



### *President's Column*

By Bess Smith

Happy New Year to my fellow lake lovers! As I write this column I'm watching the snow fall here in Massachusetts. I hear we got a foot or more of snow at the lake this past weekend. Even those of you who are lucky enough to spend the winter in warm climates are faced with temperatures much lower than you are used to.

The fall was spectacular at the lake this past year. The colors were vibrant and we spent several weekends touring around the area, apple picking with our friends and grandchildren, and just enjoying all the lake has to offer that time of year.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter. We have some very interesting columns written by both current and previous Board members. Due to a space constraint we were not able to put Carol's article about the loons in the fall newsletter. So, we've included it in this issue to keep you informed about our loon population. The photo contest is back and there is information inside about how you can participate. And, of course, Jennifer once again delights us with an article about wild life – this time it's turkeys and bald eagles!

If you have internet access and have not yet checked out our new website, please do. It has a completely new look and we are polling visitors to see if you would be interested in doing some GELIA activities online. Log on to [www.greastlake.org](http://www.greastlake.org) and give us your opinion. If you are interested in contributing information or photographs to the website, send them to [webmaster@www.greastlake.org](mailto:webmaster@www.greastlake.org).

The Great East Lake Watershed Survey report is now available on our website. The report includes lots of interesting information about the lake and how we can all do our part to protect its pristine water. Copies of the report are also available by request.

I look forward to seeing everyone in the spring and until then I wish you a happy and healthy 2010.

### *Annual Meeting 2009*

By Pat Theisen

Legend has it that no GELIA Annual Meeting held at Week's Park has ever been rained out, or even had a drizzle. After a very wet and rainy start to the summer season, this year's meeting was held on Saturday, July 11<sup>th</sup> under a shining sun! We were again pleased to see how many came out to support GELIA programs and reconnect with summer friends.

New officers elected were Chris McKay, Treasurer and Gene Rosenthal, Secretary. Janet Gould, Chuck Hodsdon and Stephanie Theisen were approved as new directors. Thanks were given to Carol Lafond for her work in creating the GELIA website and working with the LPC, and Gary Field who managed the database and membership and their years of service as directors.

Committee reports: Chuck Hodsdon gave a report on Water Quality Monitoring, Linda Schier on Lake Hosts, Dorothy Smith on Weed Watchers, Gary Field on Membership, and Carol Lafond on loon activity.

Speakers included Linda Schier for the Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance who reported on the GEL watershed survey; Amy Smagula from NH Department of Environmental Services and Laurie Callahan from Maine Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants whose topic was "A Look at Invasive Species."

Gary Field announced the winners of the photo contest used in creating the 2010 calendar, presenting prizes to the winners.

Following the meeting, several members expressed serious concern for speed boat racing on the lake.

This year a "special raffle" was held for a kayak donated by Raise-A-Dock in addition to the traditional raffle. Winners were announced while members enjoyed the always popular hot dog lunch provided by GELIA.

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## Great East Lake Improvement Association

### OFFICERS

Bess Smith, President  
Jennifer Craig, Vice President  
Chris McKay, Treasurer  
Gene Rosenthal, Secretary  
Linda Schier, Past President

### DIRECTORS

Janet Gould  
Chuck Hodsdon  
Marcia Hodsdon  
Bill Hohenberger  
Dee Kasprzak  
Dave Mankus  
Ron McKay  
Walter Neff  
Dorothy Smith  
Doug Smith  
Pat Theisen  
Stephanie Theisen

### Mission

To preserve, enhance and protect the advantages of Great East Lake and its environs.

### Annual Meeting *continued from Page 1*

Many thanks to all who coordinated raffle, membership table, GELIA wear, GEL merchandise, displays and handouts, Weed Watcher and Lake Host sign-ups and speakers. Thanks also to Three Rivers Land Trust and Moose Mountains Regional Greenways for their presence and displays.

For photos and the complete minutes of the Annual Meeting, go to our website, [www.greateastlake.org](http://www.greateastlake.org).

### 2009 Loon Update

By Carol Lafond

The Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) with many volunteers conducts an annual loon census in July that provides a mid-season check on NH loon populations. Thanks to Dave Nordengren and Dee Kasprzak for their help with this year's census. Great East is a large lake and many people are needed to do the census properly. A total of eleven adult loons and two chicks were counted this year. There were three nesting pairs this year, Scribner River, Loon Island and Second Basin. Only the Scribner pair hatched chicks. The two chicks thrived and grew into juveniles, but on several different occasions in early September only one juvenile was seen with its parents. Many thanks to Sam Merker, the dedicated LPC biologist assigned to Great East and volunteers Sue Bixby, Dave Nordengren, Charles Crespi and Donald Bell who provide valuable information about the nesting pairs in their areas during the spring and summer.

Doug Smith and Dave Lafond braved the cold spring waters to place the floating loon nest in Copp Brook again this year. The Copp pair didn't nest in either the floating nest or on a natural site this year and sometime in July the floating nest and the "Loon Nesting Site" sign went missing. The nest, which is anchored in two places, was found further up the brook near the shore, but the sign was never found. If anyone knows where it is, please email me at [carol.v.lafond@roadrunner.com](mailto:carol.v.lafond@roadrunner.com)

The number of adult loons and nesting pairs continues to rise on NH lakes and is at an all time high since 1976 when the count started. As reported by LPC, the 2009 loon census produced a count of around 500 paired loons and over 300 nesting pairs.

A less encouraging statistic is the nesting success of loons in New Hampshire in the past few years. Reproductive success fell each year between 2004 and 2008 and since 2006 it has been less than needed to sustain a viable loon population. This condition has also occurred in at least three other time periods since 1976. LPC is currently conducting studies on eggs and shell fragments to determine the cause of these nest failures.



### ***Boating Safety***

By Walter Neff

Each year we hear complaints from lake residents about incidents in which many of Maine and New Hampshire’s rules and regulations are violated. High on the list are: infractions in the “no wake zones”, especially where big wakes create shore damage, operating too close to other boats, high rates of speed, dangerous operation and so forth.

GELIA is sympathetic to those complaints and over the years we have followed up with the two states’ agencies to investigate the particular incidents, and have requested on many occasions that the states spend more time here patrolling to curtail those types of activities. The results of these requests are mixed. Sometimes the response is timely, other times it is not, leading to a sense of frustration on all our parts.

Which leads us to a little discussion of the subject.

Some members have suggested that GELIA should undertake contacting the alleged offenders directly. The GELIA Board of Directors has talked about this a lot in an effort to see what we might do. We inquired of both states’ agencies and were basically told that law enforcement was their job, not ours (when it comes to repetitive offenders “enforcement” is the operative word).

We have also inquired of other lake associations

about their use of volunteer patrols— something some GELIA members have wondered about. It sounds good but the reality is that its difficult to find volunteers who will be available consistently and again the lack of enforcement authority has left those efforts pretty toothless. Basically the response from other lake associations is that “it didn’t work”.

At this point it would seem that we have no alternative but to deal with the system that has been in effect for many years— the New Hampshire Marine Patrol and the Maine Warden Service.

Because Great East Lake is a border lake we are dealing with two separate agencies, each with its own set of regulations, its own manpower issues and especially these days, its own budget issues. Each of them does have a system for handling complaints and/or responding to emergencies.

In our next newsletter, just before boating season, we’ll give you the simple, proper method of contacting each agency along with some tips that should be helpful in getting a quicker response to your concern.



### **SALMON FALLS HEADWATER LAKES Watershed Management Plan**



Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance  
PO Box 235, 254 Main Street  
Union, NH 03887



FB Environmental Associates, Inc.  
97A Exchange Street, Suite 305  
Portland, ME 04109

--January 2010--

### ***Watershed Management Plan Unveiled***

By Linda Schier

The “Salmon Falls Headwater Lakes Watershed Management Plan” was presented on January 23<sup>rd</sup> to 40 members of the Wakefield, NH and Acton, ME communities representing selectmen, planning boards, conservation commissions, land trusts, lake associations and concerned citizens. The plan incorporates interests and ideas expressed by many community members as well as water quality data analysis, on-the-ground observations, land-use modeling, ordinance reviews, and recommendations into what will be a useful and relevant tool to protect the waters of Wakefield and Acton over the next 10 years and beyond. The plan focuses on the Salmon Falls headwater lakes - Great East Lake, Horn Pond, Lake Ivanhoe, Lovell Lake and Wilson Lake.

The Plan was developed by FB Environmental Associates in cooperation with the Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance, NH Dept. of Environmental Services, Great East Lake Improvement Association, Lovell Lake Association, Wilson Lake Association, Horn Pond Association and Round Pond Association. To view the Plan please visit [www.AWwatersheds.org](http://www.AWwatersheds.org) or contact AWWA at 603-473-2500 or PO Box 235, Union, NH 03887.

**Great East Lake Improvement Association**  
**Statement of Changes in Fund Balance for the Period**  
**January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009**

**Revenues**

Membership Dues	\$15,370.00
Contributions - ISDF	\$3,415.00
Grants	\$1,850.00
Raffle	\$1,055.00
History Books	\$485.00
Maps	\$25.00
Charts	\$180.00
Calendars	\$2,498.50
GELIA Wear	\$1,279.00
Golf Tournament	\$1,754.72
Interest	\$1,013.55

**Total Revenues** \$28,925.77

**Expenses**

Advertising	\$17.00
Bank Charges	\$49.70
Dues and Subscriptions	\$510.00
Insurance	\$1,464.00
Legal and Professional Fees	\$475.00
Treasurer Expenses	\$106.37
PO Box Fees	\$97.00
Mailing	\$2,355.43
Lake Host Program	\$7,950.43
Newsletters	\$1,076.29
Supplies	\$921.84
GELIA Wear	\$1,493.04
Storage	\$540.00
Contributions *	\$3,750.00
Buoys	\$468.00
Stickers	\$242.00
Annual Meeting	\$915.18
Water Quality Monitoring	\$789.00
Calendars	\$2,074.07

**Total Expenses** \$25,294.35

**Net Income** **\$3,631.42**

<b>* Contributions</b>	
Three Rivers Land Trust	\$500.00
Gaffney Library	\$100.00
Moose Mountain Regional Greenways	\$500.00
Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance	\$1,000.00
Wakefield Ambulance Service	\$400.00
Maine Audubon Society	\$250.00
Acton Ambulance Association	\$400.00
Loon Preservation Committee	\$250.00
Maine VLMP	\$250.00
Wakefield Parks and Recreation	\$100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,750.00</b>

**Great East Lake Improvement Association  
Balance Sheet  
12/31/2009**

**Assets**

Primary Checking - General Reserve Fund	\$4,373.52
Money Market - ISDF Fund	\$6,483.46
CD - ISDF Reserve Fund	\$10,006.23
CD - General Reserve Fund	\$14,661.63
CD - General Reserve Fund 2	\$4,037.07
CD - ISDF Fund 2	\$11,930.69
CD - ISDF Fund 3	\$5,614.93
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$57,107.53</b>

**Fund Balance**

Beginning 1/1/09	\$53,476.11
Increase During Period	\$3,631.42
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$57,107.53</b>

***Third Annual GELIA Photo Contest***

By Gary Field

Our Photo Contest has become a popular regular event! Share your fondest memories of time spent at the lake and bring the whole association closer together. I know you're sitting on a pile of great pictures the rest of us would like to see. Send them in already!

If you don't have pictures you want to share, then you're still not off the hook, we also need volunteer judges to pick the best ones. You don't need to be a photography expert. As long as you have a computer with a CD/DVD drive that you can display pictures

on, you're all set!

The people who won last year's top prizes (Elaine Meagher, Lennie McKinley, and Bill Carroll) are not eligible to enter this year so we'd like to encourage them to be judges instead.

We will take the best 13 photos submitted (one for each month plus the cover) and create a calendar which will be available for sale at the annual meeting. This also has the benefit of being a fund raiser for GELIA and creating a historical photo archive of our beloved lake and its inhabitants. The best of the runners up will be posted on [www.GreatEastLake.org](http://www.GreatEastLake.org).

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**Photo Contest** *continued from page 5*

I intended to announce the "Special Category" for 2010 at the annual meeting, but I think I forgot...The special category is "Fall".

You have until the end of March to work on digging out and selecting your favorite pictures so you can send them in.

There are, of course, rules:

<http://www.greastlake.org/PhotoContestRules.html>

Download and print an entry form:

<http://www.greastlake.org/PhotoContestEntryForm.html>

Or, if you have no internet access you can write to: Gary Field, PO Box 762, Tewksbury, MA 01876

And I'll send you the rules and an entry form.

To volunteer your services as a judge send an email to: [PhotoContest@GreatEastLake.org](mailto:PhotoContest@GreatEastLake.org)

Family members living in the same household as a

judge are not allowed to enter the photo contest.

Good Luck!



***Majestic Birds Make a Comeback***

By Jennifer Craig

Did you know that the eccentric and brilliant statesman, Benjamin Franklin, was a staunch advocate of making our national mascot not the bald eagle, but actually the wild turkey? It's true. Franklin admired both this bird's wily intelligence and its importance for the survival of the early colonists and campaigned hard for the turkey. However, the eagle advocates won out, and, as we all know, the bald eagle now serves as our national symbol. Think of that next time you wear your "Freedom is not Free" T-shirt...you could have been sporting a turkey!

***It is gratifying that both of these large and impressive birds are making a strong comeback in southern Maine!***

Over the years, I have noticed a huge increase in turkey tracks as I walk in the snowy woods. According to the Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife website, wild turkeys were quite prevalent in York county at the time of initial settlement but declined throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century as more forest was converted to farmland and as the remaining birds were killed for food. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, turkeys

were virtually gone from this region. However, since 1942, various attempts have been made to reestablish the local populations. These attempts were unsuccessful until the late 1970's when 41 birds were transported here from Vermont. The local population started to grow nicely but was decimated by poaching in the mid-80's. In the late 80's, 70 birds were brought here from Connecticut where they joined the small surviving local population and thrived. At this point, the wild turkey population appears to be stable despite hunting being permitted in both fall and spring.

These are amazing birds. First, they are huge. Average weight for a female is between 8-12 pounds while a tom can weigh more than 25 pounds! Second, they can fly up to 60 mph and up to a mile at a time. Finally, once they make it to adulthood, turkeys live to be about 10 years old.

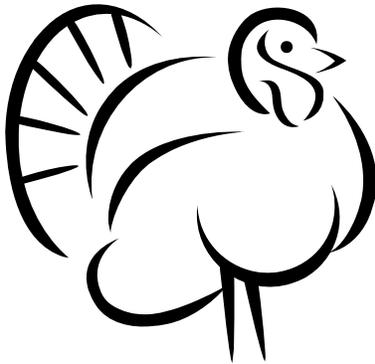
Wild turkeys like to live in mature hardwood forests, especially around nut-producing species like oak and beech. They also like grassy places and pasturelands for raising their young, called "poults". Turkeys eat a wide variety of animal and plant material including insects, greens, fruits, berries, seeds, grains, and nuts.

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## Majestic Birds *continued from page 6*

In the winter they eat bayberry fruits, fern spore heads, burdock seeds and other vegetation around spring-fed brooks and the bare edges of fields. In Maine, turkeys also hang around dairy farms where they pick at leftover silage corn and manure containing undigested corn that is either spread on fields or piled up for later use.

Wild turkeys breed in April and May and it is quite a sight to see! The toms put on a dramatic display, puffing themselves up to look as large and impressive as they can and strutting around theatrically. I once



tried to pull into my driveway where a tom was standing, doing his courtship number for a group of nearby females. I ended up parking the car at the bottom and walking up; there was no way he was going to abandon his act, even for my minivan. Apparently, such displays are effective; successful toms will breed with 12 or more females in a season!

Females lay an egg a day for up to ten or twelve days and the eggs hatch 26 to 28 days later. There are plenty of predators to guard the eggs against, including crows, skunks, raccoons and red squirrels. The females can also be attacked by coyotes, foxes, fisher, bobcats and great horned owls. Poults leave the nest the day they are hatched and spend their early days around field edges and forest openings searching for the high-protein insects they need for rapid growth. Hens and poults join others to form large flocks during late summer, fall and winter. The toms generally remain solo but can form small all-male groups at times other than breeding season. Feeding turkeys can cover several miles a day and generally roost in trees at night for safety.

Bald eagles are also coming back and been spotted at my place on the north shore, Maine every fall. I once photographed an eagle catching a large fish right at the point where the ice was forming; after swooping down and snatching its prey directly from the frigid water, the eagle settled down on the nearby new ice to

devour it.

Bald eagles were on the endangered list in this area for decades, largely because of the impact of DDT, a pesticide that was later banned. (The chemical rendered the birds' egg shells too fragile to survive). Now, however, according to Fosters newspaper, NH has identified 20 bald eagle breeding territories, with six nesting eagle pairs spotted along Winnepesaukee and surrounding lakes. Nesting sites have also been spotted in Dover and the Great Bay Estuary, as well as on the Androscoggin River, the Connecticut River, and the area around Portsmouth.

In the 1960's, the number of breeding pairs of bald eagles *nationwide* was estimated to be as low as 487. Now, the national figure is around 10,000 pairs with 400 pairs in Maine alone. Nests produce from one to three chicks per year and the chicks stay in the nests for about 11 or 12 weeks before they can fly off on their own. The parents both take part in feeding them during this time, with fish and other water creatures composing their main diet. A rainy spring can make finding food more difficult since the eagles rely on their amazing eyesight to see fish in the water and rainy weather can make the water cloudy.

New Hampshire Audubon and NH Fish & Game are working together to teach landowners about the importance for the eagles of maintaining natural shoreline habitats and also protecting water quality.

For many of us who are concerned about and work hard to protect our environment, there is often much to be discouraged about. Development is not always carefully thought-out, animals suffer from habitat destruction and man-made hazards like lead fishing tackle, and mother nature can be very unforgiving in these northern climates. Yet, the turkeys and the eagles have shown us that with concerned citizens, good science and careful management, majestic species such as these might be brought back to health for all of us to enjoy!



## *2010 Membership Drive*

By Pat Theisen

2009 was again a successful year for membership, with 403 members. While membership numbers fluctuate very little, membership itself does. Each year new members join, while some long-time members let their membership lapse.

As in the past, **membership letters will be mailed in March.** Please be on the lookout and send in your dues while it is fresh in your mind, saving GELIA the price of another mailing by responding quickly. Your 2010 membership sticker will be mailed shortly after the receipt of your dues.

Should you forget to renew your membership, you will receive a reminder letter. We have made great strides in the past several years with members joining prior to the Annual Meeting in July. The membership committee thanks you!!



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

GELIA  
PO Box 145  
Stratham NH 03885

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