



**INVASIVE SPECIES**  
LIFE AQUATIC



**LLA PRESIDENT**  
MESSAGE



**REGATTA**  
HIGHLIGHTS

# LAUREL LAKE LEDGER



## Pond Ice

Photos and Story by Chip Yensan

For as long as I can remember I have had a relationship with pond ice. It began on an oversized frozen mud hole in a field behind my house, just big enough to pass pucks with a friend or two. The relationship blossomed and expanded to include any nearby water feature on which us kids could skate - anything that would freeze, that we could walk to or easily drive to, and that we could claim as our own.

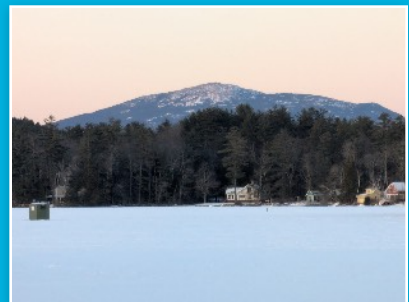
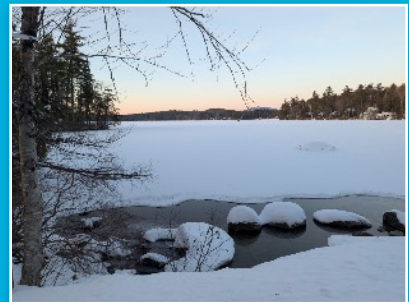
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*“..get out there as early as possible and stay on the ice until sunset”*

On weekends and after school, the routine was the same – get out there as early as possible and stay on the ice until sunset.

We had homemade huts where we would strap on our gear and lace up our skates. Our Zamboni was mother nature and ever-present shovels. Mounded snowbanks served as boards. No helmets, no goalie masks...just the basic affordable gloves and pads to provide some protection against flying pucks, sticks, and the occasional elbow. Sometimes we had homemade goal frames; sometimes just somebody's boots. Enjoying endless hours of wonderful, sometimes bone-chilling fun, we were one with the ice. Our pond rink gave me a place to strengthen friendships and connect with nature. In return I helped care for it until solid gave way to liquid with the arrival of spring.

In adulthood, skating mostly moved indoors for my family and me. But now much later in life I have returned to the pond and rekindled my relationship with its ice during the winter months. At my age the stride in my skating glide isn't what it used to be, a helmet is a required piece of gear, and pads are worn to protect fragile joints rather than from flying pucks. Boot spikes are usually preferable to skates during treks across the ice. And yet, I find myself reconnecting with my old friend as if it were 1972, shoveling and caring for a rink in front of our Laurel Lake house each winter season. Am I crazy? All this work just to shoot an occasional few pucks at the net? More likely it is the fond memories that emerge as I push the snow off it and the comfort in looking out each morning and knowing it is there – a life-long relationship still intact.



### Philanthropy on the Rise

We are pleased to share that we experienced a significant increase in small, medium and large donations as well as several corporate matching gifts this past year. Given the LLA is an all-volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, donations to the LLA are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. With your gift, you will join a growing community of people like you who care passionately about the health of Laurel Lake. Donate today at [www.laurellakeassn.com](http://www.laurellakeassn.com). You can make a difference!



Become a Member  
or make a donation

## A Lifetime of Environmental Stewardship - Barbara Green

Laurel Lake has been part of my mother's life since childhood. Her parents purchased land and built a summer cottage in the early 1950s, and she has held a deep, lifelong appreciation for the lake ever since. In the late 1980s, not long after regular monitoring began through New Hampshire's Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP), she joined a small group of neighbors (Don Garland, Don Treat, George Graff, and James Deyo) sampling Laurel Lake several times each summer, bringing her skills as a Ph.D. in applied environmental microbiology and many years as a research scientist to something she had a very personal attachment to. Over the years she also shared that work with her grandchildren, who joined her for sampling from a young age and helped more as they got older, passing along both her love of science and her care for the lake.

That early involvement set the stage for more than three decades of leadership. Barbara joined the Laurel Lake Association's Board of Directors in 1994 and, over time, became the person everyone turned to for questions about water quality and lake health. She kept up with guidance from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) and NH LAKES, shared new information with the board, and helped make sure local decisions were grounded in sound science.

In 2002, she became Chair of the Water Testing Committee, reviewing state reports and sharing key trends at annual meetings in language that lake residents could easily understand. Barbara also helped launch the lake's work on aquatic invasive species. In 1999, she and George Graf began the weed-survey program—now known as the Aquatic Invasive Species Survey—initially covering the whole shoreline themselves. Under her encouragement, that effort grew into a team of more than a dozen volunteers surveying the lake several times each summer. She later urged the Association to join the Lake Host program, volunteered as a Lake Host herself beginning in 2013, and co-wrote the grant that allowed the Association to hire paid hosts the following year.



Along the way, her dedication was recognized. In 2012, NHDES honored her with its Volunteer Limnologist Award in recognition of her dedication to and enthusiasm for volunteer lake monitoring. In 2016, the Laurel Lake Association presented her with its Distinguished Service Award for her many years of work toward preserving, protecting, and enhancing the quality of the environment and life around Laurel Lake.

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More recently, she turned her attention to the broader watershed. Beginning in 2021, she led the effort to seek funding for a comprehensive watershed management plan. Working with the Laurel Lake Association, the Town of Fitzwilliam, and the Southwest Region Planning Commission, she drove a Clean Water Act Section 319 grant proposal.



Missing out on earlier rounds of this very selective process only encouraged her to keep refining and resubmitting the application; that persistence helped lead to final approval in December 2024. The EPA-funded, NHDES-administered project—now underway with FB Environmental and the Planning Commission—will help identify runoff sources and develop long-term strategies to protect water quality and wildlife around Laurel Lake.

My mother’s commitment has always extended beyond the shoreline. While living in Fitzwilliam full-time, she served on the Conservation Commission, worked on open-space issues, and was a Town Library Trustee—ways of caring for the community that holds the lake. Even after moving to Covenant Living in Keene in 2019, she has stayed connected as a citizen scientist and as part of the wider Monadnock community. Her work has always been rooted in that enduring connection: a child who loved a lake and grew into a scientist, neighbor, and volunteer determined to care for it.

*Contribution by Kerry Shrives*

**It is with great pleasure that the Laurel Lake Association will recognize Barbara Green with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the Annual Summer Meeting on July 18<sup>th</sup>. We thank Barbara from the bottom of our hearts for her devotion and stewardship to Laurel Lake for over four decades. Please join us for this momentous celebration.**

**Newly formed Communication Committee**

LLA Communication Committee was formed to assemble members who represent and assist with the delivery and coordination of the Association’s various out-facing communication functions. This team oversees our social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram), the annual “Laurel Lake Ledger” newsletter, the LLA website, the monthly article for the Town of Fitzwilliam newsletter, periodic informational emails to members and our general membership outreach efforts. If you wish to join this highly motivated group, please reach out to Chip Yensan or Pat Spicer. We can always use a few more creative ideas!



@laurellakeassociation



www.facebook.com/groups/laurellakeassociation



[laurellakeassn.com](http://laurellakeassn.com)

## WE NEED YOUR HELP TO KEEP OUR LAKE CLEAN AND BEAUTIFUL

### Identifying Invasive Aquatic Species in New Hampshire Waters

Everyone who enjoys New Hampshire's lakes, rivers, and ponds can help protect them. While boating, fishing, swimming, or walking along shorelines, **watch for unfamiliar plants or animals**. Invasive species spread quickly and can harm native wildlife, damage habitats, and interfere with recreation.

If you spot something unusual, **do not try to remove it**. Take clear photos, note the location, and report your findings to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Exotic Species Program or your local lake association. Early detection is one of the most effective ways to stop invasive species before they spread.

New Hampshire's lakes, rivers, and ponds are home to a diverse range of native plants and animals that support healthy aquatic ecosystems. However, invasive aquatic species pose a serious threat to these waters by disrupting habitats, outcompeting native species, and interfering with recreation. Early identification is one of the most effective ways to prevent their spread.

Together, we can help keep New Hampshire's waters healthy and thriving.

### Invasive Aquatic Plants



Among the most widespread invasive plants in New Hampshire is **variable milfoil**. This submerged plant has feathery leaves arranged in whorls along the stem and often forms dense underwater mats that can clog boat propellers and fishing gear. It is frequently confused with native milfoil species, but its softer texture and variable leaf structure are key indicators.



Another common invader is **curly-leaf pondweed**, recognizable by its wavy, reddish-green leaves that resemble lasagna noodles. Unlike most native aquatic plants, curly-leaf pondweed grows aggressively in early spring and dies back by mid-summer, often leaving behind thick plant debris.



**Fanwort**, also known as Cabomba, is identified by its delicate, fan-shaped submerged leaves and small floating leaves at the water's surface. Its symmetrical, finely divided leaves make it distinctive, though it can spread rapidly once established.



**Water chestnut** is one of the easiest invasive plants to recognize. It forms floating rosettes of triangular leaves with toothed edges. Beneath the surface, it produces hard, spiny nuts that can injure swimmers and wildlife. Dense mats of water chestnut can completely cover shallow waters, blocking sunlight and oxygen.

## **Invasive Aquatic Animals**



Invasive animals can be harder to spot but are equally damaging. The **spiny water flea** is microscopic, yet its long, barbed tail causes it to clump on fishing lines and downrigger cables, forming dark, gelatinous masses.



The **Chinese mystery snail** is much larger than most native snails, often reaching the size of a golf ball. Its olive-brown shell and trapdoor-like operculum make it easy to distinguish when found along shorelines or shallow waters.



**Asian clams** are small, tan-colored clams with ridged shells that live buried in sandy or muddy bottoms. They often occur in dense colonies, sometimes making lake bottoms feel gritty underfoot.



Perhaps the most well-known invasive species is the **zebra mussel**. These small, striped mussels attach themselves to hard surfaces such as rocks, docks, and boats. Their sharp shells can cut bare feet, and their rapid reproduction allows them to spread quickly and alter entire ecosystems.

### **Preventing the Spread**

Boaters, anglers, and swimmers play a crucial role in stopping the spread of invasive species. Inspecting boats, trailers, anchors, fishing gear, and waders after every outing can prevent accidental transport between waterbodies. Shoreline walks and swims also provide opportunities to notice unfamiliar plants or sharp shells.

### **Reporting Invasive Species**

*If an invasive aquatic species is suspected, it should not be moved. Take clear photographs, record the exact location, and report the finding to the Laurel Lake Association and an expert will respond quickly and help limit further spread. Please email this address: [spikewilliams@gmail.com](mailto:spikewilliams@gmail.com) include your name and cell phone.*

Protecting New Hampshire's waters depends on awareness, early detection, and responsible recreation. By learning to recognize invasive aquatic species, residents and visitors alike can help preserve these ecosystems for future generations.

**Laurel Lake Association**  
**Message from the President**  
**February 2026**



We plan to return from our winter trip south late this year as my bride needed a new hip. All went well and she is getting around like new.

There has been steady progress on the watershed study. The engineering consultant has provided LLA with some initial copies of their progress and areas we can identify to improve water quality.

Our board of directors have appointed a work group to work on an update to our bylaws, and we should have a package with some changes to vote on by this summer's annual meeting.

This summer's annual meeting will be back to hamburgers and hot dogs. There will be a Chicken BBQ later in the year. Dave Streeter and his team have volunteered to perform the cooking again and will be bringing his secret sauce. When the dates are finalized at this spring board of director meeting, Tickets will be available on the website and from any board member.

As always, my continued thanks to all the people who keep all the activities going strong. It is rewarding to be a part of the Laurel Lake Association as it continues its goal to maintain the quality of the lake and provide family-oriented programs.

Remember the Association works well because of your help. We continue to provide a full schedule of activities as the ever-changing conditions permit.

As always, we need help with Lake Host Volunteers, water testing, and AIS members and all the summer activities and look forward to everyone being involved again this year. Don't forget to ask you neighbors if they are members of the association.

This will be my last year as president. It has been my pleasure to provide my time and energy for the improvement of the quality of the Lake. Don't worry though, I will continue to be a supporting member of the organization.

See you soon!

Tom White

## 2026 SUMMER EVENT CALENDAR - LAUREL LAKE ASSOCIATION

### MAY

#### 2026 SPRING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

May 30, 2026 - Saturday  
9:00am - 12:00pm  
Camp Fleur de Lis Dining Hall

### JULY

#### JULY 4th FLARE AFFAIR 🌟

July 4, 2026 - Saturday  
9:00 - 10:00pm  
Flares should be lit at sundown. Evening boat cruising is encouraged!



#### CONCERT ON THE LAKE 🎵

July 11, 2026 - Saturday  
5:00 PM  
PULL YOUR BOAT UP AND ENJOY THE MUSIC!  
Nafi Fraiman's House 10 camps north of the boat ramp



#### ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MTG & PICNIC 🍷

July 18, 2026 - Saturday  
10:30am - 1:00pm  
White's Field Keene Avenue; Cookout to Follow  
BRING YOUR LAWN CHAIRS!  
Rain Location: Depot Train Station

#### 35th ANNUAL CANOE/KAYAK RACE 🚣

July 25, 2026 - Saturday  
9:30am - 5:00pm  
Registration - 9:30am @ White's Field  
Children's Race Start - 11:00am  
7 Mile Race Start - 11:10am  
2.5 Mile Race Start - 12:30pm  
No Boat Wake Rule During Races



### AUGUST

#### CHICKEN BBQ 🐔

August 15, 2026 - Saturday  
Whites Field Kids games start @ 3pm, chicken served @ 5 pm, price to be determined at a later date. Raffle, Cornhole and possibly other games to be included in the day's events.

### SEPTEMBER

#### ANNUAL DRESSER FRIEDMAN REGATTA 🚢

September 5, 2026 - Saturday  
10:00am - 12:00noon  
Organizer: Tom White  
Rain Date: Sunday September 6, 2026

#### 2026 FALL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 12, 2026 - Saturday  
9:00am - 12:00pm  
Camp Fleur de Lis Dining Hall



<https://www.laurellakeassn.com/copy-of-news-events>

## 2025 Regatta Highlights

August 30, 2025



The 2025 Dresser Freeman Regatta was well attended this year with seven boats in the race. Vice Commodore Jim Wood and Robert Woodruff officiated the race, and a modified Olympic course was in place. This year's participants were Jeff Prunier with his tactician Caroline and navigator Owen, Bill Chase, Matt Poulin, Tom White, Mike King again sporting his black pirate sail, Patrick McNamara, and Joe Pelkey.

The winds were out of the Northwest at a steady pace with gusts. At the end it was Jeff Prunier with his tactician, Caroline and navigator Owen who brought the trophy home in 35 Minutes following a long dry spell. Matt Poulin finished second with a time of 37 minutes, followed

by Patrick McNamara at 37 minutes 30 seconds, Tom White 39 minutes, Bill Chase 41 minutes Mike King 42 minutes and Joe Pelkey. A good time was had by all with the after party held by last year's winner Patrick McNamara.

As always it is more fun the more boats in the race. Make sure you put next Labor day's race on your calendar early so you can join in the fun. If you are like me and can't lift the sunfish any more, we have a few trailers and helpers and we can get your boat to the water and back to your camp after the race. Just let Tom White know in advance.

If you have a sunfish under your camp, clean it off and enjoy the day with us. And if you need sailing lessons, call Tom White and he will be happy to give you a quick class. The Regatta is open to all sailors and non-sailors alike who live on the lake.




2025 Winners

**Note from the editor:** Thank you, Kathy Olson, for your many years of dedication as Editor of the *Laurel Lake Ledger*. Producing this publication requires an extraordinary amount of time, care, and expertise. Your efforts have made the Ledger a valuable resource, providing our community with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the lake we are fortunate to call home. -Dan White

## Laurel Lake Association - Lake Host Program 2025 Annual Report – Executive Summary

Laurel Lake is a clear, spring-fed lake covering about 180 acres and located in the town of Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire. The lake is served by a public boat ramp located at its southern end. The Laurel Lake community is supported by the Laurel Lake Association (LLA) which was established to promote a closer relationship among lake users, to foster beneficial lake-related initiatives, and to support the overall environmental health of the lake. The Lake Host program is one such environmental wellness program for which LLA partners with NH LAKES for the purpose of conducting seasonal lake hosting and watercraft inspections at its boat ramp. This program is jointly funded by an annual NH LAKES grant and a matching LLA allocation and is administered by way of both paid and volunteer Lake Host inspectors. The Lake Host program is a first line of defense against the introduction of aquatic invasive species (AIS) into Laurel Lake and as a way of greeting lake visitors.



Survey Results			Percent of total inspections		Inspections by Time Block											
Boat Type	Non-Motor	126	39%													
	Motor	197	61%	4:00am-6:00am	6:00am-8:00am	8:00am-10:00am	10:00am-12:00pm	12:00pm-2:00pm	2:00pm-4:00pm	4:00pm-6:00pm	6:00pm-8:00pm					
Motorboats with Ballast				1	0%	Sunday	0	0	1	31	27	26	5	0		
State of Boat Registration				NH	157	49%	Monday	0	0	0	2	1	8	3	0	
				MA	18	6%	Tuesday	0	0	0	2	2	11	3	0	
				ME	0	0%	Wednesday	0	0	1	0	1	0	10	22	
				VT	7	2%	Thursday	0	0	8	1	1	14	6	0	
				CT	5	2%	Friday	0	0	16	17	5	4	11	1	
				NY	1	0%	Saturday	0	0	13	14	27	19	10	0	
				Other	2	1%										
Prevention Measures Taken				Cleaned	194	60%	Boater Activity		Commitment Question*		Has Boater Previously Interacted with a Lake Host?					
				Drained	195	60%	Fishing Recreation	0	Yes	257	Yes	235				
				Dry	194	60%	General Recreation	0	No	9	No	44				
				Total Arriving	196	61%	Maintenance	0	Previously Committed	4	Not Asked	36				
				Total Departing	127	39%	Research	0	Not Asked	45						
<b>Total Inspections:</b>				<b>323</b>												

\*Will the boater Clean, Drain, and Dry over when a Lake Host is not present?

note: Variations in data collection can influence outcome measures. Categories may not add up to 100%, or reflect the amount of total inspections, due to these variations.

The 2025 Lake Host program at Laurel Lake met desired targets for the year including the NH LAKES volunteer match amount. The program was principally funded by a \$900 funding carryover and \$1950 annual grant from NH LAKES, a \$500 contribution from the Laurel Lake Association, and \$1450 in local business sponsorship and program-specific charitable giving. Program funding supported paid lake host coverage over the Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day holiday weekends as well as approximately 18 hours per week of coverage between May 17 and September 1. Mason Hill served as the 2025 paid Lake Host and was paid at the state average for this position as reported by NH LAKES. Paid Lake Host hours, in

combination with volunteer hosting, contributed to 364 total ramp hours and 323 total inspections for the season. 2025 total ramp hours were slightly higher and total inspection numbers were slightly lower than 2024, making this the second year in a row for that trend. No suspect weed specimens were observed or removed from entering boats or trailers during paid and volunteer Lake Host inspection hours during this season. This continues to suggest that there is considerable compliance to NH’s “Clean. Drain. Dry.” law by boating visitors to Laurel Lake. There were eight(8) lake host “saves” state-wide as reported by NH LAKES during the 2025 season. Our local business sponsorship effort for the Lake Host program this year yielded two 3-year and one 1-year sponsorships from our 2024 original three business partners: KG Performance Solutions (3yr), Flavor Smart Beverage Group (3yr), and Tri-City Marine Sales (1yr). Much appreciation is given to our 2025 Lake Host volunteers: Phil Strahan, Denis Guenette, Tom White, Kerry Shrives, Nancy Fey-Yensan, Terry Manley, and Teri Chavira.

Respectfully Submitted By: Chip Yensan, Lake Host Local Coordinator, December 19, 2025

## 2025 Volunteer Lake Assessment Program

The Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP) is managed by the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) and consists of over 500 volunteers from approximately 180 participating lakes throughout New Hampshire. The VLAP program was initiated in 1985 in order to enlist lake associations in lake protection and watershed management in a cooperative and streamlined process.



The Laurel Lake Water Testing Committee are VLAP members and are charged with providing NHDES with water samples and various observational data at least 3 to 4 times during the Spring and Summer seasons. NHDES then analyzes and interprets that data to provide annual water quality summary reports to each participating lake.



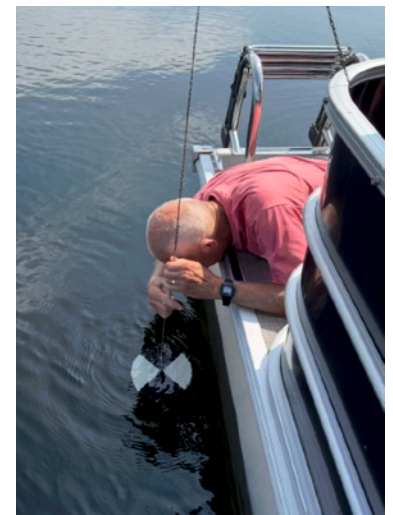
With water testing equipment and bottles provided from NHDES, the LLA collects water samples at the lake's deepest spot from 3 depth levels: 2 meters, 7 meters and 12 meters. The State lab tests these samples for Phosphorus levels, Turbidity, Chloride, Chlorophyll, Transparency and more. To ensure we have healthy recreation, we also collect water samples for E. coli tests from each of the 3 main swimming areas on the lake which are the Town Public Beach, Sandy Beach and the Fitzwilliam Swim Club. Each round of E. coli testing proved safe as the DES notified us immediately.

Due to significant staff turnover at the NHDES Concord office, we have not yet received the 2025 Laurel Lake summary findings report. When the State does issue this report later this Spring, we will post the findings onto the LLA website. However, I have called DES and confirmed there were no major issues to announce.

As a result of the Watershed Survey Grant, we will also have a detailed water analysis in our resulting Management Plan. The Laurel Lake Watershed Management Plan will be presented at the 2026 July Annual meeting by F.B. Environmental Associates. This is the company the grant team hired to conduct the watershed assessment. Please plan to attend and stay informed.

In closing, I would like to personally thank all of the participating VLAP volunteers from this past summer: Barbara Green, Kathy Olson, Kerry Shrives, Bill Townsend and Pat Spicer. We do have a lot of fun while getting the work done!

Respectfully,  
Gail Connelly



## 2025 LLA Membership Drive Report



Right after the LLA July Summer Meeting, a targeted campaign to grow our membership among Laurel Lake’s waterfront properties as well as the White’s Grove neighborhood was put into action. A door-to-door campaign, totaling 73 properties, reached out to residents to become new members or renew their annual membership with the Laurel Lake Association. The breakdown consisted of 36 residences within White’s Grove and 37 waterfront lake properties.

To encourage waterfront residents to join or renew their annual membership, we promoted our 2025 goal of attaining 70% of the lakefront properties as active members and then specifically asked them to help us reach this goal. It was tiring to say the least, but definitely fun to speak to so many people over the two-day event.

I am thrilled to report that results speak for themselves! Waterfront lake property participation grew to 83% for 2025 from a previous 56% in 2024 and White’s Grove neighborhood property participation grew to 58% from a previous 42% in 2024. You’d have to reach back all the way to 2007 to achieve the membership levels attained in 2025!

<b>Laurel Lake Association - Annual Membership Results</b>				
	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Adults	178	203	199	285
Children	26	30	36	57
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>342</b>

I relay this information to you to ask for your assistance this summer and take a few minutes to encourage your neighbors and acquaintances to join the Association this 2026 year. We need to motivate everyone on or around the lake to become active members. By building a stronger community, it will provide us with more resources and opportunities to protect and preserve this lake for generations to come.

So, please renew your LLA membership for the 2026 season as your participation directly helps to keep our lake beautiful! Renew now either by mailing in your annual membership or online at [laurellakeassn.com](http://laurellakeassn.com). If you have already renewed, please accept my gratitude. If we are all invested in this mission together, we can achieve another milestone!

Pat Spicer, LLA Membership Chair

## Top Tips to Keep Laurel Lake Healthy!

*(Edited version of an article originally published by NH LAKES)*

New Hampshire is home to approximately 1,000 lakes and ponds. Not only are these irreplaceable natural resources important to the ecological health of the state, they contribute to our quality of life and to the state's economy. Here's how you can help keep them clean and healthy!

**Keep shorelines vegetated with native plants.** Plants along the shoreline help keep lakes healthy by absorbing polluted runoff water from roadways and lawns. More information about native plants, including lists of accepted species and those to stay away from, can be found at <https://www.nhdfi.dncr.nh.gov/natural-heritage/native-plants>

**Think about the soaps we use.** When we wash our clothes, tiny fibers, often made of plastic, shed from fabrics and enter our wastewater, pass through septic systems and eventually make their way into our lake, where they can impact water quality and fish stock. There are simple steps we can take to reduce this problem including washing clothes in cold water or installing a filter on your washing machine's drain line. Also, it is important to avoid the use of soaps and detergents in or near the water. Soaps that contain phosphates should be avoided, as these compounds can enter the water and contribute to the growth of harmful algal blooms. There is no truly "safe" soap for use directly in a lake: even products marketed as environmentally friendly can disrupt Laurel Lake's ecosystem.

**Remove hitchhiking plants and animals from boats and trailers—clean, drain, and dry!** Aquatic invasive plants, like milfoil, and animals like the Asian clam, spread from lake to lake by little fragments or larvae being transported from infested lakes to non-infested lakes on or in boats and trailers. Aquatic invasive species infestations make recreation in and on the water dangerous and unpleasant, disrupt the ecological balance of lakes, reduce shoreline property values, and are difficult and expensive to control, and almost impossible to get rid of!

**Reduce your use of fertilizer.** Not only does fertilizer make your lawn green, when applied in excess or too close to the water, it makes your lake green with algae. You can check to see if your soil even needs fertilizer by conducting a simple test (contact your local University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension for more information.) You can save money by using lake water to fertilize your lawn or garden since it naturally contains nitrogen and phosphorus, the main components of conventional fertilizers. If you must use fertilizer, use phosphorus-free fertilizer (the middle number in the N-P-K listing on the bag should be '0'). And, remember, state regulations prohibit the use of all fertilizers, except limestone, within 25 feet of the high water mark of waterbodies.

**Have your septic system regularly pumped and inspected.** Have your tank pumped every two to three years—organize a neighborhood pump-out to get a lower price. And, upgrade or replace your septic system if it is outdated or undersized. The typical life expectancy of a conventional septic system leach field is approximately 20 years.

**Dispose of yard waste away from water bodies.** Grass clippings and leaves contain nutrients such as phosphorus that aquatic plants and algae use to grow. In addition, this organic matter smothers the habitat of fish and other aquatic organisms and causes the lake bottom to become mucky. No one likes to wade and swim in muck! Wash boats, cars, and pets away from waterbodies. Soaps and shampoos will add nutrients and other pollutants to the lake. Even camping soaps or biodegradable soaps may contain undesirable pollutants.

**Prevent erosion and reducing stormwater runoff by stabilizing paths to the lake.** Limit foot traffic to the shoreline by providing only one meandering pathway surrounded by vegetation. This will prevent polluted runoff water from being funneled directly into the lake. State regulations limit the widths of new paths to the water. For more information about the NH Shoreland Protection Act see <https://www.des.nh.gov/protected-shoreland-faq>

**Keep shorelines clean by not feeding waterfowl.** While it might be fun to feed the waterfowl, there is more than enough natural food available for these birds. Waterfowl waste contains phosphorus and nitrogen which contributes to undesirable algal blooms, and also lots of bacteria and possibly parasites, which can make swimmers sick.

**Become a member of your local and state lake associations.** The Laurel Lake Association is dedicated to protecting the water quality and natural resources of Laurel Lake and its watershed. Learn more about the LLA and its membership at [www.laurellakeassn.com](http://www.laurellakeassn.com).

NH LAKES is the only statewide, member-supported nonprofit organization working to keep New Hampshire's lakes clean and healthy, now and in the future. Learn more at <https://nhlakes.org/>

## TREASURER'S REPORT

### 2025 Income

Membership	\$4,575.00
Donations	\$4,083.68
Canoe Race Income (raffle & registration)	\$1,214.00
Merchandise Sales	\$1,130.00
Chicken BBQ	\$925.00
Interest Income	\$1,547.00
Flare Income	\$400.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$13,875</b>

### 2025 Expenses

Canoe Race	\$1,179.00
Annual Meeting and Cookout	\$1,061.00
Merchandise	\$480.00
Dues / Lake Host Program	\$1,026.00
Ledger Printing	\$769.00
NH Business Registration	\$75.00
Website Maintenance	\$336.00
Water Testing	\$540.00
Concert on the Lake	\$500.00
Sailboat Regatta	\$163.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$6,129.00</b>

**2025 Net Increase** **\$7,745.68**

### Checking and Savings Account Balances as of December 31, 2025

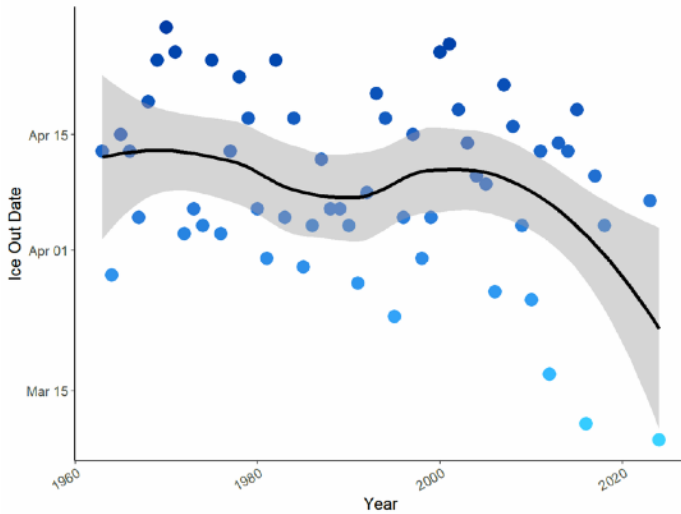
Savings Account	\$22,065.00
Certificate of Deposit	\$5,183.00
Checking Account/PayPal	\$17,054.06
<b>Total Association Assets as of December 31, 2025</b>	<b>\$44,302.06</b>

Ashley Marshall, treasurer

The Laurel Lake Association is a non-profit tax deductible 509(a)(2)

## Ice Out April 3, 2026

Ice Out Date Trend Chart – Laurel Lake



### ICE-OUT ON LAUREL LAKE From the cellar of Arthur Rousseau

My name is David Streeter and my grandfather was Arthur Rousseau. Ever since I could remember, he recorded “ice-out” on Laurel Lake in Fitzwilliam, NH. “Ice-out” means the total disappearance of ice, due to thawing, from the surface of body of water such as a lake. Every year in February, Arthur had several visitors to his cellar where they would pick a date when they thought that the “ice-out” would occur. You could backup your date with a five cent (\$0.05) bet. As the economy grew, the wagers went to \$0.25, to \$0.50 and then to \$1.00. When the ice began to disappear from the lake, Arthur, equipped with his binoculars, would go to every cove and look for signs of ice. He would verify that not even ice cube was floating anywhere on the surface of Laurel Lake. The lucky person that picked that day would win the jackpot. Before my grandfather passed away in 2005, he asked me to continue the “ice-out” tradition. Now, come February, I have frequent visitors to my garage to pick a date and to place a wager. The wager now is \$5.00. I’m often asked what the previous years’ dates for the “ice-out” were. Below is a list of dates from as far back as my grandfather and now I have kept. Traditions may just be a small part of who we are and where we come from but I’m proud to carry this one on for someone who meant so much to so many.



04/13/1963	04/17/1979	03/24/1995	04/13/2011
03/29/1964	04/06/1980	04/05/1996	03/17/2012
04/15/1965	03/31/1981	04/15/1997	04/14/2013
04/13/1966	04/24/1982	03/31/1998	04/13/2014
04/05/1967	04/05/1983	04/05/1999	04/18/2015
04/19/1968	04/17/1984	04/25/2000	03/11/2016
04/24/1969	03/30/1985	04/26/2001	04/10/2017
04/28/1970	04/04/1986	04/18/2002	04/04/2018
04/25/1971	04/12/1987	04/14/2003	04/04/2019
04/03/1972	04/06/1988	04/10/2004	03/21/2020
04/06/1973	04/06/1989	04/09/2005	03/28/2021
04/04/1974	04/04/1990	03/27/2006	03/27/2022
04/24/1975	03/28/1991	04/21/2007	04/07/2023
04/03/1976	04/08/1992	04/16/2008	03/08/2024
04/13/1977	04/20/1993	04/04/2009	03/28/2025
04/22/1978	04/17/1994	03/26/2010	04/03/2026

[Note: original article from Dave Streeter was published in the 2013 issue of the Laurel Lake Ledger; with dates through 2012. This file is the running list of ice out dates for the lake, updated annually. /Kathy Olson]

Graph of dates from NHDES: [https://www4.des.state.nh.us/onestoppub/TrophicSurveys/NHLAK802020202\\_02\\_01.html](https://www4.des.state.nh.us/onestoppub/TrophicSurveys/NHLAK802020202_02_01.html)

## Laurel Lake Association Leadership



### 2025-2026 Officers

Tom White	President
Gail Connelly	Vice President
Ashley Marshall	Treasurer
Liz Young/Beth Samuels	Secretary
Perry Nadeau	Past President

### Board of Directors

Jack Dumont	2026
Joe Pelkey	2026
Terry Silverman	2026
open	2026
Charley Brackett	2027
Bill Chase	2027
Jeffrey Prunier	2027
Chip Yensan	2027
Patrick McNamara	2028
Bill Samuels	2028
Rebecca Stagray	2028
Matt Stagray	2028

### Committee Chairpersons

Gail Connelly	Water Testing Committee
Bobby Williams	Aquatic Invasive Species Survey Committee
Chip Yensan	Lake Host Program
Pat Spicer	Membership
Robin Olejarz	Nominating Committee
Pat Spicer/Chip Yensan	Communications Committee
Jack & Barbara Dumont	Annual Meeting/Family Picnic
Charley Brackett	Canoe/Kayak Race
Bruce Hill	Commodore Dresser-Friedman Sunfish Regatta
Rebecca Stagray	LLA Logo Products
Terry Silverman	4 <sup>th</sup> of July Celebration Flares
John Fitzwilliam	Swim Club Representative
Dan White	Editor Laurel Lake Ledger

## LLA Bylaws Study Group

Submitted by: Chip Yensan

Laurel Lake Association Bylaws were last updated and approved in 2017. Given that eight years had passed since the last comprehensive bylaws review along with the Association’s recent change in status to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, an ad hoc Bylaws Study Group was established at the fall 2025 LLA Board meeting. This group of volunteers consists of Bill Chase, Jeff Prunier, Pat Spicer, Tom White, Liz Young, and Chip Yensan (Chair). The Study Group was charged with the following: 1) improve current bylaws clarity, grammatical form, and general formatting; 2) align language with current organizational practices, structure, and general lexicon; and 3) propose desired changes in organizational operating practices and procedures as appropriate to be contained within the Association Bylaws.

The Bylaws Study Group met several times throughout the past year and has submitted proposed updates to the LLA Board of Directors. Once the Board has reviewed and approved these changes, the Bylaws will be emailed to all LLA members ahead of the July 18 Annual Meeting where the final vote of approval will occur. Once ratified by the membership, the updated Bylaws will take effect at the fall 2026 Board of Directors meeting.

Keep an eye open for the Bylaws update email being sent to members as well as a post on the Association website in June. The email to members will appear in mailboxes as being generated by [laurellakecommunications@laurellakeassn.com](mailto:laurellakecommunications@laurellakeassn.com).

## CANOE/KAYAK/Stand Up Paddleboard RACE RESULTS



The 34<sup>th</sup> Canoe/Kayak Race was held July 26, 2025 on a spectacular weather day. There were 43 boats with 54 participants, including 24 children. Our youngest participant was Jack Woodruff, 2 years old. Thanks again to Charley Brackett for orchestrating another successful race event as well as all the volunteers who helped make this happen without a hitch!

**Race Results (Category, Winner & Time):**

**3/4 Mile Children's Race**

Boy's Kayak 12 and Under	Jason Stenfeco	14:39
Boy's Kayak 13 to 16	Braxton Gardner	13:42
Girls Kayak 12 and Under	Marina Freeman	15:04
Girls Kayak 13 to 16	Willa Rio	13.51
Girls Canoe	Emma Short / Annabelle Arp	14:13
Girls Stand Up Paddleboard	MJ Francis	17:55

**2.5 Mile Race**

Men's Kayak	Randy Hull	31:17
Women's Kayak	Jessica Freeman	31:48
Family Canoe	John Berry / Jack Adams	25:35
Mixed Canoe	Stuart Gray /Andrea Greeley	28:43
Women's Canoe	Gail Connelly / Pat Spicer	34:37
Solo Canoe	Bill Sarrell	27:59
Men's SUP	Colin McGinn	33:05

**5 Mile Race**

Men's SUP	Mike Adams	59:20
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**7 Mile Race**

Men's Touring Kayak	Ken Brand	1:11:10
Men's ICF Kayak	Heidi Henkel	1:11:15
Men's Solo Canoe	Michael Melnikov	1:11:18
Men's Racing Canoe	Bob Allen/Bob Balla	1:15:25



Charley Brackett  
Race Director

## FITZWILLIAM'S SUMMER CONCERTS ON THE COMMON – SUMMER 2026

All *Summer Concerts on the Common* performances will be held on Thursdays in July and August from 7:00-8:30 pm. In case of inclement weather, the venue will be upstairs in the Town Hall or at the Emerson School Gymnasium. Keep an eye out for updates on the announcement boards located at the depot and center of town. Bring your folding chairs and be ready to enjoy great music on our beautiful town common!

**July 9 Murphy's Blues Explosion** – A regional blues-rock band sure to get you grooving on the lawn or in your chair.

**July 16 The Starlight Honeys** – A band rooted in the folk/Americana tradition that plays acoustic instruments and takes pride in its vocal harmonies.

**July 23 King Saison Band** – This band is a Charcuterie board of musical flavors, genre-bending originals that hails from Springfield, Massachusetts.

**July 30 Willie J Laws Band** – The band is a notable blues act with a modern funky style that's uniquely its own with Texas roots music, funk, jazz, and Afro-Caribbean drum beats.

**August 6 Tattoo** - Tattoo performs American roots music: rock 'n' roll, soul, swing, Cajun, and originals, with a strong connection to American musical traditions.

**August 13 Jatoba** – This Brattleboro, VT band is a high-energy groovegrass bluegrass trio that has been captivating audiences since their formation in 2008.

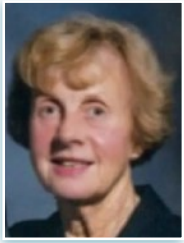
**August 20 Soggy Po Boys** – A band that explores the musical traditions of New Orleans jazz and traditional Caribbean tunes as well as funk, soul, and street beat music.

## 2026 FITZWILLIAM FARMERS' MARKET

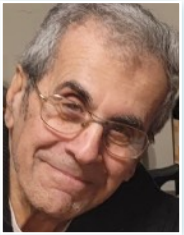
The 2026 Fitzwilliam Farmers' Market season will begin on Saturday May 23 from 9:00am to 1:00pm on the Fitzwilliam Common. There will be 25+ vendors offering local food items, crafts, plants and flowers, and more. Farmers' Markets will be happening every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday from 9:00am – 1:00pm thru October. Come and listen to local musicians and enjoy a delicious snack while wandering through the vendor booths. Check out the Fitzwilliam Farmers' Market NH Facebook page for additional updated information.



## In Memoriam



**Marilyn Anderson O'Donnell**, 88, of North Haven, passed away peacefully on June 14th. She was the beloved wife of 64 years to Henry "Hank" O'Donnell. A 1958 graduate of UConn School of Nursing, Marilyn was a nurse for the VNA in many towns in CT; ACES for 18 years and later for the State of Connecticut at High Meadows of Hamden until her retirement. She enjoyed camping, taking cruises and going to her little cabin on Laurel Lake.



**Howard P. Bornstein**, 83, of Cumberland, RI, passed away peacefully on October 30<sup>th</sup> after a courageous battle with Alzheimer's disease. A hardworking and energetic man, he owned Cleveland Circle Auto School in Brookline, MA, later working in sales, and found joy in family traditions, summers in New Hampshire, Boston sports, his Jewish faith, running, weather watching, and life's simple pleasures.



**Mike Korjeff** died at the age of 93 at his home in Harwich Port, MA on November 6th. Mike and his late wife Anne were long time summer residents at Laurel Lake, where they graciously hosted Association board meetings for many years. Mike had a career in investments for the former State Mutual Life Insurance Co. He was an avid athlete, playing tennis at the court at their lake house, hiking and skiing. Anne wrote a wonderful article about her family's long history at Laurel Lake for the 2009 issue of the Laurel Lake Ledger and it includes Mike's fascinating family background.



**William G. "Bill" Nelson**, 80, of Newton, NH, formerly of Sturbridge, MA, passed away November 5th. He earned a bachelor's degree from Robert Morris University and built a long career as a medical equipment sales representative in the Northeast. Bill cherished time with his family, especially at Laurel Lake and enjoyed golf, travel, and working outdoors. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Margaret "Peg" Nelson.



**Kevin McGuirk**, 69, had his final Irish exit at his home in Fitzwilliam on December 20th. He is survived by his wife, Melissa Burbank, with whom he shared 26 well-lived and well-loved years. He had a 25-year career with Digital Equipment Corporation, where he proudly worked his way up from the loading dock to leadership roles that provided him some of his fondest memories of traveling to and working in Ireland. He was a proud Irishman, enjoyed playing pool, and played on several teams in Keene and Athol. One of his teams travelled to Las Vegas to compete in the national amateur championships and came in fifth! He loved classic rock and was a terrific dancer, always the first on and last off the dance floor. In fact, one of his favorite bands gave him the nickname Swivel Hips. Kevin loved Laurel Lake. He began as a summer resident in 2000 spending a great deal of time and hard work making improvements to his camp in White's Grove. He insisted on a room for his pool table which was completed in 2014 which became Melissa and Kevin's year-round home, although they still called it Camp. He is most remembered for his kindness, willingness to always help others, his sense of humor and zest for life.



## Mar chuimhne ar Kevin McGuirk

Words by Joe Pelkey, written with Rebecca Stagray



Laurel Lake lost a true steward this past year. Kevin McGuirk, a longtime White's Grove resident, built lasting friendships and left a meaningful impact on everyone he touched. I had the opportunity to learn more about Kevin by speaking with those who knew him best.

If I had to describe Kevin in just a few words, they would be *selfless, genuine, and hardworking*. But what truly set him apart was his creativity and his deep, unwavering care for others. Kevin didn't just talk about "living each day to the fullest"—he lived it, fully and intentionally, every single day. He was one of the strongest-willed people I have ever known.

I made it a point to tell him often how much he meant to me, because people like Kevin deserve to hear it. If you hadn't known about his health challenges, you never would have guessed the battles he carried quietly for so many years. He never allowed them to define him, limit him, or dim the way he showed up for the world. There are two moments that capture Kevin best for me.

The first is how our friendship truly began. After a brutal ice storm tore through Sandy Beach, leaving trees down and branches everywhere, I went down to survey the damage. There was Kevin—alone—working methodically. He had rigged a winch line from his tractor to the fallen limbs, climbing between the tractor and a ladder, doing everything he could to make the area safe. Without much discussion, we fell into working side by side, clearing debris and problem-solving together. By the end of that day, something solid had formed between us.

That was the start of a real friendship.



The second story takes place at the old, weathered water wheel by the white farmhouse. Kevin loved walking the property, soaking in the quiet and the beauty around him, and he became especially fond of that wheel. When it finally collapsed and fell into the well, most people would have let it go. Kevin didn't. He waded into the frog-filled pond, pulled out the broken pieces, and began rebuilding it—entirely from scratch. Despite everything he was dealing with physically, he never gave up. I would check in with him often, offering help, and every time he'd smile and say, "No, I got this. I'll finish it." And he did.

I am deeply grateful that we were able to celebrate the completion of that water wheel together in the fall of 2025, surrounded by friends and family. It was a beautiful day. Kevin knew he was loved. Today, in his honor, that spot is known as **McGuirk Mill**. Kevin leaves us with an example worth following: slow down, appreciate the simple things, take care of one another, and truly live each day to its fullest. He didn't just believe in those values—he embodied them.

## A Special Thank You 2026 Lake Host Local Business Sponsors

The Laurel Lake Association would like to acknowledge our 2026 Lake Host program local business sponsors. Join us in thanking these local businesses for their partnership and for their commitment to maintaining a healthy and invasive-free lake ecosystem. Their contributions go directly to supporting our Lake Host program.

KG Automotive Solutions – Route 12, Fitzwilliam, NH  
 Flavor Smart Beverage Group - Serving Southern NE & PA  
 Tri-City Marine Sales – Route 12, Winchendon, MA  
 Trident Environmental Group – Route 12, Fitzwilliam, NH  
 HG Johnson Land & Home - Elm Street, Keene, NH

### New Kiosk Message Center to be Assembled by the Boat Ramp

Over the past couple of years, some of us working on many of the committees and projects around the lake had been discussing having a Laurel Lake Association kiosk message board at the boat ramp that would be dedicated to LLA news, summer activities, and membership information. In the Fall of 2025, Tom White officially secured permission from the Fitzwilliam Selectboard to place a new LLA message board immediately next to the existing NH boating rules kiosk with the provision it would be similar in appearance to the town's kiosk. A new recycled plastic kiosk matching the size, appearance and construction of the town's kiosk was priced at around \$2000 to purchase.

We believed that we should, and could, purchase this new message board through LLA member one-time donations given this special project is beyond our normal annual budgeting. We are pleased to report that we successfully fundraised the \$2000 needed with a very limited outreach to current residents of the lake. We will assemble and install it with volunteers and plan to have it in place prior to Memorial Day Weekend. This LLA dedicated message board will benefit not only our immediate lake community, but also offer wider visibility and potential membership growth with those that enjoy the lake as day visitors.



## Laurel Lake Merchandise... New Items Coming Soon!

During the off-season, we've been working hard to bring you exciting new merchandise for the 2026 season. Don't worry—the original Laurel Lake logo merchandise will still be available, along with several great new designs, including:

- A modernized Laurel Lake logo
- Laurel Lake with loon design shirts
- 2026 Special Edition "National Park" style logo

We will have a limited supply of pre-printed shirts, sweatshirts, hats, mugs, and more available for purchase at the 2026 Annual Meeting and Canoe Race.



In addition, we'll be reopening our online store in partnership with local company Bulldog Design <https://bulldog-design.com/>. Once the store is live, the link will be shared on the Laurel Lake Association Facebook and Instagram pages for easy online shopping <https://laurellake.itemorder.com>

Thank you for supporting our beloved Laurel Lake!  
Matt and Rebecca Stagray, Merchandise/Logo Chairs

## The Blue Marble Project

The Blue Marble for 2025 was presented to Charley Brackett. Gail Connelly, the previous recipient, chose Charley because of his passion for Laurel Lake and the joy and tremendous energy he exudes when he is involved with lake events. This is especially true when he puts all his effort into successfully managing LLA's Annual Canoe/Kayak Race, of course his favorite!



### *A New Way to Reach Our Members*

The Laurel Lake Association will be using new software through which to send important group emails to our members. This new software, called Constant Contact, is an easy-to-use, all-in-one digital platform ideal for nonprofits like ours to communicate and engage with members using an efficient, secure, and private email delivery method. This coming season we'll be emailing Membership Drive information, the electronic version of the Laurel Lake Ledger, and the proposed revisions to the Laurel Lake Association Bylaws to be voted on at the July annual summer meeting.

To ensure that we reach you without error, please follow the steps required by your email provider to allow these LLA emails to move directly to your primary inbox. This is often as simple as selecting the email in your junk or spam folder and setting it as "not junk" or just moving/dragging the email from your promotions folder to your primary inbox.



# 2026 Laurel Lake Association Membership Form

**RENEW TODAY!** Either use this form and pay by check, or pay online at <https://www.laurellakeassn.com>

**Membership Dues:** \$15.00 for Adult Memberships and \$5.00 for children under 18

**Laurel Lake Ledger:** Each household of paid-up members will receive the Laurel Lake Ledger via US Mail Delivery or E-mail (please select delivery method below)

## Members

Last Name	First Name	Membership Type		Amount
		(Adult or Child under 18)	A/\$15.00, C/\$5.00	
_____	_____	Adult	Child	_____
_____	_____	Adult	Child	_____
_____	_____	Adult	Child	_____
_____	_____	Adult	Child	_____
_____	_____	Adult	Child	_____
If you wish, you may also include an additional donation to help support the Association		Donation Amount		_____
<b>Total</b>				_____

## Permanent Address

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Summer Address

same as above

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Ledger Delivery Preference (select how you would like to receive your Laurel Lake Ledger)

I would like to receive an electronic copy of the Ledger via e-mail at the e-mail address below

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive the Ledger via US Mail delivery

\*Please make checks payable to **Laurel Lake Association**

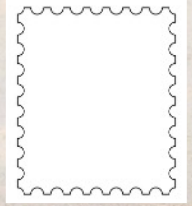
\*All applications and checks should be mailed to:

Laurel Lake Association  
PO BOX 352  
Fitzwilliam, NH 03447

**Thank you for your contribution !**

Laurel Lake and Monadnock Mountain, Fitzwilliam, N. H.

Laurel Lake Association  
PO Box 352  
Fitzwilliam, NH 03447



# LAUREL LAKE LEDGER

*You ever there? Am looking for a letter. Are there  
cubs*  
Laurel Lake, Fitzwilliam, N. H. *How is this? Was*



# LAUREL LAKE LEDGER