



A Little Spot of Heaven

# The Laurel Lake Ledger

Laurel Lake Association

38th Annual Newsletter Spring 2025

## PROTECTING OUR BEAUTIFUL LAKE & WATERSHED

We are lucky that our beautiful lake has avoided being contaminated with invasive species or water which is unsuitable for swimming & recreation. But that is the result of pro-active work by the Laurel Lake Association over decades and is not by chance. In this newsletter you'll read the reports of the committees who lead these efforts. In addition, we applied for and received a grant of \$74,000 from the EPA, via NH DES, to conduct a watershed protection survey and action plan, with the goal of identifying and correcting issues with sources of runoff which can degrade the water quality. This project is being administered by NH's Southwest Region Planning Commission, which partners with member communities to promote sound decision making for the conservation and effective management of natural, cultural and economic resources. As The Ledger goes to press, a consulting firm is being hired to do this work. Updates will be on our website. This is a great follow-up to the excellent stormwater runoff projects conducted in 2023 & 2024 by members of the Association and the town of Fitzwilliam (see the 2024 Ledger for details). The last of these projects was widening and stabilizing the boat ramp, finished in August, 2024.

In addition to these projects, individual property owners are taking action to ensure their lake front properties are

not contributing to stormwater runoff pollution. The 2023 Ledger highlighted the work of the Deyos on East Lake Road. Last year Joe & Heather Griffith on Laurel Lane did a landscaping renovation which is beautiful and designed to reduce, if not eliminate, runoff across their property. Here's their story:



"Last spring marked our family's third summer living on Laurel Lake, and we absolutely love it! We are a big family and love to entertain. We realized that we spent most of our time by the water and wanted to expand our patio. We envisioned extending the existing patio the length of our property. Although we love a good DIY project, we knew that this would be too big for us to handle! We researched landscape companies that had specific lakefront experience. After meeting with several companies, we confidently chose to work with Stephen Petersen of Petersen Landscaping out of Hancock, NH.

Again, our plan was to simply extend the current patio, but he quickly explained that would not be possible given the proximity to the shoreline. He right away came up with an idea to create a path from the existing patio to

the new patio, using the same large Goshen stones for continuity. We loved this idea! We wanted a small wall for extra seating as well to keep any debris from blowing into the lake. For the area in front of the wall, Stephen consulted his colleague Don Scott, a Landscape Architect at LA Designs, Harrisville, NH. Don met with the NH Conservation Commission and the Town to identify the best plants for our location. He created the space using Chokeberry, Sheep Laurel, Black-Eyed Susan and Brunswick Low Bush Blueberry. Stephen and Ron ensured that we had sufficient rainwater management and plantings that would thrive. We are 100% satisfied with their work and are excited to see how the plants will come up this spring/summer!"

Photos courtesy of Joe & Heather Griffith



Kathy Olson



## EDITORIAL INDULGENCE

My first visit to Laurel Lake was as part of a college crowd partying at Steve Olson's camp in the early 1970's. My second visit to Laurel Lake was in 1980, a year after I married Steve and discovered that he & his sister still had their family camp. Steve's parents met at Laurel Lake in the 1940s and were married in the parsonage of the Fitzwilliam Community Church. Steve's dad, along with relatives & friends, camped in White's Grove in the 1930s and eventually built little camps. Being a city girl, this was as close to camping as I ever wanted to get: a bed with a mattress and a roof over my head. We still used an outhouse, had cold running water and a two-burner hot plate for a stove but I could live with that.



Like everyone reading this, I fell in love with Laurel Lake. Weekends and vacation time were spent there, sitting on Sandy Beach, swimming, socializing at night with campfires & card games & consuming some adult beverages. We became friends with some wonderful people and eventually got involved with the Laurel Lake Association and met even more great people from around the lake. In 2004 the editors of the Ledger – Margery & Jack Aukstikalis – announced they were making some major changes in their life and were looking for someone to take over the editor job. Steve had just taken early retirement and volunteered to take on the job. 2005 was his first issue. In 2008 I became the main copy editor – assembling the articles – and contributing a few articles while Steve produced the lead stories. Steve's health started declining and I became the sole editor in 2018. With Steve's passing in 2019, keeping a second home had become too much work with not enough reward and I sold our camp in 2022. (We had upgraded it with indoor plumbing & septic & a real stove so was quite posh!) I also decided that 20 years involvement with the Ledger and being a board member of the Association for most of that time was enough and it was time for some fresh blood. As such, this is my last issue of the Ledger and I am leaving the board effective our July annual meeting.

I am delighted that Marjorie Feldman-Wood volunteered to take over the editor function and Dan White has volunteered to help. The Ledger is a major communication vehicle for the Association so it will always have reports of our activities in it but Marjorie & Dan have free reign to embrace it and make it theirs. I know many of us love the history articles about lake properties and lake life from years past so I encourage you to share your stories with Marjorie & Dan, as these stories bring life to the Ledger.

I also want to pay tribute to the past editors of the Ledger. The first Ledger was published in June 1988 with Jack Dumont serving as editor. Jack was already Secretary, Treasurer & Membership Committee chairperson (talk about overachiever!) and felt it was important that the Association have a vehicle to communicate with our members. At the time, Jack was Chairman of Telecommunications & Technology for Chicopee Public Schools so had the technical skills & tools to do a newsletter and he published 4 issues of the Ledger over 2 years. Jack still serves on the board of the Association!

In 1990 Larry Friedman became editor and started publishing a large (tabloid size & page-wise) Ledger, filled with Association news, articles about lake history and local news tidbits such as restaurants & shops in the area. I never met Larry but everything I heard about him says he was a great guy and his dedication as editor is evident when you look at the issues he produced. In his last 2 issues in 1995 & 1996, Eve Samuels joined him as Co-Editor. Sadly, Larry died suddenly and much too young in February, 1997. Sue Wood was secretary of the Association at the time and stepped in to publish the Ledger for 1997 through 1999. In 2000 Marge & Jack Aukstikalis became the editors and changed the flavor of it a bit – literally, as Marge was a outdoors woman and shared recipes for cooking fish caught in the lake & preparing venison. As noted above, in 2004 they announced a change in their lives with a planned move to Arizona.

Having spent his whole life vacationing at Laurel Lake, Steve loved the history of the lake and Fitzwilliam and we embraced that in articles for the Ledger. We also wrote of important current topics such as the re-opening of the Webb Hill quarry, the 2008 ice storm, Fitzwilliam's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary and watershed protection activities. There is a wealth of history in the Ledgers, all of which are available on our website – [laurellakeassn.com](http://laurellakeassn.com), under the News & Lake Life tab. Folks have contributed reminiscences of camp histories and 'real' camps such as Camp Chevy Chase from 110 years ago, South Pond Cabins and Camp Fleur de Lis. Pull up the website & enjoy. I wish you all the very best and thanks for reading the Ledger.

**Kathy Olson, Laurel Lake Ledger Editor**





## 2025 SUMMER EVENTS—LAUREL LAKE ASSOCIATION

### MAY

31st- 9:00 AM - The Board of Directors will meet at Camp Fleur de Lis (members are welcome to attend).

### JULY

4th - **9:00 PM** - Celebrate the Fourth of July with the traditional lighting of flares around Laurel Lake. Flares are available for purchase at Pottery Works (Rt. 119)

12th - 10:30 AM - The **Annual meeting** will be held at White's Field, Laurel Lake Campground, Keene Ave. Our featured speaker is from NH LAKES who will talk about their wonderful—FREE—Lake Smart Program. Association business will also be addressed. A fabulous chicken barbeque will be served after the meeting. **YOU MUST PRE-BUY TICKETS.** See details below. Bring a chair (none provided). Note: in case of terrible weather, the meeting will be moved to the restored train depot building in Fitzwilliam Depot, next to the fire station.

12th— 5:00-7:00 PM - Concert on the water at Fraiman's home (east side of lake at Laurel Lane). "The Ways & Means Committee", a blues/folk/rock band, will be performing. Boat on over for some great music.

26th- 11:00 AM - The **34rd** Annual Canoe/Kayak Race at White's Field, Keene Ave. Registration starts at 9:30 AM. Kids race at 11:05 a.m., other categories are timed afterwards.

### AUGUST

30th—10 AM The **37th** Dresser-Friedman Regatta (Rain date Aug. 31). Contact Tom White (President@laurellakeassn.com) for details

### SEPTEMBER

6th - 9:00 AM - The Board of Directors will meet at Camp Fleur de Lis (members are welcome to attend).

## CHICKEN BARBEQUE

For the past couple of years we've been treated to a delicious chicken barbeque after our annual meeting. It's been a delight but a logistical problem in figuring out how much food to get and we've run out so some folks have gone hungry. And it costs a lot more than our usual hot dogs & hamburgers. As such, we're reverting to requiring people buy tickets ahead of time, to eliminate guesswork and ensuring everyone gets to eat. To buy tickets, go to our website: laurellakeassn.com home page or click on the News & Lake Life tab and click on the link to purchase tickets via PayPal. Tickets are \$16 person and \$5.50 for children under 12. The **deadline for purchase is July 5** so don't put it off. If you don't have internet or Paypal, please contact a Board member for tickets or email: President@laurellakeassn.com or VicePresident@laurellakeassn.com. The food is terrific and Dave Streeter uses the same recipe his grandfather used years ago when we used to have the BBQs pretty regularly. If you can volunteer to help with food preparation (wrapping potatoes, etc.), please drop a note to President@laurellakeassn.com.



Dave Streeter & his crew (Dennis Lapointe, John Daigle & Butch Streeter) working on our 2024 BBQ. Not the best angle of Dave—sorry!



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We returned from our trip south to the lake on February 10<sup>th</sup> this year to enjoy a bit of winter. Mother nature cooperated with vigor providing snow and ice and then mud. Enjoying the quiet and beauty during a snowfall was worth the inconvenience of the season. And it really helps if you are retired and do not need to get on the slippery roads to go to work.

The State has awarded us a grant to study and recommend drainage improvements to further enhance the lake water quality. Special thanks to Barbara Green who has championed this project for years.

This summer we will try something a little different. To accurately purchase the correct amount of food and drinks, we will be selling tickets to this year's summer chicken BBQ to be held after the annual meeting. Dave Streeter has volunteered to perform the cooking again and will be bringing his secret sauce. Tickets will be available on the website and from any board member.

My continued thanks to all the people who help pitch in and 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 and all the summer activities and look forward to everyone being involved this year.

See you soon!

**Tom White**

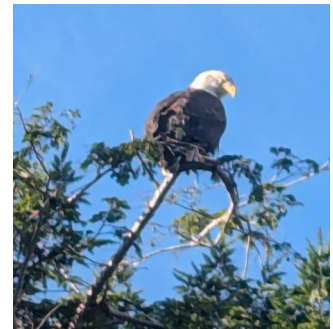
Snow balls created by the wind blowing across the lake. They are 5-10" big! Gail Connelly caught them in January.



Left: Bike racing on the ice?

Right: Bald Eagle visitor in Nov. 2024

Top photos courtesy of Gail Connelly



Left: Start of children's race.

Right: Starting line before the commotion of the canoe race.

Photos courtesy of Sherry Sanderson





## 2024 DRESSER-FRIEDMAN REGATTA

The 2024 Dresser Freeman Regatta was well attended this year with six boats in the race. Commodore Bruce Hill officiated the race setting a modified Olympic course. This year's participants were Bill Chase, Zander Yensan, Tom White, Mike King again sporting his black pirate sail, Patrick McNamara and his navigator Gardner and Jeff Prunier with navigator Caroline and tactician Owen.

The winds were steady for a change. Tom White led at the start with Patrick overtaking



him on the first leg. Bill

Chase passed Tom on the fourth leg and that was the standing at the end with Patrick first with a time of 47:44, Bill second with a time of 48:17, Tom a close third with a time of 48:22 and Jeff with 51:12, Mike King with 51.57 and Zander with a time of 56:23. Zander learned a valuable lesson to make sure and tie a knot in the end of your sail control line. He inadvertently dropped his line which quickly departed from the sail leaving him, as we say, dead in the water until he could re-rig his sail.



Sailors Bill Chase, Tom White, Gardner & Patrick McNamara, Mike King, Jeff, Caroline & Owen Prunier

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 anymore, 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 or Commodore Hill know in advance.

If you have a sunfish under your camp, clean it off 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.

### Tom White

## Sunfish History

In 1988 the Laurel Lake Association had its first sunfish race. Current President and frequent winner Tom White placed 2nd that year, in a field of 6 boats. The races typically draw between 6 and 10 boats. The sunfish boat itself was first launched in 1952 and was essentially a sail attached to a rescue paddleboard. The cockpit was added to the design to accommodate the pregnant wife of the boat company's owner. The boats were simple and inexpensive and could be launched right from a beach, making them accessible to those without yacht club memberships or money for a big boat. (Source: Smithsonian Magazine, July/August 2023.) Our regatta (named in memory of devoted Association members Gardner Dresser and Larry Friedman) is open to anything with a sail—but the tenets of the sunfish design remain: anyone can sail one and they are fun. They also provide such beauty to the lake.

### Kathy Olson



## CANOE/KAYAK/SUP RACE

The 33rd canoe/kayak race was held July 27 on another pleasant day, with similar participation to last year. There were 46 boats with 58 participants, including 29 children, all numbers up a bit from last year. The kids must have had good breakfasts as the first place winners all had better times than last year, which had been better than the year before! Our youngest participant was Jack Woodruff, age 1, and oldest participant was Marci Kelly, 81. Thanks as always to Charley Brackett and all the volunteers who make this big event happen.

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

#### $\frac{3}{4}$ Mile Children's Race:

Girl's Kayak: Hazel Haigh, 11:13

Boy's Kayak: Kallen Stagray, 10:45

Girl's Canoe: Annabelle Arp & Aly Finizio, 12:23

Girl's SUP: Emma Zagrocki, 13:24



Children's Race winners & participants.

#### 7.23 Mile Race:

Men's Solo Canoe: Michael Melnikov, 1:20:24

Mixed Racing Canoe: Sandy Harris & Tim Garland, 1:08:53

ICF Kayak: Ed Dvorchak, 1:27:13

Men's Touring Kayak: Bob Balla, 1:23:50

Women's Touring Kayak: Pam Browning, 1:21:08



Start of the 2.5 Mile Race.

Photos courtesy of Kim Saso.

#### 2.5 Mile Race:

Women's Kayak: Marci Kelly, 43:55

Men's Kayak: Mark Dion, 31:22

Men's Canoe: Ty Wirell & Dana Gray, 31:05

Family Canoe: Megan, Evan, Julia & Jack Woodruff, 32:29

Mixed Canoe: Stuart Gray & Andrea Greeley, 30:51

Solo Canoe: Jim Mundell, 34:21

Tandem Kayak: Kyle Freeman & Bruce Hill, 29:55

SUP: Bob Fitzpatrick, 36:51



Charlie Brackett & Race MVP Matt Stagray.

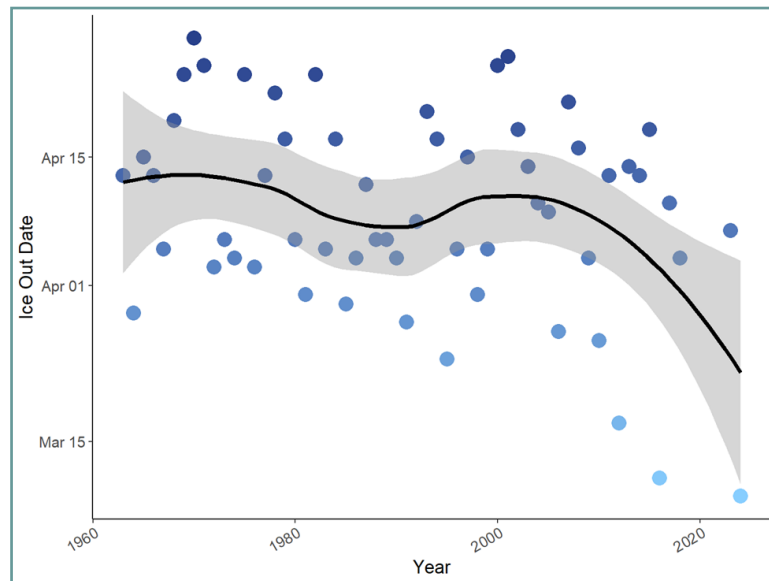
**Note:** One of the features of the canoe race day is the **raffle** at the end. This has been a good money maker, funding some of the race expenses, and is especially looked forward to by the kids. All the items in the raffle are donated by members & friends and local businesses. So, please make a point of picking up something you can donate—kids beach/water toys, games, camp 'stuff' like flashlights, beach chairs, a gift certificate to a local business. You can drop them off on race day. Thanks!

**Kathy Olson**



## ICE OUT DATES

Dave Streeter is our official Ice Out declarer, following the practices of his grandfather Art Rousseau who started tracking it in 1963—63 years of data! I've submitted the data to NH DES which is recording it for the state and has put together a trend chart. Ice Out for 2025 was March 28 (not reflected in this chart). Earliest ice out date was last year on March 8. The latest was April 28, 1970. The dates are highly variable but the trend is to earlier.



## WATER TESTING REPORT

We continue to do a fourth sampling date in May in order to learn more about the impact of spring runoff into the lake, along with our June, July & August sampling. Results of the 2024 testing are on the next two pages. The results are also posted on the Laurel Lake Association website, along with instructions about how to read the report.

Thank you to our great 2024 sampling team and volunteers who delivered samples to the laboratory in Concord: Gail Connelly, Kathy Olson, Pat Spicer. If you would like to learn about water testing techniques or can deliver samples to Concord, please let me know. We need to get a couple more people to help with this important task. It's part of a day once a month and a valuable experience. Drop a note to [President@laurellakeassn.com](mailto:President@laurellakeassn.com) or [vicepresident@laurellakeassn.com](mailto:vicepresident@laurellakeassn.com) if you can help out.

**Barbara Green, Water Testing Committee Chair**



## 2024 VOLUNTEER LAKE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM INDIVIDUAL LAKE REPORTS

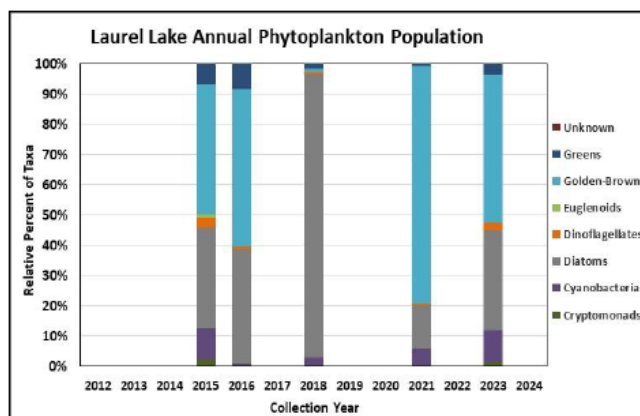
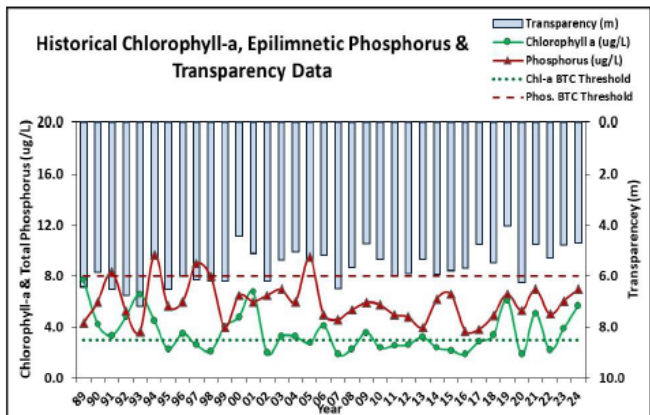
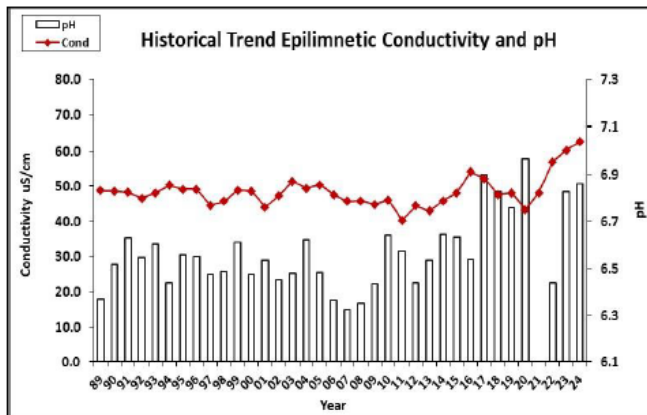
### LAUREL LAKE, FITZWILLIAM

**Recommended Actions:** Great job monitoring water quality in 2024! Lake nutrient (phosphorus) levels have remained below the threshold for oligotrophic lakes, however algal growth (chlorophyll) has remained elevated and fluctuates above the threshold for oligotrophic lakes since 2019 which is concerning. The increased intensity of storm events and associated stormwater runoff and fluctuating climate conditions resulting in shorter periods of ice cover, warmer water temperatures, and longer periods of thermal stratification can impact pond quality over time. This highlights the importance managing nutrient loading from the surrounding watershed. Properly maintaining [septic systems](#), eliminating [fertilizer](#) use, stabilizing shorelines, and managing [stormwater runoff](#) are all ways to reduce nutrient loading to the lake. Great job on continued efforts to develop and implement a watershed management plan to help protect the lake from future degradation! Encourage lake front properties to be certified [LakeSmart](#) through NH LAKES' lake-friendly living program. Great job adding a sampling event in May to evaluate spring nutrient loading and continue May monitoring in the future. Keep up the great work!

#### HISTORICAL WATER QUALITY TREND ANALYSIS

PARAMETER	TREND	PARAMETER	TREND
Conductivity	Stable	Chlorophyll-a	Stable
pH (epilimnion)	Stable	Transparency	Worsening
Phosphorus (hypolimnion)	Stable	Phosphorus (epilimnion)	Stable

#### HISTORICAL WATER QUALITY GRAPHICS







## 2024 VOLUNTEER LAKE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM INDIVIDUAL LAKE REPORTS

### LAUREL LAKE, FITZWILLIAM

#### OBSERVATIONS (Refer to Table 1 and Historical Deep Spot Data Graphics)

- ◆ **CHLOROPHYLL-A:** Chlorophyll level was low in May, increased to a slightly elevated level in June and July, and increased to an elevated level in August. Average chlorophyll level increased from 2023 and was greater than the state median and the threshold for oligotrophic lakes. Historical trend analysis indicates stable, yet variable, chlorophyll levels since monitoring began.
- ◆ **CONDUCTIVITY/CHLORIDE:** Epilimnetic (upper water layer), Metalimnetic (middle water layer), Hypolimnetic (lower water layer), and Keen Ave Trib conductivity and/or chloride levels were slightly greater than the state medians yet within a low range for NH lakes. Historical trend analysis indicates relatively stable epilimnetic conductivity levels since monitoring began.
- ◆ **COLOR:** Apparent color measured in the epilimnion indicates the water was clear with little to no tea, or brown, coloring.
- ◆ **E. COLI:** North Beach, South Beach, and Swim Club E. coli levels were very low and much less than the state standards for public beaches and surface waters.
- ◆ **TOTAL PHOSPHORUS:** Epilimnetic phosphorus level was low in May, decreased through July, and increased to a slightly elevated level in August. Average epilimnetic phosphorus increased slightly from 2023 and was less than the state median and the threshold for oligotrophic lakes. Metalimnetic phosphorus level was slightly elevated in June and July. Hypolimnetic phosphorus levels increased as the summer progressed but remained within an average range for that station. Historical trend analysis indicates relatively stable epilimnetic and hypolimnetic phosphorus levels since monitoring began. Keene Ave Trib phosphorus levels were elevated in August following a significant storm event.
- ◆ **TRANSPARENCY:** Transparency measured with (VS) and without (NVS) the viewscope was below average (worse) in May, increased (improved) in June, remained stable in July, and decreased slightly in August due to wave conditions. Average NVS transparency remained stable with 2023 and was higher (better) than the state median, however historical trend analysis indicates significantly decreasing (worsening) NVS transparency since monitoring began.
- ◆ **TURBIDITY:** Epilimnetic, Metalimnetic, and Hypolimnetic turbidity levels fluctuated within a low range from May through August. Keene Ave Trib turbidity level was slightly elevated in August following a storm event.
- ◆ **pH:** Epilimnetic and Metalimnetic pH levels were within the desirable range of 6.5-8.0 units. Historical trend analysis indicates stable, yet variable, epilimnetic pH levels since monitoring began. Hypolimnetic and Keene Ave Trib pH levels were slightly acidic and potentially critical to aquatic life.

Table 1. 2024 Average Water Quality Data for LAUREL LAKE - FITZWILLIAM

Station Name	Alk. (mg/L)	Chlor-a (ug/L)	Chloride (mg/L)	Color (pcu)	Cond. (us/cm)	E. coli (mpn/100mL)	Total P (ug/L)	Trans. (m)		Turb. (ntu)	pH
								NVS	VS		
Epilimnion	4.3	5.68	14	16	62.8	-	7	4.70	5.73	0.40	6.86
Metalimnion	-	-	-	-	63.2	-	9	-	-	0.58	6.56
Hypolimnion	-	-	-	-	65.7	-	12	-	-	0.96	6.09
Keene Ave Trib	-	-	-	-	53.6	-	62	-	-	2.41	5.89
North Beach	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
South Beach	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-
Swim Club	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-

#### NH Median Values

Median values generated from historic lake monitoring data.

Alkalinity: 4.5 mg/L      Chlorophyll-a: 4.39 ug/L  
 Conductivity: 42.3 uS/cm      Chloride: 5 mg/L  
 Total phosphorus: 11 ug/L      Transparency: 3.3 m  
 pH: 6.6

#### NH Water Quality Standards

Numeric criteria for specific parameters. Water quality violation if thresholds exceeded.

Chloride: > 230 mg/L (chronic)      Turbidity: > 10 NTU above natural  
 E. coli: > 88 cts/100 mL (beach)  
 E. coli: > 406 cts/100 mL (surface waters)  
 pH: between 6.5-8.0 (unless naturally occurring)

## MEMORIES OF FISHING AT LAUREL LAKE

Fishing Laurel Lake was an important fun activity for me years ago. I grew up in the 1950s spending summer weekends and vacations with my Mom, Dad & older brother at the Lake where Olsons and related family have had a presence since 1929. Our camp in White's Grove was built in 1945 from hurricane salvage lumber when I was one year old. [See Editor's Notes.]



Roger Olson's family's camp at Woodland Court (built by his parents Fran & Ella Olson) Photo from Kathy Olson

Early on an old steel fishing rod and reel standing in a corner at the camp was my tackle, the same one that tumbled from its storage spot, cutting my mother's eye. So, we had an emergency trip to Doc Emerson; she was okay. A small wooden box stored hooks, bobber and a few lures from the 1930s & '40s. Learning the sport was a challenge since neither my brother nor dad were anglers.

The fishing season started for me on Memorial Day which traditionally was spring camp opening. With some improvements to gear, I eagerly anticipated arriving at the camp during the car trip from Massachusetts. The annoyance of clouds of voracious biting black flies was overcome by my excitement and anticipation of fishing. Down the hill with pail, tackle and bait earthworms I would rush to the docks east of the beach below Si White's place. With luck, the

catch would be yellow perch, Kivvers (pumpkin seed sunfish) and bass. Adding to the adventure was bushwacking to the large high rock jutting out into the lake a few rods south. There the added height made for longer casts out into the lake depths where bigger perch lurked.

Summer nights brought a new experience: fishing for hornpout (small catfish). A camper from near the beach would show up with a folding chair at the dock. His method was a worm and sinker on the bottom. He always went home with a 'mess' of those ugly fish. I followed his 'sophisticated' approach with some success marching back to the camp to show off a couple of pout in a pail. In spite of their appearance, they were good table fare. Preparing them for eating was a challenge. The smooth non-scaly skin had to be removed. Grossly but effectively enough, this was done by nailing the fish's head to a tree, making some strategic cuts and pulling the skin off by the tail.

It soon became clear that anglers in boats caught more fish. So, I built a 12 foot skiff at home in the cellar from plans in a 1938 issue of Rudder Magazine. Proudly launched at the beach sand ramp I rowed around the lake and fished better. Upgrading to a 10HP outboard aluminum boat came soon.



Roger with his upgrade of a boat, 1964

Trolling, casting and bottom fishing produced results. The north point of Fleur-de-Lis camp held some nice rainbow trout. White perch, which suddenly appeared about 1958, were taken trolling spinner and worm along the west shore. Small-mouth bass were mostly caught casting at dusk, along the shore. A catch of two very nice bass was taken at the Perry's cottage one evening near dusk. We kept fish to eat back then, unlike today's philosophy of 'catch and release'. Small fish were released.

This photo & next page courtesy of Roger Olson

(continued next page)





### *Fishing Memories continued:*



Roger Olson with Pickerell near Turtle Rock, Laurel Lake, 1959

Progressing in my life with college, career, family & locating far away has prevented me from continuing to fish the lake. The last time was 2010 while doing some carpentry work at my sister-in-law Tanja Olson's cottage. By that time, largemouth bass had become dominant with stocked brown and rainbow trout. And, there were more anglers with public access provided at the boat ramp. My interest in fishing has remained with me to this day. Friendships have flourished with it. My focus in recent years has been on remote wilderness Canadian lakes. My early Laurel Lake experiences played a large roll in my continuing love of the sport.

**Submitted by Roger Olson**

[Editor's Notes: Roger would welcome any comments from other Laurel Lake anglers at [RogerK0419@gmail.com](mailto:RogerK0419@gmail.com). Roger is first cousin to the late Steve Olson and now lives in Illinois but he has maintained his membership in the Laurel Lake Association for years.

More information on the impact of the 1938 hurricane can be found in past Ledgers: lead article in 2007; article about Bob White, starting page 7, 2008 issue; article about Abenaki canoe & Turkey Pond, page 7, 2022 issue.]

## LOON UPDATES



We continue to be graced by Loons who fish (but don't breed) at the lake. These photos—taken by Gail Connelly—show 3 visitors in August, 2024 & a September, 2024 loon starting its winter plumage.

The leading cause of loon deaths—42% - is lead poisoning from fishing tackle so make sure you aren't a potential cause. Get the lead out!



The 2024 Concert on the Lake featured Fitzwilliam's own 3-Gen band. The 2025 concert will be The Ways & Means Committee. Photo courtesy of Joe Pagano



Another view of the shoreline design of the Griffiths' yard.

Photo courtesy of Heather & Joe Griffith







## LAUREL LAKE MEMBERSHIP REPORT 2025

If you are reading this report then you are most likely already a Member and I would like to sincerely Thank You for joining! This year our goal is to deliver this awesome Ledger to all lakefront property owners, members or not. We are doing this because almost half of the lakefront property owners are not members and we need to spread the word why the Laurel Lake Association is so important.

Can you imagine if no one was inspecting boats at the ramp for invasive/exotic species and an infestation occurred?!

Can you imagine if that infestation was left to multiply because there were no teams paddling in search of potential invasive/exotic species?!

Can you imagine if nobody was collecting lake water in the state provided specialty bottles in order to deliver them to the State Dept of Environmental Services for testing?!

Can you imagine if there was no one to write, edit and publish this wonderful Ledger?!

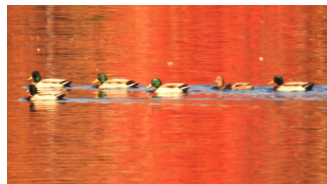
And can you imagine if there was no one to organize the joyful and amazing annual races on the Lake or the delightful annual concerts, or the Annual Meeting with great speakers and delicious food?!

Yes, The Laurel Lake Association does all that and more with its many members, volunteers, Board of Directors and Community support! Oh yes and with your membership dollars. We keep assets in savings because if (hopefully not "when") there is a crisis on the lake, the State of NH cannot remedy problems alone. We must be prepared.

More and more lakes are facing issues like exotics infestation and cyanobacteria outbreaks. There are approximately 90 lakes and rivers in NH infested with invasive species. Due to climate change and nutrient pollution more lakes are experiencing dangerous cyanobacteria blooms. So, let's keep LLA strong! Renew your membership, volunteer, attend the annual meeting and other activities and Please reach out to your neighbors and friends and encourage them to join us too!

Thank You

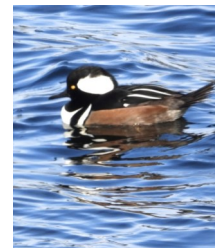
**Gail Connelly, Membership Chair**



More of Gail's great wildlife photos.

Left: Mallards

Right: Bufflehead Merganser



## IN MEMORIAM

**Bob Courtemanche**, 71 of Fitzwilliam, passed away March 7, 2025. Bob was a long time resident in White's Grove. He had a long career in both information technology and manufacturing and was a support associate to challenged individuals. He loved fishing and swimming at Laurel Lake. He is survived by his wife Glenna Flanders, sisters Diane & Cheryl and brother Gary. His son Zoe Flanders sadly passed away 3 weeks later.

**Zoerium (Zoe) David Flanders**, 51 of Fitzwilliam, passed away March 29, 2025. Zoe was an artist and also worked in the food service industry in the area and in New York City. He leaves behind his mother Glenna Flanders Courtemanche and grandmother Mary Flanders.



## TREASURER'S REPORT

## 2024 Income

Membership & Donations	\$ 3,991
Canoe Race Income (raffle & registration)	1,155
Merchandise Sales	1,066
Interest Income	734
Flare Income	330
<b><i>Total Income</i></b>	<b><i>\$ 7,276</i></b>

## 2024 Expenses

Canoe Race	\$ 1,316
Annual Meeting and Cookout	1,238
Merchandise	1,035
Dues / Lake Host Program	938
Ledger Printing	703
Non-Profit Registration & Related Fees	570
Flares	375
Water Testing	350
Concert on the Lake	300
Sailboat Regatta	156
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b><i>\$ 6,981</i></b>
<b>2024 Net Increase</b>	<b>\$ 295</b>

**Checking and Savings Account Balances as of December 31, 2024**

Savings Account	\$ 21,356
Certificate of Deposit	5,009
Checking Account/PayPal	9,645
<b><i>Total Association Assets as of December 31, 2024</i></b>	<b><i>\$ 36,010</i></b>

**Ashley Marshall, Treasurer**

Note: Thanks to Ashley, the Association now has Federal [501(c)(3) status] & State non-profit status. So, if you would like to make a donation to the Association, it is now deductible on your taxes. We have struggled with establishing this status for some time so this is a significant achievement. Thank you Ashley! K.O.

**2024-25 OFFICERS**

Tom White	President	Kathy Olson	Vice-President
Ashley Marshall	Treasurer	Liz Young	Secretary
Perry Nadeau	Past President	Beth Samuels	Secretary

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Barbara Green	2025	Joe Pelkey	2026
Bill Samuels	2025	Terry Silverman	2026
Bill Townsend	2025	Charley Brackett	2027
Patrick McNamara	2025	Bill Chase	2027
Gail Connelly	2026	Jeffrey Prunier	2027
Jack Dumont	2026	Chip Yensan	2027

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

Kathy Olson	Editor Laurel Lake Ledger
Barbara Green	Water Testing Committee
Bobby Williams	Aquatic Invasive Species Survey Committee
Chip Yensan	Lake Host Program
Jack & Barbara Dumont	Annual Meeting/Family Picnic
Charley Brackett	Canoe/Kayak Race
Bruce Hill	Commodore Dresser-Friedman Sunfish Regatta
Joe Pelkey	LLA Logo Products - T & Sweatshirts & Hats
Gail Connelly	Membership
	Nominating Committee
Terry Silverman	4th of July Celebration Flares
John Fitzwilliam	Swim Club Representative

**Visit Our Website: [LaurelLakeAssn.com](http://LaurelLakeAssn.com)**

We frequently say 'visit our website' but we really mean it, as it contains tons of great information. Chip-Yensan spent significant time this winter researching and creating a section called Environmental Stewardship which has resource links for state and town guidelines & regulations, Association programs and help on being a good property owner. How to connect with the Lake Smart program? It's there. How do I interpret the water testing report? It's there. How to make a rain garden? It's there. Thank you Chip for putting so much information in one easy to search place.





## LAKE HOST PROGRAM

The Lake Host Program is a state-wide courtesy boat inspection program administered by NH LAKES and uses both paid and volunteer Lake Hosts at the Laurel Lake boat ramp. It is our first line of defense against aquatic invasive species hitchhiking into our lake on boats and trailers.



The 2024 Lake Host program at Laurel Lake met desired targets for the year. In addition to the annual grant funding provided by NH LAKES as well as funds provided by the Laurel Lake Association, the program received \$1100 in local business sponsorship funding from Tri-City Marine Sales, Flavor Smart Beverage Group, and KG Performance Solutions. Lily Pierannunzi (in photo on the left) served as the 2024 paid Lake Host. Lily's paid Lake Host hours, in combination with volunteer hosting, contributed to 327 total ramp hours and 348 total inspections for the season. 2024 total ramp hours were slightly higher and total inspection numbers were slightly lower than 2023. No weed specimens of a suspect nature were observed or removed from launched boats or trailers.



ers during paid and volunteer Lake Host inspection hours. This suggests that there is desired compliance to NH's "Clean. Drain. Dry." law by boating visitors to Laurel Lake. Special appreciation to our 2024 Lake Host volunteers: Phil Strahan, Denis

Guenette, Tom White, Pat Deyo, Nancy Fey-Yensan (in the photo above), Terry Manley, Teri Chavira, and Dana Wasserbauer.



Lake Host volunteers Pat Deyo & Nan Fey-Yensan at the newly rebuilt boat ramp.

**STILL HIRING! PAID LAKE HOST: A GREAT PART-TIME SUMMER JOB** – Earn extra cash while working outside on beautiful Laurel Lake this summer as a PAID LAKE HOST! This part-time job (about 15-20hrs/wk) pays a minimum of \$14/hr and has flexible hours with some weekend work required. Must be 17 years or older. INTERESTED? Apply at <https://www.laurellakeassn.com/water-quality-environment> or email [lakhost@laurellakeassn.com](mailto:lakhost@laurellakeassn.com) today!

**WE NEED LAKE HOST VOLUNTEERS** - The key to keeping our Lake Host program strong is through volunteer involvement by our lake community. Without active volunteers to put in just a few hours of hosting time at the ramp, we cannot attain the highest level of "clean, drain, and dry" education and boat inspections that provide a solid defense against invasives entering our lake. Also, active

volunteer involvement helps us maintain our grant funding each year. Each Lake Host volunteer earns a free Lake Host t-shirt and cap for the season. Learn more about Lake Host volunteering at <https://www.laurellakeassn.com/water-quality-environment> and join the 2025 volunteer team!

**WE WELCOME LOCAL BUSINESS SPONSORS** – Our Lake Host sponsorship program provides local businesses with front-and-center advertising exposure and high value community engagement with the Laurel Lake community as well as local and regional vacationers. Local business partners will play an important role in protecting Laurel Lake from invasive weeds and animals through its Lake Host Program. As of going to press, we have sponsorships from **KG Performance Group, Flavor Smart Beverage Group & Tri-City Marine Sales**. Thank you!! Protecting the lakes we love and enjoy is a mission we can all rally behind. More information about our local business sponsorship program is at <https://www.laurellakeassn.com/news-events> or drop a note to [lakhost@laurellakeassn.com](mailto:lakhost@laurellakeassn.com).

**Chip Yensan, Committee Chair**

## AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES REPORT

The biggest invasive risk to our lake is an aquatic plant called variable milfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*). This plant is native to the Midwest and south but has been transported to New England waters starting in the 1960s. Fragments of the plant can be moved from lake to lake by hitching a ride being stuck on to the hulls of recreational boats or on trailers.

The major problem with variable milfoil is that it can reproduce in great volumes, affecting the ecological balance of the lake. It's also a hazard to boating, because its long spindly threads can get wound up around propellers. If it were to become established in Laurel Lake, it would be almost impossible to eradicate. This would have a serious economic impact, as University of New Hampshire research has found that lakefront property values can decline by 10% to 20% in lakes where exotic plant infestations are present.

Variable milfoil looks like a fuzzy tube floating right below the surface of the water, and it sends a spindly-looking seed-head above the water in mid-summer. Variable milfoil can be distinguished from other milfoils that are native to New England, because it is thicker and heavier, like a raccoon's tail, while native milfoils are more delicate. If you see an aquatic plant growing that you think may be variable milfoil, get in touch with a member of the lake's Aquatic Invasive Species Committee.



Variable milfoil under the surface of the water

The Laurel Lake Association's Aquatic Invasive Species Committee is a group of volunteers charged with monitoring the lake for variable milfoil, as well as for other invasive plants and invertebrates. Last year's committee included Caitlin Stewart, Bill Townsend, Gail Connelly, Phyllis Lurvey, Barbara Dumont, Tricia LeClaire, and Bobby Williams.



The Committee is in need of more volunteers for the upcoming season. Volunteers will be assigned a section of the lake to monitor and asked to report on the plants growing there three times over the course of the summer. This is an excellent way to serve the community by working to protect the lake. If you are interested in joining the "Weed Watchers," please reach out to Bobby Williams by email at [SpikeWilliams@gmail.com](mailto:SpikeWilliams@gmail.com).

Left: Seed heads of variable milfoil

Photos credited to Leslie J. Merhoff, Wikimedia.org

### Bobby Williams, Aquatic Invasive Species Committee Chair

## INVASIVE PLANT REMEDIATION

Gail Connelly contacted Amy Smagula, Director of NH DES Limnology Lab, to find out who pays to remedy a species/plant infestation in a lake. Amy's reply: "For aquatic invasive plant infestations, a new infestation to the waterbody is covered 100% by the state (be it for diving or treatment). After that it is a cost share, usually 25-50% match on project costs. We do all the survey work and recommendations for management for free so you don't have to pay for that, just costs that involve contractors. For cyanobacteria, we do not have an active management program yet, or dedicated funding that is recurring." There is limited funding for cyanobacteria which makes our efforts to control stormwater runoff—the leading cause of cyanobacterial blooms—so important.

As you can see from our Treasurer's report, we have a sum of money in reserve and the Board of Directors is very careful to make sure we retain it in the awful case that we have to deal with an invasive infestation. Costs for removal of milfoil or other invasives range from \$200-\$2000 per acre. At 180 acres, we're looking at \$36,000-\$360,000 per treatment and multiple treatments are usually needed and still may not be successful! This is why prevention & frequent surveying is critical to maintaining our beautiful lake.



## LAUREL LAKE LOGO PRODUCTS AND ONLINE STORE



When it comes to Laurel Lake Logo Products we have all the bases covered for you. There is a supply of pre-printed shirts, sweatshirts, hats, mugs and much more and these will be available for sale at the annual meeting July 12, at the canoe/kayak race on July 26, or by appointment.

In addition to the limited supply of pre-printed items we have pivoted to an online store through a local screen printing and design shop located on Winchester St. in Keene NH. The company is Bulldog (a quick internet search for them and you will find the amazing things they are doing to help Cheshire County Communities). Their website is <https://bulldog-design.com/>. Along with their website there is also a special online store setup specifically for the Laurel Lake Association so you can purchase Laurel Lake Logo Products. The web address for the online store is <https://laurellake.itemorder.com/> (as of your reading the store is open for business and you can see many items that can be purchased). How this works is the store will be open until July 1<sup>st</sup>. At that time Bulldog will close the store and put into production all the orders that were made through July 1<sup>st</sup> with the products being available 2-3 weeks after the online store is closed (just before the canoe/kayak race). In addition to normal Laurel Lake Logo Products there will also be canoe/kayak shirts as well. There are many ways to pick-up your gear and they include curbside, shipping to you (extra charges may apply). I will also be willing to pick up for anyone and we could do curbside pick-up at my camp at 14 South Pond Rd. (off of White's Grove Rd. on the east side of the lake). Anyone that needs assistance ordering please contact Bulldog at 603-352-7217. If there are product selections you would like to see, please share those



thoughts with me and I will see what I can coordinate with Bulldog.

The online ordering was very successful last year with two separate online store offerings throughout the year (one in the spring/summer and one in the fall just in time for the holidays which we will also offer in 2025 (dates to be communicated later in 2025 on our website).



**Joe Pelkey, Logo Products Chair** ([jpelk20@yahoo.com](mailto:jpelk20@yahoo.com) 603-762-2247)

### The Blue Marble Project

The 2024 recipient of the Blue Marble was Gail Connelly for her contributions in managing our membership program, recruiting new members, educating lake front owners on the Association and being an integral part of our water testing program. Gail was selected by her predecessors Pat & Luanne Deyo and it is well deserved.



### Elliot Institute Concerts on the Fitzwilliam Common Summer 2025

These concerts are made possible by the generosity of the Elliot Institute Trust Fund, established in 1927. All performances will be 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. **(Please check the signboards).**

**July 10 "The Mark's Brothers"** A four-piece danceable, rock'n'roll jam band...classic rock at its finest!

**July 17 "Tom Foolery Band"** A seven-piece band playing rock, big band and jazz music. This group is popular throughout Cheshire County.

**July 24 "The Green Sisters"** Four multi-instrumentalist singers who perform folk, country, bluegrass & Irish music. This group is a returning favorite.

**July 31 "Soggy Po Boys"** A seven-piece band playing New Orleans jazz and Caribbean tunes as well as funk, soul, and brass band/street beat music...they will bring the party!

**August 7 "Tattoo" with Walden Whitham** An acoustic five piece band performing American roots, rock and roll, soul, swing, Cajun & originals.

**August 14 "King Saison"** A charcuterie board of musical talents (vocalists & multi-instruments) performing electric jam, country funk & fiery energy rock & roll.

**August 21 "Gaslight Tinkers"** A blend of global, danceable music of Afrobeats, Caribbean funk & Latin tunes meets up with Northern fiddle music.

### Fitzwilliam Farmers' Market

The Farmers' Market season begins on Saturday, May 17, 9am to 1pm on the Fitzwilliam common and will be held the 1st & 3rd Saturday of each month through October 4. The common will be hopping and local foods (veggies, meats, jerky, sauces, flowers, breads, sweets, baked goods, fruits) and crafts will be available and music to entertain. Join the fun & get some of your groceries at the market this summer!

For our **2024 Annual Meeting** we had Dode Gladders, Sullivan County Forester, speak to us about tree diseases like the Hemlock wooly adelgid, the impact of climate change on our forests and optimum tree species for planting here. He recommended a book on the environment: "Increasing Forest Resiliency for an Uncertain Future" (authors Paul Catanzaro, Anthony D'Amato & Emily Silver Huff) - <https://masswoods.org/sites/masswoods.net/files/Forest-Resiliency.pdf>. His talk was well received, with lots of questions.





## 2025 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	_____
_____	_____	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

I would like to volunteer:

For Invasive Species (weed watching) Team \_\_\_\_\_

To be a Lake Host \_\_\_\_\_

To do Water Testing \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to speak to someone about being a LLA

Board Member \_\_\_\_\_

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

\*All applications and checks should be mailed to:

Gail Connelly  
Laurel Lake Association  
PO BOX 352  
Fitzwilliam, NH 03447

**Thank you for your contribution !**

Thanks to our business sponsors of our Lake Host program:



**Tri-City Marine Sales, Inc.**

