



PO Box 245  
Blue Mountain Lake, NY 12812

## News of Blue Winter 2025

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### In Case You Missed It:

**1863: Ebenezer Emmons, Credited as Discoverer of Blue Mountain Lake, First Climber of Marcy, and Namer of the Adirondacks Dies in North Carolina**

*By History Wizard*

In 1838, Ebenezer Emmons, Chief State Geologist for the northern counties, led an expedition to find the headwaters of the Raquette River, a rumored Ragged Lake. After arduous bushwhacking following the shore of the Rock River and passing the long wetland that is now Lake Durant, the party emerged at the Blue Mountain Lake beach to the overwhelming beauty that still makes travelers pause today. *(jump to page 1)*

*(Emmons from page 8)* Interest in geology was at a peak in 1836 when Ebenezer Emmons was named a chief geologist of New York State. He was assigned the 2nd Geologic Region, the northern counties, which included the little-known mountain range he soon christened *Adirondacks*.

Emmons had graduated with a medical degree from Williams College in 1818, but his passion had been geology, an emerging science enjoying exciting new discoveries. In 1824 he helped create a geologic map of Berkshire County Massachusetts and then enrolled in the Rensselaer School (now Polytechnic) to study geology, earning his second degree in 1826.

By the time he was appointed a chief state geologist, Ebenezer Emmons was simultaneously a medical doctor in Chester, Massachusetts, a professor of Natural Science at Williams College and a lecturer at Rensselaer. In 1838, while in his second year with the state's geologic survey and perhaps having not enough to do, he added another job, Professor of chemistry and obstetrics at Albany Medical College.

Emmons published his findings during the winter after summers of exploring. His report of the first recorded ascent of Mount Marcy, New York's highest peak, made in August 1837, appeared in 1838. And his 1838 exploration of Blue Mountain Lake, which he first called Lake Clinch, then Lake Janet, and then Lake Emmons, was reported in

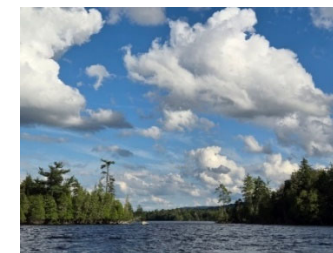
his 1839 Survey of the Second Geologic District.

Several years later, Emmons and his superior clashed about the age of the rocks composing New York's Taconic System. Though he was later vindicated, the dispute led to a lost lawsuit and his leaving to take a similar job in North Carolina. There Ebenezer Emmons was trapped in the South by the outbreak of the Civil War and died in 1863.

*Image courtesy of the Adirondack Experience*

### Co-Presidents' Message

Happy Winter and greetings from the BMLA! Our Winter newsletter brings you good news from Blue, along with a reminder that January is renewal time for all BMLA memberships, regardless of when you joined last year. Thank you for renewing your membership now.



The BMLA has crossed the 200-member line for the first time ever!!! 2024 was a banner year! We are grateful for the support of both new and long-time members who attend our yearly meetings and activities and support our fund-raising efforts to protect our lakes and enhance our community.

*(continued)*

## -the- Big Three QRs

### Renew Membership:



### Donate Thru PayPal:



### Visit Our Website:



Soon we will announce the dates of the 2025 Water Watch Committee meeting and the annual meeting of the Blue Mountain Lake Association. We hope to see you there! Until then, please know that the BLMA Board of Directors is focused on the well-being of the Blue Mountain Lake community and its beautiful lakes. We welcome your ideas and concerns.

See you in 2025!  
All the best,

Cathleen and Nancy



If you have trouble with your username or password, please don't create a new account. Instead see *Resetting Your ZippyReg Password* under the Membership tab at the BMLA website ([www.BlueMountainLakeAssociation.org](http://www.BlueMountainLakeAssociation.org)) or contact a membership volunteer by emailing [Membership@BlueMountainLakeAssociation.org](mailto:Membership@BlueMountainLakeAssociation.org). We can also help with edits to your profile, adding a family member, etc.

We strongly encourage ALL members to pay dues online to reduce volunteer workload. The small service fee, \$2.46 on a \$25 membership, makes our work so much smoother. However, if you are unable to pay online or are making a donation and want to avoid the service fee, a percentage of the total, please mail your check made out to "Blue Mountain Lake Association" or "BMLA" to:

Diane Selin, Treasurer  
PO Box 61  
Round Lake, NY 12151

And, please write your email address on the check—it helps a lot.

Every single member is our hero. Whether you renew online or through the mail, THANK YOU!



## Membership Renewal Time is Here

*By Leslie Tondreau, Membership Committee Chair*

Won't you take a moment now and renew your membership? Dues are still \$25 a year and of course we're grateful for anything extra you donate to our Operating, Water, and Resident Scholarship Funds.

By far the easiest for us (and hopefully for you) is to renew online using our Blue Mountain Lake Association page at ZippyReg. Get there by either typing

[www.zippyregclubhub.com/org/bmla](http://www.zippyregclubhub.com/org/bmla) into your browser or simply scan the QR code with your cell phone's camera.



## Water Watch: Making a Difference, Together

*By Michele Curry, Water Watch Committee Chair*

Five years ago, Water Watch became a committee of the Blue Mountain Lake Association (BMLA) to protect the long-term water quality of Blue Mountain, Eagle and Utowana Lakes. The discovery of variable leaf milfoil (VLM), a highly aggressive aquatic invasive species, in Utowana Lake made this partnership imperative. Working together, we are making a difference—an important mission given that Blue Mountain Lake serves as the town's drinking water supply, and that all three lakes provide pure enjoyment!

The good news:

- No aquatic invasive species have been discovered in Eagle Lake and Blue Mountain Lake;
- The amount of VLM harvested from Utowana Lake has decreased substantially since 2020;
- New signs have been posted at town launches warning of invasive species;
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation awarded the BMLA a \$60,000 grant to spend over a three-



*Be sure to  
Clean-Drain-Dry  
Any boat coming to Blue*





department enjoys tremendous esprit-de-corps. Volunteers range from retired firefighters to strictly amateurs—teachers, mechanics, and even office workers, all of whom pitch in for the benefit of our community.

We have two fire trucks, a fire boat, and an ambulance. Engine 32 is a 2001 Pierce on an International chassis with 1,000-gallon capacity and a 1,250 gallon per minute pump. Engine 33 is a 2012 Pierce with 300-gallon capacity and a 1,000 GPM pump. Our fireboat is a Carolina-24 flat-bottom skiff and a portable pump. Our all-wheel-drive PL Custom ambulance can make the 65-mile drive to the Glens Falls Hospital emergency room in almost any weather.

Like so many Adirondack and rural communities who rely on volunteers, we suffer with changing demographics and a shrinking year-round population. Most of our volunteers are in their 60s and 70s and we worry about our replacements.

Activity spikes during the summer with more ambulance calls and motor vehicle incidents. Fortunately, summer and seasonal residents expand our personnel during that busy time. Our company is 100% volunteer, except in the summer when the hamlet's population increases by a factor of ten and a series of professional EMTs spend their vacations in town in return for responding to ambulance calls.

Won't you join us? It doesn't have to be a huge commitment. Not everyone has to be a ladder-climbing, air-pack wearing, interior fire-fighter; you can pitch in with simpler but critical roles like connecting hoses to hydrants or flagging traffic.

To learn more or just to chat, drop in for coffee at the fire station any Monday, Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday morning at 9:00. Business meetings are the first Monday evening of the month at 7:00, and training is the third Monday evening at 6:00.



## 2025 Race Dates

**July 20<sup>th</sup>** BluMouLA-BuFuRa- 1.5, 7 and 14 mile races for canoes, kayaks, SUPs, and guideboats. [www.BMLBuoyRace.com](http://www.BMLBuoyRace.com)

**August 10<sup>th</sup>** the Blue Mountain Sizzler- 5K run/walk around Blue's Big Triangle [www.BlueMtSizzler.com](http://www.BlueMtSizzler.com)

## Construction Updates

### *By Sidewalk Supervisor*

Two visible and fascinating long-term projects remain underway, and a third interesting undertaking begins in the fall. The new bridge over South Inlet along Raquette Lake is coming

along well. It is still one lane controlled with a "3-color signal", but travel has now moved to the curved and banked lakeside lane of the new bridge. The old, 1928 structure is gone. Trucks with enormous prefabricated curved beams for the remaining side are parked and ready. Completion is scheduled for May 2026, but two-way traffic should resume sooner.

In Indian Lake, the Adirondack Lake Dam refurbishment continues and because the road dips below to give a clear look, there is always something to see, people and machinery at work—a drive-by diorama. Efforts should wrap up this fall.

Closer to Blue Mountain Lake, a new bridge over the Rock River is coming. Construction should start next winter and last a year, probably another one-laner with a 3-color signal.

Most of us know the Rock River drains Lake Durant, but only a few catch a glimpse of it on our way to Indian Lake. Just east of the ranger house and well before the campground entrance, the river passes under route 28/30 through twin culverts dating from 1963.

The NY Dept of Transportation has a statewide program to replace culverts with bridges, to add flood capacity and to restore a more natural river bottom for the benefit of animals and fish.

Aesthetically, the Rock River is a beautiful stream so let's hope this project makes it more easily seen.

- year period (2024-2026) to help us reach our goal of ultimately eradicating VLM from Utowana Lake; and,
- The 2024 Fund to Protect Our Waters Campaign has nearly succeeded in its goal of raising another \$150,000 to continue the work needed to eradicate VLM from Utowana Lake.

While we have maintained steady progress removing VLM from Utowana Lake, **in 2024 professional divers removed 72 gallons (double the amount taken from the lake bottom each of the past two years.) We plan to do everything possible to reverse this trend!**

Our community can be proud that it moved quickly to stop the spread of VLM both through action and funding. Not every lake association has been so fortunate, and the grant from the NYS DEC validates these important efforts.

In addition to preventing aquatic invasive species from entering our waters, the Water Watch Committee also studies the impact of road salt and aging septic systems on our lakes, supports the summer Lake Steward program and advocates for full-season staffing at the free boat wash station by Lake Durant.

*You can help, too:* 1) Make sure all boats are Clean.Drain.Dry. before entering our lakes; 2) Avoid boating in the western half of Utowana; 3) Stay away from orange buoys marking areas of VLM infestations; and, 4) never dump bait in the water or on the

ground which can harm lakes and forests by introducing non-native species to the environment.

Want to learn more? Please join us at our annual community meeting in early July!



## Rescuing Buoys—Joe and Ralph

*By Frugal*



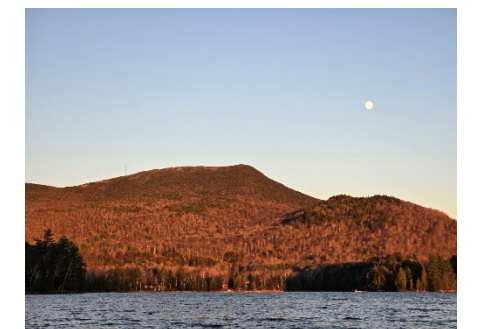
Our navigation buoys make it easier to get around the lake with confidence. Usually, we don't think about them—they're just there; two marking Shearing Pin Shoal, three around Expletive Shoal, five outlining the Sunken Islands, et cetera.

Our small white buoys, called *Ice Spars*, can survive the winter because of their hard shells and their tapered shape which allows them to slip out underneath when an ice sheet moves.

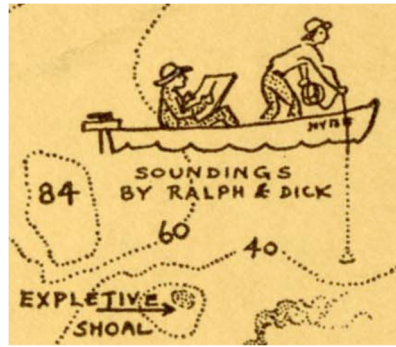
You'd think that once placed our spar buoys could remain indefinitely, but that's not been the case. One broke when hit by a snowmobile and another was sliced by a boat propeller. But that was unusual. The two major reasons why we've replaced spar buoys are worn out mooring rings from corrosion and mechanical wear, and when buoys take on water and become a *low-floater*.

The buoy crew typically replaces five spar buoys a year. The process is to drop in a replacement buoy and anchor next to the one that's to be taken out, haul out the old set, and return it to shore where a new buoy is attached to the anchor with fresh cable and clamps.

Lately though, instead of the BMLA buying replacement spar buoys, in stepped Ralph Coon and Joe Whalen to refurbish the ones we've taken out. Ralph cuts open the top, reems out the wet, failing floatation and replaces it with new foam. Joe, an accomplished welder, adds a new stainless steel anchoring ring to the stub of the old one. And, the buoy is reborn. It's then joined to an anchor with new cable and clamps, ready to replace the next low-floater.







## New BMLA Resident Scholarship Fund

By Sarah Lewin, Scholarship Committee Chair

This summer the Blue Mountain Lake Association awarded two inaugural scholarships from our new Resident Scholarship Fund. Created to assist year-round residents off-set the costs of higher education, scholarships are available to Blue Mountain Lake's high school graduates (or the equivalent) and can be applied to any degree or certificate granting institution. The fund was seeded by \$6,500 in donations from seven anonymous BMLA members and has since received a \$5,000 gift from the fire department.

The two inaugural students each received \$1,000 paid directly to their colleges. We hope that over time the amounts will increase as the Scholarship Fund grows.

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

## True Blue

by Elizabeth Folwell

Reprinted with permission from Adirondack Life magazine, August 2024

Approaching from the west, the water splays out, peppered with islands, the mountain itself a giant backstop. The lake and mountain are forever one, like Buddha cradling a huge bowl, the forest slopes holding the rain and snow, then sending it all down to the basin. Dribbles and seeps combine into rivulets, then



brooks named for creatures (Beaver and Minnow), families (Potter), industry (Sawdust) and such. The notion of watershed plays out here in vivid commotion, these streams cutting under roads, past homes and cascading in gentle falls and the rare raging torrent. High up on Blue Mountain, miles from the marked trail, pinched-together topo lines indicate what

should be a dramatic waterfall. I've looked, but have yet to clamber over the rocks and among the brambles to find it. I see it as a majestic source of all that mingles below.

This liquid heads downhill, naturally, though north-flowing streams just seem counter-intuitive to us. Blue Mountain Lake and its Eckford Chain partners are parents of the Raquette River that snakes through Raquette and Long Lakes to meet the St. Lawrence River near Massena. The Raquette River tumbles at

Buttermilk Falls, is impounded at Piercefield and rolls through farmland en route to its confluence and the loss of its identity.

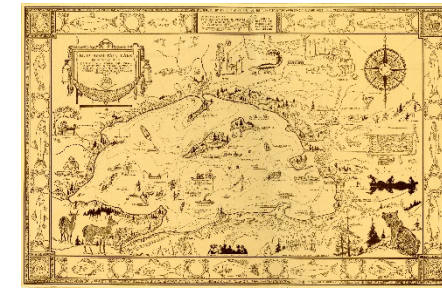
Dip a paddle in Blue Mountain Lake and you can gather some of that energy of moving water. Or you can float, bobbing gently in the shadow of a whale-backed rock, and picture what this place

was long before you ever showed up. In your launch you'll see lakeside camps and hear the occasional lawn mower, but head west and north from the town beach and you might as well be traveling back in time.

Most of the islands are uninhabited, shaped by glaciers rather than altered by buildings. A friend who mapped the lake counted more than 30 islands, 18 major ones and the rest "big enough to stand on without getting your shoes wet." The tops of the pines and spruces all indicate the direction of the prevailing winds while each shore has been meticulously pruned by generations of four-legged landscape artists, the white-tailed deer. The browse line is so consistent from one shore to the next, a miracle of everyday life that has little to do with us.

An island or two hold craggy osprey nests. On secluded muddy shores loons lay hopeful eggs. Eagles are not quite common now—their visitation exciting, but they spell peril for our elegant divers, preying on loon eggs and chicks. Beavers have their pocket coves and streams and do their best to engineer watery garlands bordered by girdled trees. Mergansers are abundant, often flotillas with aunties and ducklings 20 strong.

Maps of the lake show up on resort placemats, with quaint names for islands that most locals don't use. Gehenna? Which one is that? Blueberry or



Gull Rocks? Aren't they the same? On Verplanck Colvin's 1870 map of Tallow Lake (just one of several names before Blue Mountain Lake stuck forever), geo features include the ominous Skull Caves. Now that a small dam props up the waters of the Eckford Chain (Blue, Eagle, Utowana and cardinal-flowered, cedar-bordered Marion River), those caverns are hidden underwater.

The joy of exploring the lake is the chance to creep along a wild shore to appreciate its abrupt rocks and tiny beaches. There are channels and snug bays, all inviting a lingering look. A friend, when asked by a motorboater where the rocks are, simply replied, "I know where they aren't." No wonder there is a feature called "Expletive Shoal."

Those propeller crunchers can spell doom for the quick and careless. But in human-powered watercraft, the lake is all open for business, to float here, dodge there, sneak up on a patch of water lilies or watch in the rooty shallows for the shadows of bass. This is one lake where a chart isn't that necessary, really, and looking at the teeny image on a phone seems silly when the real thing is right in front of you. Blue Mountain is the lodestar,

your guide back to where you started.

Do I have a favorite place on this lake that I have known for more than 40 years? Sure. But Herman Melville said it better than I can: "It is not down on any map. True places never are."

Elizabeth Folwell is a former editor and creative director of Adirondack Life. She's the author of Short Carries: Essays from Adirondack Life.



## Fire and Ambulance

By A. Volunteer

The Blue Mountain Lake Volunteer Fire Department formed in 1938 to serve Indian Lake Fire District 2, covering the northwestern portion of the Town of Indian Lake, the Hamlet of Blue Mountain Lake and a lot of forest. We provide fire protection, ambulance service, and rescues. We work closely with the NY State Rangers and cooperate with the Indian Lake fire company which covers Fire District 1.

Led by Chief Greg George, Deputy Chief Ken Hinkley and Assistant Chief Jim Pine, Ambulance Captain Tim Leach, and President Gary Tyler, the

(continued)