

## Lake saving projects in English Brook watershed move forward



After Tropical Storm Irene, English Brook changed its route near its mouth: it started flowing in the same path that it did nearly 50 years ago, prior to the construction of the Northway. The last 300 feet of the brook now flows in a northeasterly direction. After input from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), it was determined that the stream should remain in place and the basin installed where the stream is currently flowing.

English Brook is one of eight major brooks flowing into Lake George. **LGA lake saving projects like this one make a huge difference to water quality, because stormwater runoff is the number one source of**

**T**he Lake George Association has completed the construction of a new sediment basin at the mouth of English Brook.

Construction of the basin was completed during the last week of October. The 150-foot long sediment basin was designed by the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District (WCSWCD) with financial assistance from the LGA. The basin will slow down the flow of water and allow sediment to fall out prior to entering the Lake. Grass pavers were also installed to enable future access to the site so that it can be maintained. The basin will be cleaned out every one to two years, when it reaches about 50-75% capacity. Each time it is cleaned out, roughly 300-400 cubic yards of material will be removed.

**pollutants entering Lake George.** The brook has been of concern to the LGA for many years, because intense land development has increased the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff in the watershed.

The mouth of English Brook is located just north of Lake George Village at the Lochlea Estate. Earlier this summer, the LGA installed a \$49,500 Aqua-Swirl stormwater separator on the property, as part of a \$100,000 stormwater project. This system is collecting previously untreated stormwater runoff from both the east and west sides of Rt. 9N, as well as the bridge between the two off-ramps at Exit 22 on Interstate 87. The majority of the runoff in a 48-acre subwatershed is now being captured and treated.

*Continued, next page*



## English Brook , *continued*

In the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene, WCSWCD used funds provided by the DEC to pull out trees, stabilize the streambank and restore capacity in the brook. The remainder of these funds will be used to complete more of the projects outlined in a WSCSCD 2008 English Brook Watershed Study, and the LGA will provide supplemental funding for these where possible.

### Additional work in the English Brook Watershed

Further upstream, at the Hubble Reservoir, the LGA hired Galusha Construction to remove a non-



Since the construction of the Northway, the shoreline near the mouth of English Brook has moved significantly. This cottage once sat right on the shoreline; it now sits several hundred yards back. Dave Wick, executive director of the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District, *above*, points out the growth of the delta over recent years.

functioning sluice gate and valve that were making it difficult to maintain the site. The site was dewatered and almost 600 cubic yards of sediment were removed in 2009.

The LGA acquired funding for all of the English Brook projects through grants from the Helen V. Froehlich Foundation and the New York State Department of State and the Environmental Protection Fund, with additional funding for the Aqua-Swirl project provided by the Lake Champlain Basin Program.

Projects estimated to cost hundreds of thousands of dollars are still needed to contain and reduce stormwater runoff and sediment in this sub-watershed. The culminating lake saving step for English Brook is to remove the sediment that has built up in the delta over the course of generations. The nutrient-rich sediment in deltas supports invasive plant growth, hampers fish spawning, and harbors nuisance waterfowl. By removing

the delta, safe navigation is restored, the health of the Lake's fisheries improves, the Lake returns to its original bottom, and property values are retained.

## Lake-friendly Living - inspiration from the Diers and the Jacksons!



LGA members Mike and Kathy Dier completed a major stormwater improvement project at their home in the watershed recently, including lots of different types of new permeable surfaces: interlocking pavers, gravel, stones, and walls. They created a lake-friendly walkway, patio (*above*) and driveway, and a vegetative buffer behind their house (*top*) to capture stormwater flowing from the driveway and land uphill from it. Prior to the improvements, large gullies were forming on the sides of their driveway, making it difficult to enter their home via the front walkway.

Who wants to think about the coming ice and snow? Isn't it more fun to dream about landscaping projects for next spring? LGA members Mike and Kathy Dier, pictured here, recently completed this beautiful permeable and lake-friendly driveway at their home in the Lake George watershed.



Keith (*above*) and Sandie Jackson live in Putnam. They installed a vegetative buffer (*bottom right*) to capture and slow down stormwater flowing down the hillside across the street behind their home. They noticed lots of sediment and erosion coming down the hill, and put in a new garden of bushes and plants to help absorb the excess water.

A large variety of plants and trees also frame the sides of their home down to the shoreline (*upper right*), and are present in front of their home as well, screening their view of the Lake. Their lawn area is minimal.





## Another **TERRIFIC** season on the Queen of American Lakes

*LGA member Joe Greco volunteered his time to write this "FISH STORY" for the LGA.*

*The LGA is involved in several projects that protect and enhance the fisheries of Lake George. Over the past four years, the LGA's Lake Stewards and other staff have helped in the annual stocking of salmon. In 2011, 34,000 juvenile salmon were introduced into the Lake. Our delta removal efforts in Huletts Landing at the mouth of Foster Brook have greatly enhanced smelt spring spawning ability. Smelt had not been seen in that stream in decades because their access was blocked by a 1,500 cubic yard sandy delta which had formed over time. Once the LGA removed the delta in 2009, smelt were able to swim into the mouth of the stream. Huletts residents spotted smelt during their very next spring run in 2010.*

*The LGA also "spawned" the Lake George Fishing Alliance which is an off-shoot from its Fish and Game Committee. The LGFA has moved on to be an effective independent organization focusing on sport fishing in Lake George.*

*The LGA continues to work to protect water quality on Lake George and consequently protect resources such as our renowned fisheries as it has done since its founding in 1885.*

**B**ased upon conversations I have had with fellow charter operators around the Lake, 2011 was a very good year for fishing on Lake George. We had visitors from all over the globe aboard, including folks from Germany, Russia, England and China, as well as many clients from around the continental United States. Regardless of where folks come from, virtually all comment on just how magnificent the Lake George region is and how remarkably clean the water is. I wish I had a dollar for every time someone told me how lucky I am to spend so much time on our wonderful lake.

Many charter operators around the lake start the busy season in May each year, in search of lake trout and salmon. **We are blessed with one of the most unique lake trout fisheries in the country; our trout population is totally self-sustaining.** Our unspoiled waters are conducive to natural lake trout reproduction and as a result, the state of New York hasn't had to stock trout in a few decades. This sets Lake George apart from countless other fisheries as, while many have some natural reproduction, most require supplemental stocking to ensure a productive fishery. We are cognizant of just how special this fishery is and try to educate all of our clients about the uniqueness of our lake trout population during the course of a charter.

While most of us have seen better salmon fishing in years past, we still caught some very nice salmon this past season. Although catch rates were significantly down, when anglers were lucky enough to hook up with an acrobatic landlocked Atlantic salmon, they usually

found a decent sized fish at the other end of their line. Unlike our native lake trout population, our salmon fishery is a result of New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) stocking efforts. For some reason the 33,000 fish that are stocked annually have not done well in recent years. There is a good deal of speculation as to why the salmon are not thriving and NYSDEC biologists are currently working with local anglers and fishing organizations - such as the Lake George Fishing Alliance (LGFA) - to hopefully remedy the problem. In an attempt to bolster an ailing salmon fishery, the state will begin stocking a new strain of salmon (Sebago strain) from the state of Maine in the not too distant future. This strain of salmon has been successfully stocked in a few other lakes in New York in recent years - including Lake Champlain - with seemingly positive results.

During the spring we concentrate our efforts in the vicinity of stream mouths, as the primary forage for trout and salmon is smelt. The smelt gravitate toward our streams each spring in an effort to spawn, with countless numbers of hungry predators not too far behind, in search of an easy meal. During this time frame, we usually troll in the vicinity of streams with lures that imitate mature smelt, such as Rapalas. As surface temperatures warm and the post-spawn smelt migrate back into deeper water, so do the trout and salmon. When this occurs we use techniques which enable us to run lures deeper in the water column.

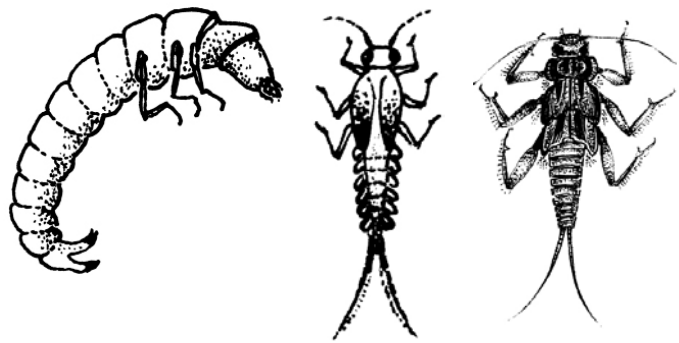
Once summer arrives, we begin receiving many

## LGA works with LGES Lake Rangers

*(continued from back page)*



Several weeks ago, the Rangers toured the site of the West Brook Conservation Initiative with LGA Project Manager Randy Rath, and learned how the stormwater runoff entering the lake presents its greatest threat. Later, Emily DeBolt, LGA director of education (*pictured above center*), and Jill Trunko, LGA educational intern, worked with the students at a stream on the school's property to help capture and identify the macroinvertebrates living in the stream. These tiny insects are key to determining the biological health and water quality of a stream.



Some macroinvertebrates are very sensitive to pollution while others are very tolerant. Sensitive organisms like caddisflies (*above left*), mayflies (*middle*), and stoneflies (*right*), as well as water pennies, dobsonflies or hellgrammites, and gilled snails are all indicators of healthy, good quality water.

**Do you have a group that would like to learn more about stream health and the creatures that live in stream? Call us to schedule a stream monitoring workshop!**

calls for bass fishing excursions. These trips have become increasingly popular over the years as our bass numbers appear to be at peak, offering anglers of all ages an action-packed fishing opportunity. During the summer months large numbers of smallmouth bass can be found in areas which contain structure, at depths of 20-40 ft. Most bass fishing enthusiasts have great luck fishing with live crawfish, minnows and artificial baits, such as 3-4 inch rubber worm presentations. Not much beats the excitement of catching a tenacious smallmouth bass on light tackle, as pound-for-pound they are one of the best fighting freshwater species.

**What makes running a charter fishing business so rewarding for myself and many of the other skippers on the lake?** We get to spend time on our awesome lake with people from all walks of life. Regardless of an individual's background, once they get out on the water most share a common goal, simply enjoying a wonderful day on one of the most beautiful lakes in the world.

One of my absolute favorite trips each year is taking a group of physically challenged individuals from the Buffalo, NY area (People and Places) out fishing. The group has been fishing with us for several years and they like to do a combination bass/trout charter. They were out with us once again this past August. We had a fabulous trip. The group caught a bunch of smallmouth bass and also boated a few nice lake trout. At the close of our trip I filleted several bass for the group, which they planned on having for dinner later that evening. I gave them a rather simple, delicious fish-fry recipe a few years ago which they claimed they thoroughly enjoyed. I absolutely love fishing with this group, as they don't sweat the small stuff and thoroughly enjoy every minute on the water. I have undoubtedly learned more from this group over the years than they have learned from me.

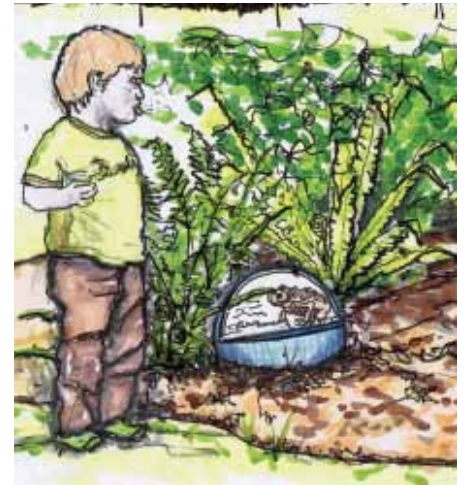
***"Thanks to the efforts of the LGA and others, we continue to have one of the most spectacular fresh water fisheries found anywhere. If we all do our part to protect and preserve this one-of-a-kind resource, our children and grandchildren will hopefully have the same exceptional fishing opportunities available to them that we have all enjoyed!"***

Capt. Joe Greco

## Glens Falls National Bank & Trust Donates \$20,000 to LGA for West Brook project

Glens Falls National Bank and Trust Company has pledged an additional \$20,000 to the LGA for the West Brook Conservation Initiative (WBCI) project, located on the former Gaslight Village property. This gift brings Glens Falls National Bank's total commitment to the project to \$25,000.

"In all of our 126-year history, this project is the LGA's largest, most important water quality remediation effort," said Walt Lender, executive director of the LGA. "This project will treat millions of gallons of stormwater," he continued, "while also educating thousands of annual Lake George visitors about the importance of water quality. We are so grateful to Glens Falls National for recognizing the importance of this project."



Planning team member Howard Fish, of Points North Communications, showed the audience ideas for interpretative signage, all of which would be unified with a circular motif, since water droplets form in circles, not squares. The circles would appear on posts, rails, and as spheres in the ground -- at eye level for young children. Thought-provoking questions on Lake George ecology would appear on one side. The circle would swivel around in its base to reveal the answer.

"Glens Falls National Bank has been a strong partner from the start. We appreciate their increased support," said Victor Hershaft, LGA president.

Due to the filling of historic wetlands, channeling of the stream, and development in the stream's watershed, West Brook today is the single largest source of contaminants, pollution, nutrients and sediment, entering the south basin of Lake George. The delta at the mouth of the brook has grown to over 7,000 square meters.

**To date, \$9.4 million has been raised toward the \$15 million dollar project.**

"Here at Glens Falls National Bank and Trust Company we are well aware of the central role Lake George plays in our region's economy. We know that protecting the exceptional quality of the lake's water is essential, and

are very excited about this project, as we believe it is key to ensuring a healthy future for the lake and its citizens," said Tom Hoy, CEO and chairman of Glens Falls National Bank and Trust Company. "And as a result of our donation, we hope other businesses will be able to support this Lake George project as well," he continued.

Earlier this year, grading and infrastructure for a stormwater treatment complex was completed on the south parcel of the property. This series of sediment ponds and wetlands will naturally slow stormwater generated from the Route 9 corridor and adjoining properties, capture sediment, and filter pollutants. Wetland plants will be installed next year. Project engineers estimate that 90% of the sediment will be successfully treated and over one-half of the

nutrients will be removed.

Significant state and federal funding has been acquired to complete the construction of the project, but monies still need to be raised from private individuals and corporations to pay for the conservation easement on the land. In addition to a \$2.1 million loan on the Gaslight Village purchase by the LGA and the FUND for Lake George, the Lake George Land Conservancy is carrying a \$2.7 million loan on the 1,400-acre Berry Pond tract, which protects the upland watershed for West Brook.

In late October, the public gathered at the Lake George Village Firehouse for a presentation from the planning team, on the preferred concept plan for the park.

The overarching theme for the park -- WATER -- will be present in what visitors will see, feel, and perceive.

Upon leaving the park, the goal is for each visitor to carry away a heightened sense of how “the clean water in Lake George matters to me personally.”

Team member Jere Tatich, of Elan Planning, shared specific designs for the entrance ways, structures, walkways and interpretative features. The plan proposes to use multiple types of elements and surfaces to provide a full range of experiences and interactions with nature. Lisa Nagle, of Elan Planning, explained what elements and sections could be constructed immediately, using the remaining \$1.7 million in TEP funding, and what elements would be constructed once additional funding is secured.

The team and project partners will seek to raise an additional \$3.5 - 4 million to complete the final design. Potential funding sources include the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation Green Innovation Grant Program, NYS Dept. of State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, NYS Dept. of Health, and private foundations.

Now the project enters Phase 2: construction documentation. Design reports for NYS DOT will be prepared next, as well as construction blueprints. The proposed start date for bidding on the construction is June 2012.

## Septic Cleanout Program a Success!

This summer the LGA, the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board (LCLGRP), and the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) partnered on a Onsite Septic Improvement Program. Half-price septic system pumpouts were offered to residents of the towns of Bolton Landing, Diamond Point, and Silver Day/Hague who own property within 500 feet of Lake George.

88,000 gallons were pumped, including 2 combined systems at Cannon Point in Diamond Point (48 townhomes) and Bluebird Cottages Homeowner Association in Bolton Landing (10 homes). In addition, 56 individual households participated in the program.

SWCD and LGA staff provided water conservation kits and answered any questions related to septic system maintenance and lake related issues.



Photo courtesy LCLGRP

*Send your family and friends a gift that will have a lasting effect on the quality and beauty of Lake George, beyond the holidays.*



*Gift memberships to the LGA start at \$50. Call us today at 518-668-3558 or use our online donation and membership form at [www.lakegeorgeassociation.org](http://www.lakegeorgeassociation.org)*



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## LGA works with LGES Lake Rangers



Staff from the Lake George Association worked this past October with Lake George Elementary School teacher Robin Weber and her 5 - 6th grade after-school club — the Lake Rangers. The Rangers meet weekly to examine the issues affecting the Lake George watershed.

*"The students donned rubber boots, grabbed nets and ventured into the stream. This was truly a remarkable hands-on activity yielding a memorable and meaningful learning experience. The LGA is a valuable resource to us. I appreciate the tremendous learning opportunity we have right in our backyard."*

Robin Weber, Gifted and Talented Teacher,  
Lake George Elementary School

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**LGA's MISSION:** *Working together to protect, conserve and improve the beauty and quality of the Lake George Basin.*

