

Newsletter IRLC Indian River Lakes Conservancy

WINTER 2007



Trail Builders '06

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

As the Conservancy's 9th year of service winds down we look back thankfully at the extraordinary support from the community. The notion of individuals working together to set aside important land resources, to preserve our area's unique natural character, has been enthusiastically embraced. Over 1,040 acres have been conserved all due to very generous donations from local landowners. Most importantly, membership dues have enabled IRLC to meet expenses and to build a small reserve for future projects and acquisitions. Board members and officers are all volunteer. The Conservancy has no paid staff. Members, land donors and volunteers, thank you for coming together and making such a positive difference for the Indian River Lakes Region.

IRLC's Board of Directors has been enhanced by new members: Vici Diehl of Antwerp, NY, Jeff Garvey of Watertown and Grass Lake and David Martin of Clear Lake, Minnesota and Lake of the Woods. Welcome and thank you for offering your valuable time and energy to help IRLC pursue its mission.

A new 6 year strategic plan has been adopted with goals focused on preserving land and water resources. Our work will be aimed to complement land protection strategies of the New York State Open Space Plan and other regional protection plans. IRLC will step up our efforts to identify and prioritize local resources. We plan to collaborate with other public and private conservation partners to accelerate natural asset preservation. The Conservancy's partnership with Ducks Unlimited, NYSDEC, and TILT last year to access federal wetland protection funds through the North American Waterfowl Conservation Act, is a model we plan to pursue.

Another goal is to establish a world class stewardship program, with an education component, to maximize the benefits of conserved land. This template will be perfected through trial and error (mostly trial we hope) at the Grand Lake Reserve.

MEMBERSHIPS

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

It's your membership that enables the IRLC to continue it's mission.

We would like to welcome our new members and extend sincere thanks to them and all of our members and contributors for 2006: Judith Adams, Robert Andrews, Dani Baker & Dave Belding, Karen Bald & Nadine Gardner, Fred & Rosemarie Belcher, Bob & Betty Belge, Peter & Sharri Berzins, Carl Boler, Steve & Kay Bolivar, Jim & Gail Borkman, Mary & Bill Bostick, Lawrence Bovenzi, Barbara Brakeman, David Brandt, John & Elizabeth Briggs, Butterfield lake Association, Charles

Burlingame, Mike & Carol Buzzell, Harold & Shirley Carpenter, Henry Carse, Peter Carse, Jeff & Priscilla Cashmore, Laura Cashmore, Mike Chetwin, Robert & Beverly Cliffe, Jerry & Kathy Cole, Paul & Bridgid Cook, Phyllis Dake, Steve & Vici Diehl, John & Judy Dixon, Verna Docteur, Elaine Dooling, Marlene Douglas, Ed Dumas, Janet Durling, John & Lauren Evans, Ingeborg Eyre, Tony & Lori Felder, Wallace Freeland, Lynn Frizelle, Dolores Furman, Jeffrey & Elaine Garvey, Peter Gaskin, Mildred Gimber, James & Elizabeth Golembeski, Robert Gorall, Grass Lake Assoc., Elizabeth Hazen, Elliott & Marge Hillback, George Hills, Priscilla Hiter, Debbie & Fred Hoffman, Holmes, Brandon Hunneyman, Guy Hunneyman, Jordan Hunneyman, Cheryl Hurley & Walter Dutcher, Robert & Betty Jennejohn, Anne Johnson, Judith Jones, Elliot Klass, Lake of the Woods Owner's Association, Lawrence LaRue, Richard LeClerc, Francis & Mildred Lehman, Richard Lopez, Craig MacFarland, Curtis Mahon, Len & Roberta Main, Tyler Malott, Ken & Marci Mann, Ron & Barb Mann, Dave & Gretchen Martin, Kim Martusiewicz, Josh Mayo, Joe & Janet McChesney, Steven McDonald, Randy & Janet McDonald, Martha McFall, John & Lorry McMahon, Andrew Meyn & Luann Elizabeth, Rowena Miller, Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Morgan, Richard & Patricia Muller, Kevin Murray, Allan Newell, John and Angie Ninos, Jon Ostrander, John & Stephanie Palmer, Louis Panunzio, Terry Panunzio, Joseph & Edith Pasquini, Richard Peal, Dr. & Mrs. Dale Porter, Richard & Sonja Prekert, Mary Regan, Will Ramsiere, Gail & Daniel Rizzo, Ed & Denise Robertson, Carl & Arlene Rode, Leon & Beverly Ross, John Rothermel, Rich & Liz Samson, Richard & Sally Sauer, Louise & Mark Scarlett, Al & Carol Sealy, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Sheehan, Gerry Smith, Jeff Smith, Thomas Snelson, John & Denise Sobolewski, John & Marie Steinbeck, Chris & Tami Storey, Don & Vicky Storey, John Sundbeck, Richard & Sharon Sweet, Dave Swenson, Dr. Kenneth Thomson, Doug & Louise Tichenor, Butch & Kathy Tipper, John & Paula Tobin, Daniel & Pamela Tordy, Rodney Trask, Karen VanEpps-Peters, Mr. & Mrs. Roland VanDeusen, Alex Velto, Robert & Janet Wakefield, Gerald Walsh, Janice Walsh, E. Mary Washburn, Doris & Harland Waterstraat, Craig Waterstraat, Patrick White, D.E. Wilcox,

Judith & Charles Willis, Yvonne Wimmer, Don & Phyllis Wingerath, Thomas Wingerath, David & Lynne Wurster, Allan & Bonnie Wysocki, Amy York Wakefield, Dave & Mary Lou Zimpfer

Contributions received in memory of:
Robert Dake, Audrey Hughes, Jack McFall
We greatly regret any errors or omissions.

GRAND LAKE RESERVE

Happy Trails to You

Equipped with chainsaws, pry bars, brush cutters, gauntlet gloves and liberal dollops of bug juice, more than 20 volunteers pitched in over four weekends last summer to clear the first new trail in the Grand Lake Reserve. Thanks to everyone who participated and whose blood, sweat (and occasional tears) made relatively short work of a rewarding job, well done.

The new Grass Lake trail runs from Burns Road to Grass Lake over a series of wooded ridges, beginning along dramatic rock ledges and ending at an attractive cedar, pine and oak point on the southwest arm of Grass Lake. Nearly midway to the lake, a side trail continues along the first ridge to a dramatic, tall pine bluff overlooking Grass Lake and the wetlands along its southwest shore. Another side trail loop takes you through an old sugar bush and the remains of a 19th century maple sugaring operation beside an abandoned access road. The trail returns along a fairly level logging road to rejoin Burns Road less than a tenth of a mile from the parking lot where it started.

Thanks to Northern New York Community Foundation for a grant that funded the new parking lot on Burns Road across from the new Grass Lake trailhead. The grant also funded signage at both Burns Road parking lots that will be installed in the Spring. The new Grass Lake trailhead begins on the east side of Burns Road, across from the new parking lot approximately 1.4 miles from the intersection of Burns Road with Cottage Hill Road (.6 miles from the intersection of Burns Road and the Lake of the Woods access Road). The summer of 2007 will involve the placement of trailhead and side trail signage and trail markers. Until then, intrepid hikers will need to find their way by following red and orange

flagging left over from last summer's clearing work.

With sufficient ambition and volunteers, we may also begin clearing a second Grass Lake trail over the rocky highland northeast of the Grand Lake Reserve's main parking lot (the large crushed stone parking lot on the west side of Burns Road approximately 1.7 miles from Cottage Hill Road). Future years will include clearing new trails on the Butterfield Lake side of the Reserve. For the latest news on 2007 trail clearing dates and times, please call Mark Scarlett at 324-5240 or e-mail him at mascanoe@cit-tele.com.

HUNTING PROGRAM

Fall 2006 Hunting on the Grand Lake Reserve

The primary purposes of the IRLC permitted hunting program are to manage the deer population on the Grand Lake Reserve and to provide community access for the enjoyment of recreational deer hunting activities. In exchange for hunting privileges, hunters agree to spend at least 16 hours assisting in the maintenance of the Reserve. Maintenance activities include posting signs, removing unwanted or unauthorized items [such as trash, permanent tree stands or other structures], assisting surveyors and blazing and maintaining of Reserve trails and boarders. Hunters on the Reserve are required to obtain a valid NY State hunting license and tags and to comply with all laws, guidelines and safe practices of the NY State DEC. Hunters are limited to taking two bucks and to only shoot bucks with at least three points on one side. No other shooting of snakes, coyotes, porcupines, bobcats, targets or anything else is permitted on the Reserve. The NY permit and tags are nontransferable and only those with permission from the IRLC may hunt on the Reserve. No commercial activity, guided hunts, or other profit making business of any kind may be conducted on the Reserve.

About a dozen hunters participated in this past seasons permitted hunting program on the Reserve. A fewer number of deer were spotted by hunters this past season.

One reason offered for seeing fewer deer was the mild weather. As deer had an easy time finding food and shelter, they were able to remain secluded. Other wildlife reported on the Reserve included chickadees, wren, turkeys, porcupines and coyotes. Also, a number of eagles and raven were seen soaring above the Reserve and feeding on animal remains.

The IRLC is grateful to all hunters who contributed time and labor to help maintain the Reserve. 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 U.S. mail [IRLC, P.O. Box 27, Redwood, NY 13679]. Also, questions or comments about the hunting program are welcome.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The recipients this year were a graduate of Hammond Central School, David Jenne, and Matthew Borkman, a graduate of Erie Community College.

David is the son of David & Tina Jenne of Rossie. While a student at Hammond Central, David attended Northwest Technical and Vocational Center in Ogdensburg. He was president of the National Vocational Technical Honor Society. He received awards from Northwest Tech. and was employed at Singer Castle this past summer. He is attending Canton College of Technology where he will be studying in the field of environmental conservation.

Matthew is the son of Jim & Gail Borkman of Clarence, NY, long-time summer residents and cottage owners on Butterfield Lake. While a student at Erie Community College, Matthew was a member of the Environmental Club and spent many hours working on community clean up, on education programs to help raise public awareness about environmental issues, and helped with a clean-up project for the Great Lakes. He will continue his education at SUNY Brockport where he will be studying with well-known fish ecologist, Jim Haynes who has done studies in the Thousand Islands region and on Butterfield Lake. Matthew will study aquatic wildlife and he

hopes to eventually become an aquatic ecologist.

We congratulate both of these scholarship winners and are pleased to support them as they continue their education in the field of environmental science.

CHARISMATIC BIRDS OF THE INDIAN RIVER LAKES REGION

Part 3

by Gerry Smith

Wherever it occurs the Great Blue Heron is hard to miss. Our largest northeastern heron, often mistakenly called a crane, is obvious when they occur along shorelines and in wetlands. In our region Great Blue Herons are usually present from mid and late March to early November. Depending on the intensity of the winter, a few immatures hatched the previous breeding season, may attempt to over winter. In most years these poorly adapted for survival individuals are sorted out of the gene pool. In forty-five years of field birding I have rarely seen adult Great Blue Herons after mid-October and those usually appeared to be in poor health. It's the wise heron that heads to the Mid-Atlantic States and south as the leaves are dropping from the trees locally.

The first returning Great Blue Herons in the Indian River Lakes areas usually arrive by late-March in most years. These are breeding adults hatched at least 22-23 months prior to the spring in which the first attempt to breed. Immatures hatched the previous year either remain on the wintering grounds or return north during May. First year birds rarely if ever attempt to breed. One may identify immature birds for their initial 12-14 months of life by a solid blue/black crown that contrasts with the white crown of adults. Adult Great

Blue herons nest in colonies of varying size from a few - many hundreds of nests. Most herons, gulls, terns and many seabirds, practice this type of nesting strategy. These colonial water birds may nest in many places, but in general areas that are inaccessible to ground based mammal predators are preferred. In the case of the Great Blue Heron in our region wooded Swamps and Islands are among the sites chosen. Exact colony locations in the Indian River Lakes Area are poorly known but it is clear from the breeding season presence of this species there must be a number in our region.

By mid-late April all adults are at their colony sites and courtship, egg laying and other breeding activities are underway. This is a critical time for colonies since any major disturbance by humans or other factors can cause colony abandonment and reproductive failure for that breeding season. A month later, when eggs have hatched and there are growing young in the nest, adult herons have a great deal of parental investment in their nesting attempt and abandonment is unlikely. This pattern of behavior illustrates an evolutionary tradeoff directed at assuring the survival of the species. Adult Great Blue Herons who have survived their first year are relatively long-lived and may survive an average life span of nearly 10 years with some individuals living up to 20 years. Thus when a predator or other factor impacts the colony in the early season adults are better off from the standpoint of lifetime offspring output to run and live to breed another year. When disruptions occur later with large young in the nest the equation changes. By mid June successful nests are filled with large squawking young begging for food and testing their wings.

Just as most cottagers are returning for the summer young are flying from nests and they and adults

are leaving the colony for the summer. All age classes including any of last years young that returned north now begin wandering in search of food. They may be joined by other wanderers from more southerly climes as each individual pursues it primary missions of survival and physical preparation for the coming migration. Most of the period from mid July-early September will find these birds using the abundant wetlands and prime natural habitats throughout our region. This high quality habitat mosaic is critical to the survival of all these Great Blue herons but particularly young birds. Since catching highly mobile very elusive prey requires rapid development of a high degree of skill in a short period of time an abundant prey base is critical. The rich diverse lakes, wetlands and shorelines of the Indian River Lakes Region are ideal places to build survival skills and fat reserves for leaner times to come. This is true of many other species that remain for a while on the lakes as the Great Blues head south. One of these, The Belted Kingfisher, will be the subject of a future newsletter article.

IRLC CONTACTS

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Mark Scarlett, V.P.
Steve McDonald, Sec/Treas
Elliott Hillback
Bob Wakefield
Dave Martin
Jeff Garvey
Vici Diehl

INDIAN RIVER LAKES CONSERVANCY
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM - 2007

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Circle One Membership [\$20.00]

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\$ _____ **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

Indian River Lakes Conservancy

P.O. Box 27

Redwood, New York 13679

Return Service Requested

