created a diverse ecosystem that is home to a variety of rare species. This carefully balanced ecology relies on our protection of existing habitat and water quality.** Fortunate hikers, who look and listen carefully, may be rewarded by glimpsing one of these rare reptiles, odonates, flora or bird species. For more information, visit our website: [www.IndianRiverLakes.org](http://www.IndianRiverLakes.org)

**Pitch Pine** (*Pinus rigida*), while not at all common, is worth trying to locate. It is at its northern limit in our area and can be found on and near the shores of Butterfield Lake. It has needles in groups of three, while white pine has five and red pine two. Pitch pine grows on dry, sandy or rocky sites and is generally a somewhat scraggly tree.

**Grand Lake Reserve  
A Habitat for Rare Species**

**Whip-poor-will** (*Caprimulgus vociferus*), Rarely seen because of its nocturnal habits, the Whip-poor-will's distinctive call can be heard at dusk across the Grand Lake Reserve. While not categorized as endangered, the Whip-poor-will has experienced pronounced decline in NYS over the past decade.



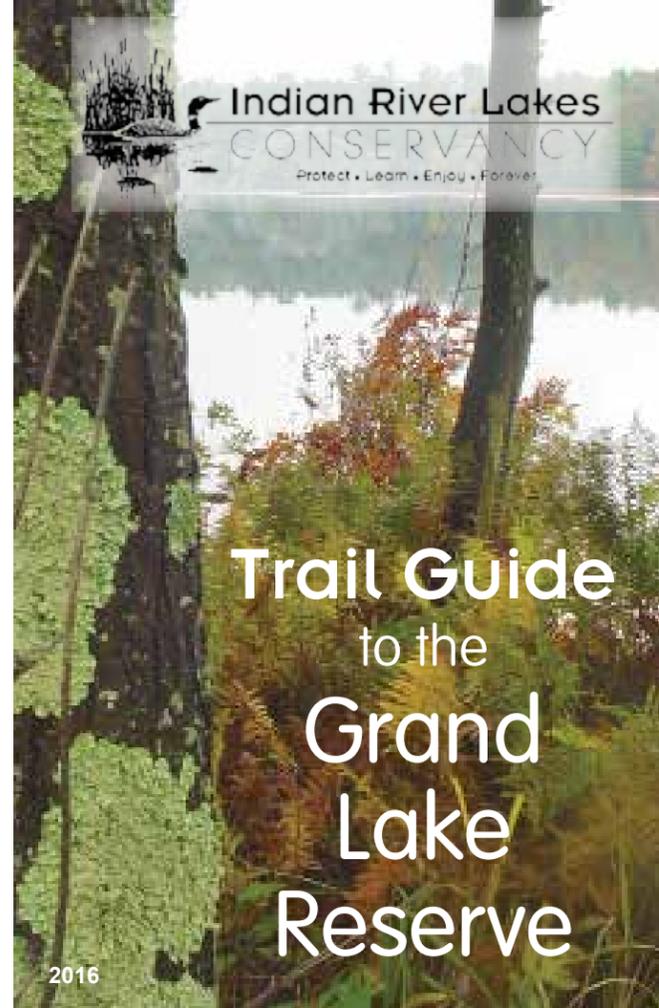
**Rose Pogonia** (*Pogonia ophioglossoides*) is a small, attractive pale to intense pink orchid which blooms mid-June to mid-July in open peatlands, on floating pond edges, and in wet meadows. Its nodding flower is quite a treat to see. Some people say this fragrant flower smells like violets, while others say raspberries and yet others strawberries.

The handsome **Golden-winged Warbler** (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) has declined greatly in number and may be added to the federal endangered species list. Grand Lake Reserve and vicinity is a refuge for this woodland species, harboring many breeding pairs. From May to August each year forests and wooded wetlands ring with the *bee bzz bzz bzz* song of the males.



Our high quality wetlands support over 85 dazzling Odonata species, 9 uncommon in NYS. Of special concern, the Rapids Clubtail dragonfly (*Gomphus quadricolor*) is found in only 12 small/isolated populations. The Lyre-tipped Spreadwing damselfly (*Lestes unguiculatus*), found in 4 NYS counties and the **Cyrano Darner** dragonfly (*Nasiaeschna pentacantha*) in 3 NYS counties, are imperiled/uncommon. And we have them all!

Others, such as the **Elfin Skimmer** (*Nannothemis bella*) are not only uncommon, but difficult to observe. being the smallest dragonfly in North America at less than one inch. They are found on bogs and fens near open water, flying 6 inches or less above the surface. Worth seeking are Jewelwing and Bluet damselflies, Halloween and Calico Pennants, Darners, Emeralds, Shadowdragons and Sundragons.



**Trail Guide to the Grand Lake Reserve**

2016



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The Indian River Lakes Conservancy is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit corporation created in 1998 to conserve, protect and encourage the sustainable management of the water, land and biological resources of the Indian River Lakes Region for the benefit and enrichment of future generations. This remains our abiding purpose and commitment.

Visit our website to learn more about hiking trails at Redwood Hill Preserve, Baker Woods Preserve and Boyd Pond.

IRLC trails are maintained by volunteers. Visit our website, call, or email us if you are interested in becoming a trail steward or helping on a trail work day.



Bald Eagle

Mark Scarlett



The haunting calls of the **Common Loon** (*Gavia immer*) ring from the waters of the Grand Lake Reserve, Grass and Butterfield Lakes. Adult pairs arrive in late April to early May, mate and raise their young. Chicks are largely grown by August. Resident loons may be joined by others, forming flocks from September to November, prior to migrating south.

E.D. Hillback

**Observed on the Grand Lake Reserve**

The Grand Lake Reserve is home to a diverse community of plants, mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and insects and any outing will reward you with sightings of interesting species. Depending on the time of day and season, it wouldn't be unusual to spot any of the following while hiking one of the Conservancy's trails: **eagles, loons, ospreys, blue herons, woodpeckers and a multitude of other bird species, trilliums, flag irises, cardinal flowers, blueberries, raspberries, lichens, ferns, sedges, foxes, otters, beavers, porcupines, dragon and damselflies, salamanders, garter and black rat snakes, or box, painted and snapping turtles.**



Blue Heron

E.D. Hillback



From late spring into fall, jewel-toned damselflies and dragonflies abound. Some are common, like the bright red or gold **Cherry-faced Meadowhawk** (*Sympetrum internum*). They are found in large numbers near water and in fields July through October.

Steve and Vici Diehl



Steve and Vici Diehl

**Geology**

The Indian River Lakes region is underlain by the Frontenac Axis, a band of Precambrian metamorphic marble, gneiss, and granite, extending from Canada to the Adirondacks. On top are remnant outliers of sandstone and sandy dolomite which survived glacial erosion.

The varied geology greatly contributes to the diversity of species found on the Grand Lake Reserve and throughout the woodlands, wetlands and numerous lakes of the area.

Even a short hike or paddle will provide countless opportunities to examine these varied rock formations.



**Welcome to the Grand Lake Reserve**

The Grand Lake Reserve presents a spectacular landscape, rich with biological diversity, rugged geography, and beautiful scenery. Located between Grass and Butterfield Lakes and including more than 5 miles of shoreline, the Grand Lake Reserve offers a model of how conserved lands can provide public access for recreation and educational benefit while still preserving a unique and valuable natural resource.

The Grand Lake Reserve was created in 2003 through a generous gift of more than 800 acres from local summer resident Henry Carse, a pioneering environmentalist and civic leader. Since then, additional acquisitions have expanded the reserve to over 1,000 acres.



**Butterfield Lake Landing:**

1.66 miles.  
Trailhead at Parking Lot 2.



An easy hike along an old farm lane that terminates at the shore of Butterfield Lake across from Big Island. Boat access at the landing makes it possible to hike this trail in the opposite direction. The plant species (including a wide variety of ferns, some unusual) found along the trail are numerous. Old field areas have abundant birds, such as the Common Yellowthroat Warbler, Yellow Warbler and Gray Catbird, all active during the breeding season. In woodlands, look and listen for Red-eyed Vireos, Eastern Wood-Pewees and Scarlet Tanagers during summer.

**Eagle Marsh Trail:**

1.29 miles  
Trail accessed from Butterfield Lake Landing Trail.



This challenging loop is accessed from Butterfield Lake Landing Trail approximately 1/2 mile from Parking Lot 2. This trail includes some of the reserve's most difficult terrain, but takes you to overlooks with outstanding views of Butterfield Lake and Eagle Marsh. During nesting season hikers are often able to spot Bald Eagles near the island on Eagle Marsh. The trail returns to the Butterfield Lake Landing Trail approximately .9 miles from Parking Lot 2.

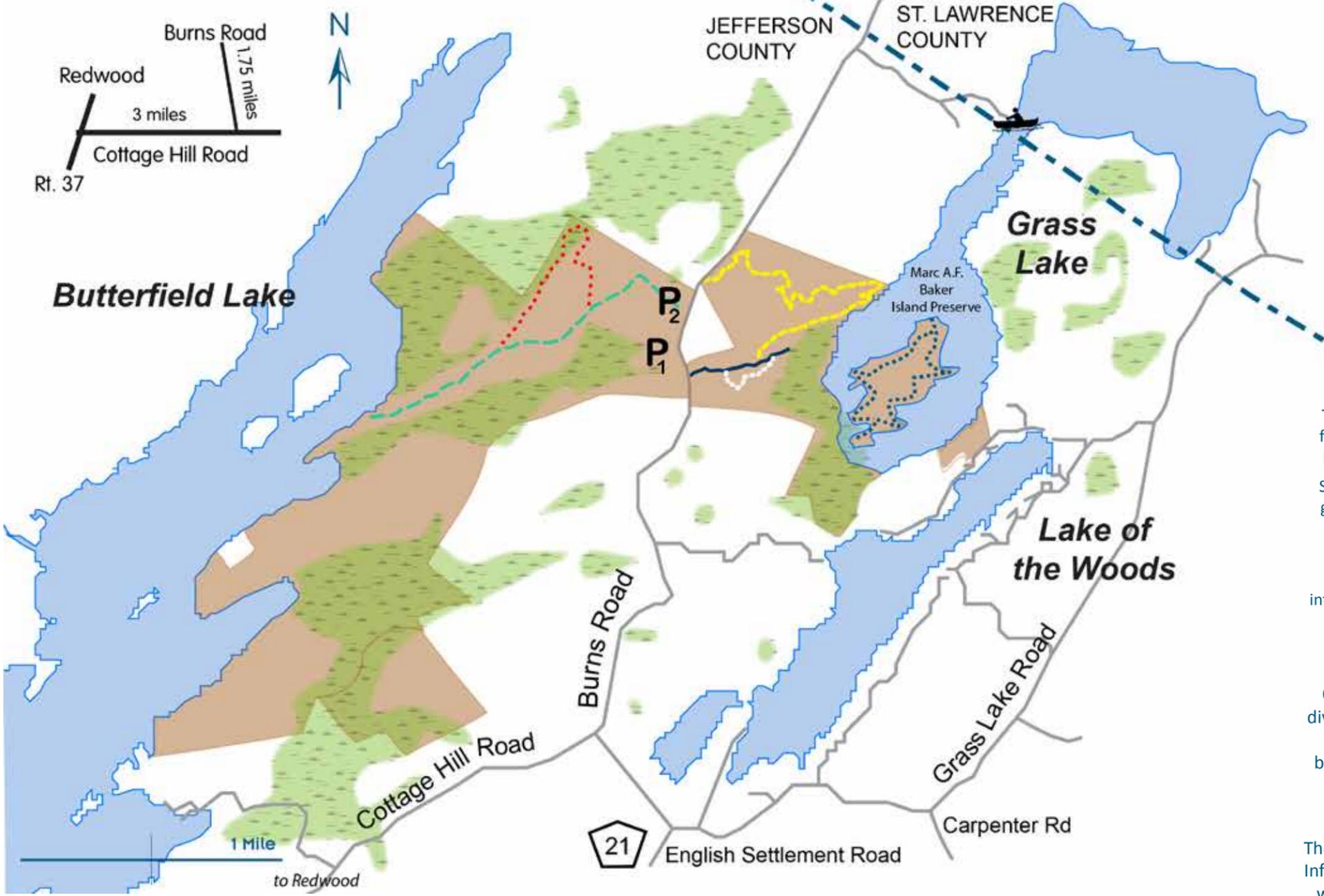
All of the following trails are located on the eastern side of Burns Road.

**Grass Lake Overlook:**

1.1 miles  
Trailhead at Parking Lot 1.



An easy hike along the top of a ridge with outstanding views of the western end of Grass Lake. This forested trail abounds with spring wild flowers and maidenhair fern. Rocky slopes teem with sedges, marginal wood fern, fragile fern, and a variety of lime loving plant species. The higher the trail climbs, the more acidic and dry the forest becomes, with white pine and oak over a dry understory of blueberries and hairgrass or carpets of the sedge *Carex pensylvanica*. Look and listen for Common Loons on the lake and Great Blue Herons along the shore. Rich forests support nesting Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Great Crested Flycatchers. In May and June, pine areas ring with the songs of Pine Warblers and Common Ravens call throughout the year.



**KEY**

- Grand Lake Reserve & Grass Lake
- Wetland areas
- Parking areas
- Boat Launch
- Local roads
- Water
- Jefferson/St. Lawrence County Line

Trails determined by symbols next to descriptions

**About the Conservancy:**

The Indian River Lakes Conservancy (IRLC) was formed in 1998 to conserve critical lands in the Indian River Lakes area of Northern New York. Since that time, the dedication, hard work, and generosity of our community have assured the continuing success of our organization. We all can help protect this natural resource that we care so much about. For more information about how you can become involved, visit [IndianRiverLakes.org](http://IndianRiverLakes.org)

• **PROTECT** •

Our region's unique geology has created a diverse ecosystem that is home to a variety of rare plant and bird species. This carefully balanced ecology relies on the protection of existing habitat and water quality.

• **LEARN** •

The Conservancy's mission includes education. Information about the natural habitat in which we live is shared through interpretive trails, publications, and public programs.

• **ENJOY** •

Everyone's careful stewardship will ensure that the quiet woodlands, rocky vistas, and peaceful, undeveloped shorelines of the Indian River Lakes region can be enjoyed by future generations of local residents and summer visitors.

• **FOREVER** •

**Indian River Lakes Conservancy trails are open year-round**

- No motorized vehicles.
- Hunting by IRLC permit only.
- Camping and fires prohibited.
- Please respect the trails, plants and wildlife.

Note that winter road conditions may occasionally require four wheel drive.

**Sugarhouse Trail:**

0.5 mile  
Trailhead at Parking Lot 1.



A short diversion off the Grass Lake Overlook Trail. This loop begins at an intersection .25 miles from the trailhead, passes the remains of an old sugar shanty, and returns to the Overlook Trail at .3 miles. Note the sparser understory in this higher and drier area of the trail. What looks like a grassy lawn under the thin tree cover (mostly ironwood) is actually a rhizomatous sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*). This spur trail passes through an area where Whip-poor-will are often present in summer. In late September and October look for flocks of Dark-eyed Junco.

**North Ridge Trail:**

1.5 miles  
Trailhead at Parking Lot 1.



A moderate hike with panoramic views of the surrounding countryside and interesting geologic formations. The trail begins at an intersection with the Grass Lake Overlook trail approximately .3 miles from the trailhead. Shortly after the intersection the trail begins to parallel Grass Lake, inland from the shore. It then turns away from the lake traversing over rock ledges featuring impressive views. The trail then continues back to Burns Road 100 yards east of Parking Lot 2 and .5 mile east of Parking Lot 1. This trail passes through rich rocky woods and over high and dry rocky

tops with a sparse, but interesting flora of sedges, blueberries, hairgrass, and lichens growing on the almost bare rock.

**Marc A. F. Baker Island Preserve**

2.5 miles  
Accessible only by water



A remarkable property located on Grass Lake with over 2.5 miles of undeveloped shoreline. The preserve is reachable only by water. The trail begins and ends at the dock located on the north end of the island. This easy hike affords multiple views of the western end of Grass Lake and surrounding wetlands. Hikers often see Ospreys, Common Loons and Great Blue Herons.