

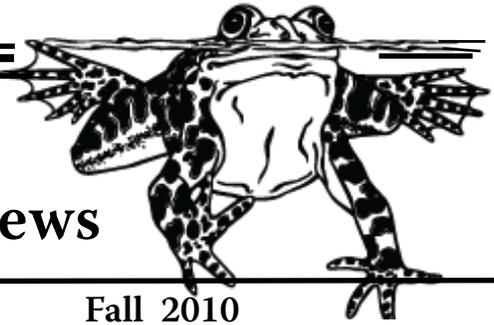
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# Water's Edge

## Gratiot Lake Conservancy News

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Volume 12

Fall 2010

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### *Bammert Farm History Investigated*



*19th century logging at Bammert Farm. Photo courtesy of Frank Carlton.*

Following the GLC business meeting on August 3, Lee Sweitz, Ph.D. student in the Industrial Heritage and Archaeology program at Michigan Tech, gave an engaging presentation on her research on the history of Bammert farm. Lee is focusing her study on the food system which supported the mining industry in 19th and early 20th century Copper Country. Bammert Farm, located about two miles west of Gratiot Lake in the headwaters of Snake Creek and the Bruneau River, is a main subject of her inquiry.

Lee found that Jonas Bammert immigrated to the Keweenaw from Baden, Germany and that in his 20's he worked as a miner at Cliff Mine in 1854. He made the first of several land purchases for farming in 1857. His farm grew to help feed the burgeoning population of miners at Cliff and Central mines. It was in its heyday by the 1880's and by the turn of the 1900's was known as the "best farm in the Keweenaw." Through examination of transactions at Foley & Smith Store and Petermann Stores

and the state agricultural census, Sweitz found Bammert Farm sold oats, Irish potatoes, hay, clover, and timber. The records show that a good portion of production was in crops used to feed livestock. In the 1890's the thriving farm expanded to dairy production, a market garden, and apples. Logging was mostly done during the winter.

The farm was owned by Jonas Bammert who passed away at 82 years of age in 1909 (Mining Gazette headline "Aged Pioneer Dies"), and then by his heirs until 1916. The farm was eventually owned by Petermann Stores and purchased

*Continued on page 6.*

### *The Rescue of GL-O*

On August 1st, Jim Hay spotted a loon in distress on Gratiot Lake. The loon had a bright red fishing lure hooked in her neck, a hook in her mouth and cheek, and a third fishhook hanging just below her beak. He suspected that this was a loon he had seen many times over the last couple of years. It often calmly swam and fed nearby his boat and seemed to pose for photos.

Fishhook injuries like this often lead to loon mortality due to infection or eating difficulties. So we contacted Keren Tischler at Common Coast Research and Conservation, an organization devoted to the study and protection of loons. A team led by Joe Kaplan arrived at Gratiot Lake around midnight on August 3, launched in Joe Lizzadro's small fishing boat with the intent of capturing the loon under the cloak of darkness. Unfortunately, even with the assistance of Jim Hay and Louis Lizzadro on another boat, the injured loon was nowhere to be found.

We alerted others at Gratiot to watch for the loon, and in the next

*Continued on page 5.*



*Injured loon. Photo by Jim Hay.*

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## About *Water's Edge*

*Water's Edge* is the newsletter of the Gratiot Lake Conservancy. Its purpose is to report Conservancy news, to share information about the ecology and history of Gratiot Lake and its environs, and to suggest ways to improve stewardship of the Lake and its watershed. View *Water's Edge* in color on the GLC website.

**Please send questions, comments, or articles to Bonnie Hay, *Water's Edge* Editor**

**Gratiot Lake Conservancy**

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***Janet Avery Scholarship***

A Janet Avery Scholarship was awarded in August to *Wetland Plants Workshop* attendee, Meghan Kline. This Scholarship was established in memory of Janet Avery, a Gratiot Lake resident who was founder of A.W.A.K.E., a grassroots group which fought for environmental protection in the Keweenaw. The scholarship is awarded to participants in some of GLC's programs which focus on the environment and environmental stewardship, such as Janet Marr's *Wetland Plants Workshop*.

**GLC Life Membership**

Gratiot Lake Conservancy now offers the option of a life membership for individuals. A contribution of \$500 or more for Life Membership offers the convenience of a one-time enrollment. Life memberships, like annual memberships and donations, are tax deductible.

## Keweenaw Autumn Migrations

“Snow birds” who put away their boats and pack up their cars before leaves begin to fall are not the Keweenaw’s only migrating species. In fact, most Keweenaw migrants rely on the winds not roads for their journey. Many birds, some insects, and a few bats migrate from the Keweenaw seeking food and warmer climates. Often their movements are most dramatic after a front moves through from the North.

We are familiar with the migratory flights of songbirds and raptors. Last spring Copper Country Audubon and Laughing Whitefish Audubon of Marquette funded the Keweenaw Raptor Survey on Brockway Mountain. From Brockway Mountain 2598 birds flying to the west and 9579 birds flying to the east were tallied from mid-May through mid-June. A lesser raptor migration takes place in the area in the late summer and early fall. <http://keweenawraptorsurvey.org/> This summer Bruce Wolck reported seeing 400-500 hawks, eagles, and falcons fly by Little Traverse Bay within a few hours one morning in mid-August. Here are profiles of other sorts of fall migrations.



Photo by Jim Hay

*Common green darners mating.*

We all know about monarch butterfly migration and stand in awe of their complicated life story which takes successive generations on a path from the north to central Mexico and back. However there are other spectacular insect migrations.

One of these migrants is the common green darner, a very large dragonfly. According to studies, this insect fattens up before migrating, just as birds do. Some of these powerful fliers have been tagged with tiny radio transmitters and have been found to migrate over 200 miles in a month. As with monarch butterflies, the individual dragonfly that moves southward in the fall is not likely to be the one which returns in the spring. They reproduce in their winter home and die. Their offspring head north for the summer!

The few species of dragonflies that migrate in the fall seem to follow the same general rules that birds do: they fatten up ahead of time, they follow a cold front’s passage, and they often move along topographic leading lines such as shoreline, cliffs, and ridges. (Read *Simple Rules Guide Dragonfly Migration* at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1686212/>)

Four species of UP bats hibernate in abandoned mines and caves. An effort has been made in the UP to keep entrances to such abandoned mine shaft hibernacula open to bats but gated to humans (for both human and bat safety!) However, not all bats are cave dwellers.

In fact, in the Upper Peninsula the eastern red bat, the hoary bat, and the silver haired bat roost in trees. Curled-up in their warm, furry tail membranes, tree bats move gently with the breeze as they hang suspended from branches. They are easily mistaken for pinecones or dead leaves. Tree bats do have the ability to survive very low temperatures (in red bats down to 23 degrees F) by regulating their metabolism, but the wintertime UP environment is too harsh for them. Red and silver haired bats migrate along the same routes as songbirds and may overwinter from Ohio and Illinois southward. Hoary bats often travel to more tropical areas.



Photo by Chris Harshaw

*Red bat roosting.*

Visit the Gratiot Lake Conservancy web site to view current and archived issues of *Water’s Edge Newsletter* (in full color), articles, program information, photos, video clips, and links to more.

<http://www.MLSWA.org/Gratiot-Lake-1508/>

The common loon, like many waterbirds, could not survive on ice covered winter lakes. As early as late August in the UP, adult loons precede their young in heading south to the Atlantic Coast or the Gulf of Mexico.

Migrants are usually at their winter destination by late November. There they find food rich areas off shore --just over the horizon from where some of the "snow birds" have settled. You might not recognize them as loons in their drabber winter plumage.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill has impacted some loon wintering areas. Already, over 100 loons have been rescued that have been impacted by the spill. Some have not survived. Of greatest concern is the impact the spill might have on the juveniles which spend their first 3 to 4 years in the southern waters before heading north to breed.

Informative [video clips from Keren Tischler's loon presentation](#) at GLC's 2009 Members Meeting are on the GLC website. The clips highlight loon behavior, threats to loons, and steps being taken to protect loons.

An example of one threat for loons and other waterfowl is lead fishing tackle, especially small sinkers. The birds ingest lead sinkers as they gather pebbles to aid in digestion. They are poisoned when the lead accumulates in their gut. Several states have banned the use of lead sinkers for this reason.

When shopping for tackle, buy lead free and encourage bait shops and stores to carry lead free alternatives. Find out more about lead tackle and lead-free alternatives at the Minnesota Poison Control Center at [www.pca.state.mn.us/sinkers](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/sinkers)

## Loon Nest Platform

Gratiot Lake has loons present every year from the time open water begins to peak through the ice. Flocks of migrants use it as a stopover and a few remain at Gratiot for the balance of the breeding season. Although loon courtship behavior such as head bobbing and synchronized diving has been noticed, there has been no evidence of loon nesting at Gratiot Lake.

Because the common loon is a "threatened" species in Michigan, efforts have been made to increase loon nesting success by installing artificial nesting platforms on some lakes in the upper midwest. About ten years ago, Copper Country Audubon with assistance from Art Dion attempted to make it easier for loons to nest at Gratiot by installing two floating nesting platforms. These platforms, however, went unused by loons.

GLC with the advice and guidance of Keren Tischler of Common Coast plans to make another attempt at enticing loons to nest at Gratiot Lake next spring. A 4'6" square platform constructed by lake residents Ron Sibbald and Herb Marutz will be set out with the assistance of Keren Tischler. The cooperation of boaters next spring in avoiding the area where they see floats with flags near this platform is crucial. Boaters are asked to proceed slowly, giving that area and the platform a wide berth.



Photo by Jim Hay

Recovering loon at Gratiot Lake

Rescue of GL-O continued from page 1.

few days it was spotted again. Keren Tischler and Curt Webb came to the lake before sunset for another rescue attempt. Jim Hay took them out on the pontoon boat to locate the loon while there was still light. After taking Keren and Curt back to the get Joe's fishing boat, Jim and Zach Muller returned to the area where the loon was swimming and kept watch. Keren and Curt waited until dark and then spotlighted the loon and approached slowly. After one failed attempt, Keren and Kurt approached again, and she scooped the loon up with a huge fishing net.

Once in the fishing boat, the loon was not in the mood for a physical examination. Keren took quite a pecking trying to examine the feisty loon. So, after transferring it to the pontoon boat, with the help of Curt and Zach, Keren again attempted to examine the loon to see if she could remove the hooks and to assess whether the loon needed to be taken to a vet. After many more pecks and no success, the loon was placed in a box and brought to shore. Jim and Zach left, but then because the loon appeared very stressed which can also be life threatening to loons, Keren decided to make another attempt rather than waiting to bring the loon to a veterinarian the following morning.

Carol and Joe Lizzadro set up a "MASH" unit in their yard. As Joe tells it, "With Keren on one end of the bench and Curt on the other holding the loon down, Keren successfully removed a hook from the loon's mouth. The second hook was more difficult. The barbed hook was deeply imbedded in the loon's neck with only the shank protruding. This surgery took five hands. So I was drafted to clip the shank while Keren held the loon's neck and exposed the skin. Operation successful." Antibiotic was applied and Keren noted that no infection was apparent. Keren also banded the loon with a number band on one leg, and a blue band with white letters "GL" and a red band with a large white dot "O", on the other leg.

The loon, dubbed "GL-O" was released at midnight off the end of the dock, and she paddled south into the dark. No doubt, along with the rescue team, she was breathing a sigh of relief! On frequent sightings over the next few weeks, she appeared to be recovered and doing well.

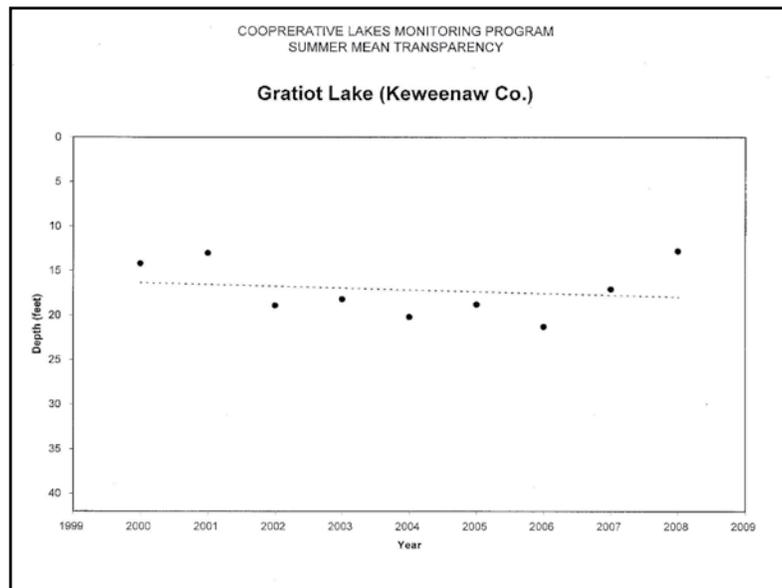
## Gratiot Lake Water Data Analyses

With the help of volunteers, GLC has been collecting data on the clarity of Gratiot Lake water for eleven years. This data and the additional phosphorus reading taken yearly in late August provide baseline statistics which can be used to better assess lake water quality and trends. In recent years, Dorothy Jamison has been our faithful lead volunteer monitor. Readings are taken 14 or 15 times a season by lowering a black and white painted secchi disk into the lake's deepest waters in order to see at what depth it returns to view when reeled in.



Below is a graph of the mean of each year's secchi readings from 2000-2009. This graph was provided by Michigan Lake and Stream

Associations under whose auspices GLC does this testing. Results become part of a statewide database which can be viewed at the MI Corps website. Yearly reports which include data on water clarity and phosphorus levels from Gratiot and many other Michigan inland lakes can be accessed on their website at <http://www.micorps.net/lakereports.html>



In a separate effort to detect any trends in lake water quality, Larry Anderson volunteered to look at data collected from Gratiot water since the 1970's in occasional state samplings for various chemical parameters. He has done some interesting graphing which combines that data with the data GLC has been collecting. Although a slight lowering in pH and increase in phosphorus may be indicated, not enough data has been collected to show significant trends. You can view some of [Larry's graphs on the GLC website](#) and also find links to other information on lake monitoring and its significance.

*Bammert Farm* continued from page 1.

by Mary Lizzadro in 1934. The children of Joseph and Mary Lizzadro donated four hundred and sixty-six acres of Bammert farm to GLC in 2004.

The Conservancy now has a sustainable forestry plan for Bammert Farm which includes an educational collaboration with the Keweenaw Community Forest Company and Michigan Tech School of Forest Resources and Environmental Science. The selective logging will ultimately produce a healthier and more diverse ecosystem. Care is being taken to protect the historical remnants that remain there.

Lee Sweitz is eager to learn more about Bammert Farm and to find answers to such questions as:

How many people worked at Bammert Farm at any one time?

Were workers from any particular ethnic group? Where did the workers live?

What was daily life like at Bammert farm?

Were other crops grown on the farm?

Who are the people in the historic photographs which have been provided by the Keweenaw County Historical Society's (KCHS) Hoffenbecker Collection and by Frank Carlton?

Descendants of Jonas Bammert, many of whom live locally, were in attendance at Lee's presentation. Interviews with descendants whose families were involved with Bammert Farm have been helpful in Lee's research. Lee is hopeful that others in the area who may know the missing pieces of this history or have documents or photos that pertain to Bammert Farm will be interested in sharing the information. Please contact Lee at: [lsweitz@mtu.edu](mailto:lsweitz@mtu.edu) 906-281-6205

Visit the GLC website to learn more about Bammert Farm and to see historic photos of Bammert Farm from the Hoffenbecker Collection at the KCHS and photos of Bammert's 19th century logging from Frank Carlton. A copy of the slide show which Lee Sweitz presented is also available to view on our website: <http://www.mlswa.org/Gratiot-Lake-1508/BammertHistory06.htm>

## *Improvements at Noblet Field Station*

GLC's Noblet Field Station's fireplace was refurbished in September. KJ Searle Concrete & Masonry installed a fireplace insert and some chimney repairs were made. The improvements make the field station safer to use in cooler months and provide a much better and efficient heating source. Brian Rajdl helped his father-in-law Keith Searle with the installation. Brian's wife

Katy and children Fisher, Anna, and Myrica were wonderful volunteer assistants. They did a great job on scrubbing accumulated soot from the sandstone around the fireplace and assisted with clean up, while baby Lain looked on.

Pat Ryan volunteered handyman hours at the field station and eased the opening and closing of several stuck doors and windows.

David McPherson, McPherson Custom Engraving, designed, crafted, and installed two "live edge" engraved wooden signs for the Noblet Field Station. He also built a larger map and brochure box for GLC. GLC is grateful for the donation of these attractive additions to the cabin.



### *Just Give*

As a convenience to donors, GLC has enrolled in an online site where contributions can be made by credit card. This is a quick and easy way to make last minute donations to GLC. The downside is that 3% of your donation will be deducted by *Just Give* as a service charge.

Go to <https://www.justgive.org/basket?acton=donate&ein=36-4242179>

Designate how you would like to have the contribution used-- membership, donation to general fund, donation to education fund, or donation to land acquisition fund. Be sure to check the boxes which allow *Just Give* to share your name, address, and email with GLC.

## *GLC Fund at the Keweenaw Community Foundation*

There is new way to donate to Gratiot Lake Conservancy through the *Gratiot Lake Conservancy Fund* at the Keweenaw Community Foundation (KCF). This donor advised endowment fund is managed by KCF to further the mission of GLC which is to support land conservation, environmental education, and ecological research in Keweenaw County especially in the Gratiot Lake area and within its watershed.

Michigan residents may find that they will receive an extra tax advantage by making donations through a community foundation. The Michigan Tax Credit allows individuals to give up to \$200 (for couples it is \$400), and half of that gift amount is credited against your Michigan Income taxes. So, individuals immediately save \$100 on their taxable income by giving a \$200 gift through the Keweenaw Community Foundation. Please consult your tax advisor for more information.

To learn more about the Keweenaw Community Foundation and how to contribute to *Gratiot Lake Conservancy Fund* contact Barbara Rose, Executive Director KCF at P.O. Box 101 326 Sheldon Ave. Houghton, MI 49931. (phone) 906-482-9673 (fax) 906-482-9679 [mail@k-c-f.org](mailto:mail@k-c-f.org) website: [www.k-c-f.org](http://www.k-c-f.org) **When mailing in donations to KCF be sure to indicate that the donation should be earmarked for the Gratiot Lake Conservancy Fund.**

## *Fixer-upper is Successful Nesting Site*



*Eaglet and parent in Gratiot Lake nest. Photo by Jim Hay.*

We thought that the huge nest at Gratiot Lake in which we saw many eaglets raised was a “goner” after its partial collapse in the winter of 2005. Evidently, the bald eagles thought so too, and shunned the nest except as an occasional perch until last spring. Then, voila, it became a handyman special worthy of a little strategic remodeling, a stick here and a twig there, and it was in move in condition.

One eaglet successfully fledged from the nest in July. Parent and baby are pictured above. Jim Hay took some informative and often humorous videos of the eaglet’s progress. You can watch eaglet feeding behavior, begging behavior, character building behavior, and bad behavior. Photos and video clips may be viewed on the GLC website: <http://www.mlswa.org/Gratiot-Lake-1508/EagleUpdate2010.htm>

***Thank You Volunteers! Your efforts sustain our work!***

**GLC renewals for 2011 are due.**

**A GLC membership makes a great gift.**

**Join our 116 Member Families. Support GLC !**

Gratiot Lake Conservancy members receive a biannual newsletter, notice of special events, and an invitation to the Annual Members Meeting. Some GLC programs that have fees are discounted for members.

*[Click here to download a membership/donation form.](#)*

The membership year is from January 1st to December 31st, but you may join at any time.

Donors of \$100 or more will receive a gift of notecards with photos taken at Gratiot Lake.

[Click here to view sample Gratiot Lake notecard photos in full color!](#)

