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Lake George Journey

"An Alphabet Adventure"

Nature, conservation, community
and history for all generations

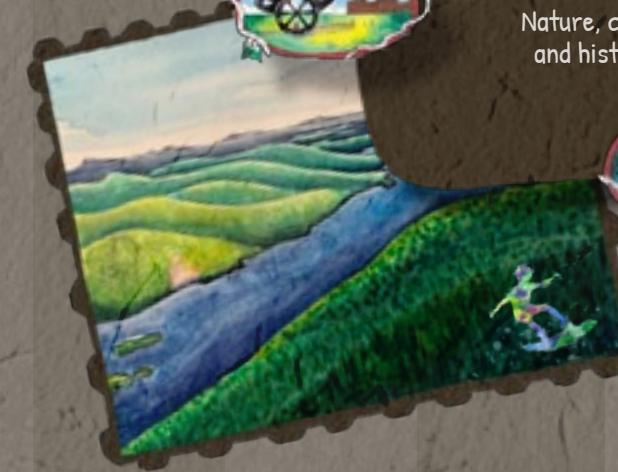
I-spy art for
each letter!

by Tamara Jacobi
& Walter Wright
Featuring 7 local illustrators

Lake George Journey

"An Alphabet Adventure"

Nature, conservation, community
and history for all generations



Thank you for reading this book! Your purchase supports conservation and educational initiatives in the Lake George region. If you have an idea, project, or inspiration to share, please send us a note at www.adklakelove.com

Lake George Journey

“An Alphabet Adventure”

by Tamara Jacobi & Walter Wright

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Dedication

“To the Wright family and generations of families who love Lake George, this book is for you!”

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HUGE thanks to...

My husband, Walter, who had so many brilliant lake stories to share that he ended up becoming a co-author. To my kids, Dasen and Zephyr, for their curiosity and endless patience with my 4 a.m. writing sessions—you’re the best cheerleaders and guinea pigs! To my kids’ cousins—Mabel, Elsa, and Eaden—the next trip to Candy Island is on me! To Aunt Becca for being such a sharp editor, to Uncle Joel for being such an inspirational leader, Grandma Nancy for your teacher’s attention to detail, and to Grandpa Forrest for putting down roots at Lake George in the first place!

To the seven local artists who filled these pages with their color and lake love. Your artwork is a delight to the imagination! And tremendous gratitude to our local designer, Chris Quinn—your artistic vision and natural creativity made this all possible.

To our outstanding community around the lake who helped us on our journey. Boat Babes, cheers to you for getting my inspiration flowing! Special thanks to long-time Wright family friends Janice Reynen and Helen Barton-Benedict at the LGLC for bright ideas and countless introductions across the lake. To Nancy Hawley in Lake George Village and Lindsey Kenna at the LGA for their ongoing contributions. To LARAC and The Lake George Arts Project for their support.

And a special dedication to the memory of Roger Summerhayes, Floating Classroom educator, who we were lucky enough to be onboard with before his sudden passing in Winter 2025. Roger, your love for Lake George was contagious, and we’ll do our best to carry on your legacy.

Many local hands contributed to the creation of this book. Just as the lake, mountains, and creatures are interconnected, so too are we. The beautiful synergy of family, artists, organizations, leaders, and friends around the lake brought this book to life. We look forward to nurturing this Lake George community tree and watching it grow with more leaves, branches, and deep roots. This is just the beginning of our journey together!



The Lake George Journey Family



Introduction by Tamara Jacobi



I didn't become a long-distance swimmer until I met Lake George. On summer mornings, I tiptoe down to the boathouse, the only sounds the gentle snores of my family, their cheeks still sticky from s'mores. I strap on my pink swimming buoy, nicknamed "Rosita," and head toward Slim Point, marveling at the dawn colors over the mountains that are Forever Wild. Along the way, owls, bald eagles, otters, and loons greet me in the stillness.

Energized by a blissful swim, I return home to rehydrate with water straight from the lake. I watch my five-year-old son kayak happily beside his 80-year-old grandma. Grandpa wades, cheering on my three-year-old daughter as she attempts to balance on a stand-up paddleboard, my husband fishes her out after each splash. My brother-in-law and his wife come sprinting down into the water, energized from their trail run up Sunrise Mountain, while the older cousins wander sleepily toward the hammock in their PJs. I can't help but think, is there a better way to start the day?

I often reflect on my journey to Lake George. We'd been dating for about a year when he invited me to spend a summer at his family's home near Silver Bay. Little did I know, I was undergoing the "lake test"—a playful tradition to see if I was up for the challenge and bliss of lake life. Fortunately, I passed! From the moment I arrived, I felt the magic. I was enchanted not only by his

welcoming family but by the lake's wonders, both in and out of the water. A love story unfolded, leading to my now husband (co-author of this book!) and our two "lake babies."

There's something in the water here, I spent my childhood on a different lake (Lake Memphremagog, Quebec/Vermont) and while it's lovely, there's a reason that Thomas Jefferson described Lake George as "the most beautiful water I ever saw" and the Jefferson Project has earned the lake a reputation as "the world's smartest lake." As a relative newcomer, my mother-in-law quizzes me regularly: How many islands are there? What's "Forever Wild"? How do we keep the water clean? These questions sparked our family's alphabetical exploration. You'll see that each letter is told from a different voice and perspective in our family. We hope you enjoy the journey as much as we have.

As you dive in, you may not read the whole book in one sitting. We encourage you to leave it in your family hangout area so you can flip through whenever you need a bit of lake love. With every turn of the page, see if you can discover something new within the short stories, hidden art, and fun facts. If you're inspired to learn more about a specific topic, you'll find additional resources in the back of the book and at www.adklakelove.com. You can also send us a message there anytime, we'd love to hear your ideas, questions and stories.





Artist: Shaundra Bartlett

Aa

Adirondacks

Kids Quote:

“ How long is Lake George? How deep?
What's your favorite color
Adirondack chair? ”

I-spy:

Adirondack Chairs, Anthony's Nose,
Apples, Acorns, Anchor

Voice: Tamara (Mom/Author)



Ahh... Let's take a moment to settle in and soak up the scene. Our family loves to gather on the dock in front of our boathouse, each of us nestled in our favorite Adirondack chair, with the kids happily perched in their little red ones. From here, we watch the wooden boats glide by, guessing how many boathouses there are on the lake. It's a view that never gets old—a perfect blend of rustic Adirondack charm and timeless New York elegance, where the sun sparkles on the clear water while the magical calls of the loon echo.

This beloved scene is not only true for Lake George. You might find a similar view at any of the over 3,000 lakes and ponds in the Adirondacks! The park spans 6 million acres and is known for its unique landscape, diverse wildlife and the famous “46ers” of the High Peaks. This natural playground also boasts a rich history, from its Native American roots to its role in early American tourism.

In the southeastern part of the Adirondack Park, Lake George has a charm all its own. Long admired by many throughout history, the Mohawks called it “the place where the mountains close in” and the Mohicans referred to it as “the tail of a large lake.” Poets and romantics fondly nicknamed it “the Queen of American Lakes.” Whatever you choose to call it, this lake holds a special place in our family's heart—keep reading and you'll see why! You might even find pieces of your own story reflected in ours.

— FUN FACTS —

- **ADIRONDACK PARK:** Established in 1892, it is the largest publicly protected area in the contiguous U.S., even bigger than Yellowstone, Everglades, Glacier, and Grand Canyon National Parks combined.
- **LAKE GEORGE:** 32 miles long, nearly 200 feet deep, and up to 2 1/2 miles wide. It is part of the Adirondack Park and is a unique blend of public and private lands.
- **46ER:** If you hike all 46 High Peaks over 4,000 feet you're considered an Adirondack 46er.
- **THE CLASSIC ADIRONDACK CHAIR:** In 1903, Thomas Lee was inspired to build a comfortable chair for his family that could withstand the ruggedness of the Adirondacks, whether on sand, rocks or sloped terrain.



Bb

Black Mountain, Boathouses & Bateaux

Kids Quote:

“What’s that mountain?
What’s a bateaux?”



Boathouse, Bass, Black Eyed Susan,
Birch Twigs, Berries, Bee, Butterfly,
Black Bear, Blue Jay, Blue Heron, Bat,
Bobcat, Beaver, Boat, Black Mountain,
Bolton Landing, Balsam Fir

Voice: Dasen (Age 3)



From our house, I can see the peak of Black Mountain, standing tall like a giant. Did you know it’s the highest point on the lake? Our family loves to hike, and I’m always looking for creatures and finding treasures. The hike up Black Mountain is pretty easy (especially when I’m riding in mommy’s backpack, I sometimes even take a nap!). There are a few steep rocky sections near the top that can be tricky, but my brother loves the scramble. When we reach the summit, it feels like I’m on top of the world!

After the hike, we return to our boat and head home. Along the way, I look at all the boathouses. There are so many—each a different color and size. Some have space for just one boat and others have space for six! Do you have a favorite boathouse on the lake?

My grandparents have told me all about the different kinds of boats this lake has seen: birchbark canoes, bateaux, guide boats, classic wooden boats, fancy modern boats, sailboats, and big steamboats too! Wow...people have loved boating on Lake George for a really long time!

— FUN FACTS —

- **BLACK MOUNTAIN:** The highest point on the lake at 2,665 feet. There are two trails up (lake-side and road-side). The mountain was named for its black and charred appearance caused by a forest fire in the mid 1800s.
- **POPULAR TRAIL:** Lake George lore says that in the early 1900s, the trail up Black Mountain was so popular, an enterprising landowner charged a fee to cross his property!
- **VIEW:** On a clear day, from the top you can see most of the lake, Vermont’s Green Mountains and some of the Adirondack High Peaks. Fall provides one of the most colorful landscapes imaginable.
- **BATEAUX:** French for “boats” and specifically the name for the flat-bottomed watercraft used on Lake George starting in the 1700’s by the French, British, and later Americans. Typically made of pine planks and oak frames, it had a wide, shallow hull ideal for carrying heavy loads. Bateaux could be rowed, pushed by a pole in the shallows, or sailed with a simple mast.



Artist: Chris Quinn

Cc

Camping Islands & Canoes

Kids Quote:

“What island are we camping on?
When can we make a s’more?
How many islands are there?”

I-spy:



Camping Island, Canoe,
Chipmunk, Cone, Cardinal,
Campfire, Canada Geese

Voice: Aunt Becca



There are 176 named islands on the lake, the majority are state-owned and 44 of them have camp spots. Whoa! That means there’s a lot to explore. As a family, we have visited over 30 islands and have a goal to visit them all. But what exactly defines an island? Does it have to have a tree? In our family, not everyone agrees...

Every summer, we pack up the old ski boat with our sleeping bags and marshmallows and head out on an island camping adventure. After docking the boat at our reserved site, we hang our hammocks, set up the tent, and get settled in. We all love exploring the unique islands, from creatures and wild blueberries to stinky outhouses! After a restful night of sleep (or sometimes a little less than I’d like!), nothing beats the moment when we open the tent to the soft glow of the early morning light.

Before we leave a campsite, we often challenge each other to see who can pick up the most litter. Whether it’s from our group or left by others, it’s important to leave the site a clean place for everyone to enjoy. As we wave goodbye to the island, I take a moment to imagine how the Native Americans would have traveled by birch bark canoes. I’m sure they must have camped on these islands too, probably with a lot less stuff!

— FUN FACTS —

- **INDIGENOUS CANOES:** Birch bark canoes that were light and easily portaged were popular in the Northeast of North America. Dugout canoes, carved from large tree trunks like cedar, were better suited for the larger waters of the Pacific Northwest.
- **AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION (ACA):** With the increased popularity of canoeing in the late 1800s, Lake George and Lake Champlain canoe enthusiasts organized a Convention of Canoeists which led to the formation of the American Canoe Association (ACA). The ACA was established on Lake George on August 3, 1880.
- **CAMPsites:** There are 387 campsites across 44 islands and lakeshores owned by New York State. Campsites range from large islands with up to 90 spots, to tiny islands with just one.
- **WILD TREATS:** There are wild blueberries on many islands (yum!) but always check with an expert before picking and eating anything.



Artist: Wendy Soliday

Dd

Darrin Freshwater Institute & Dome Island

Kids Quote:

“What’s a dive-bomb?”

I-spy:



Dome Island, Ducks, Dragonflies,
Driftwood, Diver, Dog, Dock

Voice: Zephyr (Age 5)



Have you ever heard of a “dive-bomb”? This is the nickname for a weird-looking research device that I got to see on our visit to the Darrin Fresh Water Institute (DFWI) in Bolton Landing. I thought it was a submarine, but it’s not (Lake George doesn’t have those). The dive-bomb is an ROV (remotely operated vehicle) that researchers send to the bottom of the lake to collect information. That’s just one of the machines and gadgets scientists at the DFWI use to help understand and protect the lake. They do other really amazing things to study the lake too. Senior Research Specialist Laurie Ahrens told me they sometimes load canoes into helicopters to study remote ponds near Lake George—one time she even lost her favorite hiking boot in some mud!

Not far from the DFWI sits Dome Island. I’ve always been curious about this island. Most of the other islands on the lake have cottages, docks, or campsites, but Dome Island is wild and mysterious. The island looks like a dome! It’s also covered in thick trees that hide the inside part of it. We’re not allowed to walk on this island because it’s a special preserve. That’s probably a good thing so we don’t disturb the animals. It looks like it has lots of secret places for creatures to make their homes.

— FUN FACTS —

- **DARRIN FRESH WATER INSTITUTE (DFWI AT RENSSELAER):** Since 1967, this multidisciplinary field station of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) located in Bolton Landing, focuses on how human activity impacts environmental issues—affecting the land, water, and air around Lake George.
- **RESEARCH PROJECTS:** DFWI has over 12 current research projects and includes the well-known Jefferson Project (see letter J). The data collected helps predict the lake’s future conditions, so we can better protect Lake George. DFWI also shares their findings with organizations all over the world to help preserve lakes globally.
- **LECTURE SERIES:** From “Keeping The Wild in Wildlife” to “Dome Island: Forever Wild on Lake George,” the summer co-hosted lectures at DFWI have something of interest for everyone.
- **DOME ISLAND:** John Apperson recognized the island’s vulnerability and began taking care of it even before it was publicly owned. In 1939, he purchased the island for \$4,500 to protect it from development, later donating it to the Nature Conservancy in 1956 to become a research site and remain forever wild.



Ee

Eagles & Eastern Hemlocks

Kids Quote:

“ I saw 5 bald eagles on my 5th birthday! ”

I-spy:



Eagle, European Starling, Ermine, Eastern Hemlocks, Eastern White Pine, Red Eft

Voice: Grandpa Forrest



Cruising up the lake for my grandson's 5th birthday, we saw 5 bald eagles soaring. What a sight! Their majestic presence captivated us as they landed in the towering Eastern Hemlocks along the shoreline. Watching the eagles that day, I was reminded of the same sense of wonder I've carried since my first visit to Lake George in 1952 at age 12, on a canoe camping adventure.

My parents and I visited the following summer, and we've been coming ever since! While my family's legacy was just beginning, the Bald Eagle's legacy in the Northeast was being threatened. Due mostly to the chemical DDT (which caused the thinning of egg shells and lowered the reproductive rate), Bald Eagle sightings were extremely rare, and scientists were afraid of completely losing this iconic bird. It has taken decades, but eagle sightings have become much more common, thanks in large part to conservation efforts from New York's Endangered Species team along with help from passionate locals like Ed and Sally Becker. Today, we're very fortunate to regularly see eagles gliding over the lake or perched in the trees. May our legacies continue on together!

— FUN FACTS —

- **EAGLE POPULATION (2024):** 426 nesting pairs in New York, with around 25 near Lake George. In 1976 they knew of only 1 nesting pair in the state.
- **REINTRODUCTION:** In 1976, the NYS Eagle Reintroduction Program began with eaglets from Alaska.
- **EAGLES:** Eagles mate for life, return to the same nest annually, and live up to 30 years. They have the sharpest eyesight of any bird; spotting a bunny 1-2 miles away from up in the sky. Baby eaglets reach adult size in 6 to 8 weeks but don't grow their iconic white feathers until 3 to 5 years old.
- **EASTERN HEMLOCKS:** Eagles often nest in these tall trees, which cover about 60% of Lake George's forest canopy. Hemlocks may grow 100 feet tall and can live over 400 years. They are vital for forest health as their dense canopy provides the needed shade for the variety of vegetation and animals that live below them.
- **HEMLOCK BARK:** Rich in tannins, Indigenous people soaked animal hides with the Hemlock's bark to make leather.
- **HEMLOCK WOOLLY ADELGID (HWA):** This invasive insect (from Asia) attacks Eastern Hemlocks and is of high concern for lake health. The Lake George Land Conservancy has been closely monitoring and treating this invasive species since 2016. Efforts are working, but we all need to work together to focus on prevention and solutions.



FF

Floating Classroom & Forever Wild

Kids Quote:

“How do I use a microscope?
What is a Secchi disk?”



Floating Classroom, Fairy,
Fish, Foliage, Fireflies, Fox,
Forever Wild

Voice: Zephyr (Age 5)



Last summer, I did some really cool experiments on the Floating Classroom. As we cruised on the pontoon boat, Mr. Roger Summerhayes taught us how to use a Secchi disk to measure how clear the water was. We lowered the round, black-and-white disk into the water to see how deep it would go before it disappeared. Did you know that on average you can see down 26 ft? That's taller than our house!

Looking through a microscope, I could see all the squirmly little zooplankton living in just one drop of water. These tiny superheroes play a very big role in keeping the lake healthy (see "z" for zooplankton). Next, I learned about the "bad guys" in the lake—invasive species like the spiny water flea and Eurasian milfoil. These troublemakers make it harder for other native plants and animals (like the zooplankton) to survive. By studying the lake, little scientists like me can become Lake Protectors!

When the captain mentioned "Forever Wild," I thought he meant my sister and me! Nope, then I learned that's the reason why there are no houses across the lake from us. It's a special place where we go to see the eagles and explore the wilderness with no houses, roads, or stores. I'm grateful to the Lake George Land Conservancy for helping us protect the wild lands we still have. This will keep the forests healthy forever, and the plants and animals will always have a place to live.

— FUN FACTS —

- **THE FLOATING CLASSROOM (EST 1991):** Operated by the Lake George Association, and is designed for all generations interested in learning more about the lake.
- **LAKE GEORGE ASSOCIATION (LGA, EST 1885):** A non-profit that is dedicated to the ongoing protection of Lake George's water quality, achieved through science-guided action, education, advocacy, and productive partnerships.
- **LAKE GEORGE LAND CONSERVANCY (LGLC, EST 1988):** A non-profit land trust that is committed to protecting the land within Lake George's watershed.
- **COMMUNITY SCIENTISTS:** The LGA offers a Lake Protector Program, Algae Watch, Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring Weekend, Salt Watch and others.
- **FOREVER WILD:** This clause in New York's Constitution, was added in 1894, and protects state owned lands from being developed or leased, exchanged or sold, or used for mining and logging, ensuring that the forest preserve "shall forever be kept as wild forest lands".



Artist: Chris Quinn

Gg

Glen Island Treats & Guideboats

Kids Quote:

“Can we visit Candy Island today?”

I-spy:



Glassy Lake, Guideboat,
Glen Island Store (Ice Cream/
Candy Island), Great Blue
Heron, Grasshopper

Voice: Mabel (Age 10)



Can we go to Candy Island? PLEEASSE? It's officially called Glen Island, but we've always called it Candy Island because it's filled with all sorts of yummy treats. Getting there is part of the fun—you can only reach it by boat! From our house, it's a quick half-hour zoom through The Narrows in our ski boat. Some days, we make it a full-on adventure—tubing, skiing, and hopping between islands for a swim or an exciting jump off a high rock.

Glen Island is the only island with a store. It has lots of colorful candies, ice cream, camping essentials (like marshmallows!), and a ranger station for permits or for a potty stop. Apparently, Glen Island used to have a post office too. It's fun to imagine families rowing guideboats to pick up their mail and maybe a special treat—probably homemade pies or fresh bread instead of candy bars!

— FUN FACTS —

- **GLEN ISLAND:** One of three islands on Lake George with a DEC ranger station, along with Long Island and Narrow Island. However, only Glen Island has a store. While visiting a ranger station, be sure to check out the Junior Naturalist Program, available for kids ages 5-13.
- **GUIDEBOATS:** Inspired by indigenous watercraft, Adirondacks craftsmen perfected this boat design in the 1800s. Earning its name from the guides who used them to carry sportsmen and tourists, these sturdy yet lightweight boats were perfect for long trips on the water and easy to carry between lakes and rivers. They are not used much these days, but every once in a while, you can see one on the lake.
- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Visit the Adirondack Experience to see a guideboat being constructed. They are typically made from cedar, spruce, or pine and are a classic symbol of Adirondack life.
- **ADIRONDACK EXPERIENCE:** A museum for all ages offering a hands-on, immersive journey into the region's history and nature, with engaging exhibits featuring historic boats, carriages, trains and logging tools.



Artist: Kathleen Becker

Hh

Historic Hotels of Huletts & Hague

Kids Quote:

“Look! There’s a huge old dock on the bottom of the lake! That would have been so cool to see the steamboats dropping off guests. Which fancy hotel used to be here?”

I-spy:



Historic Hotels, Hacker Boats,
H₂O, Hawk, Hummingbird,
Hammock

Voice: Grandma Nancy



As we paddle along and gaze down at the old dock cribbing beneath the water, I imagine the grand hotels that once graced the lake. An era of luxury began in the early 1800s and lasted for around 100 years. Elegant hotels were built to attract wealthy and influential travelers looking to escape cities in the summer and immerse themselves in nature. Expansive docks awaited the arrival of impressive steamboats, each bringing guests eager to experience a season filled with the romance of lake life, exquisite dining, and sophisticated social gatherings. Many visitors returned year after year, weaving memories that would last a lifetime.

Huletts House, perched on the east side of the lake in the mid-1800s, offered guests breathtaking views of sunsets to the west. The property included a long sandy beach, meticulous landscaping, and over 200 elegantly appointed rooms. Guests were entertained by orchestras, games, and regattas, creating a lively community.

On the west side of the lake, Hague also had a few historic hotels. While still luxurious, this quiet community was not known for elaborate parties, but instead attracted guests looking for a more relaxed and quaint lodging experience, as it still does today.

At its peak, Lake George had close to 15 grand hotels. Today, only a few historic structures remain, mostly on the southern end of the lake. North of the Narrows, very little is left of the old hotels, but the lakeside communities of Hague and Huletts still remain beloved spots on warm summer days. Every visit to these charming communities reminds me of the stories that linger on the land and in the water—memories of a time we’ll never forget.

— FUN FACTS —

- **WHAT HAPPENED?** Fires and cars! These historic hotels, primarily made of wood, lit by candles, and heated by fireplaces, were prone to devastating fires. Meanwhile, the Great Depression and the rise of the automobile transformed where and how people vacationed.
- **CURRENT LANDMARKS:** Few historic hotels remain, but their legacy carries on through modern resorts and historical markers. The Uncas Inn is now the Northern Lake George Resort, the Silver Bay Hotel lives on as the Silver Bay YMCA, and the Sagamore is still thriving. The Fort William Henry Hotel has become a modern hotel, retaining some of its historic charm, and sits alongside the replica of Fort William Henry.



Artist: Wendy Soliday

I;

Ice & Indian Kettles

Kids Quote:

“ Will the lake freeze this year?
Why is an icehouse not made
from ice? ”

I-spy:



Ice Skating, Ice Fishing,
Igloo, Ice Cream, Icicles,
Ice Blocks

Voice: Grandpa Forrest



Can you imagine ice a mile thick? That’s how this lake was created...with ice! A long, long time ago (12,000 to 20,000 years), huge glaciers covered Lake George. As they advanced, the glaciers scraped and carved the land, shaping it into the lake we see today. The glaciers left behind some intriguing “potholes” along the shoreline. Sometimes known as “Indian kettles,” they resemble large cooking pots, leading some to believe they were made and used by Indigenous people, while others believe they were formed by glacial rivers swirling small stones in eddies of moving water. What do you think?

Ice is powerful stuff. Not to mention, what would your favorite summer drink be without ice? Even before the invention of the freezer, lakeside residents had ice during the summer. Ice was “harvested” in the winter from the lake and stored in insulated ice houses. The ice kept their food and drinks cold all summer long. A few of these ice houses are still used today, not for storing ice, but as overflow sleeping quarters, sheds, or even an “ice office”.

Nowadays, when the lake does freeze solid, there’s skating, sledding, cross-country skiing, ice fishing, ice shanties, and even ice (sail)boats. Unfortunately, the lake doesn’t freeze as often or as long as it used to, which makes me wonder how the changing climate might affect the health of the lake. Will the lake freeze this year so we can get out on the ice and have some fun?

— FUN FACTS —

- **ICE IN/ICE OUT:** The earliest recorded freeze date for the entire lake was December 20th, 1980 while the latest occurred on February 29th, 1932 (a leap year!). The shortest duration of complete ice coverage was just 13 days, while the longest lasted 121 days.
- **ICE BRIDGES/ROADS:** Frozen roads, also called “ice bridges”, were created over the frozen lake so people could more easily access work and friends on the other side of the lake in the winter.
- **ICY DRIVING:** Salt is used to melt icy roads, but excess road salt can harm the lake. The LGA’s Annual Salt Summit brings people together to figure out how to keep the roads safe in winter, without hurting the lake.
- **POLAR PLUNGE:** A beloved New Year’s Day tradition, where brave souls dive into the new year with a chilly splash.



Artist: Chris Quinn

Ji

Jefferson Project & Junior Naturalists

Kids Quote:

“Why is Lake George the smartest lake?”



Jefferson Project Station,
Junior Naturalist, Jay, Juniper

Voice: Tamara (Mom/Author)



Have you noticed the UFOs (“Unidentified Floating Objects”) around the lake? My kids are intrigued by these mysterious floating stations with their solar panels and fancy gizmos. Did you know there is a raspberry pie on each one? Nope, not the kind you eat! This “raspberry pi” is a key ingredient in something extraordinary—the Jefferson Project. Each floating station’s “brain” uses a raspberry pi single-board computer with custom software, and is also equipped with another device called a sonde, that is used to dive deep into the lake. Data is collected four times every second, 24/7, from April through November—wow!

These stations are studying everything from weather patterns to aquatic life, tracking tons of variables such as temperature, pH levels, salinity, rainfall, sunlight, currents, sediments, and nutrients. The data collected helps researchers inform communities on how to make smart decisions to keep the lake healthy. The Jefferson Project isn’t just for Lake George, it’s a game-changing model for freshwater preservation, which aims to help people better understand and protect lakes all over the world.

— FUN FACTS —

- **JEFFERSON PROJECT:** Started in 2013 with a science-to-solutions philosophy, this unique and innovative collaboration between Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), the LGA and IBM Global Research, uses the lake as a living laboratory to learn from and protect Lake George.
- **REAL-TIME UPDATES:** The Jefferson Project’s data dashboard provides live and historical weather and lake health information. It’s one of the most advanced water monitoring systems in the world! With over 500 sensors on land, in streams, and in the lake, it offers critical data that’s easily accessible to everyone.
- **WANT TO BECOME A JUNIOR NATURALIST?** Here are a few ways kids can learn to help the lake:
 - Pick up a Junior Naturalist booklet at a ranger station (published by the DEC).
 - Download a workbook online through Up Yonda Farm.
 - The LGLC offers a year-round series of events that are great for young explorers.
 - The LGA’s Floating Classroom is a fun and fact-filled cruise for young lake protectors.
 - The DFWI hosts school groups and summer field trips.



Artist: Kathleen Becker

Kk

King George

Kids Quote:

“ Why is it called Lake George? ”



Kayak, Kingfisher,
Kings Crown

Voice: Grandpa Forrest



So, how did the lake get its name? Well, it has actually had many names over the years, some I find very difficult to pronounce! From the Native American tribes who first lived here to the European explorers, each culture left its mark and a unique name for the lake. Eventually, the name Lake George stuck. Let's take a moment to reflect on some of the lake's rich history and evolution of its name.

— A BRIEF HISTORY —

- **MOHAWK:** The predominant tribe around Lake George and part of the Iroquois Confederacy. They called the lake Andiatorocté (pronounced An-dee-a-toh-rok-tay), meaning "the place where the mountains close in."
- **MOHICAN:** The Mohicans, an Algonquian-speaking tribe, may have referred to Lake George as "Caniderioit" (pronounced kah-nee-deh-ree-oit), meaning "the tail of a large lake" due to its geographic connection to the larger Lake Champlain. The Mohicans lived around the lake but were often rivals of the Mohawks.
- **1642:** The first European to name the lake was the French-Canadian missionary Father Isaac Jogues. He named it "Lac du Saint-Sacrement," which means "the Lake of the Blessed Sacrament". Oddly enough, his first view of the lake was as a prisoner of the Mohawks. He escaped, returned to France, and then named the lake.
- **1755:** British General Sir William Johnson added the English name to the lake's lineage. It became Lake George, in honor of King George II of England.
- **1756-1763:** During the Seven Years' War, also known as the French and Indian War, the British built Fort William Henry at the southern end of the lake, while the French built Fort Carillon (later renamed Fort Ticonderoga) near the northern end. With the British "winning" this conflict, the name Lake George, held on.
- **1775-1777:** During the American Revolution, the lake was a key route for thousands of vessels carrying supplies and soldiers. Lake George was also the site of a critical battle—when Benedict Arnold captured Fort Ticonderoga for the Americans. The heavy cannons from Fort Ticonderoga were then taken to George Washington in Boston, helping to prevent the British from moving inland, a huge turning point in American Independence. During this time, there were attempts to change the lake's name, and patriots often called it "Lake Washington" in honor of George Washington, but "Lake George" continued to be used officially, and any name change never fully took hold.



Artist: Andrew Thompson

CI

Loon Love on Lake George

Kids Quote:

“What’s that sound?
Do the same loons come
here every year?”



I-spy:
Loons, Ladybugs, Lake

Voice: Grandma Nancy



As I sit in my favorite Adirondack chair, the familiar call of the loons fills the morning stillness. I close my eyes and let their song wash over me. I’ve known the loons as long as I’ve known the lake. Their love story is played out year after year. While they may migrate separately in winter, they come back together each spring to nest. These remarkable birds can live 30 to 40 years—that’s a long relationship!

Whenever we hear the distinctive call of a loon, my family races to spot its black-and-white plumage and mesmerizing red eyes before it disappears beneath the water. As a retired teacher, I educate my grandkids about their distinct calls—the mournful wail, the gentle hoot, the territorial yodel, and the tremolo, often compared to laughter. What do you think each call/sound is for?

In late spring, female loons lay 1-2 large olive-colored eggs. About a month later, they hatch, at a moment that (unfortunately) coincides with many people’s return to the lake for summer. Because loons struggle to walk on land, they build their nests directly along the shoreline, which makes them particularly vulnerable to boat wakes and human interference, as well as changing water levels and predators. Our family likes to talk about how we can respect their space and protect their homes, ensuring they stay a part of this magical lake.

— FUN FACTS —

- **5 UNIQUE CALLS:** Loons use coos for flirting and snuggling, hoots to communicate with family, wails for long-distance calls, and tremolos and yodels to warn of threats.
- **SUPER SWIMMERS:** Known to be one of the strongest and fastest swimmers among birds that can also fly, adult loons can dive up to 200 feet and hold their breath for up to 2 minutes.
- **UNIQUE FLYERS:** To get airborne, loons “run” on top of the water for up to a quarter mile to take off—a sight to behold! But once airborne, they can fly about 70 mph.
- **TERRITORIAL:** Loons return to the same stretch of lake each spring, and may battle each other to the death when an intruding loon tries to come into an established territory.
- **LOON CENSUS:** Held every July on Lake George since 2001, volunteers count loons and nests to track their population. Conducted by the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation (ACLC), it’s one of the region’s longest-running surveys.



Artist: Shay De Russo

Mm

Maple Syrup, Mohawks & Mohicans

Kids Quote:

“When did the first people live here? Who figured out how to make maple syrup?”

I-spy:



Maple Syrup, Maple Leaves, Mohicans/Mohawks, Monarch, Moose, Muskrat, Mud, Mink

Voice: Tamara (Mom/Author)



I married into a family that thinks maple syrup is a food group! They put it in coffee, oatmeal, smoothies, sauces, mashed potatoes, and anything that needs a bit of special sweetness. When Grandpa makes his famous waffles on most Sunday mornings, they are drenched in locally made maple syrup.

Maple trees have stood here since the retreat of the last Ice Age, over 10,000 years ago, when the Paleo-Indians first arrived. Legend has it that it was these first inhabitants who discovered maple syrup, when a spear missed its animal target and instead hit a maple tree, accidentally “tapping” it.

The Mohawks and Mohicans frequently used maple products, with maple sugar being especially valued for trade. The lake served as an important travel route for trading goods and transporting the tribes, linking waterways to the north (Lake Champlain) and south (Hudson River). Abundant wildlife, plentiful trees, and fertile soil for growing the Three Sisters—corn, beans, and squash—helped both the Mohicans and Mohawks thrive in this region. These resources provided food, shelter, tools, and materials for boat building, all of which were essential for survival and trade. It seems like maple trees and syrup were a big part of why these tribes lived in the Lake George region. Maybe they had a sweet tooth? I know Grandpa sure does! Makes me wonder, would Grandpa trade anything for his maple syrup?

— FUN FACTS —

- **MAKING MAPLE SYRUP:** Indigenous people would collect sap in birch bark containers and drop in hot rocks heated by fires to boil the sap, making it into syrup or sugar.
- **MAPLE SYRUP:** It takes 40 gallons of sap to produce just one gallon of syrup.
- **2 MILLION GALLONS! (A YEAR):** New York is the 2nd largest syrup producer in the USA. Of course, Vermont’s the 1st.
- **MAHICAN VS. MOHICAN:** “Mahican” is the historically accurate name for the tribe, while “Mohican” is a variation introduced by European settlers.



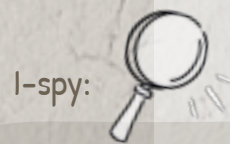
Artist: Wendy Soliday

Nh

Newts in the Narrows & Needle's Eye

Kids Quote:

“ Let’s play ‘Find the Newts!’ ”



Needle’s Eye, Newt, Nest

Voice: Elsa (Age 13)



The Narrows is one of my favorite sections of the lake. It’s where the mountains get high, the homes almost disappear, and the lake gets really narrow with a lot of islands. When we navigate our boat through this area, we have to pay close attention to the many rocks that can hide beneath the surface. Luckily, I recently took my boater’s class, so I understand what the buoys mean and how they help guide us.

Further north, there’s a secret spot called the Needle’s Eye. It’s a hidden gap between two islands, a narrow passage with just enough depth for our boat to glide through. When we pass through the Needle’s Eye, everyone goes quiet, savoring the peaceful oasis around us as we keep our eyes peeled for any wildlife. If we’re lucky, a flash of bright color catches our eye—maybe the vibrant orange of a newt!

During summer hikes with my family, we love to search for the bright orange newts. We play a game called “Find the Newts!” and one time, we counted 113 of them! My dad is really good at spotting them.

— FUN FACTS —

- **NEWTS:** Start life in the water as aquatic larvae with gills, then go through a dramatic transformation into red eft, spending 1-3 years on land before maturing into olive green adults that return to the water to breed. What an extraordinary life cycle! They are said to be capable of living up to 15 years!
- **SUPERPOWERS:** Newts can regrow lost legs or tails, making them true masters of regeneration!
- **THE NARROWS:** A narrow and island-filled stretch of Lake George, approximately 5 miles long, bordered by the Tongue Mountain Range to the west and Black Mountain to the east. Within this stretch, the narrowest part of the lake is 1,000 feet wide and has the highest concentration of islands.
- **NEEDLE’S EYE:** Did you know there’s more than one “needle’s eye” secret passage on the lake? Shhh...don’t tell anyone if you do.
- **BOATER’S LICENSE:** Starting in 2025, all motorized boat operators in New York State, beginning at age 14, need a Boating Safety Certificate, ensuring safer waters for everyone (kids can take a boating safety course at age 10).



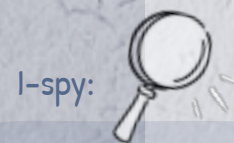
Artist: Andrew Thompson

Oo

Otters, Owls & Oligotrophic Waters

Kids Quote:

“It looks like the otters are back—they left their stinky poop surprise in our boathouse!”



Owl, Oak, Otter

Voice: Tamara (Mom/Author)

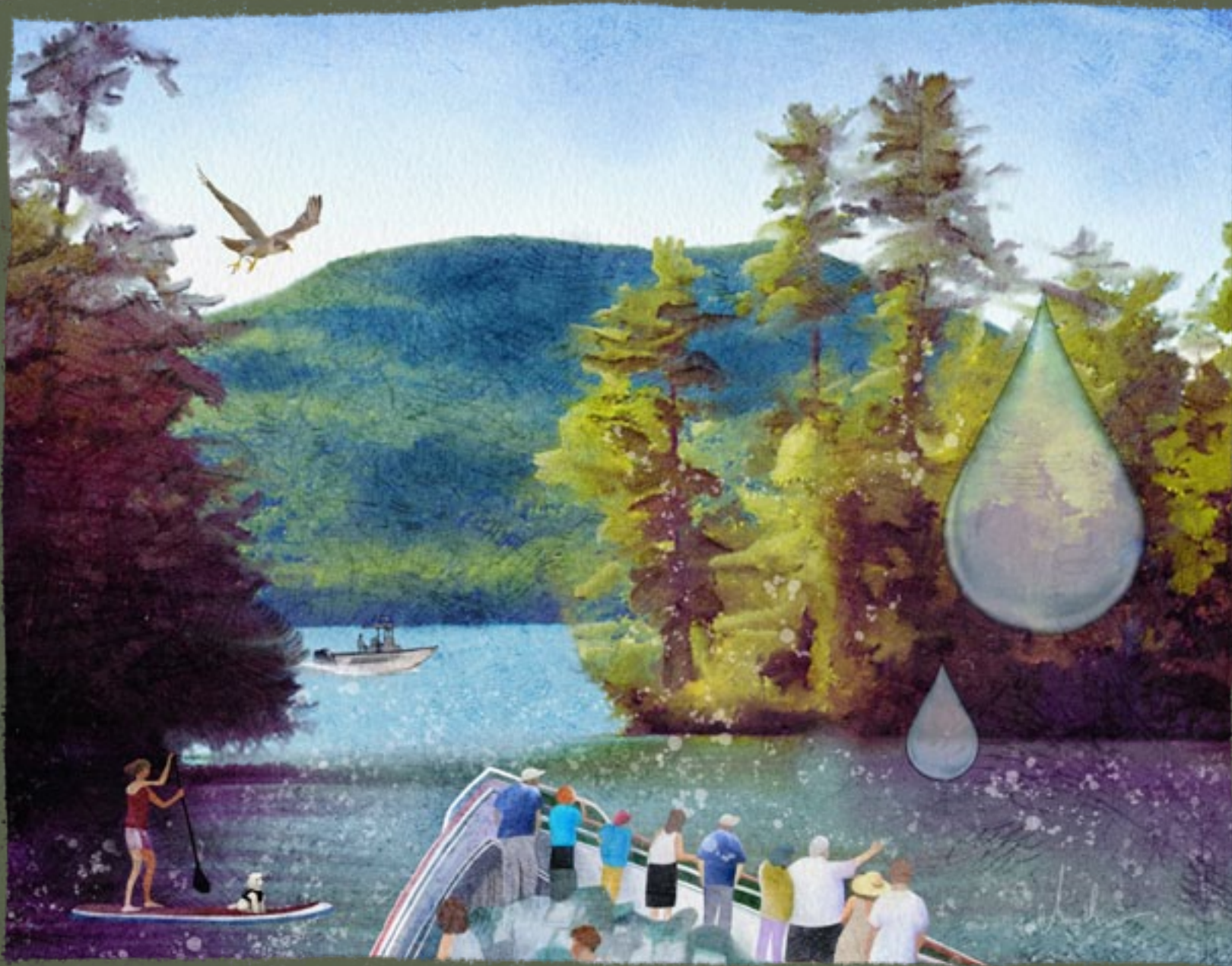


Having a family of otters living in our boathouse has been surprising, sometimes stinky, and actually pretty cool! I'm an early bird, and when I wander into the boathouse before dawn I often find the otters cozied up in their favorite corner by the waterskis. For a few moments, we share a silent connection—who will move first? The otters, reluctant to leave their snug spot, eventually rise and give me a look that seems to say, "Hey, this is our home too!" Then, with sleek bodies, they dive back into the water. They seem to have gotten more used to my presence at the break of day, less bothered by my arrival. One time, we even had a staring contest that lasted nearly a minute until I broke the silence by whistling, nudging them to relocate.

Shortly after I say good morning to the otters, I often hear the owls sharing a dawn chorus. Though they usually stay out of sight, I once had an owl fly just a few feet over my head, its expansive wings spread wide, likely searching for breakfast. At that moment, I was grateful I wasn't a mouse or a baby duck! Many thanks to my otter and owl friends for sharing these oligotrophic waters with me—what a wonderful way to start the day!

— FUN FACTS —

- **OTTERS:** Boathouses and dock cribbing offer cozy nooks for otters to rest and raise their young. Baby otters stay with their mom for about 6-8 months.
- **OWLS:** The lake is home to a variety of owls, including the Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, and Northern Saw-whet Owl, with occasional migration visits from species like the Snowy Owl and Great Gray Owl.
- **OLIGOTROPHIC LAKE:** Lake George is one of the clearest lakes in the world! It's an oligotrophic lake, which means clear water, low nutrient levels, and a diverse aquatic ecosystem. To maintain this healthy state, it's essential to minimize nutrient pollution. Avoiding large lawns with fertilizers and eliminating stormwater runoff are ways to protect the lake. (You'll find more ideas in the back of the book).
- **RAIN GARDEN/ShORELINE BUFFER:** A landscape feature that uses native plants to absorb and filter stormwater runoff. Runoff from rain and melting snow can carry pollutants from impervious surfaces like roofs, driveways, and roads. By capturing or filtering this runoff, rain gardens and shoreline buffers help prevent contaminants from reaching the lake.



Artist: Chris Quinn

Pp

Pure Drinking Water & Paradise Bay

Kids Quote:

“Do you think Georgie the
lake monster lives in
Paradise?”

I-spy:



Paradise Bay, Peregrine
Falcon, Paddleboard,
Police Boat, Poodle Puppy,
Pure Water Droplet

Voice: Zephyr (Age 5)



In our house, the water from the faucet comes straight from the lake, and it tastes delicious! We can't do that at other lakes we've been to. I guess that is because the water here is so clear and fresh. This water is special—when the sun shines on the surface, it sparkles like a million tiny diamonds, especially in Paradise Bay. I've heard stories that say there actually is a hidden treasure on the bottom of Paradise Bay, who knows! The Mohican cruise boat was specially designed so it can easily glide through Paradise Bay. It's so cool to see a huge boat coming through a tiny bay.

My sister and I also like to spot the LG boats around Paradise Bay, and we even got to go onboard one once! It was awesome to see the controls and meet the officer. "LG" is a nickname for the Lake George Marine Patrol. They pass through Paradise Bay regularly to keep everyone safe, especially since it's such a popular spot. Dad says that this bay used to get way too busy and became polluted. Everyone learned from that mistake, and Paradise Bay is paradise again!

— FUN FACTS —

- **DRINKING WATER:** There are about 2,000 households that drink water from Lake George. This is one of the few lakes in the U.S. like this. Others include Crater Lake in Oregon and Lake Tahoe on the California-Nevada border.
- **MONITORING:** The quality of the lake water is carefully monitored to make sure it's safe for drinking. There are strict rules in place to keep the water clean.
- **PARADISE BAY:** A hidden cove in the southern part of the Narrows.
- **HOW MUCH WATER?** Before 1945, the lake's water levels varied by up to four feet, with much debate on who should control the lake's water level—International Paper Co, NY State or the property owners along the lake (through the LGA). Today, with dam control in Ticonderoga monitored by the Lake George Park Commission, the water levels only vary by about 18 inches.
- **DOWN THE LAKE:** Lake George is one of the few lakes/bodies of water in the country that flows north, so when you're heading towards Ticonderoga you're going "down the lake".



Artist: Ottavia Huang

Q q

Quiet on the Queen of American Lakes

Kids Quote:

“Which famous people have been here?”



I-spy:

Quiet Waters, Quill

Voice: Grandma Nancy



Lake George has held a special place in my heart since my first visit in the mid-1960s. The “Queen of American Lakes” took my breath away then, and over the years, it has become a dear friend that has given me a lifetime of memories and love. The lake’s ever-changing conditions—from wild to serene—often mirror the highs, lows, and unpredictability of my own life. I particularly appreciate the precious quiet moments, when the lake’s stillness reminds me to live in the present and to embrace each moment of life on Lake George to the fullest.

And of course, there is my expanding family, dear friends, and neighbors, who make lake life even more precious. But honestly, they’re not very quiet! I’ll never forget one time, we were gathered for a family birthday celebration and watching the moon rise across a glassy lake, when suddenly the stillness was disrupted by our 90-year-old neighbor taking a skinny dip! She serenaded us with “Happy Birthday” at the top of her lungs. The performance had my grandchildren cheering with delight—though she remained blissfully unaware of their encouragement, as she couldn’t swim with her glasses or hearing aids!

I just love this lake. And I know I’m not alone. Many great figures have loved it here as much as I do. Thomas Jefferson captured it in his writings, while Robert Louis Stevenson (author of “Treasure Island”) found inspiration for his tales. Even Mark Twain felt the lake’s quiet magic.

— FUN FACTS —

- **QUEEN:** Since the 1800s, Lake George has been described in guidebooks and newspapers as “The Queen of Waters” and “the Queen of American Lakes”. The term came from the lake’s beauty, elegance, prestige, and history.
- **A SEVEN-YEAR JOURNEY:** A single drop of water takes seven years to travel from Lake George Village to Ticonderoga. Once it reaches the north end, it cascades down the Falls of Carillon, plunging into the La Chute River and then to Lake Champlain.
- **FAMOUS FIGURES:** Charles Dickens (British writer), Georgia O’Keeffe (American artist), Herman Melville (author of “Moby-Dick”), William Wordsworth (English poet), Edgar Allan Poe (American author), James Fenimore Cooper (author of “The Last of the Mohicans”), and F. Scott Fitzgerald (author of “The Great Gatsby”). These are just a few, there are likely many others who have found inspiration in the beauty of Lake George.



Artist: Shay DeRusso

R r

Rattlesnakes, Rock Climbing & Rainbows on Rogers Rock

Kids Quote:

“ Have you ever seen
a rattlesnake? ”

I-spy:



Rattlesnake, Rogers Rock/Slide,
Rainbow, Raccoon, Rabbit,
Raspberries, Robin,
Red-winged Blackbird

Voice: Walter (Author/Dad)



We pulled our canoe up on shore at the base of Rogers Rock (also known as Rogers Slide) and discussed our climbing route for the day. I have been here many times before, but I am always in awe standing at the bottom of this majestic rock wall, not only for the challenge it presents when we climb, but for the history it embodies. Named after Major Robert Rogers, who fought for the British during the French and Indian War, this geographic feature represents the legendary feats of Rogers’ Rangers. One tale recounts how, after acquiring strategic French intelligence, they evaded French fighters and their Native American allies by creating the illusion of vanishing off the cliff—either by sliding down the rock face on snowshoes, or putting their snowshoes on backward and retracing their tracks away from the edge. Which fable do you believe?

As we climb, I am cautiously aware of another local legend—the Timber Rattlesnake. Although not known on the climb, there have been nearby sightings. Despite their unnerving presence, these snakes rarely hurt people and are vital to the ecosystem, serving as indicators of environmental health.

As we approach the summit, a light rain begins, and we are lucky to avoid slick spots. What does rain sometimes bring? Rainbows! We were greeted at the top by one of nature’s most breathtaking displays. Thinking back to this rock’s history, I wonder how many rainbows Major Rogers and his Rangers saw from atop this magical rock.

— FUN FACTS —

- **ROCK CLIMBING:** The base of Roger’s Rock is only accessible by boat, which adds to the climbing adventure and gives a fun show to boaters passing by.
- **ROGERS’ RANGERS:** Today’s U.S. Army has a Ranger division with tactics rumored to have been started and named after Rogers’ Rangers.
- **TIMBER RATTLESNAKES:** Protected in NY since 1983 as a threatened species, they hibernate from October to April and are known to live over 40 years in the wild. Most females reach maturity at an average age of 9 years and only have one litter (averaging 8 newborns per litter) in their lifetime.
- **RATTLESNAKE RESEARCH LEGEND:** Dr. Bill Brown of Skidmore College (retired) has been conducting field research on Timber Rattlesnakes for 45 years (the longest field study of wild rattlesnakes in the country) and has captured and marked hundreds of rattlesnakes. Dr. Brown has played a crucial role in increasing public respect for this often misunderstood creature.



Artist: Chris Quinn

Ss

Steamboats, Speedboats & Sailboats

Kids Quote:

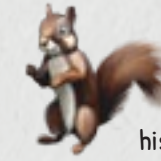
“ The Mohican is coming! The Mohican is coming! ”



I-spy:

Steamboat, Speedboat,
Sailboat, Squirrel, Sunset,
Seagull, Shoreline

Voice: Walter (Author/Dad)



I love boats—always have, always will. From a 100+ year-old guide boat to the large passenger vessels that still cruise the lake, boats have a rich history on the water and within our family. The Mohican is a family favorite. Every Tuesday morning in the summer, the distinct horn sounds and a cannon blasts across the lake, and everyone rushes to the shoreline to watch—an exciting reminder of a bygone era of steamboats. My son also loves reminiscing about his 4th birthday aboard the Mohican when he sat at the helm wearing the captain’s hat.

The distinctive hum of a vintage speedboat also draws us to the lake. Wooden boat races and regattas have been a part of Lake George since the early 1800s. Rowing, sailing, and motorized vessels were a beloved pastime for both lake families and visitors. Whether watching, participating, or building boats, these events brought excitement and community to the lake.

Sailboats are my personal favorite. The peaceful rhythm of a sailboat, powered only by nature, offers a rare sense of serenity. Watching the sunlight (or moonlight) flicker off the lake as the boat shifts with the breeze, feels like a timeless connection to the natural beauty of this lake.

— FUN FACTS —

- **LAKE GEORGE STEAMBOAT COMPANY:** Has been building and operating steamboats and cruise boats for over 200 years, including the first steamboat on the lake, The James Caldwell (1817).
- **THE MOHICAN:** Still cruising after over 100 years, the Mohican, built in 1908, is the oldest continuously operated tour boat in America.
- **GOLD CUP CLASS:** These “Gentleman’s Racer” speed boats were commissioned by builders like ChrisCraft and Gar Wood and raced from about 1914–1939. A few originals can still be seen on the lake today.
- **STOCK UTILITY OUTBOARD RACING:** These boats, each less than 20 feet long (many made in someone’s backyard or garage), competed in Hague’s 90-mile marathon races in the 1950s and 1960s and are rumored to have drawn crowds of over 10,000 people.
- **SAILING CLUBS:** Lake George currently has two sailing-based, regatta-holding yacht clubs; The Lake George Club (founded in 1908, originally as a motor speedboat based race club) and the Northern Lake George Yacht Club (founded in 1940).



Artist: Kathleen Becker

Tt

Ticonderoga – Fort & Town

Kids Quote:

“ Do we eat corn in the
corn maze? ”



Fort Ticonderoga, Train,
Trees, Turtle, Trout,
Tracks, Tent

Voice: Zephyr (Age 5)



Our family seems to always be on the water, but even though we can't get to Ticonderoga by boat, it has some great places to play. My sister and I love the swings and natural waterfall at Bicentennial Park, plus it has a gazebo where we escape from the rain and then jump in all the puddles! The park also has giant pencils! Nearby, we go blueberry picking in the summer and apple picking in the fall. Oh, and I love the farm stands—with pumpkins, tomatoes and sweet corn! Yum!

We also visited Fort Ticonderoga's corn maze when it was corn season. But...I found out you don't eat corn in a corn maze—bummer—but then I loved finding the hidden stations and clues, and playing hide and seek! We also got to see them re-enact a day in the life of the Fort in 1774. We were able to see them perform in their (strange-looking) historical clothing while cooking over a fire or repairing shoes—we even watched them fire guns and cannons. There is A LOT of history at the Fort that I find a bit confusing, but I guess I'll understand it all more when I get older.

— FUN FACTS —

- **LA CHUTE RIVER:** French for “the falls”, this 3.5-mile river connects Lake George (in Ticonderoga at 320 feet elevation) to Lake Champlain (elevation 95 feet).
- **FAMOUS PENCILS:** Graphite was discovered on Lead Hill near Ticonderoga in 1815, sparking a thriving graphite mining industry. The area supplied graphite to many American pencil makers and led to the creation of Dixon-Ticonderoga pencils. The iconic yellow No. 2 pencil debuted in 1913 and is still used today.
- **FORT TICONDEROGA:** Built by the French in 1755 and originally called Fort Carillon, the British captured it in 1759 and renamed it Fort Ticonderoga, which is believed to come from the Iroquois word “Tekontaró:ken”, meaning “the land between two waterways.”
- **“AMERICA'S FORT”:** Locally known as Fort Ti, it has earned the title “America's Fort” for its significant role in American history. Today, visitors can experience battle reenactments, immersive tours, boat cruises, a vast collection of artifacts, a corn maze, and the beautiful King's Garden.



Artist: Shay DeRusso

Uu

Up Yonda & Underwater

Kids Quote:

“When can we go back to Up Yonda?”



Underwater Treasures (Sunken Boat, Anchor) and Up Yonda Creatures (Frog, Turtle, Birdhouse, Owl, Vulture)

Voice: Dasen (Age 3)



At Up Yonda Farm, I went on a magical storybook trail that led me into a secret garden. I touched soft plants, smelled yummy herbs, and watched butterflies. It was so fun! Every time I turned a corner, I saw something new—giant frogs, funny turtles, and birdhouses! I even got to see where they make maple syrup! At the nature center I saw pretend woodchucks, a lynx, and a huge box of glowing sand that I could squish and mold into mountains to imagine how water flows into the lake.

On Halloween, we went to Up Yonda for their special “Trunk or Treat” event. I loved the candy, costumes and decorated cars, the Christmas elves, and bright red fire trucks too! But the best part was meeting real live owls and a vulture. Spooky! My big brother held my hand as we looked and learned about these cool birds. Did you know that vultures can smell a dead animal from up to 2-3 miles away!?

After exploring on land, my dad always wants to get back on the lake and I started thinking about what might be hiding underwater at the bottom of Lake George. I think it’s just fish, weeds and my brother’s favorite Hot Wheels car, but Grandma and Grandpa told me there are other “treasures” down there too—like old boats, motors, and anchors. They even said if I look really close, I might see pieces of old sunken warships and steamboats. How many shipwrecks do you think are at the bottom of Lake George?

— FUN FACTS —

- **SHIPWRECKS:** There are an estimated 300 shipwrecks on Lake George, ranging from French and Indian War relics to large tour and transport vessels from the 1800-1900’s.
- **PURPOSELY SUNK?!** In 1758, 260 bateaux (see “B”) were sunk on purpose by the British for winter storage (a common practice) and to prevent them from being taken by the French.
- **SUBMERGED HERITAGE PRESERVES:** This regulated program of lake shipwrecks includes 4 different dive sites on Lake George. The sites offer a glimpse into archaeological history, with one site adding an educational-based underwater trail system on lake ecology (only accessed using scuba gear).
- **UP YONDA FARM:** Located just north of Bolton Landing, Up Yonda today is a superb environmental educational center and has become a year-round destination offering interactive programs for nature lovers of all ages and abilities.



Vv

Vibrant Community of Lake George Village

Kids Quote:

“ I got to wear the captain’s hat on the Mohican! ”

I-spy:

Village, Vulture, Vole, Viceroy Butterfly

Voice: Zephyr (Age 5)



I love checking out the huge old steamboats when we visit Lake George Village, like the Minne-Ha-Ha, the Adirondack, and of course, the Mohican! It’s exciting to hear their loud horns as they come in and out from their docks by Fort William Henry. I wonder what’s inside the huge walls of the Fort? My parents said we can go in when I’m a bit older.

Million Dollar Beach is a great spot to dip my toes in the water and watch the action in “The Village” or LGV, especially in the summer. I’d prefer to hang out on the beach, but my family likes to wander the boardwalk and main street. There always seems to be a fun festival happening and people from all over the world—the mix of languages is cool to listen to! Being surrounded by tourists is a different kind of adventure, nothing like the quiet, peaceful vibe of our sleepy community in the northern part of the lake.

I easily get distracted by the shops, people and boats, but when I look closely, The Village is full of history too. There are statues and monuments as reminders of the Native Americans, explorers and soldiers. Sometimes we stop to read plaques about the past years that have led to what The Village has become today. Some historic buildings are really cool, like the old bank that’s now a bakery café. Every time we grab a treat there, I can’t help but wonder—do they still keep money in the vault?

— FUN FACTS —

- **LAKE GEORGE VILLAGE:** Originally called Caldwell and renamed in 1903, LGV is at the head of the lake—meaning all water flows “downhill” from here north to Ticonderoga.
- **LAKE GEORGE CRUISE BOATS:** Five large historic and replica cruise vessels operate out of LGV offering tours and cruises of every sort imaginable.
- **THE ARTS PROJECT:** This incredible organization helped bring this book to life! They celebrate local creativity through art exhibitions, workshops, performances, and educational programs.
- **FESTIVALS AND EVENTS:** Lots going on! Annual events include Lights at the Lake, Holidays and History, Winter Carnival, Barrel Fest, Rock the Dock Music Festival, Adirondack Food & Wine Festival, Adirondack Nationals Car Show. There’s something for everyone, from the Lake George Triathlon, to music festivals, art galleries, a winter carnival, motorcycle rallies and a museum at the Lake George Historical Association.



Artist: Andrew Thompson

Wu

Wonders of the Watershed, Wilderness & Wakeboarding

Kids Quote:

“What’s a watershed?”



Watershed, Wakeboarder, Wilderness

Voice: Eaden (Age 16)



There’s nothing like the thrill of wakeboarding on Lake George. With the wind in my face and the water rushing past, it’s as if the world on land completely disappears. I carve across the glassy surface, feeling the boat’s pull and the rush of adrenaline when I hit the wake, launching into the air. That moment of weightlessness, followed by the splash as I land, feels like pure freedom—the kind of thrill that makes me want to do it again and again.

As I fly across the water, I also remind myself what makes wakeboarding on Lake George so incredible—the crystal-clear waters. Through my friends, family, and organizations like the LGA and LGLC, I’m starting to understand why the waters are so clear and what I can do to help keep the lake this magical. The health of the lake really depends on the surrounding wilderness and what flows into it. Everything draining off the shoreline affects its quality—what the rainwater and melting snow collect from the roads, parking lots, driveways and lawns, can either help or hurt the water. The wilderness surrounding the lake is just as important. If these wild areas were developed, keeping the Lake clean would be much harder. We are lucky to have organizations like the LGLC protecting the undeveloped land.

— FUN FACTS —

- **PROTECTED:** The LGLC has permanently protected 12,476 acres of land in the watershed as of 2024.
- **WATERSHED:** An area of land shaped by natural boundaries like mountains, where rain and snowmelt collect in streams or rivers and drain into a common body of water.
- **WHAT’S OUR WATERSHED ADDRESS?** You can figure it out by following the path of a water drop to the ocean. Our Lake George Watershed address: Lake George, La Chute River, Lake Champlain, Richelieu River, St. Lawrence River, Atlantic Ocean.
- **WATERKEEPER:** Chris Navitsky was appointed as the first Lake George Waterkeeper in 2002. In 2025, Waterkeeper Chris continues to work as a part of LGA and is dedicated to protecting Lake George and its watershed by promoting legal compliance, supporting research, and upholding sound engineering principles for the continued protection and well-being of the community.
- **WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE:** Unites more than 300 Waterkeeper groups patrolling and protecting more than 2.5 million square miles of rivers, lakes, and coastal waterways on six continents.



Artist: Wendy Soliday

X x

eXtraordinary
equinoX

Kids Quote:

“ When is the longest day
of the year? ”

I-spy:



X-country Skier, equinoX
(Spring and Fall Seasons)



Voice: Grandma Nancy

Equinoxes are special moments when the seasons shift in the spring and the fall. I’ve always felt a certain kind of anticipation during the equinoxes, like the world is holding its breath for what’s to come.

Each season has a personality, and I love watching my grandkids embrace the natural flow and changes of the passing months. Summer is particularly special when they happily return from camp, launch themselves into the lake, and swim out to the raft to do cannonballs and dives. I remember when they were tiny babies, playing in the sandy shallows. What a gift it has been to watch them grow with each season of lake life.

Autumn brings the vibrant colors of maples, pumpkins, and apples. My littlest grandkids jump into piles of leaves, their excitement contagious. Winter comes, and many creatures sleep during this peaceful time—but not everyone! While I no longer ski, my grandkids bundle up and explore the nearby mountains with Grandpa. Spring brings muddy messes (happy little muck monsters!), and the maple sap flows. I happily watch the buds transform into lush leaves, and the wildflowers return as the lake comes alive again.

— FUN FACTS —

- **EQUINOXES:** Occurring twice a year, around March 20th and September 22nd, the equinoxes mark when day and night are nearly equal in length. While the equinoxes bring spring to one hemisphere, they bring fall to the other. The term “equinox” comes from the Latin words *aequus* (equal) and *nox* (night).
- **SOLSTICES:** Occurring twice a year, the summer solstice (around June 21st) marks the longest day, while the winter solstice (around December 21st) marks the shortest. In the Northern Hemisphere, summer is in June and winter in December, while the Southern Hemisphere experiences the opposite.
- **THERMOCLINE:** In summer, the surface of the lake is in the 70s, but only 20-30 ft down, it quickly drops to 50°F (the exact depth where temperature changes varies throughout the lake). In winter, the bottom stays at a steady 39°F, offering a refuge for fish while the surface may freeze. Each spring, the lake briefly equalizes at 39°F in a process called “Spring Turnover,” when the layers mix.



Artist: Chris Quinn

Yy

Yacht Clubs & YMCAs

Kids Quote:

“When can I sail by myself?
I can't wait for camp
to start again!”

I-spy:



Yellow-throated Warbler,
Yellow Life Jackets, Yellow Flowers,
Yellow Striped Sail

Voice: Uncle Joel



Growing up, Silver Bay YMCA felt like a place of magic and adventure: archery, tennis, fishing, water skiing, ice cream, variety shows, crafting, and capture the flag with camp friends! A summer day at The Bay felt endless. It was as if a fountain of youth sprang on forever—each summer was somehow better than the last. Silver Bay is where I discovered my career, met my wife, and learned the importance of connection. It's a timeless touchstone community that has brought generations together for centuries; a place that rejuvenates all who visit, fulfilling the YMCA's mantra “nurture the spirit, mind, and body.”

This sense of community and adventure is at the heart of camps and yacht clubs around the lake. Just as Silver Bay shaped my life, these summer programs empower kids and families, build lifelong relationships, and inspire a spirit of adventure. Through activities like leaping off local jumping rocks into the lake or tackling high ropes courses, kids and families are not only developing new skills, they are also becoming stewards of the land and water.

— FUN FACTS —

- **SILVER BAY YMCA (EST. 1902):** Known for its historic cedar-beamed boathouse and auditorium, Silver Bay attracts diverse groups, from families to global conferences. It hosts one of the longest-running annual leadership conferences in the USA.
- **ADIRONDACK CAMP (EST. 1904):** One of the oldest coed overnight camps in New York, this camp focuses on wilderness adventures on the lake.
- **LAKE GEORGE CLUB (EST. 1908):** An exclusive club on the southwest shoreline offering tennis, swimming, sailing, and social events.
- **CAMP CHINGACHGOOK (EST. 1913):** This historic YMCA camp offers transformative summer camps, outdoor education programs, and family retreats that foster personal growth, environmental stewardship, and lifelong connections.
- **THE NORTHERN LAKE GEORGE YACHT CLUB (EST. 1940):** A multi-generational club and summer program for sailing, tennis/pickleball, swimming, and family fun, where kids who start out as young “polliwogs” form lifelong friendships and may go on to become competitive sailors in college and beyond.



Artist: Andrew Thompson

Zz

Zooplankton & Zephyrs

Kids Quote:

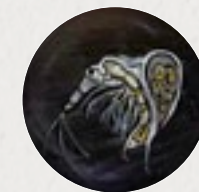
“What’s that in its belly?
Which kind of zooplankton
is it?”

I-spy:



Zooplankton

Voice: Zephyr (Age 5)

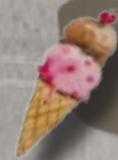


Seeing zooplankton under a microscope while aboard the Floating Classroom felt like meeting mini aliens—I could see the algae they had eaten in their bellies! These tiny superheroes are food for all kinds of bigger creatures, like fish. Some zooplankton look like little jelly beans or shrimp, and some are shaped like tiny cups or wiggly worms. They also have some cool tricks, like swimming in tiny circles or even doing flips to escape from things that want to eat them. They’re like little acrobats in the water!

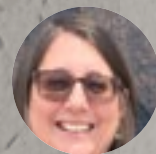
While the zooplankton do their tricks below the surface of the water, the zephyr winds blow above. That’s me! I’m Zephyr. My parents say that my name (Zephyr) is a gentle breeze from the west. But my grandparents often say that I’m more of a hurricane! Mostly, the zephyrs on the lake are gentle (when they want to be). Actually, zooplankton and zephyrs are kind of alike—small, but powerful. They help us remember that even little things we do can make a big impact and that everything on the lake is connected—the wind, the water, the land, and the creatures (like us!).

— FUN FACTS —

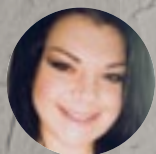
- **ZOOPLANKTON:** Tiny (microscopic) animals that drift in water and are vital to the aquatic food chain. There could be 50–100 zooplankton in a raindrop-size sample of lake water. In Lake George, common types include cladocerans, copepods, and rotifers. Certain zooplankton are used to gauge water quality so they are considered an indicator species.
- **DIURNAL VERTICAL MIGRATION:** This is the fancy (scientific) name for how zooplankton ascend to the lake’s surface at night to feed, and descend to deeper waters during the day to evade predators.
- **SPINY WATER FLEA:** This invasive zooplankton was first detected in Lake George in 2012. They are most likely spread by fishing equipment and boats. These guys are a problem because they compete with native zooplankton, may harm small fish populations, and their population grows quickly. The LGA has been studying its impact on the lake.
- **THE “LAKE GEORGE WIND”:** Though summer mornings may be calm, sailors and campers with flapping tents will notice that as warm air rises off the lake, cooler mountain air rushes in, and afternoon winds blow steadily.



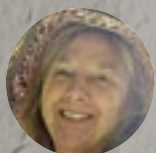
Contributing Artists



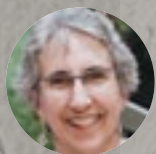
Chris Quinn (C, F, G, J, P, S, Y) — Chris is a third generation lover and summer resident of Lake George, career graphic designer, previous branding firm owner, digital artist, and children's book author and illustrator. ► theoneredchair.com



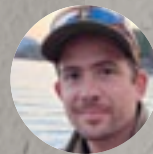
Shay DeRusso (B, E, M, R, U, V) — Living and creating in the heart of the Adirondacks, Shay specializes in realistic charcoal drawings and paintings that capture the beauty and spirit of local wildlife. Inspired by the rugged landscapes and diverse creatures of the region, her work aims to bring the wild closer to home with intricate detail and natural realism. ► artbyshay.com



Wendy Soliday (D, I, X, N) — A professional artist summering at Lake George for nearly 75 years. Her passion for the lake and its pure, vulnerable water is evidenced in her hundreds of pastels, watercolors, and oils of the area. "The changing seasons, the shifting colors and the dramatic lighting throughout the day are endless gifts that bring me joy and inspire me as an artist. Each moment is often startling." ► wendysoliday.com



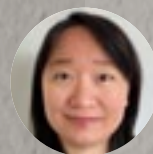
Kathleen Becker (H, K, T) — Kathleen feels lucky to have spent almost all of her summers on Lake George. Always a lover of art, she started painting with watercolors about 50 years ago at Silver Bay YMCA! Now, as a retired art educator, she enjoys teaching many people the joy of painting each summer at the place where she began her artistic journey. ► khbeckerartwork.com



Andrew Thompson (L, O, W, Z) — An artist and craftsman known for unique works of fish and wildlife that explore a variety of disciplines including painting, sculpture, and illustration. He has a studio in Hague and Brooklyn. ► andrewthompsonart.com



Shaundra Bartlett (A) — Her passion for illustration began at age two, when she spent her childhood creating art and dictating stories to her parents. Inspired by a note from her sixth-grade teacher, who wrote, "I expect to see your name in a bookstore one day," she made it her mission to see that dream come true. After studying gouache and watercolor, she created her first book in the Bartlettberry Briar series. She is currently working on the sixth book in her series and is the recipient of multiple Mom's Choice Awards® and Purple Dragonfly Book Awards. ► bartlettberrybriarbooks.com



Ottavia Huang (Q) — An artist, illustrator, and creative industries researcher who loves capturing the magic of everyday moments. Born in Indonesia and having lived in Taiwan before making New York her home, she brings a world of inspiration to her art. With watercolor and ink, she creates light-filled, spontaneous sketches that tell the story of places, people, and the little wonders around us. When she's not working in her studio in Ballston Lake, New York, you can find her exploring the Capital Region with a sketchbook in hand! ► instagram.com/ms.otter.studio



1.

GO LOW IMPACT ON THE WATER

Mix up your "boat time" by choosing a low-impact activity like kayaking, paddleboarding, canoeing, or sailing. It's a quieter, cleaner way to enjoy the lake and allows for more intimate shoreline viewing—slow down, and you'll see more.

2.

KEEP THE LAKE CLEAN

Did you know it's actually illegal to put certain things in Lake George? Soap (no washing dishes or your hair/body), food scraps (no feeding ducks or fish), and, of course, litter in general.

3.

STOP THE SPREAD OF INVASIVES

It's common knowledge that boats launched off a trailer must be inspected. However, to really stop the spread of invasives, fishing gear, paddles, lifejackets, and any vessels like kayaks and SUPs should all be cleaned well away from the lake before use.

4.

USE WATER WISELY

Conserving water reduces the strain on local septic systems and helps maintain the health of Lake George.

5.

REDUCE POLLUTION RUNOFF

Set up a rain garden or rain barrel to collect rainwater. It's an easy, fun way to conserve fresh water and prevent pollutants from running into the lake.

6.

LET NATURE STAY WILD

Shoreline buffers with native plants—not manicured lawns or hardscapes—help filter runoff, protect the shoreline, support wildlife, and add beauty to the area. Keeping it more wild benefits both you and the environment.

7.

GET INVOLVED

Whether you're a resident or visitor, getting involved with local groups, clubs, and organizations and attending their programs can be both entertaining and educational. See our list of organizations on the resources page.

Top Ways to Protect Lake George —TODAY!

These are just a few ideas to get started—there is SO much we can all do together.

Join us at adklakelove.com



Lake George Journey

"An Alphabet Adventure"

by Tamara Jacobi & Walter Wright

RESOURCES

Lake George Association (LGA)
Lake George Land Conservancy (LGLC)
Lake George Park Commission
Darrin Freshwater Institute & Jefferson Project
Lake George Arts Project
Waterkeeper Alliance / Chris Navitsky
Lower Adirondack Regional Arts Council (LARAC)
Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation
Bolton Free Library

Up Yonda Farm
Silver Bay YMCA
Dr. Bill Brown, Ph.D. (Rattlesnake Research)
Roger Summerhayes (Floating Classroom Educator)
Dr. Ed and Sally Becker (Eagle Restoration)
Fort Ticonderoga
Fort William Henry
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

Their support made this book possible!
More at www.adkLakeLove.com



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Lake George Journey

"An Alphabet Adventure"

by Tamara Jacobi & Walter Wright



"Don't let the fact that this book is colorful and 'kid-friendly' fool you. It is filled with valuable scientific information and important history that will be just as informative and interesting to adults. The book highlights what makes the Lake George basin extraordinary and what can be done to sustain the magic and majesty of this place for successive generations."

— Roger R. Summerhayes (LGA Floating Classroom Educator)

"Lake George has shaped my life in so many ways—from childhood adventures on its waters to a career dedicated to protecting its future. This beautiful book captures the magic of the lake and will inspire the next generation to cherish and safeguard it."

— Brendan Wiltse, Ph.D. (Executive Director, Lake George Association)

"The land of our childhood gets under our skin and into our blood. Growing up as a fourth-generation Lake George summer person, the Adirondacks are my favorite place in the world. Jacobi's beautiful (and educational) family Alphabet book brings to life so many wonderful elements of this part of the world and allows others to discover the beauty as well."

— Lee Woodruff (Best-Selling Author of "Perfectly Imperfect")

"The true beauty of Lake George goes beyond the shimmering waters and scenic land surrounding it to include the plants and animals that call it home, our unique lake communities, and memories shared with family and friends. This book captures all of these elements and illustrates how they are intertwined, inspiring all readers, adults and children alike, to appreciate and care for this special place."

— Michael Horn (Executive Director, Lake George Land Conservancy)

"Lake George is a special place for many—a sanctuary for nature amongst communities—which is why it is vital to protect Lake George for future generations. Whenever I dive into the cool crystal waters or wander on a mountain trail, I can disconnect from daily demands and become rejuvenated. This book illustrates and explains these wonders of nature for all, young and old, to understand and enjoy."

— Chris Navitsky (Waterkeeper Alliance)



Purchases of this book benefit local conservation and educational organizations in the Adirondacks, including the LGA and LGLC. If you have an idea, project, or inspiration to share, please send us a note at www.adklakelove.com.



@ADKLAKELOVE



LGA Lake George Association

LK LAKE GEORGE LAND CONSERVANCY

