



INDIAN LAKE ASSOCIATION

in the Adirondacks

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

~ Jon Voorhees

With exquisite timing, just as folks finished tying up their floating docks in Norman's Cove last fall, and the water receded just enough to beach them, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation suddenly announced that this would no longer be permitted. Your Indian Lake Association tried valiantly to dissuade DEC but, the State was resolute in their determination to bring an end to this long standing practice. In fact, DEC had no choice; because storage has always been illegal there (and anywhere on State land). Once complaints arose from the public, the result was inevitable. The whole sad affair was easily foreseeable and preventable; since abuse of the Cove had become rampant, and an ever-increasing number of floats were simply abandoned there to molder away as garbage. Absent this slovenly mess, it is quite conceivable that docks could have migrated in and out of the cove forever without the State ever intervening. Toward the end of January, DEC emphasized their ban by sending notices to all lake front property owners. It's uncertain at the present time what forms of enforcement and cleanup the State is contemplating. The fact is: most docks (and appurtenances) on the lake do not conform to legal land use requirements, even in their summer locations; and most have never been permitted or gained variances. If NYS really wanted to get ugly, these present difficulties will seem minor. So, at this point, discretion would be the better part of valor. Unfortunately, the problem of what to do with our docks remains.

In recent decades the ice has left the lake in fairly gentle fashion. But those with a long memory can recall times when ice-out was quite a violent affair, driving thick blocks of ice far up on shore, stacking them atop one another, girdling trees, wrecking structures and moving huge boulders. There is nothing to say that this will not happen again. And, of course, most folks have seen midwinter fluctuations in lake level that have caused

the ice pack to place enormous stress on docks. It's a tough life for a dock on Indian Lake; and it's going to get tougher. Invest wisely.

Just as the Norman's Cove problem was predictable, a similar cloud is brooding on our collective horizon. NYS has begun to focus its attention more and more on private septic systems and other forms of sanitary waste disposal. When I was young, most summer folks got their drinking water from the lake. Harmful algae blooms in recent years have betrayed the present risk of that; and most folks have put in drilled wells or other, safer sources. But what goes in must come out. In the case of lake front property that means out into the soil along shore, which typically is steep, shallow, and not very well suited for robust treatment facilities. As the smaller camps of the earlier 20th Century have been demolished in favor of grander places, and folks have installed in-home laundry and dish washing appliances, the strain has become very noticeable.



ANNUAL MEETING & BREAKFAST CAMP PIERCE BARN

9:30 AM

SATURDAY, JULY 26, 2025

A word about our venue...

Most of you who answered our survey last year preferred the Camp Pierce Barn for our meeting venue. Many thanks to our member, Alan Pierce, for offering us the complimentary use of his "barn" for our meeting. The "Barn" is located directly across from the old Lake Store building at 5441 Route 30. Park on the grass on the lower field and walk up to the Barn. Handicapped parking, closer to the building will be arranged for those unable to navigate the hill. Simply hail down one of our valets and let them know you need assistance.

Most owners are unaware of the fact that detergent stifles the bacterial decomposition process that keeps septic tanks working properly. The quality of water in Indian Lake is very much a legitimate concern of the State. They have made their initial overture to lake front property owners as a velvet glove concealing an iron fist. Ever generous with the taxpayers' money, the State instituted a Septic System Replacement Fund, allowing homeowners up to 50%, up to \$10,000 maximum, toward upgrading their private systems. Hamilton County is participating in this program, and Indian Lake has been designated as an "Eligible Water Body". Caitlin Stewart (518-548-3991 caitlin@hamcoswcd.org) is the go-to person. She will be presenting at our annual Members' Breakfast on July 26. Most property owners should have received a grant application in the mail; and though the deadline to apply has passed, the health of your septic system should still be of utmost concern to you. The existence of this fund and Indian Lake's designation could be construed as follows: THE STATE HAS ITS EYE ON US. If we don't clean up our act, then we can expect a Phase 2; and it will probably come suddenly, like Norman's Cove, but feel much, much worse... Just a word to the wise.

Continued harmful algae blooms and deterioration of lake water quality will only hasten the State's negative attention toward property owners. What might a Phase 2 look like? Mandatory inspections with dye tests? Count on it. How would you like a giant holding tank (with an overflow alarm) that you'll have to have pumped out and trucked over an hour away every time it fills. Don't like that? How do you feel about having your property condemned? Do you imagine the State will show mercy once they're that far down that road? Right now there is legislation pending that will make an inspection of your septic system by a licensed engineer a prerequisite for selling your property. Let's not shoot ourselves in the foot again.

Another lake surprise, at least for more recent arrivals, was the unusually low water level last fall. Old timers would recognize it as the traditional "normal". The lake almost always went down that much until 2016, when your ILA successfully renegotiated target elevations with the Hudson River Black River Regulating District, which operates the dam. At that time they agreed to begin to draw the lake down earlier in the season to expose beaches and then to hold off the Summer/Fall drawdown until later in the season, in order to extend the boating season.



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yielding copious amounts of pure powder. Gore Mt. enjoyed maybe the best conditions ever. Snowmobilers, snowshoers, ice fishermen and others made their way to town, and refilled businesses' bare coffers. There was so much snow, in fact, that many Snocade activities had to be cancelled on Presidents Weekend. The resultant snowpack also guaranteed the watershed's ability to once again bring the lake back up to the brim in spring. It never fails, though sometimes we may suffer doubt.

Work on the dam's rehab continued throughout, but ran into some unexpected issues and will not be finishing on its original time line. Defects were discovered in the gate house foundation and the outlet gates. This added phase of construction will occur from Fall 2025 through Spring 2026 and will likely necessitate an even more severe drawdown than last year.

There is never a drought of work in New York State. They always abound, and our school district has announced exceeding the 2% tax cap limit. The heels of an extremely negative forecast given the District by their consultants. Anyone with a rudimentary understanding of compounding interest must conclude this will not become the new

Shareholders of Frontier Communications approved that company's acquisition by Verizon Communications in November. The takeover still awaits Government approval, which seems likely. It's uncertain exactly what it will mean locally. a good guess would be higher prices for better ce... or at least higher prices.

Some of the brighter notes of the past year included the ILA convincing DEC to reform the way they stock brown trout in the lake. As we reported, last spring the fish were dumped in at the marina, where the lake is deepest, rather than at the State boat launch, where the water is shallowest. Survival of the fingerlings was enormously improved. The young fish were seen and

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caught all over the lake, where this has never been the case before. It now looks likely that this can now lead to a viable population of holdover, resident brown trout. There also seemed to be far fewer spiny water fleas last year. It doesn't seem plausible that this would be related to the increased trout population, since their anatomy makes them difficult to swallow. But this bears watching.

Fishing stories also played a role in a "near miss" Indian Lake had in March, when fortune landed in a big way on neighboring Long Lake, which received a bequest of the entire proceeds of the projected sale of the 36,000 acre Whitney Park. The Park includes 22 lakes and ponds, 100 miles of undeveloped shoreline, and Deerlands, the Whitneys' great camp. The property has been offered at \$180 million. There has been a push for several years for New York State to acquire the property, but John Hendrickson, the widower and heir of Mary Lou Whitney, who was in turn the widow of Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, was sorely displeased with the State' stewardship of the Whitney property they had previously acquired at Little Tupper Lake; where he claimed they allowed the native trout population to be decimated. He vowed that the State would never have Whitney Park and instead directed

that the property be sold and the proceeds given to the town that he and his family had loved for many, many years. It would appear possible that Long Lakers may never have to pay property taxes again. Wouldn't it be nice if Indian Lake could be re-incorporated as a part of our blessed and beloved neighbor?

And finally: through the murky miracle of statistics, Hamilton County found itself in the strange position of going from the highest murder rate per capita in the US (shockingly and tragically, we had two homicides in 2023) back to its accustomed place at the lowest murder rate by county (zero in 2024). As yet, no one from Washington has been dispatched here to study how this change was wrought. But we would surely welcome the good publicity.

ILA DICK MERRILL SCHOLARSHIP

In June 2024, the ILA awarded the Dick Merrill Scholarship to Logan Howe, the Salutatorian of the Indian Lake Central School Class of 2024. This scholarship, established in memory of Dick Merrill, a former board member, educator, and lake advocate, honors outstanding academic achievement.



Logan Howe

At the graduation ceremony, ILA President Glenn Van Norstrand presented Logan with a certificate and the scholarship check. Logan, who graduated with a 92+% grade point average, is currently attending Johnson & Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island, where she is studying Baking and Pastry Arts, along with Beverage Industry Management. She plans to open her own bakery in the future.

Logan has been an active participant in the Indian Lake/Blue Mountain Fish and Game Club, as well as in soccer and various community events, including the "Big Buddies" mentor program. She has earned a spot on the Academic High Honor Roll for the past four years and has received the Presidential Award for

Academic Excellence during that time. Additionally, she has held leadership roles as class Vice President and is currently serving as Vice President of the Student Council. Known for her kindness, respectfulness, and soft-spoken manner, Logan has also challenged herself by taking college courses during high school. We wish her the best of luck in her academic pursuits and future career.

WHO WAS DICK MERRILL AND WHY IS A SCHOLARSHIP NAMED IN HIS HONOR?

The ILA has benefited from many dedicated members, and Richard "Dick" Merrill was one of them. As an ILA Board Member in the early 2000s and later Vice President (2005-06), he was largely responsible to report on the water quality in Indian Lake, and played a key role in supporting ILA's mission to protect Indian Lake. Dick owned and operated a small steam powered boat, which he occasionally navigated around Indian Lake, and displayed at the museum. While some recall that he built the steam engine himself, this remains uncertain.

A committed Adirondack advocate, Dick was deeply



Dick Merrill with Hilary Clinton at the Adk Experience

involved with the Adirondack Museum (now the Adirondack Experience), helping organize events like the No-Octane Regatta and creating educational programs. In recognition of his efforts, he was posthumously awarded the 2009 Harold K. Hochschild Award for his contributions to the region. A General Electric engineer, Dick had a strong record of public service bringing his project management skills to various civic roles, including President of the Warren County Planning Board, member of the Queensbury Land Use Planning Board, and deputy chairman of the Queensbury Town Board. He also led the Crandall Public Library expansion in Glens Falls.

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His passion for history was evident in his work as President of the Chapman House Historical Museum and board member of the Adirondack Community College Foundation. He also authored Log Marks of the Hudson, a guide to Adirondack logging history.

An avid SCUBA diver, Dick passed away unexpectedly on March 9, 2009, while diving in the Caribbean. To honor his legacy, in 2010, the ILA renamed its annual scholarship the ILA Dick Merrill Scholarship. Originally unnamed, this scholarship has been awarded to a graduating senior at Indian Lake Central School since around 1978.

Through this scholarship, the ILA continues to recognize Dick Merrill's dedication to Indian Lake and the Adirondacks, ensuring that future generations carry forward his spirit of service and commitment.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

~ Helen Glass

The day before our last Annual Meeting on August 10, 2024, we were hit by the remnants of Tropical Storm Debbie, which caused severe damage south of us, closing Route 28 at "The Glen" for most of the week. Northern Warren County suffered major tree damage, resulting in power outages and additional road closures. While Indian Lake and the surrounding area avoided the worst of the storm, boats and docks broke loose, causing damage as docked vessels collided. A power outage the evening before our meeting sent the Board scrambling to find generators, but fortunately, power was restored before midnight, allowing our 46th Annual Meeting to proceed smoothly.

For the first time, our meeting was held at Alan Pierce's Camp Pierce Barn, a fantastic venue that allowed us to set up the day before—without concerns about wind, bears, or raccoons disrupting preparations. Despite the storm and the uncertainty surrounding power, 70 attendees joined us for our second breakfast meeting, including Town Councilwoman Pamela Howard. This year, we introduced a Silent Auction, launched our first annual ILA Calendar, and debuted the new Boater's Guide. Guest speakers included John Callaghan of the HRBRRD, who provided updates on the dam restoration, and Caitlin Stewart, District Manager of Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation, who gave an informative presentation on invasive species, water quality, and septic systems. To ensure everyone could hear, Jeff Goldstein generously set up and operated his professional sound system. Thanks Jeff!

Our new Treasurer, Mary Prusko, presented the financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. The opening balance was \$9,425.91, with receipts of \$5,104.00 and expenses of \$4,678.85, leaving a closing balance of \$9,851.06. Additional receipts of \$1,850.00 and expenses of \$40.65 in July brought the account balance to \$11,660.41 as of July 31, 2024. Detailed financial information is available from Director Prusko upon request. Mary's updated report can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Feedback from our survey was overwhelmingly positive. Nearly everyone loved the new venue and preferred The Camp Pierce Barn for future meetings. Members strongly support Town projects such as Eclipse events, the Theater, and Community Clean-Up Day. Seventy-four percent enjoyed the Silent Auction and would



Caitlin Stewart, District Manager, Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District presenting at the Annual Meeting, August 10, 2024. Photo by Charlie Clark

like to see more. The Boater's Guide was a hit, with most respondents rating it as "Great." Seventy-seven percent found the Newsletter to be good or great. We appreciate your feedback—another survey will be available at the end of this year's meeting. Your input matters!

Due to health issues and time constraints, board member Jen Hoffman stepped down, and Autumn Blanchard's term came to an end. Additionally, both the President and Vice President reached the conclusion of their three-year terms. At the meeting, the membership voted to re-elect Glenn Van Norstrand as President and Dan Way as Vice President. Wendy Clark and John Cohoon were elected as new Directors. More about Wendy and John can be found later in this newsletter. We sincerely thank Autumn for her nine years of dedicated service and Jen for her contributions as Treasurer and Board Member. We wish them both the best and hope they remain active members of the ILA. Jen can be found downtown most weekends at Axes and Irons, a wonderful venue for casual drinks and entertaining games – try it out!

Shortly after our meeting, the DEC notified the ILA Board that dock storage in Norman's Cove would no longer be permitted and threatened enforcement action. Despite our efforts—including letters to state representatives—to negotiate a more reasonable solution, no accommodations were made.

As it stands, all docks stored in the cove and elsewhere along the eastern shore must be removed by May 15, 2025. Given that ice reached over 24 inches thick this winter, we can only hope the lake thaws in time. The Board will continue to engage with the DEC in hopes of reaching an agreement, but we can offer no guarantees. If this issue affects you, we urge you to contact your representatives to advocate for a fair resolution.

Joseph Zalewski DEC Region 5 Director
518 897-1211 dep.r5@dec.ny.gov
Robert Smullen District 118 Assemblyman
518 762-1427 smullenr@nyassembly.gov
Mark Walczyk 49th District Senator
315-782-3418 walczyk@nysenate.gov

On a brighter note, our 2025 ILA Calendar was a huge success and quickly sold out! We've since printed a bigger, better, and more colorful edition for 2026, featuring stunning photos of Indian Lake. Many thanks to our members and photographers who generously contributed their work. If you submitted a photo, please contact me at SecretaryILA.ADK@gmail.com to purchase your advance copy. Otherwise, calendars will be available for purchase at our July meeting—don't miss out!

Further thanks go to Mary Prusko, who has continued Jen's great work on our Facebook page, "Indian Lake Association in the Adirondacks." Thanks to Mary's efforts, our follower count has grown to 465! If you haven't already, please Like, Follow, and Share our page! Your generous support of ILA merchandise helps offset the cost of our Annual Meeting, Newsletter, Scholarship and support of Town programs. There may be more exciting surprises at our next Annual Meeting, but you'll have to attend to find out!



FINANCIAL REPORT

~Mary Prusko

The opening bank balance on July 1, 2024, was \$9,851.06. From July 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, total receipts amounted to \$6,230.46, while total expenditures were \$2,561.64, resulting in a current balance of \$13,519.88 as of December 31, 2024.

The major receipts included:

- Membership Dues: \$1,935.00
- Donations: \$511.96
- Calendar Sales: \$696.00
- Boater's Guide Donations: \$2,430.00
- Silent Auction: \$570.00



The largest expenditure was for food and catering, totaling \$1,050.00. If any member would like to see a copy of the complete financial report as of December 31, 2024, please email me at Foxsparrow@duck.com. In 2024, we changed our accounting period from June 30 to the calendar year. Our membership has grown to 142, up from 132 members last year, with an additional 10 new members joining during the 2024 Annual Breakfast meeting. As of the production of this report, we have 464 Facebook followers.

We continue to use Square for collecting membership dues and donations. However, we still accept checks made out to: Indian Lake Association, ADK, P.O. Box 973, Sabael, NY 12864, Attn: Mary Prusko, Treasurer.



The start of the Black Fly Challenge in Inlet, NY, June 8, 2024

BLACK FLY CHALLENGE

~ Scott Smith

The Black Fly Challenge is not your average bike race. It is a true test of endurance and adventure, attracting both professional racers and recreational riders from all over. But what sets this race apart is the incredible



diversity of participants. From cyclocross and mountain bikes to tandems and even unicycles, the Black Fly Challenge welcomes all who are up for the challenge.

The race takes place on a 40-mile one-way gravel grinder, with over half of the course winding through the rugged and scenic Moose River Wild Forest. It's a breathtaking journey that showcases the beauty of our area while pushing riders to their limits. And with some pavement and single track sections at either end, the race offers a variety of terrains to keep things exciting. Every year, the Black Fly Challenge takes place on the second Saturday in June.

On June 8, 2024, the race started in Inlet and ended at the Indian Lake central school. The weather was cool and damp, creating the perfect conditions for this unique bike race. But what truly made the experience unforgettable was the warmth and hospitality of the volunteers at the Indian Lake School after party. They turned the cool and damp conditions into a mere afterthought, creating a welcoming and festive atmosphere for all participants. I embarked on this exhilarating adventure alongside my beloved wife, daughter, son-in-law, and a close friend. Together, we started the race that pushed our limits and tested our endurance. However, it was my son-in-law who truly stole the show, crossing the finish line in an impressive second place within his category.

As the hours ticked by, we persevered, battling exhaustion and hunger, but our determination never wavered. Finally, we triumphantly completed our first Black Fly Challenge, a feat that left us both physically drained and mentally invigorated. The overwhelming sense of accomplishment that washed over us was unparalleled, fueling our excitement to participate in the next race. The demand for this extraordinary event was so high that the 2025 ride had already sold out, further amplifying our anticipation. The Black Fly Challenge is not a race for the faint of heart; it demands unwavering dedication and commitment. The bonds we formed with fellow riders and the camaraderie that blossomed throughout the race made every ounce of effort worthwhile.

None of this would be possible without the incredible support of the Indian Lake community. Over 100 volunteers come together to make the Black Fly Challenge a success. From the shortwave radio operators to the dedicated fire department volunteers, and even those flipping burgers on the grill, the people of Indian Lake are the backbone of this event. Their dedication and willingness to go above and beyond ensure that every rider has an unforgettable experience. So, if you're looking for a bike race that goes beyond the ordinary, the Black Fly Challenge is the perfect choice. It's a race that combines the thrill of competition with the beauty of nature; all while being supported by a community that truly understands the spirit of adventure.



MEET THE NEW DIRECTORS

WENDY CLARK

Wendy has been spending time regularly on Indian Lake for nearly twenty years. As a native of upstate New York (Mohawk Valley and the Capital Region), she feels fortunate to have the Adirondacks in close proximity to her permanent residence. Wendy has many fond memories visiting several Adirondack lakes and camps of family members and friends. Most weekends and vacation time, Wendy can be found around the lake and in the town along with her husband, Charlie. Charlie's family has owned property in this area for several decades, and in fact, many will have fond memories of eating in the Fireside Inn, the restaurant Charlie's grandmother, Helen Clark owned and operated for many years.

Family history was a significant draw for Wendy, Charlie and their family. Beginning in 2005, the Clark family property along Route 30 became a weekend destination and most visits to "up north" in the early years included their two sons. As a family they enjoyed snowmobiling in the winter months, lake time in summer, hunting in the fall, and hiking year-round. In recent years, Wendy and Charlie purchased property and a residence adjoining the family land and continue to enjoy this area with their sons and their respective families. Wendy currently works for the State of New York in an accounting role, and she had previously worked in the horticulture field. Wendy is family-oriented, friendly, and social. The Clark's often attend community events and are known to promote and support many of the local businesses. With eventual plans to retire and make Indian Lake a permanent home,

Wendy looks forward to assisting the Association in ways that will aid in preserving the future of Indian Lake.

JOHN COHOON

John has been coming to the Adirondacks and “the lake” for as long as he can remember. Originally John’s family vacationed at Thirteenth Lake Lodge and then to their cabin near the narrows on the western shore of Indian Lake. The Adirondack Mountains with her pristine lakes has always been a special place for John, who values the opportunities as a Director to help chart the course for preserving all that we have for those who follow.

John grew up on Long Island NY and eventually graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1978, serving in the Navy for 30 years. After retiring from the Navy in 2006, he has been working for a large construction company as a senior engineer and quality manager. He has been married to his wonderful wife, Barbara, for 45 years and has two boys, one a National Park ranger and the other a design engineer and is a proud grandfather.

John’s priorities are focused mostly around the health of the lake and shoreline, protecting the wildlife, listening to what folks have to say about it and finding solutions that work.

IN MEMORIAM

Patricia F. (Hayes) Atwood

July 4, 1944 ~ January 11, 2024 (age 79)

The Indian Lake Association (ILA) mourns the passing of Patricia “Pat” Atwood, one of its founding members and a dedicated supporter of the Indian Lake community.



Pat passed away peacefully on January 11, 2024, with her husband, Jeff, by her side. Pat’s connection to Indian Lake ran deep. In 1954, her mother purchased Wilson’s Boys Camp and renamed it Twin Coves, running it for many years before passing it on to Pat. Twin Coves became Pat’s summer home

and life’s passion, a place where she welcomed visitors and helped them experience the beauty of the Adirondacks. She spent every summer there until 2023, making nearly 70 summers of memories on the lake.

During her youth, Pat, born on Independence Day believed that the annual fireworks were arranged especially for her. She celebrated nearly every birthday with a beach fire and marshmallows on the beach of Twin Coves, carrying on a tradition that brought visitors, friends and family together under the Adirondack sky. Though she faced health challenges in her later years, Pat’s love for Indian Lake never wavered. She passed knowing that the place she cherished would remain in the hearts of those who loved her.

Pat was laid to rest next to her mother at Cedar River Cemetery in Indian Lake. She is survived by her husband, Jeff, her daughter, Christina, and her son, Christian.

We extend our deepest, albeit tardy condolences to her family. Pat’s presence at Twin Coves and her dedication to Indian Lake will not be forgotten.

INDIAN LAKE DAM – A HISTORY

In 1897 George W. Rafter, a consulting engineer for New York State, wrote a report that argued for the construction of a dam on Indian Lake. It is obvious at the time that much behind the scenes work had already been done and this was merely to convince New York powers to allow it to be built on state land. Chapter 599 of the Laws of New York State of 1895 had already directed the State Engineer and Surveyor, to act in conjunction with the Superintendent of Public Works, to, as soon as practicable, make a survey of upper Hudson valley in order to determine what lakes, ponds and river valleys could be improved by the construction of storage dams in order to provide additional water for:

- 1) The use of Champlain Canal .
- 2) Restoring the water power of Hudson River that had previously been diverted for canal purposes.
- 3) For improving the navigation of lower Hudson River.

He also made an interesting argument commonly held by people at that time that areas of marsh were suspected of harboring malarial sources, diphtheria and other diseases. So in the fall of ‘97 when investigations

were under way to study the foundation for the new dam, people became concerned that the drawdown would create these dangerous marshes. But of course the new dam would raise the levels and therefore cover a lot of pre-existing marsh.

Lumbering began in the Indian Lake area about 1845, in which year a log dam was erected for the purpose of furnishing water for driving logs. The original dam raised the water surface between five and six feet. A few years later a subsequent log and crib dam further increased the elevation gain to between ten and eleven feet. This dam remains at the lake bottom and can be seen beneath the surface during the greatest drawdowns.

Before the dam there actually were three small lakes. The largest was only about two miles in length and from 1,500 to 1,000 feet in width. The effect of raising the water ten feet was to create a body of water over nine miles in length, three-quarters of a mile wide at the widest portion. The present dam of 1898 raised the water twenty three feet above the crest of the old timber dam, to between thirty-three and thirty-four feet above the mean surface of the original lake, flooding additional flat areas at the south end of the lake to such an extent as to make a body of water 14.3 miles in length with a drainage area of approximately 146 square miles.

The area of the original Indian Lake was about 1,000 acres. The area of the first dam about 3,000 acres and the present area about 4,000 acres with an estimated 800,000,000 cubic feet of water.

A great deal of the land around Indian Lake had been

devastated by forest fires so the state was very cautious in writing the specs for the clearing and burning of the timber within the lake line. Crews had to cut and pile brush and wait for appropriate weather to burn to minimize starting new forest fires. The first crews used cross cut saws but the French Canadian "choppers" preferred axes. The work was carried out by gangs of about 20 men with one foreman. The laborers received \$1.00 a day and the foreman got \$35.00 a month. It cost about \$7.50 per acre to cut, clear and pile but not to burn.

Some of the residue of that work is still visible in the enormous Cedar stumps that are revealed in various places as annual drawdowns occur. Driftwood created by the work was plentiful for decades afterwards, even giving rise to place names along the lake.

Work on the dam was also going on at the same time as the land clearing. The cement was delivered in barrels at North Creek by rail and then hauled by wagon to the dam site. The sand was obtained from a bank on the shore about two miles from the site (probably at what is now the Herlihy estate) and transported to the work in a scow having a capacity of thirty yards. It was propelled by means of an anchor, a long rope and windlass. With favorable winds a sail was hoisted, and a crew of six men and a foreman were able to deliver about 720 cubic yards of sand and 180 cords of wood for the steam boilers per month.

The surface rock in the river bed and on the west bank was quite seamy so much of it was removed with blasting and washed clean with high pressure water to a depth of three to six feet below the surface. A bed of mortar was laid on this to receive the cut stone. Two



1860 log dam on Indian Lake

quarries were opened within 500 feet of the dam. The stone was a pink granite and easily quarried into blocks and set with joints about one and a half inches wide. This was the facing stone. Backing stone consisted of large irregular stones laid in full mortar beds about a foot apart.

The cost of the dam, exclusive of clearing costs, was \$83,555. (Approximately \$3.18 million in today's dollars) This included about \$31,000 in labor, \$18,000 in material, team work \$6,800, and insurance, freight and a "barn account" for the teamsters made up the rest.

The construction took 7 months and was finished in Oct of 1898 and the reservoir was filled for the first time in the spring of 1899. The water releases were controlled by two five ft. diameter pipes laid in the dam and controlled by single disk flume gates made by Eddy Valve. There was also a 15 foot wide log gateway with the bottom 10 feet below the spillway level, controlled by 20 foot 4 by 8 inch timbers called "needles". The spillway or overflow is on the west side and is 106 feet long. At its greatest height the dam is 47 ft high, 7 ft wide on top and 33 ft wide on the bottom.

The Indian River Co was the owner of the dam and their original incorporators were Niagara Mohawk, Saratoga Board and Box, Finch Pruyn, and International Paper, the largest stockholder, which was responsible for the gatekeeper's house, releases and records. While the original purpose of the incorporators was to sluice



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logs down to the Hudson where they were corralled at Glens Falls, this soon changed as it became more expedient to take the logs out at Sabalet and truck them. IP's interest continued however since they still relied mainly on water power for their plant at Corinth. Later in the 60's they would convert to electricity reducing their interest in water power, which eventually led to the selling of the dam to the Hudson River Black River Regulating District ("HRBRD" or "RD").

In the 70s the Indian Lake Chamber of Commerce, Town Board and Indian Lake Association became concerned with lake levels to the extent that they were able to wrest a "gentlemen's" agreement with IP to keep the level up through Labor Day. This worked very well; and, in fact, too well; because Niagara Mohawk learned of the smaller releases and teamed with the Sacandaga Association to promote a bill in the State Legislature that would have set the Sacandaga low level at a point that 'would necessitate large releases from Indian Lake to make up the difference. The Indian Lake Association, Town Board, Chamber of Commerce, and Fish and Game Club lobbied in the House offices and were successful in keeping the bills out of committee. In the meantime, IP did not like the adverse publicity nor being the center of the controversy. They were quite willing to relinquish ownership to the HRBRD, when that organization suggested that they do so. The negotiations required that IP and the other incorporators re-face and re-point the dam, perform other maintenance before selling. This was done; and

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finally, in 1988, ownership passed into the hands of the HRBRRD. That deed specified that the parcel was not to become part of the Forest Preserve.

A large parcel had been owned by the dam's original consortium of owners, but the majority of the land had been sold off to the State in 1898 and became part of the Forest Preserve. That conveyance had specified that the remaining, (present-day) 2.63 acre parcel, owned by the HRBRRD, on which the dam and the dam keeper's house are situated, would be retained for the maintenance, use, control and operation of the dam. The HRBRRD is a public benefit corporation, under the laws of NY. This creates a kind of gray area, with respect to the Forest Preserve and Article XIV.

The presence of the dam keeper's house became a source of contention in the 1990s. Although they had accepted the property with the condition that it was not to become part of the Park; NYS finally, at the behest of its Department of Environmental Conservation, and at the instigation of various Park preservationist organizations, sued to have the dam keeper's house removed as a violation of the "Forever Wild" clause of the State Constitution. In 1997, the NYS Supreme Court rebuffed the State's claim, citing the previous deeds and stipulating that the dam keeper's house fell within the terms of those deed agreements.

Part of the testimony at the proceedings was by the dam keeper himself, George Virgil, who recalled an occasion when he restrained a young fisherman who had dropped his tackle box out of his rowboat, near

the gate house, and was determined to dive down (near the sluice gates) and try to retrieve it before being restrained by the dam keeper, who feared the child would be sucked through the dam and spit out into the river. Today there is a boom in place to keep young fishermen and others well away from the face of the dam.

Today the RD's primary function is flood control; and it has performed exceptionally well in averting the catastrophic spring floods that used to plague Albany other points downstream. However, for years this continued to mean heavy summer and fall drawdowns on the lake, so that as much water as possible could be held back during the spring thaw.

Many argued that this could be accomplished with later drawdowns, which had always occurred through the entire winter anyway. The Indian Lake Association negotiated with HRBRRD for higher summertime lake levels and reached agreement setting elevations at 32 ft by July 1, 30 ft by August 1, 28 ft by September 1.

A subsequent negotiation in 2016 between the ILA and the HRBRRD sought to fine-tune that agreement, so that beaches could be exposed a bit earlier in the season and to defer some of the subsequent drawdown until October to lengthen the boating season. It is hoped that this current practice will ultimately be formally adopted by the HRBRRD. Also in 2016, two members of the ILA, Jon Voorhees and Paul Kietzman, reacting to a filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, by Brookfield Power, from Canada, for a permit to generate hydro power from the Indian Lake, gained the support of the Town Board; and they filed a competing Preliminary Permit Application to FERC. They were eventually able to knock Brookfield out of contention. The project generated widespread and enthusiastic support. But again, the question of

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whether or not the dam parcel was part of the Forest Preserve reared its head; and DEC and the various Park preservation groups smothered the plan, claiming it violated Article XIV. Terms of the deeds cited here and the Supreme Court's Stipulation were not known at the time of that permitting process. After they came to light a few years ago, the effort was revived; this time with Dan Way joining the fray, and continues to this day.

This article originally entitled THE INDIAN LAKE DAM - A HISTORY appeared in the Third Annual Report of the Commissioners of Fisheries, Game and Forest in 1897, and was later updated for the ILA by Dick Catlin. The article was brought up to date for this Newsletter by Jon Vorhees.

INDIAN LAKE DAM UPDATE

~ John Callaghan, Executive Director, Hudson River Black River Regulating District

This update was received by your ILA Board of Directors on March 14, 2025. Subsequently, Director Callaghan clarified that it is not currently anticipated that any unusual drawdowns will be made during 2025.

We continue to work with Colliers Engineering (formerly Bergmann) on a scope for the emergent gate-house foundation work, and whether a more pronounced/ earlier drawdown in the fall will be necessary. There are a few different construction options under consideration. Tackling the work entirely with divers (underwater construction) would likely not necessitate any change to normal water management, but it may also be the slowest, and most costly, way to proceed. So, bear with us for a bit so we can continue to evaluate these methods, and the construction schedule, in the context of available resources.

Efforts to fully seal gaps in the stone masonry structure by injecting grout have concluded successfully. The most visual evidence of this success will be the absence of water seeping through the stone masonry spillway. Other less visible, but no less essential, work has been completed as part of the project. A new pedestrian walkway over the dam's spillway for worker access has been installed, increasing levels of safety for Regulating District personnel. The previously inoperable logway sluice gate has been replaced with a new, operable gate which will be instrumental in facilitating subse-

quent gate replacement, as well as enhancing water management capabilities over the long term. A new concrete embankment wall extension which will help accommodate a new "flattened" embankment slope on the dam's downstream side has been completed, which will help allow that portion of the dam to meet NYSDEC's dam safety standards.

Perhaps the most critical component of the project from a structural stability standpoint, new post-tensioned anchors on the spillway structure have also been installed. Installation of anchors that are attached to bedrock at existing dams is a common practice to address structural concerns related to the potential for overturning and/or sliding. This aspect of the project is critical to ensuring that the Indian Lake Dam is fully compliant with modern, NYSDEC dam safety standards, despite the structure's advanced age. Work to install similar anchors in the dam's embankment section is ongoing. Work to increase the elevation of the embankment itself is similarly a continuing effort. Importantly, the warmer spring weather which is just around the corner will be more conducive to the material which will be used to raise the embankment meeting compaction standards and functioning as designed once placed.

As is often the case with any comprehensive work on a century-plus-old structure, other necessary work has been identified over the course of construction. In the course of underwater grouting efforts, divers engaged on the project were able to access stone masonry components of the dam's gate house foundation.



While accessing the chambers directly below the gate house, divers identified gaps in the gate house foundation significantly worse than the pre-project investigatory dive inspections on the exterior of the gate house foundation had revealed. Though not integral to the structural stability goals of the overall project, these voids are likely most easily and efficiently addressed during the existing construction process, rather than at a later date through a separate construction contract. The Regulating District continues to analyze different approaches to address these issues corroboratively with the contractor and consultant engineer. While it is possible that one approach to completing this work in 2025 could necessitate a more rapid drawdown of the reservoir elevation in the fall than normal, and to a lower winter level than normal, that determination will likely be made over the next month or so in consultation with Indian Lake residents and stakeholders. It is important to note that even with deficiencies newly noted in the gate house foundation, the dam itself is more structurally stable – not less – due to the installation of anchors and slope and embankment improvements.

In the meantime, installation of the new water control gates, which have been fabricated and are on site, will occur at a later date in coordination with work to address the gate house foundation issues described above. In the meantime, the Regulating District continues to have full operational capability at the dam to make releases or store water in accordance with its mission.”



Indian Lake Press

Daniel Way, MD

Photographer & Author

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THE STORY OF PEANUT

~Helen Glass

The story of Peanut the squirrel raises questions about the balance between long-standing practices and evolving government regulations. What seemed like a minor enforcement action became a focal point for those who wonder whether bureaucracy is increasingly affecting everyday life. Was Peanut—a simple eastern gray squirrel—caught in a necessary public health measure, or does this case reflect broader concerns about excessive control? It invites us to consider where the line should be drawn between reasonable oversight and regulatory overreach.

The following is taken directly from an article appearing in the January 2025 issue of *Shooting Illustrated*, which is published by the NRA. My words cannot compete with those of Randy Kozuch, author of the original article.

“The squirrel’s name was Peanut (aka P’Nut). He was an orphan. His mother was killed by a car in New York City. Mark Longo, a Connecticut engineer, saw what happened and took Peanut into his care, hoping to find an animal shelter to accommodate him. Unsuccessful at that, Longo cared for and bottle fed the baby squirrel for eight months, intending eventually to release him back into the wild. But the attempted repatriation failed. Peanut returned to Longo’s porch a day and half later, injured and afraid. Longo realized at that point Peanut’s “wildlife career” was finished. The squirrel instead joined the home Longo shared with his wife, Daniela, and a cat named Chloe.

The couple began recording videos of their adopted pet and his high-spirited hijinks around their house. Peanut’s humorous acrobatics, his fondness for waffles, his miniature headgear and his habit of holding little signs to express his thoughts eventually led to millions of social media followers across several different platforms. In the economy of the modern Internet, this generated enough income for the couple to move from Connecticut to upstate New York to establish a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization called P’Nuts Freedom Farm Animal Sanctuary in April 2023.

Half the income from Peanut’s online presence was donated toward the needs of the sanctuary, which aimed to give other abandoned or vulnerable animals



a second chance. By November 2024, according to the Longos, the sanctuary was caring for some 300 animals, including horses, alpacas, cows, various fowl and a pot-bellied pig.

Peanut’s seven-year odyssey with the Longos was a classic, feel-good American story. He brought moments of joy and lighthearted laughter to his followers, which included many children. His caretakers leveraged the fruits of his celebrity to aid other animals that otherwise would have shared the same misfortune Peanut himself had escaped.

Peanut, in turn, became a cherished member of the Longo family and helped them find purpose, community and their version of the American dream. But not everyone celebrated Peanut’s success. An anonymous complainant, so the story goes, became concerned about the Longos having undomesticated animals living in their home and reported the matter to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). This is the point at which Peanut’s story took a dark turn.

On Oct. 30, a convoy of vehicles containing some 12 officers from multiple agencies, including the DEC and the Chemung County Department of Health, descended upon the Longos’ home in rural Pine City with a search warrant for a squirrel and a raccoon. As Longo described the scene to the media, “They treated me like I was a terrorist. They treated this raid as if I was a drug dealer. They ransacked my house for five hours.”

He continued, "They asked my wife, who is of German descent, what her immigration status was. They asked if I had cameras in my house. They wouldn't allow me to go to the bathroom without a police escort, who then checked the back of the toilet to see if I was hiding anything there."

Longo also said he was prevented from feeding and watering the sanctuary's other animals during the lengthy ordeal. Eventually, Peanut and a raccoon named Fred were seized. During the agonizing hours that followed, the Longos had no information about the status of their beloved animals.

Finally, on Nov. 1, a combined agency press release described in dry bureaucratic language the government's version of events: On Oct. 30, DEC seized a raccoon and squirrel sharing a residence with humans, creating the potential for human exposure to rabies. In addition, a person involved with the investigation was bitten by the squirrel. To test for rabies, both animals were euthanized. The animals are being tested for rabies and anyone who has been in contact with these animals is strongly encouraged to consult their physician. A distraught Longo disputed the government's account. He said that the officers who entered the house wore heavy gloves, like those used for training raptors, and that he never saw anyone get bitten by his docile critters. He also said he had extensive contact with the animals over a lengthy period with no ill effects. "Peanut and Fred did not have rabies or I wouldn't be

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here talking to you right now," he told a New York newspaper. "I've been around them long enough, played with them, cared for them and I didn't foam at the mouth."

Longo does not deny it was technically illegal to have the two animals living in his house without a permit, but he claims he was in the process of having Peanut certified as an educational animal when the raid occurred. He also questioned the government's heavy-handed tactics and priorities. "Why was there so much force brought to my house for a raccoon and a squirrel?" he asked, adding that the government "can't even fix the problems we have in daily human life." Questions also remain about why euthanasia was used to check for rabies, rather than quarantine.

Peanut's saga quickly gained worldwide attention...." Protests were held in Albany, and Social Media exploded. Later tests showed that both animals were rabies free. After the execution of the animals, both were honored at a hometown memorial service, and a GoFundMe page raised over \$200,000. In their honor.

State Congressman Nick Langworthy was frustrated by the DEC's decision and posted on X "NYS DEC needs a serious reality check on their ridiculously mistaken priorities. Instead of focusing on critical needs like flood mitigation in places like Steuben County, where local officials have to struggle just to get permits from the DEC to clear debris-filled waterways, they're out seizing pet squirrels. NY taxpayers deserve better."

Peanut's story raises important questions about the role of bureaucracy in our own community. Time and again, we have seen minor, technical violations—harmless in practice—escalate unnecessarily due to rigid enforcement. Could a simple permit, license, or corrective measure have resolved these issues without undue consequences?

It's hard not to question the priorities of a system that sends armed officers to raid a man over a squirrel while, at the same time, proposing policies that could allow convicted criminals to have their sentences overturned simply because time has passed. If public safety and justice are truly the goals, why does rigid enforcement apply so aggressively in cases like Peanut's, yet leniency is extended elsewhere under the guise of reform?

Peanut's fate stirred public concern and inspired calls for reform, yet the broader challenges he came to represent remain. In a system resistant to change, ensuring fairness, accountability, and respect for individual rights requires ongoing vigilance and persistent efforts. If we don't challenge these inconsistencies, what does that say about the future of governance and justice?



~Scott Smith

The DEC Fish Hatcheries in New York State are dedicated to raising a variety of fish species, each with their own unique qualities and characteristics. From brook trout to tiger muskellunge, these hatcheries play a crucial role in enhancing recreational fishing and restoring native species to their natural habitats.

One such body of water that has greatly benefited from the fish stocking program is Indian Lake. In collaboration with the ILA board and the Indian Lake Marina, last year the DEC relocated the fish stocking location from the state launch to the marina. This move was made to minimize the loss of fingerlings to predators and ensure their safety and growth.

The results of this decision have been remarkable. People have reported seeing trout near their docks and in other shallow areas of the lake during the summer months. The fishing experience has also become more productive, providing anglers with better opportunities to catch fish.

For the second consecutive year, the marina will be the primary location for fish stocking. The DEC plans to stock at least seven thousand Brown trout, each measuring at least 8 inches in length this spring. This deliberate effort will not only increase the survivability of the trout but also contribute to higher numbers of fish available for recreational fishing.

As the stocking continues from the marina, the fish population in Indian Lake is expected to grow year after year. However, the long-term goal is to have the DEC conduct a thorough survey of the lake and reassess the species and numbers of fish stocked. This will ensure the long-term health of the fish population and provide even greater opportunities for recreational fishing. Indian Lake has experienced improvements in its fish population and recreational fishing opportunities due to the strategic decision to relocate the fish stocking location. With continued efforts and a focus on long-term sustainability, the future of fishing in Indian Lake looks promising.



John Clark and Stephen "Ding" King show off their catch

A FEW WORDS ABOUT WASTE



Many of you received a letter from the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District this winter, advising of possible eligibility for a grant for reimbursement of up to one half of the cost of septic system repair, replacement or upgrade up to \$10,000.

Although the deadline of March 31st has passed, and it is unclear if the program will be extended, nevertheless there are many steps you can take to protect and maintain your waste system.

Routine maintenance protects nearby surface and ground waters from contamination, human health, and your investment in your home.

Pollutants found in household wastewater include Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Disease causing bacteria, and Viruses.

A properly designed, constructed, and maintained system provides long term, effective treatment of household wastewater. Failing systems cost thousands of dollars to replace.

Beware signs of failure, such as:

- o Pooling water or muddy soil around tank or drain field or in the basement
- o Bad smell coming from area of tank
- o Toilet or sink backs up when flushed or drained
- o Bright green grass over drain field

If you see any of these signs - Call a professional!

Maintain your system by

- o Avoid overloading the system with more water than it is meant to handle – educate guests!
- o Don't do multiple loads of laundry all in 1 day
- o Don't drain hot tub or pool into tank or over drain field
- o Hire an inspector every 2 to 3 years
- o Pump the system every 3 to 5 years, depending on use and size
- o Use water efficiently – less water you use, less water enters system. This helps it operate properly and reduces stress on system and risk of failure.
- o Don't dispose of household hazardous waste in sinks or toilets: paints chemicals, cleaners, gasoline, oil, toxic materials. These could kill bacteria in the system.
- o Diapers, coffee grounds, feminine hygiene products, paper towels, grease could clog pipes.
- o Plant only grass or ground cover with shallow roots over and near the septic.
- o Deep roots clog and damage drain field.
- o Don't drive or park vehicles on drain field.
- o Don't flood the drain field with roof drains, sump pump drains, or surface water runoff.

2025 INDIAN LAKE EVENTS

Contact Indian Lake Development at development@indianlakeadk.com
or stop by the Welcome Center for more information

MAY

- 7 Community Pride Day (clean up)
- 23-25 Great Adirondack Yard Sale
- 26 MEMORIAL DAY
- 26 Hamilton County Memorial Day Parade
(in Indian Lake)
- 27-31 Americade

JUNE

- 9 Indian Lake Citizen of the Year Announced
- 14 Black Fly Challenge (begins in Indian Lake)
- 21 Monarch Butterfly Festival

JULY

- Community Farmer's Market
every Saturday 10-2 July-Sept.
- 4 INDEPENDENCE DAY
- 5 Independence Day Parade, Fireworks, &
Music with Washington County Line
Bluegrass Band
- 5 ILVFD Chicken Dinner
- 19 Poker Paddle
- 19 Indian Lake Summer Concert Series
music by Fenimore Blues
- 26 ILA-ADK – ANNUAL MEETING &
BREAKFAST

AUGUST

- 2 Indian Lake Summer Concert Series
music by Tame the Rooster
- 16 Indian Lake Summer Concert Series
music by Noth Allen Duo
- 16-17 Plein Air Paint Out with Bob Stump

SEPTEMBER

- 1 LABOR DAY
- 6 ILFD Pig Roast
- 5-9 Rustic Street Fair in Blue Mountain Lake
- 12-14 Adirondack Antiques Show & Sale
in Indian Lake and Blue Mt. Lake
- 26-28 Indian Lake C of C Moose Festival
- 27 Indian Lake Summer Concert Series
music by Rocky & the Moose Men

NOVEMBER

- 11 Veteran's Day
- 27 THANKSGIVING DAY
- 28-29 Country Christmas Tour



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(across from the Lake Store Building)**

Will you be attending our Annual Meeting & Breakfast?

☐

Yes

☐

No

**If attending, number adults expected to attend _____
number of children under 12 _____**

Print Name: _____

Email: _____

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PROXY

We do not, at this time expect any elections to occur during our Annual Meeting. However if a vacancy occurs, or other business requiring a vote comes before the membership requiring a vote, and if not attending, do you appoint Helen Glass, Secretary of ILA as your proxy to vote for all matters that come before the meeting?

☐

Yes

☐

No

Signature (Print name below)

**Please return these forms (with payment if appropriate) to
Indian Lake Association ADK, Inc., PO Box 973, Sabael, NY 12864**

INDIAN LAKE ASSOCIATION ADK, INC.

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Please complete as much of this form as possible. Do not leave any of the fields blank even if you think we already have the information.

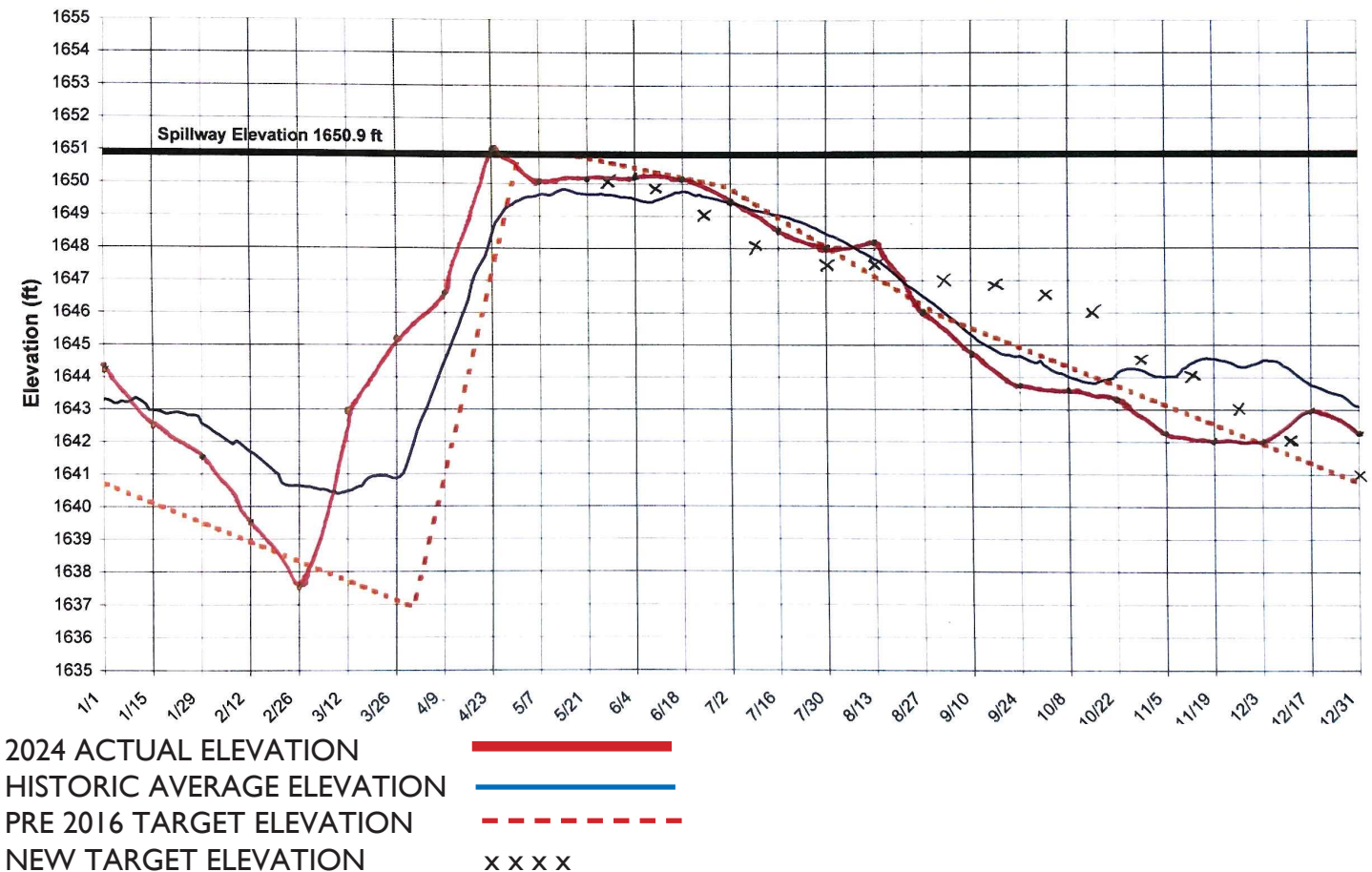
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Indian Lake Phone No.			
Please tell us when you are most likely to be in Indian Lake circle one or write your own. (ie. Weekends, all summer, last two weeks of July, I live here all year round.)			
Are you willing to participate in the ILA Networking Directory? Circle one: YES NO		Circle one: As a mentor I need a mentor	
Expertise/Skills willing to provide/ or needed:		Preferred method of communicating for Networking Email Telephone Text Zoom meeting Person-to-Person Other (specify)	
We are looking for members who will actively volunteer their time and talents to improve our Association. Please tell us if you bring any special interests or areas of expertise.			
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I hereby agree to abide by the rules of the Indian Lake Association, ADK, Inc., and agree to receive electronic communications from the Association.			
Signature:		Date:	



Indian Lake dam rehabilitation work summer of 2024. Photo courtesy of HRBRD and Colliers Engineering and Design.

INDIAN LAKE WATER LEVEL – 2024

Below is a graph from the Hudson River Black River Regulating District that shows the Indian Lake Association target water levels accepted by the Regulating District for the Lake in effect prior to 2016 (thin dotted red line), the new target levels suggested by ILA in 2016 (small x's) and the historic average water levels (thin solid blue line). Added to the graph are the actual levels from USGS data (thick solid red line).





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