

NEWS OF

BLUE



"All the News
That Fits, We Print"

Winter 2026

Weather- Today: mostly present, Tomorrow: yet another day, Weekends: yes please!

A PUBLICATION OF THE BLUE MOUNTAIN LAKE ASSOCIATION

Annual Membership Time to Renew or Join

Leslie Tondreau

If protecting the natural beauty, water quality and community of Blue Mountain Lake is important to you, being a member of the BMLA is one of the best investments you can make. We welcome residents, seasonal visitors, lake enthusiasts, and businesses.

Every membership in the Blue Mountain Lake Association matters. Your dues and donations give us the ability to fund programs to support our mission to support and enhance our local community and all its resources. We strive to keep our lakes clean and clear, preventing and mitigating invasive aquatic plant species and protecting our water quality, for now and for generations to come.

The Benefits of Membership –

When you're a member of the BMLA you:

- Are kept in the know of what's going on in our community through electronic messages and



Shakespeare by the lake at ALCA's new location (see page 7)

the newsletters mailed to your home

- Are invited to the annual meeting to hear directly from our leadership and committee chairs about current and future programs and initiatives
- Are supporting annual local events that bring the community together on the lake and on our roads
- Join a community-based advocacy group that benefits all of us
- Support the placement of buoys for navigation and lake safety.
- Can be proud that your

membership dues and donations are directly benefiting our local community and residents

We keep the membership dues low to encourage new and returning members to be a part of our organization.

While you're renewing, we'd love for you to consider an extra donation to our Operating, Water, or Scholarship funds.

THANK YOU for being a member! We couldn't do it without all of you and your financial support. And we look forward to seeing you on the lake this summer.

Use the QR code on the next page or click on *Membership* at BlueMountainLakeAssociation.org

QR code to Renew or Join



If you're a renewing member, and can't remember your account info, just use the "Login Help" button.

For those who prefer to pay by mail, please send a check for \$25 plus any donation to Treasurer Diane Selin, PO Box 61, Round Lake, NY 12151. ☀

Co-Presidents' Message

*Cathleen Collins and
Nancy Forhan*

Greetings from the BMLA! Now in our 4th year as BMLA co-presidents we are reminded of our good fortune to collaborate with a robust and engaged volunteer board, and to be supported by a membership that cares deeply for our community and its beautiful waters. Thank you for financially supporting the work that we do, attending meetings and community events, and contributing volunteer hours to the BMLA's various initiatives.

As we consider the year ahead, we are humbled and deeply

concerned by the spread of variable leaf milfoil and the challenges this poses, from continuing the search above and below water, to removing the invasive plants, and keeping the community informed and engaged throughout the process. Our fathers (John Collins and Joe Coney) led some of the early work to raise awareness about variable leaf milfoil and other risks to our natural habitats. They would be disheartened to know that VLM has found its way into our waters, but we're sure they would be encouraged by the steps being taken to control and potentially eradicate it.

While the fight against VLM will be the focus of 2026, our hamlet will once again be graced by gorgeous floral gardens and planters; our lake will be safer thanks to carefully positioned buoys; our BML residents pursuing secondary degrees will receive financial assistance; and, the BMLA will stay attuned to advances in road salt alternatives. Additionally, the BMLA will continue to make annual gifts to the local non-profits, and attend monthly meetings of the Indian Lake Town Board. BMLA even stepped in recently to improve the public restroom lighting. Rest assured, the BMLA is working to preserve and enhance our community now and for generations to come. We appreciate your on-going support. Thank you! ☀



Back and Forth on Salt Reduction

Gib Kirkham

"Ten Years of Progress" was the theme of this past September's Lake George Association Salt Summit, which Michele Curry and I attended along with BMLA members David Meyers and Monica Bills. Speakers at the Summit noted the impressive decline of salt content in Lake George in the past ten years, due in part to use of new brining techniques. While there, we met with an Assistant Resident Engineer and a crew member from the New York State Department of Transportation, who told us about NYSDOT's brining efforts in and around Blue Mountain Lake, including Blue Mountain Hill.

Curious to learn more, I visited the NYSDOT offices in Indian Lake to inquire about their efforts. Here's what I learned from speaking with Dean Carnevale, the Mohawk Region Resident Engineer, and Timea Takacs, Mohawk Region Assistant Resident Engineer:

NYSDOT is responsible for ensuring that Hamilton County's roads are safe for the traveling public during winter weather events. Since 2022, NYSDOT has undertaken significant efforts to reduce the amount of salt on the roads by introducing brine on NYSDOT-controlled roads in and around Blue Mountain Lake. Their brine efforts have reduced salt

usage by 40 to 45 percent. Hamilton County is now one of the largest brine users in the state.

Salt brine for roads is made by mixing rock salt with water to create a concentrated saline solution, which is then sprayed from trucks equipped with tanks and pumps onto road surfaces before or during winter storms to prevent ice from bonding to the pavement. The liquid is evenly distributed across road surfaces as a pre-treatment before large snowfalls, creating a barrier that makes it easier for plows to clear snow and ice. NYSDOT's brine, consisting of 23 percent salt, is made and stored at the Indian Lake facility.

Last year the facility required a million gallons of water to create enough brine to treat the local roads. Due to this increased need, the Town of Indian Lake is reflecting on more efficient ways to manage water in the case of emergencies such as fires. When asked what organizations such as BMLA could do, Dean and Timea noted that several areas need attention. Limits to water access in Indian Lake for brining could require that NYSDOT source other locations for brining. Toward that end, DOT is working with the Town of Wells on possibly establishing a brining station there next year.

Dean and Timea also noted that new pavement greatly increases the efficiency of brining

techniques and snow clearing. Working to repave roads in and around BML would help with the effectiveness of snow removal. Also helpful is reducing personal usage of salt by homeowners and rental proprietors trying to keep driveways and walkways clear of snow.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly to our members, Dean and Timea mentioned that maintaining septic systems to prevent leaching into the lake is critical, as phosphates and other minerals from septic sources can elevate nutrient readings even more in lakes such as BML.

The BMLA Water Watch Committee will keep a close eye on the efforts of New York's Road Salt Reduction Council and the Road Salt Reduction Advisory Committee and may ask for your help in supporting us through letters to our state's elected leaders.

Dean, Timea and I also discussed the large drifts and resulting snowbanks that accumulate along the lake from the town beach to Curry's Cottages and which by winter's end are laced with small stones, dirt, and salt. Two years ago, NYSDOT used an enormous snowblower to blast the piles to the sides, which meant the debris ended up in the lake and on Curry's lawns. Last year in response to the BMLA's objection, NYSDOT loaded the snow piles onto trucks and dumped them at the top of the hill across from the

Blue Mountain trailhead. While that meant the dirt settled out up there, which was good, any salt in the snow still eventually ran down the hill to Sawdust (Museum) Brook and into the lake, drawing another objection from the BMLA. Lacking a better solution, for this winter NYSDOT intends to let the snowbanks simply melt in place.

While we are encouraged by the attention NYSDOT is giving to reduce overall salt usage including its greater use of brine, the Water Watch Committee is engaging with NYSDOT to find the best possible approach to the issue of salt-laden snow polluting our lake.

Bottom line: it is taking a coordinated and dedicated effort to work together at the association, town, and state levels to reduce salt while maintaining safety on the roads in and around BML. Through communication, thoughtful planning, cooperation, and visionary leadership, our efforts will help keep our lake - the town's drinking water reservoir - clean. ✨

Variable Leaf Milfoil: The Battle for the Health of Our Waters

Water Watch Committee

This fall brought a serious setback in our ongoing fight to protect Utowana Lake from variable leaf milfoil (VLM). After years of steady progress, two large new beds were discovered in the

middle of the lake — one near the family camp and another close to the DEC lean-to along the north shore. Due to unusually hot temperatures and minimal rainfall, the largest bed grew rapidly and reached the lake’s surface, placing it directly in the path of motorboat traffic. As boats and anglers traveled across the lake, propellers inevitably chopped and fragmented the plants, accelerating their spread. Such frequent boat travel created additional disturbance, sending plant fragments into new areas of the lake.

In total, 165 gallons of VLM were hand-harvested and removed this year — more than double last year’s total. While this shows the strength of our local response, it also underscores how quickly the plants can spread if not constantly managed.

Next summer, we’re expanding our protection and research efforts. We’ll add more survey days on both Eagle Lake and Blue

Mountain Lake to ensure any early infestations are detected. In addition, BMLA is considering a scientific plant study to map all native plant communities and identify aquatic invasive species across the lake system. On Utowana, we’ll increase hand-harvesting days to stay ahead of new growth and maintain control of emerging patches.

Save the Date: July 8, 2026

Keeping our lakes healthy and clear will take all of us. We urge every resident and visitor to stay alert for signs of VLM. Save the Date: We are partnering with the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program to host a 2-hour public training session on Wednesday, July 8th from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. Come join us and learn how to identify and report invasive plants.

Our community’s vigilance remains our greatest defense — but it also takes resources. Please consider a contribution to the

Water Watch Fund. Your donation, no matter the size, directly supports the divers, surveys, and rapid-response work that protect our waters. Together, we can turn the tide in the battle for the health of our lakes. ✨

BMLA Resident Scholarships
Two years in review

Sarah Lewin

Thanks to generous support from our community members the BMLA Scholarship program was launched successfully in 2024, and we have young resident recipients who are benefiting!

2024 recipients included Anna Strader and Ruby Lewin. Where are they now?

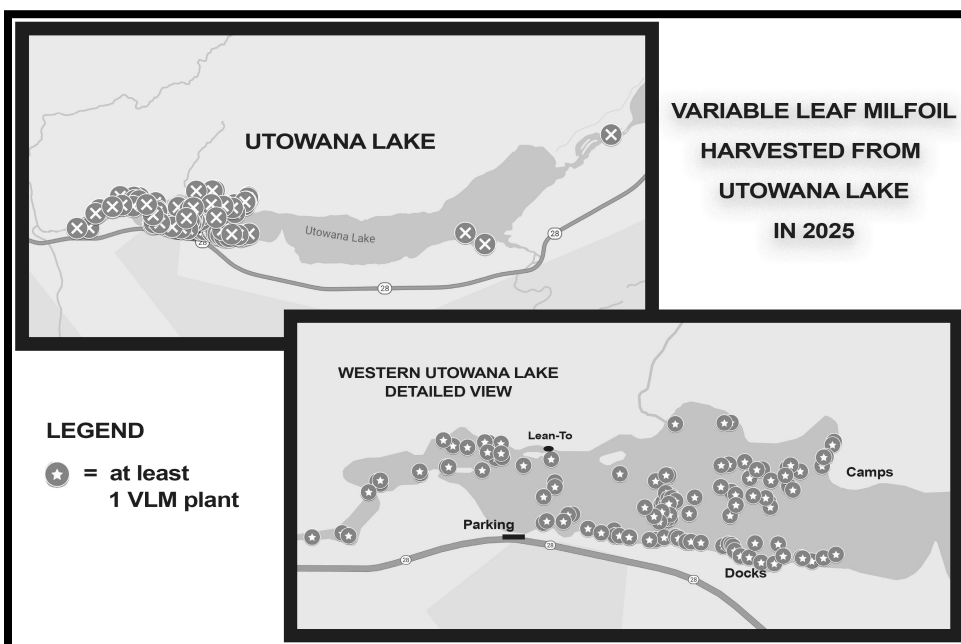
Anna Strader is currently a Junior at Smith College in Northampton, MA. Anna’s major is Sociology with a minor in Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality.

Ruby Lewin just completed her degree at SUNY Geneseo in December 2025, with a major in Psychology and double minor in Business and Marketing.

2025 recipients include Fayga Kinsey, Jackson Strader, and a second grant to Anna Strader.

Fayga Kinsey is a Neuroscience/ Biology major Pre Med at Syracuse University. She is a Freshman.

Jackson Strader is a Freshman at Cornell University and is exploring



majors.

Contributions are encouraged. The Resident Scholarship Fund is now a donation option when renewing your membership online, by donating through our PayPal account or through a check to “BMLA” with “Resident Scholarship Fund” on the memo line. ✿

Are Wakeboats Right for Blue Mountain Lake?

Water Watch Committee



The rise of wakeboats in the Northeast should make us ask, are they right for Blue Mountain Lake? These powerful boats, built to create massive waves for wake surfing, may be thrilling on big, deep waters — but on our small lake, they cause real harm.

What Wakeboats Do

Wakeboats are not just oversized ski or pontoon boats. They’re engineered to generate enormous wakes — often several feet high — by filling internal ballast tanks with hundreds of gallons of water to make the boat ride lower and displace more water. Powerful wakeboat churn stirs up sediment in shallow lake bottoms, releasing nutrients that had long been

buried. This action causes “browning” of the water that clouds the lake’s clarity and fuels algae growth — a visible sign of stress in a once-pristine ecosystem. The turbulence also erodes shorelines, disrupts fish, and the high waves sink loon nests.

Lessons from Other Lakes

Vermont’s 2024 wakeboat law restricts wake sports to zones at least 50 acres in size, 500 feet from shore, and 20 feet deep. Based on those restrictions, wakeboats wouldn’t be allowed on Blue Mountain Lake .

Hidden Threats

Water containing invasive species like zebra mussels and milfoil can be sucked up and harbored in ballast tanks on wakeboats. Even after draining, these ballast tanks can retain contaminated water, which if brought to other lakes could irreversibly damage ecosystems unless they are decontaminated at boat-washing stations beforehand.

Protecting What Matters

Beyond ecology, wakeboats threaten the peace, safety, and quiet recreation that define Blue Mountain Lake. Their large waves and powerful engines make our lake less safe for kayakers, canoeists, paddleboarders, and swimmers. Wakeboats also threaten our fishing and loon habitats, Blue Mountain Lake is too small, too shallow, and too special for wakeboats.

Please educate your family and friends about the harmful environmental effects of wake boats and let’s work together to keep Blue safe and clear for generations to come. ✿

Blue Mountain Lake Fire and Ambulance

This article first appeared in the Hamilton County Express

Led by chief Greg George, and assistant chiefs Ken Hinkley and Jim Pine, ambulance captain Tim Leach, and President Gary Tyler, our company enjoys tremendous esprit-de-corps. Volunteers range from retired firefighters to strictly amateurs — teachers, mechanics, and even office workers, all of whom pitch in for the benefit of our community.

The big news is eight new volunteers joined this year, dropping our average age dramatically and bringing strong backs and youthful agility to our previously geriatric fire company. We’re proud that three of the new members completed New York’s Basic Exterior Fire Operations course, a huge commitment; 13 evenings and 6 full Saturdays packed into eight weeks.

We serve Indian Lake Fire District 2, covering the northwestern portion of the Town of Indian Lake which includes the hamlet of Blue Mountain Lake and a considerable amount of forest. We provide fire protection, ambulance service,

and rescues. We work closely with the NY State Rangers and cooperate with the Indian Lake fire company who covers Fire District 1.

We have two fire trucks, a fireboat, and an all-wheel drive ambulance.



Our company is 100% volunteer, except in the summer when our hamlet's population increases by a factor of ten and a series of professional EMTs spend their vacations in town in return for responding to ambulance calls.

To learn more about our great organization or just chat, drop in for coffee at the fire station on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday mornings at 9:00 AM. Business meetings are on the first Monday evening of the month at 7:00 PM and training is on the third Monday at 6:00 PM. ☀

Marion River Carry Traffic Study

This article first appeared in the Adirondack Almanack

The Marion River Carry is a key

segment of historic Adirondack water routes connecting Blue Mountain Lake southwest to Old Forge and to points north via the Raquette River such as Tupper Lake and the Saranacs. The Marion River Carry is also infamous as the fourth and final portage on Day 1 of the

Adirondack Canoe Classic, aka the 90-Miler.

When New York State purchased the 296-acre Marion River Carry property in 2017, its press release cited one thousand crossings a year. However, Jay Scott, our local forest ranger notes only about

seventy-five people sign the trail register annually. So, what's the right number?

A newly released study using a motion-sensor trail camera, the same kind used by hunters and naturalists, recorded 637 boats crossing the Marion River Carry in 2025. Excluding the 90-Miler, 55% went downstream toward the Marion River and 45% traveled upstream to the Eckford Chain and Blue Mountain Lake.

The implications are not trivial. We all know that Lake Utowana, the first water body upstream after the Carry, has been the site of intense remediation efforts by divers. No one knows for sure how milfoil got into Lake Utowana

nor how long it has been there. variable leaf milfoil is known to be in Raquette Lake and the Marion River and so portaging boats are a possible source.

Since about 2008 boats and paddlers in the 90-Miler have been intensely inspected, even checking for particles in shoelaces, and so it seems unlikely the 90-Miler is the culprit. But the 183 other boats a year portaging to Lake Utowana remain suspects. It is also possible the milfoil has been there for years undetected and portagers are innocent.

The study recorded the time of day and the day of the week, helpful if plans are to hire a steward to inspect boats on days other than the 90-Miler.

Type	Month	Downstream	Upstream	Grand Total
regular	Apr	1	1	2
	May	13	11	24
	Jun	24	22	46
	Jul	82	44	126
	Aug	69	60	129
	Sep	24	34	58
	Oct	11	11	22
regular Total		224	183	407
90-miler	Sep		230	230
90-miler Total			230	230
Grand Total		224	413	637

A note about accuracy: Published results from the 2025 Adirondack Canoe Classic show 266 boats crossed the Marion River Carry. The camera recorded 230, which means thirty-six were missed, a 13.5% rate. It may not be wise to extrapolate the 90-Miler miss across the entire season, but it is likely that the study's results are understated. ☀

ALCA Update

Jean-Marie Donahue

This past year has been nothing short of historic for the Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts. After 57 years in the former Fuller Garage, ALCA moved to its new home at the crossroads of routes 28 and 30. ALCA's first season in the new performance, gallery and workshop spaces was filled with energy, joy and possibility. The Weekend Concert Series brought internationally renowned musicians to ALCA's stage. Other fan favorites included Open Mic night, hosted by Mike Nerney of Long Lake, "As You Like It" — performed at the beach with guest appearances by Dave Meyers and Monica Bills, and the Sunday night speaker series, which included talks by Blue Mountain Lake luminaries Pamela Aall, Flemming Heilman, Ella McPherson, David Oestreicher and Audrey Peartree plus Hallie Bond of Long Lake.

With acquisition of the new property behind it, ALCA launched a three-year fund-raising campaign in August of 2025 to secure the organization's future. The "Great Arts Campaign" seeks to raise \$3 million for operating reserves, capital and enhancement reserves and an endowment.

In October, ALCA announced the elevation of Jean-Marie Donahue to Executive Director and launched a search for an Artistic Director to replace George Cordes

who departed at the end of the 2025 season. ALCA also announced leadership changes on its Board of Trustees with the retirement of Joanna Pine, Mary Leach and Deb Marriott. Joanna served on the Board for fifteen years, including ten as President. Mary and Deb both served as Board Officers. They are replaced by Sally Wheeler (President), Mark Chamberlain (Vice President) and Audrey Peartree (Secretary). Todd Friebel continues as Board Treasurer.

This year's spring ALCA benefit will be Friday, March 20th at Minnowbrook. ❁

Road Construction

First, good news for travelers to or through Raquette Lake; the South Inlet bridge replacement is almost done, with completion set for June 2026. None of us will miss the long waits for the "3 Color Signal" to allow us through.

Replacement of the Rock River culverts by the Ranger Station with a bridge is beginning and will be done one lane at a time. This full year project will be a much shorter lane closure so the wait at its 3 Color Signal won't be nearly as long as at South Inlet.

Three more bridge and culvert projects will also be running in 2026, all between Blue and Long Lake. Guardrails will be replaced and the "wing walls" enhanced. Wings are the concrete walls on either side of bridges and culverts

that catch and direct water flow into the right course. Enhanced wingwalls add more resilience for the larger storms we've been getting recently and are welcome even if the 3 Color Signals will be a short-term inconvenience. Starting from Blue and heading north, the projects will occur at Sawdust Brook, just below the museum, plus Mud Pond Outlet and the Salmon River which are about 40% of the way to Long Lake. Mud Pond Outlet and the Salmon River are near each other and will probably share a single 3 Color Signal. ❁

New Water Treatment Plant Moving Ahead

Replacement of Blue Mountain Lake's 1970's water treatment plant with a modern system is getting closer. Last summer's small pilot plant test went well, and the Board of Health is now reviewing the plans for the full-scale system. The town has been approved for a New York State grant and construction should begin in August. Many thanks to the Town of Indian Lake for moving this essential project along. ❁

QR Code for Donations

to Operating, WaterWatch, or Scholarship Funds:





**PO Box 245
Blue Mountain Lake, NY 12812**

BlueMountainLakeAssociation.org

2026 Key Dates

**July 4 - BMLA Water Watch
Committee Annual Meeting**

8:30 AM at ALCA - Doors open at
8:00am for coffee and pastries

**July 8 - Citizen's Invasives Training
with AIPP**

5:00-7:00 PM at BML Fire Station

July 20 - BluMouLA-BuFuRa

10:30 AM 1.5, 7 and 14 mile races
for canoes, kayaks, SUPs, and
guideboats

www.BMLBuoyRace.com

August 9 - Blue Mountain Sizzler

8:30 AM 5k road race
9:15 AM 3/8 mile kids' race
www.BlueMtSizzler.com

**August 10 - Indian Lake Town
Board meets in Blue**

7:00 PM at BML Fire Station

**August 12 - BMLA
Annual Meeting**

7:00 PM at ADKX Auditorium



our reporter



our reader

Officers

Cathleen Collins *Co-President*

Nancy Forhan *Co-President*

Andy Coney *Vice President*

Diane Selin *Treasurer*

Sherry Nemmers *Secretary*

Board of Directors

Ralph Coon

Bob Curry

Michele Curry

Jean-Marie Donohue

David Kahn

Gib Kirkham

Sarah Lewin

Nancy Swanson

Leslie Tondreau

Ethan Vander Molen

Advisors

Mary Lynne Heldmann

Paul Monroe