



Loon Lake Homeowners' Association Newsletter

February 2022

Volume 13, Issue 1

Loon Lake Homeowners Association
PO Box 219, Vermontville, NY 12989

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Patty Cogswell, President and Beach B Committee Co-Chair
president@loonlakehoa.org

Craig Johnstone, Vice President
vicepresident@loonlakehoa.org

Brenda Gewurz, Secretary
secretary@loonlakehoa.org

Jeff Pearson, Treasurer

Zev Hershtal, Technical/IT Support

Stuart Lucks, Lake Monitoring Committee Chair

Judy Cox, Beach A Committee Chair

Carleen Madigan, Beach B Committee Co-Chair

Murray Vasilevsky, Picnic Committee Chair

Linda Zintel

Karl Smith

Tom Bartiss, Immediate Past President

Loon Lake HOA Website:
<http://loonlakehoa.org>

UPDATES FROM THE BOARD

Upcoming Board Openings

Submitted by Patty Cogswell

There will be three Board seats up for election/reelection this Summer. Please consider getting involved. If interested in running, please email your intent to president@loonlakehoa.org.

Beach B Committee Update - Boat Launch Key Change

Submitted by Carleen Madigan

The lock at the boat launch has been changed, and the boat launch key committee has distributed 65 keys so far. If you still need a key, please send an email to loonlakehoainformation@gmail.com.

Beach A Committee Update

Submitted by Judy Cox

Beach Committee A has eight projects we would like to accomplish in 2022. However, donations will be needed to complete these projects. We would like to start them in early spring to be ready for the summer. The donations can be money and/or labor. Please send donations to the HOA labeled *Donation for Beach A*. If there are HOA members with equipment and/ or skills who will donate their help, please contact Judy at cox@nycap.rr.com or text 518-505-2669. Some of these projects need professional skills which cost money. Donations of these skills reduces monetary needs.



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Beach A Committee Update *(continued)*

2022 Project Goals	Estimated Costs
1. Repair the railings on the wooden staircase structure leading to the water to make it safe for users	Minimal cost-less than \$200- may need some boards for repair but Beach Committee will do repairs at no cost
2. Restructure the existing sandbox area to create an 8' wide by 12' long sand box to be filled with sand and fill-in and seed the holes caused by erosion	Anticipated cost \$2000- This includes natural sand, seed, top soil, and labor
3. Build three Kayak racks, ea. w/space for 6 kayaks. Place close to wooden fence &/or one behind fireplace	Minimal costs- projected at \$400/rack for materials. Beach Committee will build racks at no cost
4. Created a <i>Beach A Rules & News</i> section to be part of every HOA Newsletter	No cost- We welcome concerns HOA members want to be included in newsletter.
5. Remove the abandoned canoe and sailboat on Beach A which has been there for years & make more sitting space	No cost- Beach Committee
6. Develop a plan cost estimate to build a black pipe rail (Loon Lake style) to support persons walking down the path to the beach	Anticipated Costs: At least \$2000 to build rail Initial estimates are we would need 87 ft of long black galvanized pipe with poles and T's for this project plus labor costs and other materials
7. Develop & execute plan to fix the kayak access area to make it safe for users	Costs- We have had concerns raised about safety issues in carrying kayaks to water. We need to develop a plan to address these concern that does not negatively impact on Lake. We welcome input.
8. Develop plan to repair the stone platform on the upper area where we have the picnic. This platform is disintegrating, and we want to save it. If not, too costly we would like to fix it this summer	Costs- We have one Beach Committee member who is skilled in stone wall repair & can help with the labor, but we will need materials and someone to work with him in lifting the stones.

Loon Lake Hats and Boat Labels: We have ordered more green Loon Lake Hats. They cost \$20. We also have more Kayak/canoe labels. They are free. Please email (cox@nycap.rr.com) if you want to purchase a hat or need labels. We will save them for you.



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Loon Lake Awarded Clean Water Grant

Submitted by Carleen Madigan

The Loon Lake HOA has been awarded a \$9,000 grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program, to fund a summer lake steward through the Adirondack Watershed Institute. The goal of the grant is to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species in the lakes and streams that feed into the Lake Champlain watershed. Between the LCBP grant amount and our contribution, we'll be able to have a lake steward on site at the boat launch four days a week for 15 weeks this summer.

New York State Assemblyman Billy Jones wrote a letter of support for the grant, saying "Once introduced, invasive species are incredibly difficult to remove, so it is essential to limit the spread and reduce the impact of them. I fully support the Loon Lake Homeowners' Association efforts and respectfully request favorable consideration of their application."

In order for us to utilize the grant funds, the HOA needs to contribute \$2458 to the project. We have \$1596 left from our GoFundMe fundraiser last year, so that means we only need to raise \$862. If you'd like to contribute, please send a check to LLHOA, PO Box 219, Loon Lake, NY 12989 and write "lake steward funding" in the memo line, or contribute via PayPal, at loonlakehomeowner@gmail.com. To avoid having the PayPal fee deducted from the amount we receive, please select "Friends and Family" rather than "Goods and Services." We ARE friends, after all!

PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Loon Lake Fire Tower

Submitted by Matthew Pelkey

Over the last few decades there has been a renewed interest in preserving the historic fire towers located throughout the Adirondacks. While their intended use has long since become antiquated, outdoor programs such as the fire tower challenge, and expanded tourism in the Adirondacks has given many of these towers a second chance. While neglect and



Photo provided by K. Smith

damages have resulted in many being permanently lost, other towers have been preserved and restored—often through the activism and organizing of volunteers. Most (if not all) that remain have been added to the National Register of Historic Places. Loon Lake Mountain Fire Tower is no exception—being added to the list in 2015.



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PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Loon Lake Fire Tower *(continued)*

Unfortunately, just having the Loon Lake Mountain Fire Tower on the National registry does not alone guarantee it's preservation. The tower, while now accessible to the public through the Loon Lake Mountain trail, remains closed due to the current state of disrepair. Without regular maintenance and upgrades, time and the elements still remain a risk to the tower.

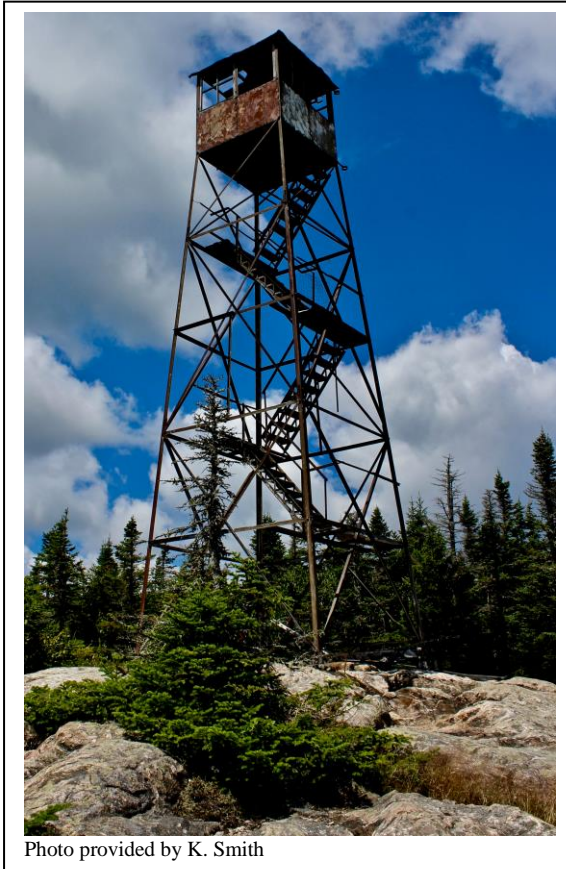


Photo provided by K. Smith

Fortunately there is a process for assisting the NYS DEC in getting the tower the much needed work it deserves. Organizations such as the Forest Fire Lookout Association and Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH) advocate for maintenance and preservation of fire towers and are available to assist with these efforts.

The process to volunteer on state land (whether that been trail work, caretaking or fire tower restoration/maintenance), must be done pursuant to a NYSDEC Volunteer Service Agreement. Most of the other prominent fire towers that have been restored operate pursuant to such agreements (i.e., Pokeo-moonshine, Hadley, St.

Regis, Hurricane). To begin any effort of restoring the Loon Lake Mountain Fire Tower we would need to execute such an agreement. This could be done through an existing nonprofit (such as AARCH) or could be done through a new non-profit dedicated specifically to maintaining and preserving Loon Lake Mountain and the fire tower. There isn't a right or wrong path here—it's really up to the volunteers pursuing the effort.

From there, what we need is fairly straightforward: money and volunteers. While nailing down a specific amount has been difficult given that it is highly dependent on the condition and size of the current tower, the expectation should be that at least six figures would be needed. There are of course grants that we could explore but the more community support for the project, the easier this becomes.

From the research I have done and the individuals that I have spoken with, the



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PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Loon Lake Fire Tower *(continued)*

groups that have had an organized, dedicated group to the project have been most successful. So step one for us is to determine if there is interest in preserving the tower, and how we would like to go about organizing that effort! We would then be well suited to set up a series of meetings (zoom is fine) with the Forest Fire Lookout Association and AARCH to educate members on the steps and efforts necessary, and then organize a campaign around our goals.

If you are interested in learning more about and helping with these restoration efforts, please contact Matt Pelkey at loonlakemountain@gmail.com



Brief History of Loon Lake Mt. Fire Tower

Submitted by George Stowers

The first structure on Loon Lake Mt. was a wooden tower erected by the Conservation Commission in 1912. In 1917 the wood tower was replaced with a steel 35' Aermotor LS40 tower. It is unclear when the first Observer's cabin was built. The first official mention of the cabin was a 1922 notation that the cabin was repaired.

However, a photograph of Observer Bernard Paye, in Martin Podskock's, *Adirondack Fire Towers, Their History and Lore, The Northern Districts*, taken circa 1920-1924, shows a rundown shack described as the "old cabin" near the base of the tower.

In March 1928, the tower was toppled by winter gale. The Observer at the time, Charles Williams, was not in the tower when it collapsed having left the tower a day or two before. However, a lean-to Charles had constructed near the base of the tower was also destroyed when the tower fell. The tower was replaced the following spring. A new Observer's cabin was also built by the CCC at this time. Six years later, in 1934, the CCC constructed a new trail between the cabin to the top of the mountain.

On June 7, 1934, Fire Warden, Thomas Derby, reported to his Supervisor, Albert Paye at Loon Lake Station, that he had made several unsuccessful attempts to reach Charles by telephone. In response, William and Albert Williams were sent in search of their missing brother. Sadly, they found their brother deceased, about half way up the mountain, the victim of an apparent heart attack.

The tower remained in continuous operation for 59 years until it's decommissioning at the end of the 1970 season. At least 25 people were appointed Observers during that time. The first Observer was William Paye from Inman, NY and the last Gerald Noreault from Mountain View, NY. In



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Loon Lake Fire Tower *(continued)*

the end it was a combination of budget cuts and the advent of aerial fire patrols that brought the end of an era for the Loon Lake Mt. Fire Tower as an active observation post.

In April 2009, a conservation easement enabled year-round public foot access across land owned by Lyme Adirondack Timberlands to the tower which is located in the Debar Mountain Wild Forest. The trailhead is located on Rt-26 about 4.3 miles north of Loon Lake. The bottom section of the tower's ladder was removed at some point, so there is no access to the top of the tower. The tower was added to the National Register of Historic Places in on December 5, 2008 (Ref. #: 8001144), and the National Historic Lookout Register on January 3, 2015. (Reg. #: US 1072, NY 34). It is also listed in the New York State Register of Historic Places.

At this point the tower has not been maintained for many years and will require a significant restoration effort if it is to be preserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

During my research I came across the paperwork nominating the Loon Lake Mt. Fire Tower for listing in the National Register of Historical Places. It was prepared in September, 2008 by David Petrelli on behalf of the, "Friends of Loon Lake Tower". It might be interesting to try to track Mr. Petrelli down, and talk with him about this effort and the, Friends of Loon Lake Mountain. If anyone knows Mr. Petrelli, or anything about the Friends of Loon Lake Tower, please contact George at gstowers@frontier.com

Information sources used in preparation of the article include: The 2010 NYS-DEC Fire Tower Study for the Adirondack Park, Adirondack Fire Towers -Their History and Lore -The Northern Districts by Martin Podskock, The New York State Chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association, the National Register of Historic Place, The National Historic Lookout Register, and Roster of the NYS Forest Observers from the payroll file of the Bureau of Forest Fire Control 1911-1972, by Bill Starr. Photo Credit: Original 2012 color photo by Marc Wanner CC BY-SA 3.0, computer rendered as pencil sketch for this article by G. Stowers.

LOON LAKE HISTORY

Blacksville - A Few Words in Honor of Black History Month

Submitted by Karl Beckwith Smith

1848 was an important turning point for the Western World in general and for the North Country in particular. 1848 is generally considered to be the beginning of the industrial revolution. Life in the big cities at the time was not very pleasant for most people. Many were looking for a way out and for ways of making living in more rural settings.



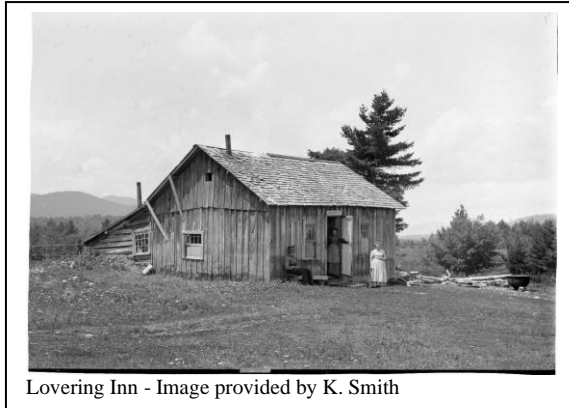
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LOON LAKE HISTORY *(continued)*

The creation of the Port Kent to Hopkinton Turnpike 1829-1832 brought about the beginning of settlement in the Loon Lake and surrounding areas. The Merrill Inn was built in 1831 and became a center of activity for the Town. It was an important stage coach stop, post office and gathering point for local activities. Vermontville and Merrillsville were settled by people from Vermont. Alder Brook was settled by 1849 with Irish people moving down from Canada. Goldsmith became a busy mill town. When the Town of Franklin was established in 1836 there were 200 residents in all. In 1848 Loon Lake was still almost wild. The only known residents were the Loverings and Amisia Washburn, guide. Around 1850 Paul Smith began to frequent the Loon Lake area as a guide. He first stayed at the Lovering Inn

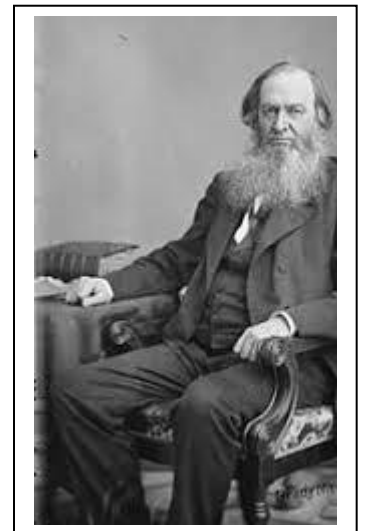


Lovering Inn - Image provided by K. Smith

which was basically a rough log cabin. His father, mother and brother started Hunters Home in 1852, which was also a rustic hunters and stagecoach accommodation, at the intersection of the North Branch of the Saranac River and the Port Kent to Hopkinson Turnpike. Paul was involved in that operation as well before it burned in

1858 and Paul moved to St. Regis to start his own hotel business there. (Hunters Home was rebuilt and was run by the Smith family until an unknown date)

One of the biggest landowners in the Northern Adirondacks at that time was Gerrit Smith who had inherited 1,000,000 acres from his father along with a considerable amount of debt. Gerrit Smith was an abolitionist who believed that Black Americans should be free and have the right to vote. At the time voters had to own a certain amount of property. In order to further that end (and improve his own fortunes) GS gave away a total of 120,000 acres in various locations in the ADKs to 3000 individuals in parcels of 40 acres. GS was a friend of John Brown and Willis Hodges, both abolitionists. In 1848 Gerrit Smith gave 200 acres of land in Loon Lake to Willis Hodges for him to settle himself and 4-5 Black families and 5 or 6 single men. (Gerrit Smith also sold 14,000. acres of land along the North Branch of the Saranac to Thomas Goldsmith where he established his sawmill and town.)





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LOON LAKE HISTORY *(continued)*

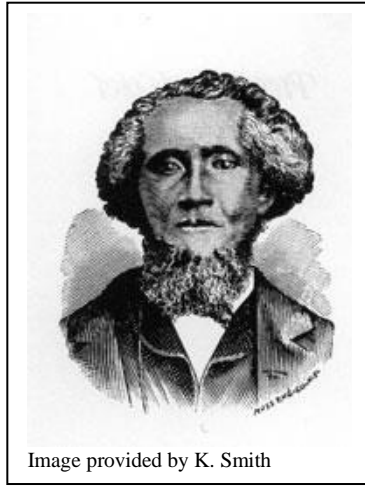


Image provided by K. Smith

Willis Hodges had been the publisher of an abolitionist newspaper called the Ram's Horn in Brooklyn NY. He arrived by wagon in Loon Lake in May of 1848 with the hope of settling himself and these families on the land to make a subsistence living from it. But these were city folk and the climate for farming in the wilderness was extremely difficult even for the best prepared.

Unfortunately things did not work out as planned. The settlers barely survived that first winter and not much help was supplied from anywhere. After a second winter it was clear

that they would not be able to make a go of it. People began to drift away and Willis Hodges was back in Brooklyn by 1853. There is a possibility that some of the settlers lingered in the area, but as public sentiment did not extend to Black folks in general their stories and numbers were not recorded, except for a very few individuals.

I believe that Blacksville was accessed from the Port Kent To Hopkinton Turnpike in the area at the foot of what is now called Lookout Mountain where there is some fairly level land probably very close to or perhaps on Washburn Brook. (Named for the guide who lived there.) That is up above where Bass Pond is now and above what we call Hodges Bay, part of Loon Lake . Who knows exactly? But it is entirely possible the remains of an old fireplace or cellar might still be found. Eventually this area was absorbed by the Loon Lake House activities which may have utilized some of this cleared land in what

became the hotel farm, corrals, deer park and gardens which were accessed by a road that ran north behind the the 11 the green (originally the 2nd green) of the 7 - Keys Golf Course. This section also became the hotel Baseball diamond after the front nine opened in 1922 and the eventually was partly used as the hotel dump site.

Other Black settlers were placed near Vermontville in the area near "Negro" Brook. More lived for a while near John Brown's Farm in North Elba. And there were others elsewhere. None of these settlements were to survive as

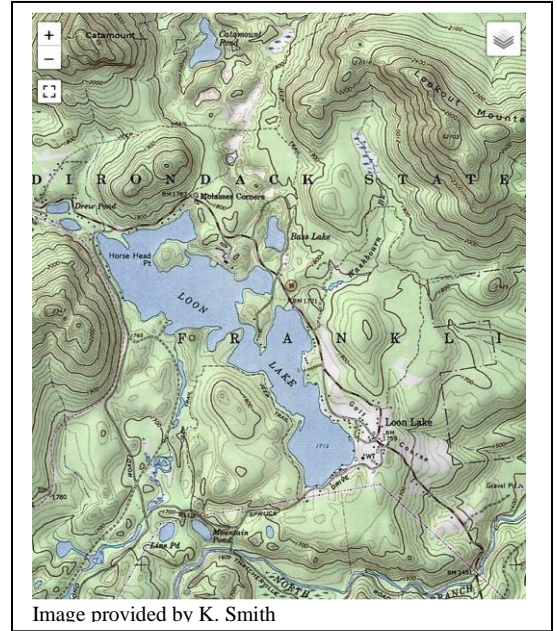


Image provided by K. Smith



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LOON LAKE HISTORY *(continued)*

such. Blacksville came and went long before before Fred and Mary Chase came on the Loon Lake scene in 1878.

After the Loon Lake House opened in 1879 many blacks were hired on staff at the hotel. It is said that Black waiters were preferred by Mrs. Chase in the dining rooms; as they were in many Adirondack hotels. Black waiters and maids ect. would travel seasonally between summer resorts in the ADKs and similar establishments in Florida and the South.

There is a gap in the known Loon Lake history between about 1860 and 1878 that we, so far, do not know much about.

THE NEWS YOU'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR ...

Starlink!

Submitted by Patty Cogswell

Starlink has finally arrived in Loon Lake! Initial reports from a few of us who have set it up are very positive. When I tested our area this summer, I was skeptical that we wouldn't get a good signal. I believe the best spot I could find said there would be interruptions every 30 seconds. Honestly, I am thrilled with the service!

A few points to note:

- The setup process is very easy; the dish is placed outside and the router is plugged in inside your house
- The speeds are pretty consistent and significantly better than either of the satellite companies we have now
- It looks like the best option will be to mount the dish high up on the house. Starlink sells various mounting systems on their website, which should make this fairly easy.
- If you have any form of mesh extender for your current system or want to directly ethernet connect anything to the Starlink router, there isn't a port to do this. There is an adapter you can purchase on their website, which will allow you to connect other devices.
- If you are ordering any extra parts, it will take a few weeks for them to arrive. Yes, I am living this and hoping that giving you a heads up will help you be ready when you want to get yours up and running!

Was it worth the wait and does it live up to the hype? Carleen and I agree, it's like a miracle!



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IN OTHER NEWS

Beautification

Thank you to our new year-round neighbors, the Cottoms, for adding some sparkle to our long Winter nights with the beautiful lights they had on display over the holidays at the corner of Blue Spruce and Oak Lane.

Winter in Loon Lake

Submitted by Cynthia Martino

Yes, it's cold and, yes, it's hard. But for those of us fortunate enough to live in Loon Lake year-round, or visit frequently throughout the Winter, this time of year offers its own magic and lots of tracks! XC ski tracks, snowshoe tracks, sled tracks, and wildlife tracks.



Photo provided by C. Martino

Snow cover provides an excellent way to see what goes on in the woods when we're not there. This year has been especially big for snowshoe hare activity, the most we've seen on our property since 2009-2010. Likely this is evidence of the natural predator prey cycle, with predator (mainly coyote) populations seemingly down over the last two years.

Snow tracks are also an excellent way to identify bobcat trails, moose traffic, otter slides and even provide an alternate form of "birdwatching". My personal favorite is finding evidence of owls landing on the snow to catch their prey and the white background makes it a lot easier to find owl pellets which can give you a good idea of where their favorite hunting perches are.

With March quickly approaching, we'll also be taking the appearance of snow fleas as a sure sign that Spring is on the way.

ABOUT LLHOA

Mission Statement

The Loon Lake Homeowners Association is now a 501(c)3, not for profit, organization and our mission is as follows.

"The LLHOA shall act to serve and inform the community around Loon Lake to encourage practices that protect the quality of the lake's natural ecosystem, and promote a sense of community for its members. The LLHOA shall be set

with the agreement of appropriate property owners to maintain areas of common access around the lake as specified in property deeds. The HOA may consider requests by members to represent the community's interests to appropriate governing agencies.”

Communication

The renewed intention of this newsletter is to provide consistent communication to membership on issues effecting both seasonal and full-time residents. Our goal is to provide quarterly updates, expanded when possible/supported to monthly for the busiest months of June, July, and August. Please send any content suggestions, constructive feedback, or respectfully worded courtesy requests to llhoanewsletter@gmail.com

Current By-Laws and Minutes

The Board is working with our website administrator to add these documents to the website www.loonlakehoa.org

Membership

What your dues make possible for Loon Lake and our community:

- * Coordinating lake water quality monitoring
- * Boat launch and beach management
- * Annual Picnic
- * Communication about news, issues, events effecting our community
- * Watchdog on development - working with APA to keep an eye on what's proposed for our lake and surrounding area.
 - * Donations to local non-profits, such as the Bloomingdale VFD, the Kate Mt. Reserve Fund, the BRI (Biodiversity Research Institute in support of loon populations in the Adirondacks, see <http://www.briloon.org/support-us>), and our own Loon Lake Live.

You can use either PayPal or send a check to pay your dues and make designated donations. You do not need to join PayPal to use the option on our website.

Visit [Membership in the Loon Lake Homeowners Association \(loonlakehoa.org\)](http://www.loonlakehoa.org) to renew, join or contribute in either of two ways:

1. You can pay your dues (to renew or join) online using PayPal and you can even make a contribution to the special funds for aquatic invasive species and the swim float installed in 2015 at the beach. It is quick and easy! Plus you save a stamp!

-or-
2. If you prefer to write a check, you can download a membership form from the [Loon Lake HOA website](http://www.loonlakehoa.org) membership page and mail it with a *check of \$50 to LLHOA at PO Box 219, Vermontville, NY 12989.*

THANK YOU for your ongoing support!