

# Newsletter IRLC Indian River Lakes Conservancy

SPRING/SUMMER 2004



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

Work has been completed on the Land Trust Alliance and Northern New York Community Foundation Organizational Development grants. Those grants enabled us to expand our Board of Directors, expand membership, and begin ecological survey work on Grand Lake Reserve to form a Stewardship plan and to create a public outreach program.

We are making preparations for parking areas on Burns Road for access to Grand Lake Reserve. Volunteers continue to post, mow and clean trails at The Reserve and survey work on the property is still on going.

Hikers out on The Reserve this Spring report a wide variety of wildflowers are now in bloom.

## PROPERTY NEWS

Steve Caldwell of Better Farm on Cottage Hill Road has donated, by way of a bargain sale, 86 acres of swamp and buffer land abutting Grand Lake Reserve. Many of us know Steve from visits with him on his birding outings on Cottage Hill and Stine Roads. Many thanks to Steve for supporting the Conservancy with this generous gift.

## IRLC AWARDED GRANTS

The Land Trust Alliance has awarded the Conservancy a land acquisition grant for 2004. This grant will be used to help cover the costs to survey and steward the 86 acres donated by Steve Caldwell.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

IRLC works with the schools and serves as the administrative unit for a scholarship program that provides funding for students who are planning to further their education in the field of environmental science. The recipients this year are Jacob Ambrose, a graduating senior at Indian River Central School and Howard Thomes, a graduating senior at Jefferson Community College.

Jacob is the son of Jeffrey and Marie Ambrose of 8789 North Main St. in Evans Mills. Jacob plans to go on to school and further his education in the field of science with particular emphasis in the field of fish and wildlife.

Howard is from Adams Center and will be transferring to

the Ranger School at Wanakena this fall to pursue a degree in Forest Technology.

Funding for these scholarships is provided by your membership, special donations and lake associations that belong to the Conservancy. Please contact us for more information on these scholarships and for ideas on how you or your association can help build this program.

## HUNTING PROGRAM

Twenty hunters participated this past season in the permitted hunting program on the Grand Lake reserve. The primary purposes of the 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 participating in the program agreed to spend at least 16 volunteer hours assisting in the maintenance of the Reserve. These activities included posting signs, removing unwanted or unauthorized items such as trash, permanent tree stands or other structures, and blazing of trails and borders. Wildlife spotted by hunters included bucks, doe, fawns, kinglets, chickadees, juncos, wrens, turkeys, porcupines and coyotes. Also, a number of eagles, turkey vultures and raven were seen soaring above the Reserve. IRLC is grateful to all the hunters who contributed their time. A special thanks to hunting coordinators Dave Gascon, Guy Hunneyman and Terry Panunzio. Please contact IRLC if interested in having your name added to the waiting list for this program.

## MEMBERSHIPS

Our 2004 membership campaign is underway, and we have received many renewals and new memberships. Thank you! If you have not yet joined for the year, please complete the enclosed form and send your check now. Your membership provides the energy and a significant part of the financial resources that drive this organization! Another great way to help is to recruit a friend to join too!

## ENDOWMENT FUND

The endowment fund was established to help cover costs of major initiatives or programs, for special land acquisitions, and to act as a reserve to cover operating expenses as necessary.

## STEWARDSHIP FUND

The stewardship fund has been established for the on going maintenance of approximately 1,030 acres of land that the IRLC now preserves. For example, with the help of volunteers we will be able to establish hiking trails for everyone in the community to use. Your donation, beyond your dues, to either of these important funds would be highly appreciated and bring these special initiatives to fruition.

## SUMMER EVENTS

### Save These Dates

Annual Meeting will be held **Sunday, July 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:00**. The location will be at Camp Wabasso on Millsite Lake.

### Wine and Cheese Fundraiser

This favorite fundraising event will again be hosted by Sandy and Marge Hillback at their cottage on Butterfield Lake. The date is **Saturday, July 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:00**. We hope to repeat the Pontoon Boat rides of last year. For a donation of \$30.00 per couple/\$20.00 per person you can join us for an afternoon of

outstanding hand selected wines and cheeses from around the world. This is really a fun event and was a sell out last year, so please sign up early. 482-2446 or 482-5250 for reservations or see any IRLC board member.

## Paddle and Oar Excursions

Under the guidance of outdoor enthusiast and volunteer member, Dani Baker, please join us on the following outings:

**Sat. June 19<sup>th</sup> 1:00 Millsite Lake** with Adirondack Hiking Club meet at public launch.

**Sun. July 25<sup>th</sup> 1:00 Butterfield Lake** meet at public launch

**Sun. August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1:00 Indian River** meet at intersection of Route 37 and Route 411 (blinking light)

**Sat. Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> 1:00 Yellow Lake** meet at 12:30 at Millsite boat launch.

## FLORA & FAUNA HIKE

A hike is being planned by botanists from the New York Flora Association on **Saturday, June 26<sup>th</sup> at 9:30**. Please feel free to join them to learn first hand what botanical wonders lay just beneath our feet as we wonder through the Grand Lake Reserve. Meet on Burns Road near the Butterfield Lake Trail.

## INDIAN RIVER LAKES: RARE BIRD REFUGE: THEN AND NOW

By Gerry Smith

Over the last fifty years the Indian River Lakes region has provided important habitat for a number of rare and declining birds of New York State. The mosaic of natural communities and relative lack of intense human development have contributed to the areas status as a refuge for these species. In addition, the high water quality and limited amount of intense agriculture also contribute to species needing clear water habitats. Several birds occurring in

the region are of particular interest and conservation concern.

Among the regions most conspicuous and most loved species is the Common Loon. The species haunting calls and great beauty endear it to all of us. In New York nesting loons are primarily restricted to the Adirondacks and a few other areas in northern sections. The small population on the Indian River Lakes continues to persist while nesting loons have been lost elsewhere. To conserve our local loon's, education and enforcement activities must continue and increase. Loons require secluded shoreline or islets for nesting and shallow bays for rearing their chicks. Disturbance from boats, jet skis and other human incursions, during the breeding season, reduce reproductive success and threaten the species continued existence. Activities such as chastising careless boaters who threaten loons and providing nest platforms will help these birds. The recent acquisition of Grand Lake Reserve provides much suitable near shore habitat for loons on Butterfield Lake.

Another conspicuous summer resident of the Indian River Lakes region is the Osprey. This region played a critical role in maintaining this species upstate New York population during the DDT era. The indiscriminate use of chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides after World War II led to catastrophic declines in many of our birds of prey. These declines were largely due to the accumulation of pesticide residues in adults that interfered with egg production resulting in reproductive failure. The Osprey being at the top of aquatic food chains declined severely throughout most of its breeding range in New York State. Only in the Adirondacks and in our area did reasonable populations persist. Locally the relative lack of intense agriculture and associated heavy pesticide use made the area a refuge for this species during the

1960s peak of the DDT era. With the banning of DDT most affected raptor species began a gradual recovery. The recovery of Osprey in the Indian River Lakes and along the St. Lawrence can only be described as spectacular. This species is now commonly nesting wherever suitable food resources are present. It is likely that many of the Ospreys we now enjoy seeing throughout northern New York are descendants of the birds that weathered DDT plague along our lakeshores.

Just as our region provided a refuge for declining Osprey populations 40 years ago it now harbors other birds suffering declines. Two declining species that winter in the new world tropics and spend their summers with us are particularly important. One species, the Whip-poor-Will is familiar to many residents. This species, while still common enough locally that its nocturnal calls may cause human residents to lose sleep, is declining throughout its range. The mosaic of open granite barrens and forest locally provide ideal habitat and abundant wetlands and lakes produce the insect food it favors. The second declining species, the Golden-winged Warbler is primarily known to birders. The Indian River Region currently harbors one of the largest remaining populations of this beautiful shrub forest warbler. Due to human alteration of the landscape and possibly to other factors, such as climate change, this species is being genetically swamped by the closely related Blue-winged Warbler. This species is the poster child for rare and declining birds in our area. If the lakes region is to help the Golden-winged Warbler and other rare and declining species to survive, active human intervention is required. Habitat preservation and management as well as targeted inventory and research will assure

that all the feathered residents of our region survive to the 22<sup>nd</sup> century.

## **CONSERVATION EASEMENTS**

### **What is a Conservation Easement?**

A conservation easement is a way for a landowner to create a forever wild state on all or part of their property while retaining ownership of it. No two conservation easements are the same. Some of the conditions which are commonly imposed by a property owner in granting a conservation easement on a parcel of land can include:

- Creation of a forever wild state on all or part of a property
  - Restricting dwellings, logging, or mining
  - Creation of a shoreline buffer or set back in which no structures would be permitted
  - Encourage appropriate land use such as agricultural or silvicultural purposes.
- In writing a conservation easement it is customary for the property owner to reserve a number of rights, including the right to use, assign, lease or sell the property. Other rights property owners may wish to retain are:
- To construct dwellings or other structures on specific sites.
  - To allow hiking, picnicking or nature study.
  - To construct nature trails.
  - To construct a dock or boat house.
  - To maintain land for agricultural use.

The donor may include any restrictions or rights he or she wishes, provided the Land Trust agrees to accept the easement. It

is important to note that the property remains in private hands, without public access and that the conservation easement is a product of mutual agreement.

In most circumstances, donors of conservation easements stand to receive a considerable net income tax savings in the year of the donation. Carry-forward provisions for charitable tax deductions are permitted. Estate tax liability may be significantly lowered. In some situations, a property owner may be entitled to a lowering of assessed valuation of the property placed under easement.

Please contact us if you have the desire to protect your property through a conservation easement.

## **IRLC CONTACTS**

Contact IRLC

P.O. Box 27, Redwood, NY 13679,

E-mail at [IRLC1998@aol.com](mailto:IRLC1998@aol.com)

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 - 2004

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

**Permanent Mailing**

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

**Seasonal Mailing**

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

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

**Total Check Enclosed \$** \_\_\_\_\_  
**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**

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, NY 13679

*Return Service Requested*

