

2021 ANNUAL MEETING- TBD

At the time of this newsletter, the date and format of the 2021 annual picnic is still to be determined. COVID related restrictions have not been lifted at our usual venue, Byron Park. We will notify our members via email if we will be hosting an in person meeting later this summer or if we will be hosting a virtual meeting again this year. Please check our website for any updates: www.ilaadk.org.

As always, we will be discussing lake level management, invasive species prevention, water quality, and other topics of concern to lake residents.

2020 ANNUAL MEETING REVIEW

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 42nd annual meeting was held in a virtual format via Zoom on September 10, 2020. We appreciate our members' understanding and flexibility.

The board recognized Pete Sinski for his service to the organization as his 3rd term ended. Pete has been a dedicated member of the ILA board for many years and we look forward to working with him again in the future. The members also reelected Carmen Adler to her third and final term as Secretary.

Treasurer Gail O'Brien reported that the beginning bank balance as of August 3, 2019 was \$8,023.80. During the past year, revenue consisting of membership dues and picnic attendance was \$2,280 and listed expenses were \$1,745.58, making the current balance as of August 31, 2020, \$8,558.22.

The main expenses were for printing and mailing the newsletter and Boater's Guide, the ILA Scholarship, the annual testing of the lake water quality, and the picnic. Active membership as of August 31, 2020 was 84. This is down from 113 last in 2019.

The minutes of the 2020 annual meeting may be found at www.ilaadk.org/meeting-minutes.

ILA DICK MERRILL SCHOLARSHIP

Last year the Association's scholarship of \$500 was awarded to Indian Lake Central School Class of 2020 graduate Shelby Benton for the pursuit of studies in psychology at Hudson Valley Community College. Shelby is an Indian Lake resident and a long-time supporter of the lake, participating in many lake cleanups in her 14 years working at Camp Driftwood.

Our scholarship was named for Dick Merrill, a long-time board member, educator, and lake advocate. It is awarded to graduates of Indian Lake Central School who have exemplified good stewardship of the lake and the environment.

LOCAL NEWS AND VIEWS

~Jon Voorhees

COVID... COVID... Covid fatigue.

After remaining virtually unscathed through the first Covid wave, Hamilton County's infections spiked during the past winter, going from barely double digits to over 300. Even after leading the State in vaccination rates, we still experienced another outbreak in April, following the spring break. But throughout it all, the town and county not only survived, but thrived in comparison to other areas.

The pandemic seems to have revealed a few things about Americans. Not having been asked to sacrifice for the national good since WWII; it turns out that, since those days, much of the population has lost a willingness to do so. That was not the case here.

County Public Health Director Erica Mahoney, and all the Department's amazing employees stepped it up in such a big way that folks here were kept safer and the

economy was less damaged than almost anywhere else.

Town Supervisor Brian Wells and so many others employed by the town, willingly put in countless extra time; and even when they were hit with a massive, and horribly ill-timed Freedom-Of-Information request that exhausted innumerable precious hours, they managed to keep everything functioning well.

Indian Lake Central School managed to stay open through almost the entire school year, thanks to the dedication and extra hard work of Superintendent Dave Snide and the school's marvelous faculty and staff. Even though the kids' lives were almost entirely bereft of sports, extra curriculars and most of the social stuff that really matters to them, there was much gratitude that, unlike many districts, they at least got full-time classroom learning.

Businesses in town that braved being open experienced their most lucrative season ever. The town was deluged with visitors, who apparently had nowhere else to go; and Indian Lake made a lot of new friends, as a result.

Long after "the season" ended, beds that usually didn't expect to see much more than nesting mice stayed packed with people. Even in between Thanksgiving and Christmas, when even the Indian Lake Restaurant is closed, there were a surprising number of tourists in town. All masked up, it was often difficult to tell what they looked like, or what they intended to do here at that time of year; but folks seemed to just roll along with it.

As if Covid wasn't enough, mice swarmed the area in greater numbers than anyone can ever remember - and they started swarming earlier than ever. Amateur trappers were busy from June onward, until finally nature sent a second assault wave: weasels (or ermine, as they're known, when wearing their winter coats), appeared suddenly en masse feasting on the abundant rodents, occasionally chowing down on them right inside peoples' homes.

Another summer of perfect tourist weather, yielding to the most spectacular Autumn in quite a while, shone down gloriously on all the mayhem. Winter started out fluky again. After the lake freezing solid on the perfectly normal date of Dec. 16, a massive thaw and torrential rain on Christmas, wiped out almost all the snow and

ice, leaving open water on the lake for days in the midst of what should have been prime snowmobile season. No machines were seen out on the lake until mid-January.

From then on, though, the snow pack deepened in dozens of tiny increments; and by Presidents' Week it looked like a regular, old-fashioned winter, with a couple of feet of soft, clean white snow, barricaded behind imposing scraper banks; even though there were zero blizzards the whole winter. Business was good, since the white stuff was mostly here when it mattered. When March rolled around, the snowpack began a discreet and orderly withdrawal, and that month was surely one of the driest ever. April recorded more snowfall than March.

Ice left the lake on April 9: early, but not the earliest ever. The lake, which had experienced a severe drawdown over the winter, was nowhere near full by the time the ice went out, and struggled to refill, but it made it.

The slalom course that is Rt. 28 east of town has become so venerable that it may be trying to become a historic landmark, which could mean New York State would never have to spend a nickel on repairs. At least the slashing ride provided a good warm up for those on their way to Gore Mt., which also logged one of its best years ever.

The County seems less contented than the State with decrepit roadways and is scheduled to resurface Lake Shore Drive this year.

As you may know, New York State was showered with a whopping \$13 billion in Federal Covid relief funds, to help plug the State's loudly lamented \$6 billion budget gap. Yes. I know. They threw a little extra in. Government math! Go figure. A lot of these stimulus funds were expected to help school districts, all of whose budgets were stressed by the pandemic. It came as a major surprise when ILCS opened its envelope, to find that it contained exactly zero cents. Yep, not a nickel. But at least the inexplicable tax increases that the State Legislature voted in on the heels of their epic windfall, will be shared across district lines.

Not that the school couldn't have used the money. Besides Covid expenses, the school's engineers (Mosaic Architects) caused us to be hit with a significant change

order on the million dollar roof and window project; because they'd undercounted the number of windows and failed to notice an I-beam that had to be built around. This was in the elementary wing. Apparently, the engineers should have hung around in the classes to "lam rithmatick".

AT&T filed plans to erect a full-size cell tower on Crow Hill. A lease agreement has been signed and the project is looking for Adirondack Park Agency approval. This would probably result in cell phone service in much of Sabael.

Predictably, the Adirondack Council opposed the permit, complaining that the proposed tower would be "very visible from public places outside of the hamlets they will be serving, including highways and the surface of several local lakes. Both would have open sky behind them that would actually attract attention to them." Of course, this ignores the fact that if cell towers are not seen then cell service is not easily heard.

Unacknowledged in the Council's opposition is the fact that the tower would be part of the Federal Government's mandated FirstNet program, which is intended to facilitate emergency communications and would prioritize that use over non-emergency calling.

Such cell service here might be increasingly necessary since cracks have even appeared in Frontier Communications' fiber internet service. Spending the half billion-dollar subsidy they received from the State of New York to install the fiber was something that Frontier was finally able to manage, even if not in a timely fashion. Maintaining and servicing the fiber is turning out to be a greater challenge. A series of outages at year's end lasted over a month. More recently, the system has experienced "jitters", which are momentary outages that disconnect live meetings and phone calls but are unnoticeable if simply streaming or browsing. Frontier, of course, is now legally bankrupt, keeping its position: one step ahead of NYS in the Ineptitude Olympics.

Showing greater enterprise, Stewarts opened their new shop in record time: only 78 days from demolition of the old Ste. Marie's building until the cash registers were ringing, and that included a weeks' long pause in between demo and construction: a model of free-market efficiency, placing its permanent, generic stamp

on the heart of the village. Not to be outdone, the Adirondack One Stop got new gas pumps, tanks and blacktop. There are now two places in Indian Lake to buy diesel fuel and no-lead high octane gasoline.

The deal to reopen a restaurant at Marty's fell apart when a boundary line discrepancy was discovered. The new owner of the old Chamber of Commerce booth was able to grab the driveway and back property that Marty's had been paying the taxes on all these years, wiping out the service accessibility, off-street parking, and much of the value of the old restaurant property. What's left may finally change hands and become an Irish Pub.

Covid seems to have stimulated a wave of urban refugee entrepreneurship: The old pink barbershop, in between Marty's and the theater, has a sale pending and is supposed to become a cafe; the old Cedar River Sports property out next to Cedar River is now a breakfast/lunch place called Mountain View Adventures; the diner on the way into Blue Mountain has finally opened under the name Chef Darrell's Mountain Diner; and the Squaw Brook Motel was sold and the new owners want to resume rentals. There is even reported interest by developers in the old Wakely Golf Course property and the stalled subdivision that spans from Rt. 30 to Crow Hill Road in the village.

Sabael's Gene Fitzmaier turned 99 on Dec. 31, and the Town Board declared it Eugene G. Fitzmaier Day.

The Town of Indian Lake crafted a deal to acquire an extremely desirable piece of property along both sides of the Indian River from the Abanakee dam all the way to the rafters' put-in by the Bullhead Pond trailhead.

The Town hired Christine Pouch, former director of the Art Center, for the newly created position of Economic Development Coordinator

Meade Hutchins, who served as Tax Assessor and Building Inspector for many years passed away on January 6. He had more recently served as Deputy Town Supervisor, from which position he aided greatly with his wisdom, institutional memory and comprehensive knowledge of the Town's nuts and bolts. There has probably never been a more dedicated public servant anywhere.

Pam Howard retired around the same time from her position as Town Budget Officer, as did Kevin King, head of the Water and Sewer Department.

Altogether these represent an enormous loss of talent and ability in the operations of our town. This was followed later in January by the news that Community Bank would be closing our local branch in April.

This proved to be too much for the citizenry, who responded with a letter writing campaign and petition drive, which logged over 900 signers. Whether that broke the crust of ice on the hearts of the execs at Community is unknown. But when the school pointed out that they banked their \$7 million budget at the local branch out of civic mindedness, even though they could gain more favorable terms elsewhere; and that their account would not obediently migrate to the North Creek branch, as the helpful masterminds at Community had suggested; that really seemed to get the bankers' attention.

They decided to have the Indian Lake branch remain open three days per week (Monday, Wednesday, 9AM-3PM, & Friday, 9AM to 4PM), with the Long Lake branch to be open the other two days of the week. We dodged a big bullet on that one.

The fate of the Indian Lake Marina remains uncertain, but since the property is now also listed for sale as a private residence, the odds of it remaining a business seem dim. There has been an idea floated that interested dock space renters might want to form some sort of coop venture. This seems like a bit of a stretch, but headier things have happened (e.g. The Hedges in Blue). In any case, the boating situation on Indian Lake remains in flux. The marina had already stopped doing boat rentals last summer and catered only to dock renters. This trend can only result in more volume at the State launch, placing the lake at ever greater risk of more invasive infestations.

In response to this threat of invasives to the health of our marvelous water, the State of New York has done exactly: NOTHING. At the same time they've increased access to the lake with their infrastructure, they've decreased supervision, leaving it to non-State, shoestring operations to try to field what little defenses exist.

The situation in Norman's Cove, which has become an ever-expanding winter haven for docks, has also gotten somewhat alarming. Not only are there more and more docks towed and stowed there; but the number of derelict docks that are simply abandoned there is bound to raise the State's ire at some point. If this unfortunate, irresponsible behavior isn't remedied, it should not come as surprise if you see a legal notice in the Hamilton County Express some ice-bound January day, warning people that they have thirty days to remove their property from the cove.

A preemptive volunteer cleanup day by interested parties might be in order. If we've learned nothing else in the past year, at least by now we should know that it's better to get out in front of foreseeable problems, rather than tackling them after they've blown up.

The entire planet had over 100 years to prepare since its last major pandemic, yet it was caught without anywhere near the number of ventilators, the amount PPE, or planning that would have helped contain the cursed thing.

We know the State acts extremely harshly toward violations of the "Forever Wild" clause of the Constitution, so we should have no right to act surprised or hurt if that safe winter harbor for docks is foreclosed on account of our own sloppy mess. Forewarned is forearmed.

HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

~Dan Way

The most recent development in our efforts to promote the installation of hydroelectric generators in the Indian Lake and Lake Abanakee dams was in October 2020, when we created an educational PowerPoint presentation on YouTube. It describes the history of the Indian Lake dam, the potential benefits of the project, the reason for the failure of the most recent attempt to create it 13 years ago, and why our renewed efforts could be successful this time around. The presentation can be found on our website: <http://www.ilaadk.org/hydropower-project>



INDIAN LAKE DAM STUDY

The Hudson River Black River Regulating District is continuing its work on an engineering study of the Indian Lake dam. They have developed conceptual plans for upgrades to conform the earthen embankments and spillway capacity to DEC standards, along with other maintenance actions such as restorative grouting and sealing of the dam joints. The Regulating District is awaiting completion of the final design phase and authorization of funding. Work is expected to begin in 2022 at the earliest.

TARGET LAKE LEVELS

~Paul Coppock

The unusually dry weather that we experienced last summer presented the operator of our dam, the Hudson River Black River Regulating District (HRBRRD), with a challenging balancing act. The Regulating District has a statutory responsibility to regulate water flow in the upper Hudson River for purposes of downstream safety, flow augmentation and recreation. It regulates the release of water from the dam to meet those needs, while also striving to maintain target water levels in Indian Lake for recreational purposes. The Lake Association and Regulating District have jointly developed target levels for Indian Lake designed to provide a more stable drawdown during the prime boating season, and to avoid damaging spikes in water

level to the extent possible while meeting downstream requirements. Last summer the lake levels were maintained close to target through mid-August despite the precipitation shortfall.

Actual lake levels in 2020 compared to target were:

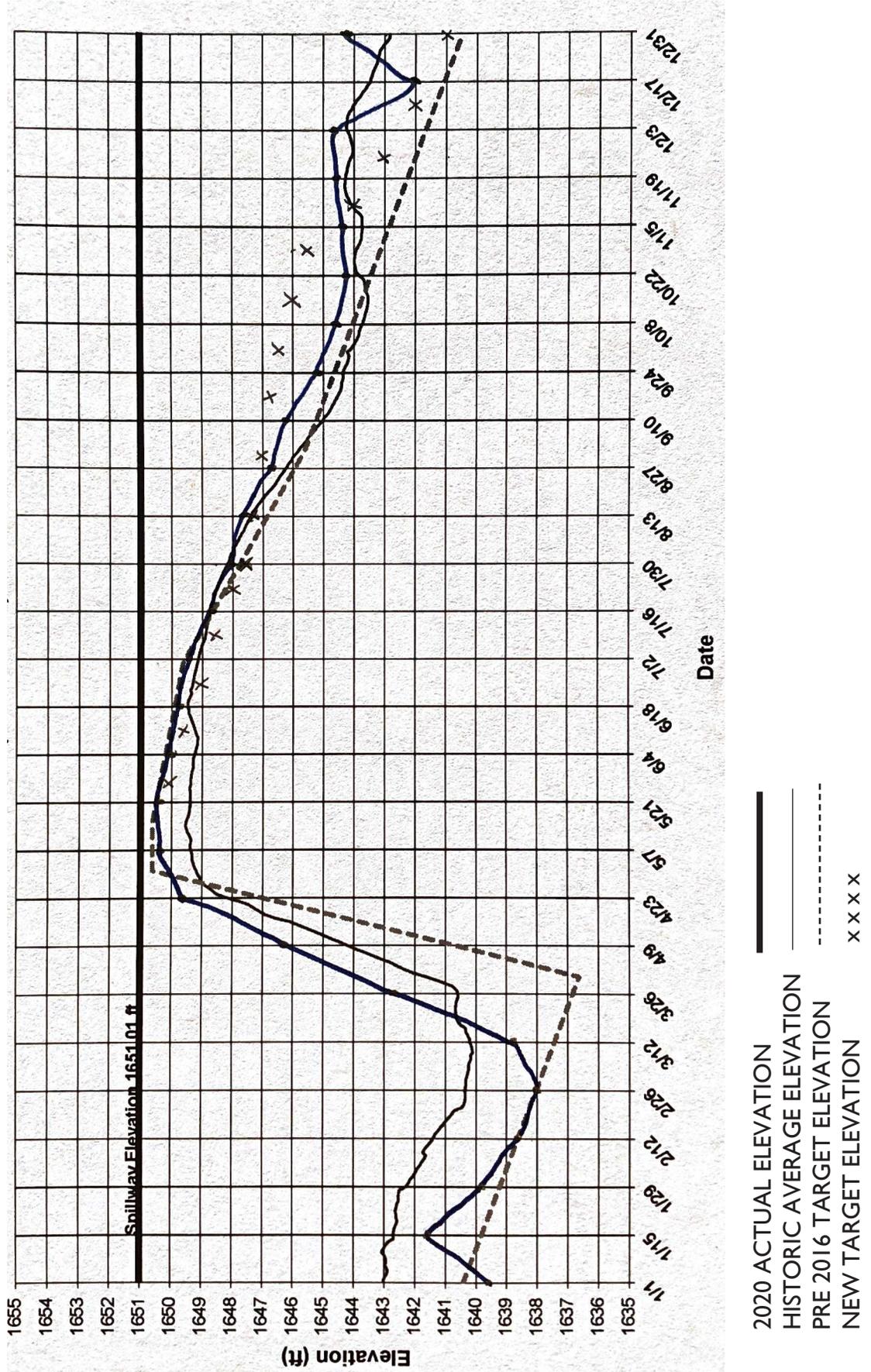
June 1	-1"
July 1	+2"
August 1	+1"
Sept. 1	-8"
Sept. 10	-8"
October 1	-18"

The Regulating District was able to stay on target last summer by restricting releases from Indian Lake to low levels compared to historical rates. The release rate from July 1 into November was held below 150cfs, compared to a historical median of 295cfs. The complete data is available at: www.hrbrd.ny.gov.

We did experience one spike in the lake level at the end of 2020. Just before Christmas, heavy rain and melting snow throughout the Upper Hudson region inundated our watershed causing Indian Lake to rise 38 inches beginning December 24 and peaking December 28. The Regulating District used the dams on Indian Lake and Great Sacandaga to hold back the surge of water that otherwise would have flooded downstream areas including Fort Edward, Lansingburgh, Waterford, Cohoes, and Green Island.

INDIAN LAKE WATER LEVEL ~ 2020

Below is a graph from the Hudson River Black River Regulating District that shows the target water levels agreed on between the Indian Lake Association and HRBRRD for the lake in effect prior to 2016 (dotted line), the new target levels effective in 2016 (small 'x's) and the historic average water levels (thin solid line). Added to the graph are the actual levels from USGS data (heavy solid line). The combination of the large drainage area and the relatively small outlets on the dam mean that a large rain event or rapid snow melt can make the lake rise significantly even with the gates fully open.



INDIAN LAKE ASSOCIATION ADK, Inc.
Membership Form

- Lake Level - \$15 for 1 year or \$35 for 3 years
- Baldface Mt. - \$25 for 1 year or \$60 for 3 years
- Dug Mt. - \$40 for 1 year or \$100 for 3 years
- Snowy Mt. - \$50 for 1 year or \$125 for 3 years

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NAME(S): _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

CAMP ADDRESS: _____ CAMP PHONE: _____

Checks - payable to Indian Lake Association ADK, Inc.
P.O. Box 973 Sabael, NY 12864

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INDIAN LAKE ASSOCIATION ADK, Inc.
2021 Annual Meeting - TBD

Do you currently plan to attend the picnic and annual meeting (in-person or virtual format TBD) if you're available?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Maybe If "Yes", number expected to attend: _____

Please provide your email address to stay updated on the 2021 annual meeting details.

NAME: _____ EMAIL: _____

If you do not plan to attend, you may sign below to authorize Maggie Crowley or Carmen Adler as your proxy to represent and vote for you at the meeting.

Signed: _____

INDIAN LAKE ASSOCIATION ADK, Inc.
P.O. BOX 973
SABANEL, NY 12864

First Class
Stamp Here

2020 WATER QUALITY REPORT

~Joe Hancock

During the summer of 2020, Russ Evatt and myself continued with our Association's participation with the Adirondack Watershed Institute's (AWI) water testing and assessment program. Our association has been participating in the program for 18 years, and the program involves the testing and analysis of over 70 lakes and ponds throughout the park. This program has been very successful and provides a detailed summary and analysis of the over-all water quality throughout the park and has been a valuable resource to spot harmful trends in water quality. Most recently contamination by road salt has been a major concern and the AWI has been able to provide detailed analysis of trends and degrees of contamination. They are also working cooperatively with State and local agencies to help mitigate the problem throughout the park.

On our lake our sampling results taken 3 times during the summer from the "deep hole" part of the lake have shown that things are largely unchanged. The water clarity has remained pretty constant at a little over 4 meters. This is measured with a round metal black and white colored disc, called a secchi disc. The disc is lowered into the water until it is no longer visible, and a measurement of the depth is recorded. The readings can vary a bit based on rainfall, wind conditions and dissolved organic matter, but have averaged out to around 4 meters. Other parts of the sampling analysis of significant note are the PH readings, which indicate the level of acidity, the phosphorus and chlorophyll levels which indicate levels of algae and potential for algae growth and sodium and chloride which are key components of road salt. In all of these cases our lake's samples have not shown any major trends that would raise any concerns. This is due primarily to a continued improvement with the elimination of acid rain, the relatively sparse population around the lake, and the high lake turnover, or "flush rate" which helps to keep the lake clean. Indian Lake has a very large watershed feeding it (the watershed covers some 83,000 acres). The watershed is also sparsely populated with very little agricultural influence. The data from our lake compares favorably with other lakes in the park.

Russ and I will continue with the water testing this summer. We can all do our part to help keep our lake in good shape by keeping our septic and wastewater

systems in good working order and minimizing fertilizer usage near the lake or where it could leach into the lake.

More information and the full reports can be found on their website: <https://www.adklakes.org/reports>

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

~Paul Coppock

The veteran team of Ellie Menz, Russ Evatt, Pete and Ellen Sinski, and Paul Coppock conducted the annual survey of Indian Lake last summer, inspecting for any aquatic invasive plant species. We are pleased to report that no invasive plants were found. To date, the only invasive that has been discovered in the lake is the spiny waterflea that has been appearing in more Adirondack Lakes recently. It's the pesky tiny crustacean that clings to fishing lines and hitchhikes on boats and trailers. We do not yet know what the long-term effect of these creatures will be, but it is a concern that they consume zooplankton that is an important food for young fish. The waterflea's barbed tail can prevent small fish from consuming them, potentially interrupting the food chain. We do know that the waterflea population in a lake can cycle through periods of growth and decline.

While we have not seen any invasive plant infestation in Indian Lake, we need to remain vigilant to identify and stop the growth of any noxious water plants in the early stages. Last August, our neighbors at Blue Mountain Lake launched an urgent fund raising campaign to stop the spread of variable leaf milfoil that was found growing in the channel between Lake Utowana and the Marion River dam. This fast spreading plant if not controlled, threatens to move up through Eagle Lake and Blue, clogging the Eckford Chain of lakes with floating beds of its leaves. By December the campaign had raised over \$140,000 and announced its intention to spend at least \$35,000 in 2021 to harvest and contain further milfoil spread. This will be followed by years of annual harvesting and rigorous containment. The project contractor estimated that the milfoil had been in the channel for five years before remediation began last September, and therefore probably has already spread into the lake. We believe that Indian Lake has some natural advantages for defending against the threat of milfoil taking root. Our lake has a very high flush rate due to the large mountain ringed watershed. Indian Lake also has a rocky shoreline, and the annual dramatic

fluctuation in the water level. While that does not immunize us from the threat, we can further cut the risk by making sure that our boats, trailers and fishing gear are all drained, clean and dry before entering the waters of Indian Lake.

Another important line of defense is the boat stewards who staff the DEC ramp, inspecting boats and trailers before launch. Boat stewards under the auspices of the Adirondack Watershed Institute and funded by DEC, were manning the DEC boat launch on Indian Lake last summer through Labor Day, checking for invasive hitch hikers on boats and trailers. They found and removed invasive species on 16 boats including 6 with Eurasian milfoil, 1 with variable-leaf milfoil, 5 with curly-leaf pondweed, and 4 with zebra mussels. The Indian Lake DEC boat ramp will be staffed with stewards again this summer and the on-site boat wash station will be operating. The complete Adirondack Watershed Institute report on the stewardship program for 2020 will be available soon at: www.adkwatershed.org/publications/annual-stewardship

Anyone interested in getting involved in our lake survey should contact Paul Coppock at pccoppock@gmail.com, or any Association board member. The Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) provides free training sessions each spring and now has an online training program available for the convenience of volunteers. On June 30, APIPP will present a live training webinar on Zoom from 9AM to 12PM covering how to identify aquatic invasive species and how to survey a lake. The session is open to both new and returning volunteers. The recorded webinar will be posted on the APIPP website: www.adkinvasives.com. Check the site for the zoom login as the webinar date approaches.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues are unchanged from the rates that went into effect in 2014. The basic membership options are \$15 for one year or \$35 for three years. In 2014 we instituted voluntary higher levels for members who would like to contribute more, and so far we have received many membership payments at the higher levels. This generosity is helping the Association strengthen its financial position and better prepares us to respond as issues that concern our membership arise.

The current membership dues levels are:

- Lake Level - \$15 for 1 year or \$35 for 3 years
- Baldface Mt. - \$25 for 1 year or \$60 for 3 years
- Dug Mt. - \$40 for 1 year or \$100 for 3 years
- Snowy Mt. - \$50 for 1 year or \$125 for 3 years

Please note that your membership expiration date is printed on the address label on the last page of this newsletter. Please check to see whether you are due to renew your membership.

REMINDER: NEW MOTOR BOAT EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

As of January 1, 2020, new education requirements for motor boat operators are in effect under the recently enacted Brianna's law which provides that all motor boat operators:

If you were born on or after:	You will need a boating safety certificate when operating a motorized vessel in:
Jan. 1, 1993	2020
Jan. 1, 1988	2022
Jan. 1, 1983	2023
Jan. 1, 1978	2024

All operators of motorized vessels, regardless of age, will need a boating safety certificate by Jan. 1, 2025.

Certification generally involves 8 hours of classroom training. Online course options are also available. For a current list of New York training locations and times go to: <https://parks.ny.gov/recreation/boating/safety-courses.aspx>

Photos courtesy of Daniel Way www.danielway.com





Indian Lake Association ADK, Inc.
P.O. Box 973, Sabael, NY 12864
www.ilaadk.org

INDIAN LAKE ASSOCIATION

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Vice President – Daniel Way, M.D.
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At-Large – Martha Bilsback

CONTACT US: info@ilaadk.org

WEBSITE: www.ilaadk.org.