



Lake Moraine Association

HAMILTON, NEW YORK

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SPRING NEWSLETTER, MAY 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello to all our Lake Moraine Association Members and Neighbors,

I hope everyone had a safe winter wherever you spent it. I understand it was a very cold and snowy winter in Upstate NY and unfortunately much worse than the prior winter. Maybe we'll catch a break this coming winter. We left New York on December 20th and were very happy to spend our winter months in Florida. Although the temperatures in Florida in January were unusually cold, with a number of overnight record lows in the mid-twenties, the rest of our stay through mid-April was great.

I'm sure many shared my concern, again this year, about damage to shoreline structures when the ice began forming on the lake with the water level only down eight inches from full. And this was actually ten inches higher than the prior year. The original plan Canal Corp shared in August 2025 was to have the temporary siphon system installed and operational by November 1st to facilitate the annual three-foot drawdown. However, due to unforeseen delays, the system did not become fully operational until early April. Since we haven't seen or heard any reports of shoreline structure damage, we can certainly be thankful for this positive outcome again this year.

Once the temporary siphon system was fully operational, the lake level went down almost 10 feet in just under a month. We have to hope we don't get too many consecutive rainy days or any heavy rain events going forward, as that could compromise the progress that has been made.

As expected, the drawdown has affected some shallow driven or drilled wells. And unfortunately, it may create many other challenges, especially with respect to watercraft access and activities during the time it takes to complete the Dam Restoration Project. I'm optimistic that we'll have some great weather in the months to come and will be able to enjoy some quality time at the lake, in spite of the drawdown.

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I've been at the lake a few times recently and I'm really amazed at how much of the lakebed has been exposed around the perimeter of the lake. For those of us that may plan on launching watercraft in the near future, be wary of new obstructions that may not have been an issue when they were ten feet below the water's surface.

Jackie Schillinger, Senior Communications Strategy Manager, has recently provided an update on the status of the Madison Dam Rehabilitation Project, which we have included in this newsletter.

The LMA Board of Directors had their first 2026 monthly meeting on April 16th, and updates were provided on the status of the ongoing and new initiatives we will be working on this year. More information on these initiatives is included later in this newsletter. Once again, I'd like to acknowledge and thank the directors for their commitment to attend and participate in these monthly board meetings and their contributions to the initiatives that sustain and/or improve the health and safety of Lake Moraine.

Special thanks to Michele Howgate and Martha Young for their ongoing commitment to gathering information for and publishing this newsletter, as well as, others who provided information and updates.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at our first General Membership Meeting on Saturday, May 23rd.

We extend our deepest condolences to the Koen family -- Kerry, Scott, and Erin -- as well as their extended family, on the loss of Joe. Our thoughts are with you during this difficult time. The LMA Board of Directors appreciates the time, effort, and thoughtful care Joe has devoted to cleaning up the stream uphill from the weir on East Lake Road and creating catchment areas to prevent sediment from entering the lake. His care for the lake was quiet but significant and consistent.

Mike

LMA General Meetings for 2026

Coffee & Refreshments 9:30 am / Meeting 10:00 am

Saturday, May 23rd – Appley Center

Saturday, June 27th – location to be announced

Saturday, September 5th – location to be announced

Board of Director's Meetings are held the third Thursday of each month – April through October at 7:00 pm. Locations to be announced – anyone is welcome to attend.

2026 LMA Membership Dues

Regular Membership - \$30 and includes two people

Associate Membership - \$15 per person

Regular Membership is available to any riparian property owner (owning lakefront property). Regular membership entitles the property owner (or owners) of any parcel or parcels on Lake Moraine to one vote, provided current dues have been paid. Regular Membership also includes free admission for up to two people at social events, including the LMA picnic. Additional family members and guests will be charged a nominal fee at social events.

Associate Membership is available to any one individual not owning lakefront property with an interest in the affairs and condition of Lake Moraine. An Associate Membership will be assessed annual dues as established by the Association. Associate members have no voting powers in meetings of the Lake Moraine Association. Associate members and guests will be charged a nominal fee at social events.

If you would like to pay your dues before a General Meeting, you can mail your check to **Michele Howgate, LMA Treasurer, 522 Frank Road, Hamilton, NY 13346**. Checks should be made payable to the Lake Moraine Association. If you are mailing a check or sending cash, send a self-addressed envelope if you would like your membership sticker mailed to you, or you can pick up your sticker at the next General Meeting.

Please join your Association to show your support and to ensure the lake is healthy and safe. Learn how we try to control weeds and protect the lake. We have many committees that need additional participants. Please let us know if there is a particular aspect of the lake that interests you. As our meetings are public meetings, anyone can speak at any of the meetings.

4th of July Festivities – We’re Looking for Ideas

Friday, July 3rd -- Lighting of the Lake around Lake Moraine at dusk

Saturday, July 4th -- Village of Hamilton Farmer's Market 8:00-1:00

Saturday, July 4th -- Village of Hamilton Parade at Village Center 11:00

Saturday, July 4th -- Village of Hamilton Events in the Park after the Parade

Saturday, July 4th -- Lake Moraine Boat Parade for Paddle Craft???

LMA Socials

The LMA Board is looking for ideas for Socials for the Summer of 2026. Let us know if you have any ideas or would like to coordinate an event. Please send your ideas to

mail@lakemoraineny.org

Madison Dam Rehabilitation Project – Provided by Jackie Schillinger, Sr.
Communications Strategy Manager – NYS Canals Corporation

- The drawdown is complete! In total, over half a billion gallons of water were released from the reservoir. This is a major feat and milestone for the project, and we appreciate the cooperation and understanding of all stakeholders involved. From here we'll be balancing our discharge according to what's coming into the reservoir from the watershed as we work to maintain the drawdown level of 10 feet throughout the duration of construction.
- You can view and track the level of the reservoir in near real-time and view the timeline ahead at the following link: [Madison Reservoir Dam Rehabilitation Project Temporary Drawdown](#).
- Upper Lake Level – One recent change we need to report is the level of the upper lake. We had planned to maintain the level of the upper lake approximately 4 feet higher than the drawdown level of the main lake with the intent to minimize impacts of the full drawdown to this area. Upon further review and coordination with NYSDEC, it was decided that doing so may not result in an overall ecological benefit to the upper lake. Doing so would have required installation of a steel sheet pile cofferdam around the culvert pipes through the causeway. This cofferdam would have effectively blocked fish and other wildlife from moving between the two pools. The cofferdam would have also added complexity, safety risks, and cost to our project and Madison County's culvert replacement project at the causeway. The level of the upper lake will now simply be maintained at the same 10-foot drawdown level as the main lake.
- Our construction contract was awarded to Kubricky Jointa-Lime, LLC/ DA Collins Companies of Wilton, NY and was fully executed at the end of March. They have mobilized and begun with preparatory site work. They have set up a staging area in an agricultural field adjacent to the dam on Spillway Road. Please note that we have a temporary agreement for the use of this area with the property owner. At the end of the project, everything (including the gravel pad) will be removed from this area and the field will be restored.
- Tree Clearing for Saddle Dike – Some of the early work that our contractor has completed includes tree and brush clearing in work areas of the project. This includes the low-lying waterfront area to the west of existing dam. A saddle dike, or smaller earthen berm, will be installed in this area to effectively block uncontrolled releases of water from leaving the reservoir during an extreme event. This aspect of the project will add a new feature to the overall dam infrastructure and was designed to increase safety by mitigating flood risks.

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- Good news! The temporary extension for NYSDEC's existing boat launch has been delivered (22.5' x 100'). We are working on the logistics and are looking to have it installed soon.

The attached image was taken from a drone on April 24 when the lake was around 7-ft down.

As always, you can reach Jackie at Jackie.schillinger@nypa.gov or 518-281-5510.



Additional Information - Canal Corporation and the Dam Rehabilitation Project -

Throughout the winter, members of the Board of Directors and lake residents at large have had many conversations about the dam repair with Joe Dodd and Jackie Schillinger from the Canal Corp. We have found them to be responsive to our questions and concerns. We thought LMA residents might like to hear the conversation with Joe Dodd and Jackie Schillinger about the project on the [Madison County Milk House podcast](#). Scroll down the list of episodes to "Look Back at 2025 in Madison County - Madison Reservoir Dam Rehabilitation Project."

The Canal Corporation is currently working with LMA residents and Board members to map out locations for timber mat walkways that will help island property owners access their properties during the drawdown period. They are hopeful that their contractor will be able to install the mats by early June.

As many of you have noticed, the exposed lake bottom sediment is hard and walkable in many places but quite mucky and impassable in others. Timber mats will help people cross the muck safely. Photographs of lake residents crawling backwards to safety or losing their shoes while crossing the muck are always welcome for the archive.

Wells: Many shallow wells around the lake have lost water, as they did in the last major drawdown, in 1983, as reported in the [February 1984 Newsletter](#). Neighbors have been very helpful in supporting others on the lake whose shallow wells have gone dry; local contractors and well drilling companies have also come through quickly, for which many of us are grateful. *From the desk of Nancy Ries*



Culvert Replacements - Madison Town Supervisor and member of the LMA Board of Directors Greg Reuter is in constant conversation with Madison County personnel about the culvert repair projects. The East Lake Road/Koen property culvert project with dredging/sediment removal of the lakebed at that location is under discussion with the County and DEC, the work is expected to begin in June or July. The County is waiting for the bid process for the East Lake Causeway culvert replacement to be completed. *From the desk of Greg Reuter*

LMA Visual Archive - The Lake Moraine Association (LMA) is building a visual archive to document the drawdown and dam rehabilitation process, and we need your help!

Dale Rejtmar is curating a permanent record for the LMA archives that will eventually be available for all members to view via a shared link.

If you have photos of the drawdown, please share them to help us capture this piece of our lake's history.

How to Submit Your Photos:

- **Text to:** Dale at 646-247-8405
- **Email to:** dale.rejtmar@gmail.com
- **Subject Line:** 2026 LM Drawdown | [YOUR LAST NAME]
- **In the Body:** Please include when the images were taken (month is fine) and where they were taken (e.g., "*From the Colgate Boathouse*" or "*Looking north from Sunny Point*").

You don't need to label individual image files, but any extra context you provide is always helpful.

Thank you for helping us preserve the story of Lake Moraine! *From the desk of Nancy Ries*

Historic Documents

We have compiled a tremendous number of historical files regarding minutes, documents, photos, events and more related to Lake Moraine. They can be found at: [Minutes](#) and [Newsletters](#)

Lake Moraine CSLAP - As we embark on a new chapter of Lake Moraine history, the Lake Moraine Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program, (CSLAP), volunteers are getting ready to begin the 2026 season, it's 41st, in June. Our first challenge is to secure safe dockage, to learn about the new shoreline, and to adjust to using different boats this season. The group will collect water samples for monitoring 4 times this summer from the second deepest area on the lake. In a normal year, the collection site is 44 feet deep. Because of the 10 foot drawdown for the dam reconstruction project we will adjust our equipment to collect from a 34 foot depth. Collections will take place once in June, July, August and September. Lake Moraine will once again add important data to its historical record. This data will be compared to past data to assess any dramatic changes in water quality over time.

We are pleased to announce that our Lake Moraine CSLAP team, consisting of Terry Spooner, Teena Spooner, Janet Walsh, Alan Tuttle, Ann Palmiter, Tim Peach, and Eileen Fehlner, has been selected to measure Dissolved Oxygen levels at Lake Moraine's collection site this season as part of a new initiative through NYSFOLA (New York State Federation of Lake Associations) and the DEC. DEC CSLAP Coordinator, Alene Onion, was able to secure a federal grant to fund the purchase of several Dissolved Oxygen probes or meters. Costing almost \$5000.00 a unit, there will not be enough meters for each lake participating in the program to be able to use one this season. We agreed to share a meter with the Bradley Brook Reservoir and Hatch Lake CSLAP volunteers which helped us to be able to be chosen as participants. We also agreed to use the meter 8 times this season which adds 4 more visits to our collection sites. We will be trained on use and care in May.

Remember to be on the lookout for Harmful Algae Blooms in our waters. If you see any, stay away and keep pets away. Also, report your sighting by submitting a Suspicious Algal Bloom Report Form via the NYS DEC website: [DEC HAB Reporting](#). *From the desk of Eileen Fehlner*

Lake Moraine Ecology - Volunteers Eileen Fehlner, Warren Meola, Tim Peach, Nancy Ries, and Alan Tuttle conducted four rounds of tributary sampling in 2025 and had those samples tested through the Upstate Freshwater Institute (UFI) lab. We have some preliminary results but until we do another year of testing, we can't report definitive findings. Stay tuned! The trib testing will ultimately give us an understanding of phosphorous and nitrogen loading from the surrounding hills and fields into the lake. We will add one site, below the spillway, for 2026 to provide insight into the loading that occurs on the lake through septic systems and other sources.

In addition to the tributary testing, the Board of Directors budgeted for testing of exposed sediment to measure copper residues from many decades of copper sulfate application.

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A team of biologists from Upstate Freshwater Institute visited the lake in early May to grab samples from all around the lake. We will report their findings when they are available. UFI is proving to be a very helpful partner as the LMA works to monitor the ecology of the reservoir.

The drawdown has exposed dying [Starry stonewort](#) all around the lakeshore. When exposed to air, this invasive aquatic macro-algae (originally from Eurasia) dies leaving yellowing residue; it seems to smell only while still drying out. This invasive, which was discussed in [Ben German's 2014 report](#) on Lake Moraine ecology, has become a real nuisance in Lake Moraine and many other waterbodies. The drawdown will certainly reduce its biomass temporarily. Starry stonewort thrives in 5-15 foot deep water. There seem to be few ways to eradicate it but let's hope the drawdown gives it a big hit.

We ask Lake Moraine residents to pick up trash in the exposed sediment. Picking up plastic trash is especially important. Walking around the shorelines we have noticed a great deal of decomposing plastic sheeting and if possible this would be good to remove where you have access. Remember that the lake bottom (even out of the water) is regulated by the DEC and any major activities including digging and earth moving will likely require permits. *From the desk of Nancy Ries*

The Burn Ban in New York State officially ended on May 14 - however, lake residents should remember that, according to DEC:

- Burning garbage or leaves is prohibited year-round in New York State.
- Backyard fire pits and campfires less than 3 feet in height and 4 feet in length, width, or diameter are allowed, as are small cooking fires.
- Only charcoal or dry, clean, untreated, or unpainted wood can be burned.
- People should never leave these fires unattended and must extinguish them.

Properties on Lake Moraine are small and tightly packed together. Wood smoke from campfires can adversely affect many neighbors, so we ask that people be mindful of wind, atmospheric conditions, and neighbors' proximity when deciding to light a campfire. *From the desk of Nancy Ries*

Boater Safety Courses – Who needs a New York Boating Safety Certificate - All operators of motorized boats or PWCs in New York are now required to be certified.

The regulation, education class information, and more information can be found at <https://parks.ny.gov/recreation/boating/education.aspx>. We also have a list of classes on our website: <https://www.lakemoraineny.org/nys-safe-boater-law>.

Septic

- Rebates for electric/gas/compost toilets are 30% of the cost of the unit, but not the cost of installation. The maximum refund is \$1,200.
- Septic clean-out rebates are 50% up to \$350 per clean out, available once a year for everyone, island and mainland property owners.
- We strongly recommend island property owners to group with other island property owners to have their systems pumped, to reduce cost.
- Contacts: Craig Lawson 607-226-4214, Nancy Ries 315-750-0007 or Ryan Hurley 413-455-4689
- For reimbursement, please send a copy of your bill to: **Craig Lawson, 19 Summit St, Norwich NY 13815**

Stewardship Program – Lake Moraine, Madison County, Hamilton, NY

The duties of the Lake Moraine Boat Steward Program are unsure at this time. If you are interested in becoming a Boat Launch Steward, or know someone who is, below are the responsibilities.

- Flexible hours - early morning, late afternoon. Includes weekends and holidays.
- Hourly Minimum Wage Paid
- Duties include but are not restricted to:
 - Examining watercraft for invasive aquatic species
 - Educating boaters on the importance of clean/drain/dry
 - Collecting data on boats, watercraft, previous waterbodies visited etc
 - Training will be provided
 - Applicants must have transportation to the launch site as well as a working iPhone or iPad

Contact Jane Clement at js3clement@icloud.com or 607-336-9127 with any questions.

From the desk of Jane Clement

2027 Calendars - Lee Ingraham has been busy taking pictures for the 2027 Calendar. If you have an event you would like to have included in the calendar, give Lee a call, he would be happy to take pictures.

To place an order, Lee will be at our lake events, or you can call him at 607-244-2608 or email him at lcingraham@gmail.com. Calendars are \$15.00 each with \$1.00 per calendar going to the Lake Moraine Association.

Town of Madison Clean Up Days – Friday, June 5th & Saturday, June 6th (8 am – 4 pm)
Town Highway Building, 3733 Solsville Road, Madison, NY 13402

Town of Madison Leash Law – A reminder from the Town of Madison Dog Control Officer - all dogs must be leashed at all times except on owner's property. All dogs must be licensed as per New York State.

Please visit our website: www.lakemoraineny.org

Please visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/LakeMoraine

To send an email: mail@lakemoraineny.org

LMA Board of Directors:

Mike Cragolin, President

Nancy Ries, Vice President

Jane Clement, Recording Secretary

Craig Lawson, Aquatic Tax District Treasurer

Michele Howgate, LMA Treasurer

Directors: Tom Ashmore, Jr., Eileen Fehlner, Ryan Hurley, Warren Meola,
Ann Palmiter, Greg Reuter, Matt Simmons, Terry Spooner,
Roger Tanner, Alan Tuttle, Martha Young