



# NEWICHAWANNOCK NEWS

GREAT EAST LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION - 79th YEAR, Fall 2011

## *President's Column*

By Jennifer Craig

“Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower”

---Albert Camus

As we all jump back into our busy lives, it's hard to believe that summer was just a few weeks ago. As you read this, you have probably pulled out the boats, stacked the docks up on the shore, and counted the number of loons gathered in single groups before heading off for the winter.

For many people, the fall is the best time to be at the lake: beautiful misty mornings, crystal blue afternoon skies, pick-your-own apples, and of course, the beautiful foliage that we might take for granted but that folks travel hundreds of miles to see. I hope you all get a chance to stop and admire our beautiful corner of the world this autumn!

As the seasons change, it is good to remember that your lake association board and numerous volunteers work hard, protecting Great East Lake for all to enjoy. Here are some highlights from this past summer:

- The Lake Hosts completed nearly 3000 boat inspections and made three confirmed “saves”; that is, prevented invasive species from entering the lake on boats or trailers three times. Thanks in part to the generosity of our members, we were able to afford to employ lake hosts seven days a week, not just weekends.

- Water quality in our lake is just superb! As veteran water quality monitor Chuck Hodsdon reported at the Annual Meeting, he actually took a Secchi disk reading of 13.6 meters, which represents the best water clarity he has ever seen.

- The Weedwatchers had a great training day in Acton, which you can read about inside. Thank you to the many volunteers who patrol “their” sections of shoreline by boat, kayak, or snorkel. More volunteers are needed to meet our goal of having every inch of shoreline being “watched” for invasive weeds.

- It was a great year for the loons with four chicks surviving through the summer. Our trained loon monitors were able to confirm this success while also educating people to keep their distance while the loons are nesting and the chicks are small.

- The Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance's Youth Conservation Corps completed 14 erosion control measures on four Great East properties this summer, bringing the total since 2006 to 77 measures on 22 properties. These projects are keeping 25 tons of sediment and 22 pounds of phosphorus from reaching our lake each year!

Thanks so much to ALL of you who do what you can to keep our lake clean and who contribute so generously to GELIA's efforts to do the same. On behalf of your GELIA Board, I wish you all a spectacular fall season and as many days at the lake as you can possibly wring from your schedules.

## Great East Lake Improvement Association

### OFFICERS

Jennifer Craig, President  
Dave Mankus, Vice  
President  
Chris McKay, Treasurer  
Gene Rosenthal, Secretary  
Bess Smith, Past President

### DIRECTORS

Janet Gould  
Chuck Hodsdon  
Marcia Hodsdon  
Bill Hohenberger  
Effie Jaramillo  
Dee Kasprzak  
Carol Lafond  
Ron McKay  
Arnie Murray  
Walter Neff  
Linda Schier  
Dorothy Smith  
Pat Theisen  
Stephanie Theisen

### Mission

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

## *Lake Hosts Achieve Three "Saves"*

By Chris McKay

Many thanks to our Lake Hosts: Caitlyn McKay, Courtney McKay, Hayley Mandeville, Jay Fugarazzo, Dan Kraft, Tyler Stanieich, Nick Lee, Paige Lee, Jackson Callahan and Calder Billings for another successful season. This was a big year for the program as we received funding that enabled us to have lake hosts at the Acton Public boat launch seven days a week from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. Without the hard work and dedication of our lake hosts, and the continued support of the GELIA membership it would not have been possible.

The Program resulted in more inspections than in any other year, as well as three confirmed saves. It is important to note that two of the three saves came on weekdays (which would have otherwise not been staffed). The GELIA BOD thanks our membership for their continued support of the lake host program.

## *Lake Property Sales*

By Janet Gould

After a busy year for property transfers in 2009, when 14 properties changed hands, 2010 and 2011 have seen a slower market. 9 properties were sold in 2010 and 9 properties have sold thus far this year. As of mid-September, 32 properties (8 are land only) remain on the market.

While many of the new owners hail from New Hampshire and the neighboring states of Maine and Massachusetts, new lake residents have also joined us from Illinois, New York, Texas, Connecticut, New Jersey and California. Welcome all!

## *In Memoriam: Jon Rouillard*

We are saddened by the death of former GELIA board member, Jon Rouillard, on August 12, 2011, after his long and difficult battle with cancer. Jon served on the GELIA Board for 6 years, from 2003-2009. His major contribution was in the area of Membership growth. Jon felt strongly that GELIA would be a stronger organization and that, indeed, the lake would benefit greatly from getting more people involved as GELIA members. He organized several successful campaigns to build membership and was largely responsible for its significant growth. Jon's enthusiasm for the lake and his commitment to keeping it healthy and beautiful for generations to come were second to none. We are grateful for his service and will miss seeing him on Great East.

## ***Four chicks still thriving on Great East***

By Carol Lafond

Two loon pairs nested successfully in 2011, the Scribner River and the Loon Island pairs, each hatching two chicks. The Scribner pair chicks hatched in early June and they are now almost adult size. The Loon Island pair chicks hatched in late July. There is always concern that such a late hatching will mean the chicks won't have time to develop their flight feathers in time for them to fly off the lake before ice-in, but they are thriving and we can only hope that the ice holds off until they can fly.

When the chicks were small, there were reports of people in kayaks trying to get too close to the chicks despite requests from others in passing boats. The kayakers were not aware of the distress and warning signal of the adult loons. Below are some of the distress signals taken from an article on Loon Behavior at the LPC website - [www.loon.org/about-loons.php](http://www.loon.org/about-loons.php)  
*"If you approach too near a nesting loon or a loon with chicks it might give a "tremolo" alarm call that sounds like crazy laughter. If the loon is very agitated it may rear up and thrash about in the water."*

Please, if you see any of this behavior, be aware that you may be too close and give the loons the space they need.

The floating loon nest in the Second Basin was not used by the loons this year, and no nest site was found in the Second Basin. There was also no nest found in Copp Brook. The Annual Loon census was held on Saturday July 16<sup>th</sup> by Dave Nordengren, the Murrays the Crespis and Carol Lafond. Six adults and one chick were counted this year, but the other chick and the other two adults were seen later that day. The count was held before the Loon Island chicks hatched, so the real Loon count on Great East this year is twelve.

Thanks to all the Loon volunteers on the lake and to everyone who takes the time to report the status or concerns about the loons to me during the year. ([carol.v.lafond@roadrunner.com](mailto:carol.v.lafond@roadrunner.com))

Thanks also to all lake users who have been careful about their speed around the loons and those who have stopped using lead fishing weights. **The good news is that we have had no reported loon deaths this year!**

## ***Wakefield Conservation Camp Kids***

By Dave Mankus

The Wakefield Conservation Commission sponsors each year, local middle school students to a week camping at the Tanglewood Camp at Lincolnville, Maine. At camp they learn conservation principles thru experiences, leadership, and plain fun in an outdoor environment. Returning students and parents alike were enthusiastic about this year's experience. GELIA contributed \$450 again this year which was the cost of one student's attendance. This and other fundraisers around Wakefield, together with the Commissions help, allowed all students wishing to attend to do so. The Directors were sent a thank you letter from the Commission and a collection of hand crafted thank you cards from the students.

## ***Fun Times & Good News at the Annual Meeting***

By Jennifer Craig

The 2011 GELIA Annual meeting was held on July 9th in Weeks Park. This year, the GELIA Board experimented with new placement of the display tables which seemed to take better advantage of the shade and also allow a better “flow” for people gathering information. Learning from the 2010 meeting, which ended in a complete downpour, the Board rented a big tent for people to sit under and purchased several smaller canopies to keep the booths dry. Naturally, it was a sunny day! (The extra shade was appreciated, however.)

Those in attendance heard reports about our excellent water quality from Chuck Hodsdon, and received an update on the fine work of our Lake Hosts, some of whom were present, from Chris McKay. Dorothy Smith gave a report on Weed Watchers, Pat Theisen spoke about Membership (which now stands at 403), Carol Lafond reported on the loons, and Linda Schier, Executive Director of the Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance, gave a report about the Clean Lakes Campaign and other work of AWWA. There was a lot of good news and a lot to celebrate: clean water, prevention of invasive species, four loon chicks! It was also a reminder that these good outcomes don’t just happen; it takes the work of board members, volunteers, paid staff, and every person on the lake to keep Great East in great shape.

This was also the year for new officers to be elected. The following people were elected to 2-year terms:

President: Jennifer Craig  
Vice-President: Dave Mankus  
Treasurer: Chris McKay  
Secretary: Gene Rosenthal  
Past President: Bess Smith

In addition, 12 directors were elected to new terms, including our newest board member, Effie Jaramillo.

Flares were given out, people purchased the latest GELIA-wear, along with maps, charts, calendars and history books, and the winners of the annual photo contest were announced. GELIA members visited the many wonderful booths for information about our activities and the various conservation projects with which we are involved, and, of course, we all enjoyed our hot dogs!

The official meeting ended with the part that everyone looks forward to...the raffle! Dee Kasprzak did a terrific job of organizing donations this year and here is her report:

*“This year, the Annual Meeting had great weather, great attendance, and many generous raffle donations from local businesses. Despite the bad economy and the numerous donation requests they always receive, so many continue to support us every year. Please show our appreciation for their support by continuing to frequent the following contributing businesses as often as you can:*

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## **Raffle Donors:**

Acton Trading Post	Beatle's Bait & Tackle	Conway Scenic Railroad
Crabby Bear	Get Fired Up	Good & Tasty Restaurant
Great East Docks	Iron Trails Saloon	Knotty Pine Grill & Tavern
Longmeadow Hardware	Lovell Lake Food Store	Muddy Paws
Nute's Trading Post	Parker's Boathouse	Patch's Family Restaurant
Peak Organic Brewing	Pinewood Products	Poor People's Pub
Province Lake Golf	Raise-A-Dock	Real Estate 2000 ME/NH
Roadside Farmer	Seven Lakes Provisions	Seven Lakes Realty
Shaw's Ridge Farm	Ted's Fried Clams	Wakefield Inn
Wakefield Reiki Clinic		

## ***Weed Watchers Workshop in Acton***

By Dorothy Smith

Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (MVLMP) presented an Invasive Plant Patrol (IPP) Workshop on July 6 at the Acton Town Hall. This workshop was cohosted by GELIA, Bauneg Beg Lake Association, Mousam Lake Region Association, Square Pond Improvement Association and York County Invasive Aquatic Species Project. This excellent workshop provides each participant with The IPP handbook and the Maine Field Guide to Invasive Aquatic Plants. Participants at this workshop from GELIA this year were Claire Cullinane, Michael Long and Dorothy Smith. Each workshop presents a hands on opportunity for plant identification including both invasive plants and their native look-alikes.

It is recommended that all weed watchers who have not yet attended this workshop look for an opportunity to attend in future years if it is presented in our area.

There was a follow-up field workshop on Mousam Lake on July 23<sup>rd</sup> attended by Dorothy Smith. This was an opportunity to go out in canoes and kayaks to harvest weeds and bring them back for identification.

Both workshops are highly recommended.

## *Irene Pays a Visit*

By Ron McKay

In this millennium, Mother Nature has presented our Seven Lakes Region with record snow and ice storms, small earthquakes, torrential rain and even a tornado, but up until now she had spared us a hurricane. With the arrival of Hurricane/Tropical Storm Irene, she completed her array of “gifts” and presented the region with an end of summer storm that blasted through the area and left a path of destruction in her wake. Many locals who were around here in 1985 would compare this storm to Hurricane Gloria that caused significant damage to the Wakefield/Acton area.

There is an old adage that says, “ history tends to repeat itself”, so we should be able to learn from events of the past to help us in the future. New technology can also help expand upon that adage. Nowadays, meteorologists can more accurately predict storms and the potential routes these storms may take. Being able to track Irene in advance for over a week gave local residents ample time to prepare, as opposed to past storms that have been less predictable.

If we went back in history and looked at the two most significant hurricanes to hit the Seven Lakes area in the past twenty five years, we could learn from them and hopefully help us better prepare for future storms. When Hurricane Gloria came through in 1985, that storm tracked inland through New England and stayed west of GEL. When a hurricane does that, the winds are heavier, rain is less and the storm surge will typically come out of the east (the narrows) and affect the North Shore of GEL more significantly. During Gloria, major tree damage occurred along the North Shore with hundreds of trees being uprooted or blown down and some extensive home damage was evident.

When Hurricane Bob came through in August of 1991, that storm tracked east of GEL as it moved up the Atlantic Coast. When this happens, the winds are more apt to come from the north and west causing more rain, lighter winds and a more direct hit on the South Shore of GEL. Damage from that storm was more prominent on the southerly shores of GEL while the North Shore came away relatively unscathed on that one.

This past summer, during Irene, the area of the North Shore (Lake Forest all the way to the Scribner River) received the full force of the storm during the daylight hours. The waves built momentum from the Narrows all the way across the main portion of the lake. Swells in excess of three to four feet toppled docks, broke boats and moorings loose and took down numerous trees. Significant erosion of the beautiful beaches in that area was also heartbreakingly evident. Random areas around the lake saw additional damage from falling trees and erosion from heavy rains. Roads throughout the surrounding Acton/Wakefield area were closed and damaged as trees and downed power lines disrupted travel and left some areas without power for up to a week.

In anticipation of the heavy rains, the agency that controls the region’s dams started releasing water from GEL early in hopes of minimizing flooding and erosion. Cautious boat owners started taking boats out days in advance to protect them from the storm.

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The Lake Host Program tallied over one hundred boats being removed in the days prior to the storm.

With the water level at near record highs for this time of year, debris and storm remnants were evident in the lake. A large portion of a tree (close to twenty feet) broke off on the South Shore, floated across the lake during the storm, and imbedded itself in twenty feet of water between the rocks and the “Needles” Camp. A section of the “floating island” in the Scribner River also dislodged and floated out near the mouth before it got stuck on the sandbar and had a chance to hit open water.

As Irene has reminded us, knowing a potential storm path and doing some research in preparation of a significant storm can help minimize potential damage to boats, docks, property and personal safety. The above rule of thumb should only be used as a guide, however. Knowing how fickle Mother Nature can be, we should always prepare for the worst, hope for the best and be thankful we came away relatively unscathed from this storm. Just remember the impact a storm such as Rita or Katrina had on other parts of the country and imagine what devastation those types of storms could have caused up here. Hopefully, Mother Nature will spare us anymore “gifts” for the foreseeable future but as we all know; we live in New England and if we wait just a minute, the weather can and will change. Here’s to a safe and uneventful fall and winter!

### ***New GELIA Members 2011***

by Pat Theisen

Welcome to the following new members of GELIA! An increasing number of lake residents are supporting GELIA’s mission by becoming members, including several who are new property owners.

Mark & Heather Adamske

Gary & Michele Bergeron

Victor Braga

Peter Clairmont

Robert & Sandra Harvey

Theodore & Lynn Lebida

Laurie Ledonne

Aurelian & Anahid Mardiros

Eric Peters

David & Christine Savukinas

Paul & Laureen Schlesinger

Brian Shaw

David & Maryann Sidebotham

David Smock

Robert & Jacqueline Spurr

Eugene & Mary Eva Welenteichick

GELIA membership for 2011 boasts 407 members. Thanks for your support!

## *Great East Lake – Up Close and Personal*

By Linda Schier

“We are going to release these guys back to the lake, aren’t we? I’ve really bonded with one little guy!” Believe it or not, that was said by GELIA Vice President Dave Mankus as he was preparing to say goodbye to his new found zooplankton friends on a late summer AWWA Discovery Cruise on Great East Lake. Dave was one of 35 people to join AWWA on the 2011 Discovery Cruises on Wilson, Lovell and Great East lakes for an in-depth look at some of the less obvious aspects of lake ecology.

On each of the GEL cruises both the adults and kids learned how the water quality monitoring is done. They used the Secchi disk to determine that we could see over 10 meters (over 30 feet!) deep in the lake! Wow! We also took a temperature reading every ½ meter to find the thermo cline which is the depth at which the water becomes cold rapidly and defines the upper, productive layer of the lake water column. That’s the water that GEL Water Quality Monitor Chuck Hodsdon samples to measure phosphorus, chlorophyll, salinity, alkalinity and color to determine the health of the lake.

Next on the agenda, with an 80 micron mesh net, I scooped up a concentrated sample of plankton which our passengers viewed through handheld microscopes. There they met a variety of tiny critters including copepods, daphnia (water fleas) and rotifers. There was some talk about keeping our mouths closed when we swim but I pointed out that a little extra protein never hurt anyone. The word “plankton” is derived from a Greek word meaning “wanderer”. Plankton is defined as organisms that can’t propel themselves against a current so, although many can move around in the water, they are dispersed with the wind, water flow, and tides. There are many different species of zooplankton in Great East and it was such fun listening to the exclamations of “Wow, look at that one!” and “Ooh! That one has crazy antennae!” This diversity indicates excellent water quality and a stable food web for everything from the tiniest phytoplankton to the giant trout to the majestic eagles.

The final lesson sent us on a trip into the Scribner River to look at the aquatic plants. I pulled up samples of the native Waterweed which looks a lot like the invasive Hydrilla, and Bladderwort, a carnivorous plant that eats zooplankton and is often confused with milfoil. Milfoil has yet to invade our lake and we hope that the vigilance of the Lake Hosts, Weed Watchers and informed lake residents will help keep it that way.

As we exited the Scribner on our first GEL cruise we met the loon family with their two very young chicks. Right in front of the boat the parents caught fish and fed them to the babies. It was quite a show and we all felt that it was put on just for us as they knew we had a full boat of engaged, curious lake lovers. On a Lovell Lake cruise we had a visit with the resident bald eagle. We are all so privileged to share such amazing natural resources and the AWWA Discovery Cruises are a “fun, fantastic, and informative” way to learn about some of the mysteries. Keep an eye out for the schedule next summer and plan to bring your family on a fun, interesting adventure.

## ***Clean Lake Focus for GELIA & AWWA***

By Linda Schier

The Clean Lakes Campaign is in full swing on the lakes in the Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance (AWWA) region and the members of GELIA are jumping in. 81 GELIA members have signed the "Reduce Your Phosphorus Footprint" pledge and promised to adopt lake friendly practices such as "Say NO to fertilizers", use Phosphate-free detergents, Scoop the Poop (properly dispose of pet waste), plant a buffer at the water's edge, properly maintain septic systems and control roof runoff. We're ahead of all the other lakes in the area but they are nipping at our heels so let's aim to get those pledge numbers higher next year! Look for the pledge form in an upcoming newsletter and on the GELIA website. All of these practices reduce the amount of phosphorus (plant food) to the lake which, in excess, causes algae blooms, reduced water clarity and habitat decline. It's important that we each do our part to keep Great East clean and healthy.

There are many ways that AWWA is working with GELIA and the other lake associations to ensure the lakes stay clean and healthy for generations to come:

The AWWA Youth Conservation Corps has now installed 77 erosion control measures on 22 properties on Great East. It is estimated that these projects are keeping over 25 tons of sediment and 22 pounds of phosphorus out of the lake per year. In addition, 40 lake residents have received site specific designs for do-it-yourself projects. Since 2006, the AWWA YCC has installed 354 erosion controls on 103 properties throughout Acton and Wakefield. Our high school crew are so proud of their accomplishments!

GELIA, the Langley Shores Road Association, AWWA and the York County Soil & Water Conservation District are partnering on a Maine Dept. of Environmental of Protection grant for 2012-13 to fix some chronic problems along Langley Shores Road that will prevent tons of polluted runoff flowing into the lake each year. Great collaboration!

The 2009 watershed survey identified 169 GEL watershed properties that might have erosion problems. AWWA has helped 25 of those properties with their erosion issues but we'd like to do more. If you have any questions about how your property might become more lake friendly be sure to contact AWWA Program Manager Dustin Johnson at (603) 473-2500 or email [djohnson@AWWatersheds.org](mailto:djohnson@AWWatersheds.org).

AWWA is supporting efforts of the Wakefield and Acton Planning Boards to review and strengthen the municipal stormwater management policies at the Town level.

Educating our future leaders at the Wakefield Paul School and the Acton Elementary School about water resource protection is one of AWWA's favorite priorities. We love it when the kids exclaim "We know you, you're the watershed people!" as we bring in live critters and watershed activities. Next spring AWWA will be leading the Acton students in a rain garden installation on school property.

35 lake residents sailed with AWWA for our Discovery Cruises where they learned how to determine lake water quality, met some of the local zooplankton and identified aquatic plants. All would enthusiastically recommend the cruise to a friend and all signed the Phosphorus Footprint pledge. Keep an eye out for the schedule next summer and plan to bring your family on a fun, interesting adventure.

It is great to see all the energy and support for projects and activities that are helping keep the focus on clean water and healthy habitats. The GELIA – AWWA partnership is so important to the future health of our lake.

Great Holiday Presents!  
Keep remembrances of the summer alive all year long by giving gifts  
reflecting Great East Lake

\*\*\*\*\*GELIA Merchandise Order Form\*\*\*\*\*

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