

A scenic landscape featuring a bright yellow sun or moon partially obscured by a wispy white cloud in a blue sky. Below the sky, a calm lake reflects the light, surrounded by a dense forest of green trees. In the foreground, a grassy field with scattered trees leads to a small, light-colored building. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Reflections on the Three Lakes

Three Lakes Council 1970 - 2020

Reflections on Our Lakes
Three Lakes Council 1970 - 2020

Reflections on Our Lakes:
Three Lakes Council 1970 - 2020

Lakes Waccabuc, Oscaleta, and Rippowam

Janet Andersen, editor and primary author, and Jean Lewis, author and contributor

Three Lakes Council
2020

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First Printing: 2020

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Acknowledgements

Three Lakes Council is 50 years old in 2020. It was founded in 1970 to coordinate environmental stewardship for Lakes Waccabuc, Oscaleta, and Rippowam.

If our three beautiful lakes could talk, what stories they would tell.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Three Lakes Council, this book intends to tell our lakes' stories through historical information, photographs, legends, and memories. We will describe how the Three Lakes Council strives to protect and preserve these lakes so they provide future joys and memories.

This book owes its existence to the help and enthusiasm of community members. Janet Andersen was the lead author and editor, and provided many photographs. Jean Lewis wrote much of the content, served as a sounding board, and provided essential enthusiasm for the project. Jean also gathered documents, photos, and stories from Ken Soltesz, Janet Karl, Maureen Koehl, Fred and Tina Cowles, Ferne Bende, and her own collection. Dana Owen loaned his historical postcards. Linda Broudy offered photographs, both historical and her own. Nancy Hallberg gave insights into Perch Bay Association. Paul Lewis shared saved documents. We are grateful to observers and packrats everywhere.

Other sources that were instrumental in creating this document are listed in References.

About the Lakes

Lakes Waccabuc, Oscaleta, and Rippowam comprise the Three Lakes, and are located in the northeast corner of the Town of Lewisboro, New York. The watershed extends into Ridgefield, Connecticut. The lakes are glacial in origin, dating from the Wisconsin ice age of twenty thousand years ago. Permanent and intermittent streams and springs supply the three connected lakes.

Early documents indicate that Native Americans called this area Wepack or Wepuck, which may be a variation of the Algonquin phrase wequa-paug. This term, translated as “Long Pond”, seemed to refer to the complex of the three lakes, not to any individual lake. The name Long Pond was first documented in 1701 when Chief Catoonah granted Long Pond to the citizens of Stamford. In 1729 when Tapporneck deeded land to the Ridgefield Proprietors, he also called the lakes Long Pond.



The three lakes with their watersheds outlined in green.

Early Waccabuc

The first European settlers probably arrived in this area around 1730, and the inaugural Salem town meeting was held April 8, 1747. The Town of Salem split into North Salem and Lower or South Salem, which was later renamed Lewisboro.

The Mead family has a strong historical influence on the community, especially on Waccabuc. The Rev. Solomon Mead was ordained to the first church in Lewisboro, with 12 members, in 1752. The Mead family ties expanded in 1776 when Enoch Mead and his new wife Jemima built a house on Post Road. This supposedly occurred because the horse of the traveling couple died near Long Pond. More prosaic minds believe it was because Enoch was Solomon Mead's nephew, and Jemima's uncle was an early settler in the area. In any case, the couple established a farm and a tavern on the portion of Post Road that would later become Mead Street.

By the 1830's, documents began to refer to each of the lakes by their relative locations: North Pond, South Pond, and West Pond. The West Pond name was used only briefly, and soon the largest lake was called Long Pond.



1940 Photo. Lake Oscaleta on the left, Lake Waccabuc in upper middle, Lake Rippowam on the lower right.

Early Waccabuc



Photo of Waccabuc House

The Mead family built the Waccabuc House overlooking Lake Waccabuc about 1857. The resort hotel was four stories tall, wrapped on three sides with a two-story veranda. The Harlem Railroad connected New York to the Katonah and Goldens Bridge stations, and visitors took a horse-drawn wagon from the stations to Mead Street and Lake Waccabuc. The railroad featured Waccabuc as a summer destination in their vacation brochure.

Waccabuc House

Marketing may have played a role in retrieving the wequa-paug name for Lake Waccabuc, as it came into use around 1860 as the Mead family built and popularized Waccabuc House as a resort. The name of the hotel transferred to the lake. Richard Lawrence, an early resident, renamed South Pond to Lake Oscaleta as a variation of a phrase meaning “little kiss”. The origin of the name Lake Rippowam for the third lake is unknown.



Courtesy Mead Studwell Collection, Mead Memorial Chapel

Early Waccabuc

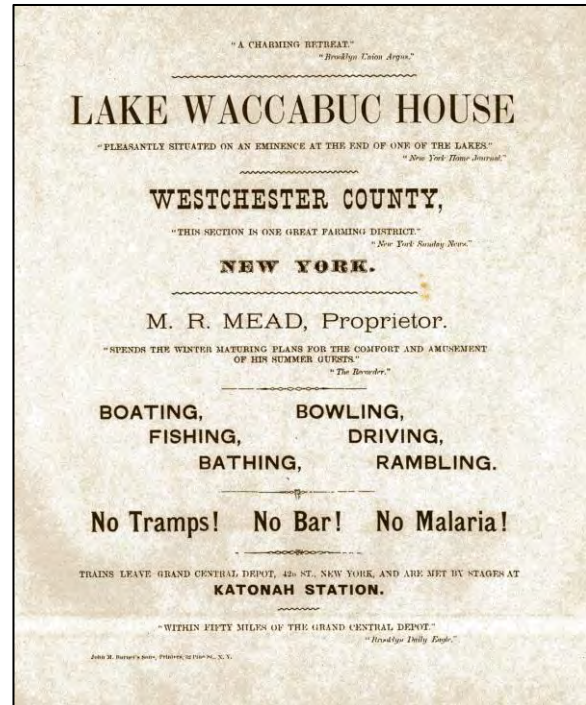
The Waccabuc House advertised rooms for 100 visitors. They invited guests to use flat-bottomed boats for fishing, and to pole skiffs through the channels to visit each of the lakes.

Newspaper write-ups of the time told of scenic visits to Castle Rock, which was topped by paths created by meandering cows. They also heralded the ability to visit the island of Juan Ferdinand, without giving any indication of the origin of that name for the island.

The Meads sold the Waccabuc House in 1895. A fire in 1896 ended the resort operation.



The Waccabuc House Boathouse. Courtesy of Ken Soltesz



The Lake Waccabuc Boat Corporation rented boats from a boathouse on the lake near the hotel. It continued operating until 1934, apparently a casualty of the Great Depression.

Early Waccabuc



Bungalow Club. Mead Studwell Collection

Members of the Mead family built cottages and boathouses along the lake. They were very protective of Lake Waccabuc. In 1863 the Mead family commissioned a road survey so lots could be sold, but the land was not developed at that time. In 1895, the Mead family built a house called Tarry-A-Bit on that road (now 8 Tarry-A-Bit). About the same time, the eleven Mead children constructed the log cabin “Bungalow Club”. This was their retreat, where they could enjoy alcoholic drinks without disturbing their mother, who believed in total abstinence.

Auntie Deb’s Boathouse

Elizabeth Brundige Mead built a boathouse on the south side of the lake in 1895, known as Auntie Deb’s boathouse. She later married Richard Cahoon. They bought land on the north side of the lake and built a house there. Around 1920, the boathouse was put on skids and a team of horses dragged it across the ice to their property. While the house has changed greatly, the boathouse is still recognizable on the lake’s shore today.



Auntie Deb’s Boathouse. Mead Studwell Collection

Early Waccabuc



Mead Studwell Collection, Mead Memorial Chapel

Robert Hoe III's boathouse

Robert Hoe III, another member of the Mead family, owned an eight-acre parcel on the south shore of Lake Waccabuc. This parcel became very important to Lake Waccabuc. He built a boathouse along the shore. When the Meads founded the Waccabuc Inn, later to become the Waccabuc Country Club, this became the beach area for the Club. The upgraded boathouse remains in use today and is one of the buildings at the Club's beach.



*Waccabuc Country Club boathouse & The Roost in 2016.
Photo by Linda Broudy*

The Roost

The small building next to the boathouse has a peripatetic background. It was originally a cabin on the north shore east of Castle Rock. When the Meads acquired the land, they kept the cabin as a clubhouse for the girls, earning it the name of Hen's Roost. Later used by the adult families and for picnics, it was renamed The Roost. The building was moved to the west end of the lake around 1940. Now sitting just to the east of the Waccabuc Country Club boathouse, it serves as a changing room for the beach facility.

The elephant

Lake waters may hold many secrets in their depths. In Waccabuc, it's possible they also hold an elephant.

In 1808, Hachaliah Bailey, a farmer in Somers, bought an African elephant for farm labor. It became such a sensation that he started to tour with "Old Bet". The elephant, supplemented by a trained dog, several pigs, and a horse, formed the foundation of the Bailey Circus. By 1830, circus groups were popular in the area, and farmers sheltered circus animals in their barns over the winter. It is said that the Bailey circus elephants stayed at the horse barn that was part of the Waccabuc House.

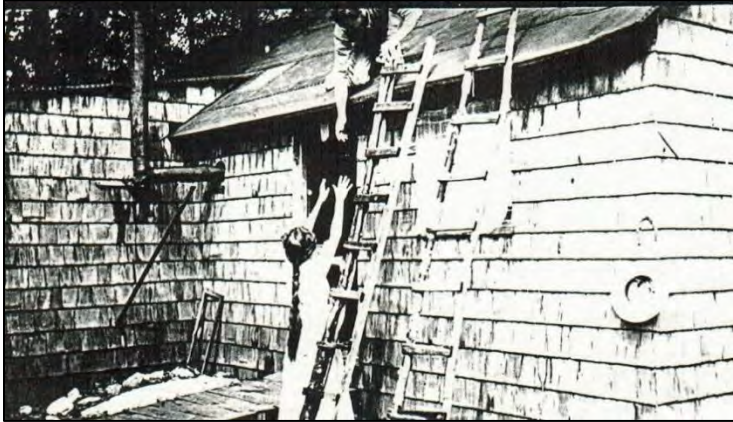
As the story goes, one of the elephants overwintering on or near Mead Street died. Since no one wanted to tackle digging an elephant-sized hole in the frozen ground, disposal was a concern. According to legend, the elephant was dragged out on to the ice, weighted down, and left to sink to the bottom as the ice melted.

Despite the popularity of the story, no evidence supports the claims. The bottom of the lake has enough muck that, despite repeated attempts, divers have never found any evidence of elephant bones. Still, some old timers refuse to eat any fish from the lake, fearing the taint of elephant might linger. Or is this another story aimed to encourage catch and release fishing? After all this time, it is doubtful that we will ever find the truth about the elephant. But that shouldn't spoil a good story!

Does the watery disappearance of a canoe support this tale? A hundred years or so after the storied elephant burial, a canoe sunk in Waccabuc, never to be found. Here's that story. Chuck Cantine, a homeowner, decided to remove some rocks from his lakefront to make it easier on the feet to reach deep water. He had a process. He filled up his aluminum canoe with rocks, took the loaded canoe out from shore, and overturned the canoe to dump the rocks into the depths. The last time, the rocks caught inside the canoe, and did not fall out of the boat. The canoe righted itself, the combined weight of water and rocks overcame the buoyancy of the canoe, and down it sunk into the muck at the bottom of the lake. Divers were never able to locate the canoe, and it remains entombed in the murk at the bottom of Lake Waccabuc. Does this give credence to the report that elephant bones could be in the bottom of the lake? Dear reader, you may decide.

Early Waccabuc

South Shore of Waccabuc



Before any structures existed, men traveled from New Canaan to fish on Waccabuc's south shore. According to the New Canaan Advertiser newspaper of July 25, 1908, two members of the 'Bungalow Family' at Lake Waccabuc added 1,000 black bass and 1,000 white perch to the fish supply of the lake.

Mary Benedict, a widow who owned a farm of 226 acres south of the lakes, started leasing land for small cottages on Lake Waccabuc's southeastern shore around



1903. The first house on Lake Waccabuc's south shore was built in 1913 and was known as the "New Canaan Camp".

By 1930, about 20 cottages existed, one of which was the Deved cottage. Mary Knapp, a Benedict descendent, divided the land and sold it to the individual cottage owners in 1955.

Annie Pardee had a cottage on the south shore, brought to that location from Lake Osaleta. She named it "Oweliket" based on the enthusiastic assessment of one of her early guests.

New Canaan Camp. Photos courtesy of Janet Karl

Dicken's Boathouse

Samuel Dickens moved from New Canaan to the south shore of Waccabuc around 1920. In 1924, he relocated to a house he had built across the cove. Sam constructed a small store by the bridge where Oscaleta Road crosses the channel that connects Lakes Oscaleta and Waccabuc. The name of the store reflected the location "Between the Lakes". Initially he sold soft drinks and candy, but within a few years, he began renting boats that he built himself. By 1929, the flotilla consisted of about dozen canoes and two dozen rowboats.



Between the lakes. Photo courtesy of Ken Soltesz

Early Waccabuc

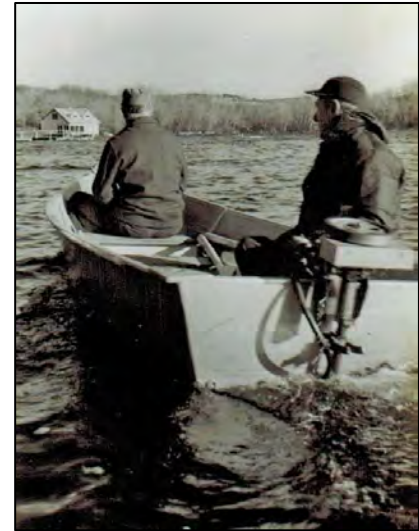


In 1927, three Roscoe boys opened another boat rental on Lake Waccabuc out of the log cabin that still exists on Cove Road. Samuel Dickens bought them out within a year. He sold the old “Between the Lakes” store to the Benedicts, who rented it seasonally before tearing it down around 1935.

At his new location on Cove Road, Sam Dickens built a boathouse on pilings over the water. This site opened for business in 1929. In

addition to renting boats, he sold snacks and gasoline for motor boats.

Merwin Dickens documented the first production motorboat used on Lake Waccabuc. In the photo, the occupants are heading towards Dicken’s Boathouse.



Dickens Boathouse 1928. Photo courtesy Ken Soltesz

Early Waccabuc

Merwin Dickens took the boathouse over from his father Sam in 1945. Eventually the popularity of the boathouse generated concerns among the neighboring lake community. Complaints of trash, trespass, and parking congestion grew. Residents of the community banded together to purchase the business from Merwin in 1961.

Merwin Dickens then converted in the boathouse building into a year-round home. After extensive renovations, the boathouse continues today as a residence perched over the lake.



Early Waccabuc

Cedar Grove and Pardee's Point



Cedar Grove, as described in an advertisement for Waccabuc House, was “a small hill bountifully shaded, almost totally surrounded by water, where the rustic swain loves to go on picnics.” This description is believed to refer to land now occupied by Waterview Court homes.



Pardee's Point or Pardee's Cove was the location of Wawonaissa Camp, a summer stay for the boys' choir of St. Paul's Church in Norwalk, CT. Maureen Koehl, Town of Lewisboro Historian, found reports of the camp from the 1930's. The boys stayed in tents large enough to hold six bunks. After a Labor Day filled with swimming, canoes, and rowboat races, the boys loaded all the supplies into a Dodge truck and returned home.

Ice Harvests on Lake Waccabuc

The ruins of “The Ice House” stand on Long Pond Preserve on the south shore of Lake Waccabuc. A foundation and some attachments remain on the shore, although some equipment continues to disappear. The ice trade was a source of income and activity during the coldest part of the winter. After snow was cleared, a grid was laid out on the ice surface. Horses pulled an ice plow to gouge out grooves. Then workers used handsaws to harvest large chunks of ice. These large ice cubes were brought to an icehouse insulated with sand, straw, and sawdust. The blocks were stored in icehouses until warmer weather, when they were sold by weight.



The demand for ice was high. New York City purchased 300,000 tons of ice in 1850. By 1880, in northeastern cities average demand was two-thirds of a ton per person. By 1900, ice in summer was as important as coal in winter.

Early Waccabuc



Photos courtesy of Studwell Mead Foundation, Mead Chapel



*Ice House foundation, gears, & chains in 2016.
Photos courtesy of Linda Broudy.*

Early Oscaleta and Rippowam



The lakes in 1932. Photo courtesy of Janet Wood Karl

Early Oscaleta and Rippowam

Lake Oscaleta – south shore

The first records of a house on Lake Oscaleta are from 1882, and people began building cottages on the south shore of Oscaleta in the early 1900's. "Camp Ne'eer-a-Kare", the Ryan-Daley cottage, was built in 1921.

"Camp Sunup" was built on the south shore of Lake Oscaleta in 1908. Bennie Wood and four other men would travel from New Canaan on Saturday evenings by horse and wagon, go fishing on Sunday mornings, and then return to New Canaan.



Camp Ne'eer a Kare Photo courtesy Janet Wood Karl



Camp Sunup. Photo courtesy Janet Wood Carl.

Bennie was the grandfather of Janet Wood Karl. Her family has enjoyed the cottage for over 100 years. Janet remembers that the camp originally had no electricity or running water: drinking water was carried from a spring, and the family used an outhouse. The camp did sport an ice box.

Janet remembers playing cowboys and Indians in the woods across the lake (now site of Twin Lakes Village). "One of the highlights was to go to Waccabuc to get ice cream at Dicken's Store ('Between the Lakes') and dance to the juke box."

Early Oscaleta and Rippowam

Three members of the Karl family detailed their memories of summers spent at “Camp Sunup” in the 2009 Three Lakes Council newsletter. Read it on the Thee Lakes Council website.



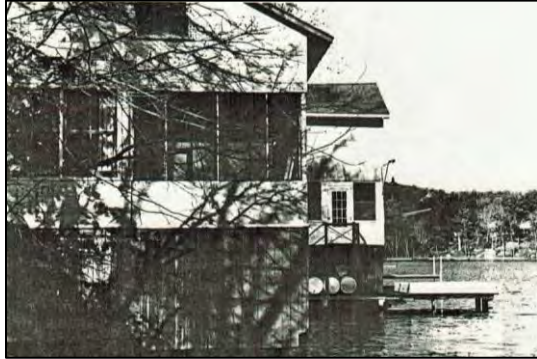
1930 photo. Courtesy of Janet Wood Karl

The original Knapp-Kane-Crucy Cottage on the south shore of Lake Oscaleta burned and was later rebuilt.

1960 photo. Courtesy of Janet Wood Karl



Early Oscaleta and Rippowam



Photos courtesy of Janet Wood Karl. Photo of the Twin Houses on the right is dated 1927.

“Twin Cottages”, owned by the Dartt and Davis families, were located midway along the south shore of Lake Oscaleta. Later, the Twin Cottage on the left was pulled onto the ice, turned sideways, and pulled back onto the shore.



The Holden cottage at the eastern end of Oscaleta belonged to the Marian Holden estate on Old Oscaleta Road.

Early Oscaleta and Rippowam

C. S. Nash of Ridgefield had a cottage on the beach at the southeastern end of Oscaleta. He moved it westward over the ice to the Benedict property.

In 1882, the "Ridgefield Club" built a boathouse on Lake Oscaleta. It had caretaker's apartment upstairs. When James Abrams acquired the Nash property, he moved the boathouse to his house at 27 Old Oscaleta Road and used it as a caretaker's cottage.



Photos courtesy Ken Soltesz

Early Oscaleta and Rippowam

Swinging Bridge, Rippowam Estate

At the east end of Rippowam is a boathouse belonging to the Rippowam Estate, established in 1902 by Johathan Bulkley of New York City. Mr. Bulkley built stone steps from the boathouse up to a swinging bridge, which he erected around 1910. Many current “old timers” remember visiting the swinging bridge as kids.

The swinging bridge was a wooden construction with a walkway going from the top of a steep cliff fifty or sixty feet straight out to the crown of a huge tulip tree. The walkway went around the lofty tree trunk and had built-in benches. Iron hangers from the tree provided support. As constructed, the whole thing would sway gently. A series of what looked like telephone poles, split lengthwise, provided further support while still allowing the swaying or swinging. A Swiss engineer designed this unique architectural feature.



Early Oscaleta and Rippowam



Swinging bridge materials courtesy of Janet Wood Karl



These photos of the swinging bridge date from 1931.

At the tree, the seats provided a fine view of the three lakes.

Despite periodic repairs, the Swinging Bridge eventually began to deteriorate. It was dismantled in the 1950's.



Development around the Three Lakes

The communities around the three lakes are important on their own and in this context, since the organizations guide the Three Lakes Council. Board members represent Lake Waccabuc Association, Lakeside Association of Waccabuc, South Shore Waccabuc Association, Perch Bay Association, Waccabuc Country Club, Two Lakes Club, Lake Oscaleta Association, and Waccabuc Landowners Council. Their stories follow.



The oldest house in the community is the saltbox home on Oscaleta Road by Twin Lakes Road. According to the Lewisboro History Book, Isaac Benedict built the house during the 1770's. Fred Cowles, the current owner, says the stone walls were built to keep the farm animals away from the wetlands that edge Lake Waccabuc.

Development around the Three Lakes

The photo shows a woman operating a well sweep in front of the house. This device reduces the effort needed to raise water from the well. The sweep rests in “Y” notch at the top of a stationary pole that acts as a fulcrum. The sweep has a bucket at one end and a counterweight at the other. To draw water, the person pulls the bucket down into the well and the counterweight assists pulling the bucket full of water back up. The door into the basement level of the house allowed the valuable oxen to go inside during cold weather. Their presence below also helped heat the house.

The three lakes area was an early recreational destination. In the 1890's, this house was the site of Camp Clover. Campers played lawn tennis and enjoyed a porch added to the front of the house, but now missing. Live music was frequent entertainment, as demonstrated by the group listening to a banjo in the 1891 photo below. Another activity for the campers was playing croquet.



Photos courtesy Fred and Tina Cowles

Development around the Three Lakes

The Port of Missing Men



At the turn of the century, Henry B. Anderson was a successful developer who had just installed water and sewer systems for Ridgefield, CT. He acquired 1750 acres on the state border and planned to develop an estate community. He built and sold dozens of homes on the Connecticut portion of the property. In 1907, Anderson built his family a 20-room house on the New York side of the

border that overlooked Lakes Waccabuc, Oscaleta, and Rippowam. The property contained the highest point in Westchester County, with commanding views from “Cat Rocks”, now known as Lookout Point in Mountain Lakes Park. Anderson also built roadways throughout the property, and a boathouse on Lake Rippowam. Water was pumped up from the lake to supply the house. The Andersons moved away in the early 1900’s, and the house deteriorated and was torn down in 1952. The overlook remains a popular destination for its outstanding views.

Development around the Three Lakes



Courtesy Westchester County Historical Society

To help the marketing efforts for his planned residential community, Anderson built a teahouse on the state border, converted from an old barn. It was large, about 40 feet by 70 feet, with a porch on two sides. Sales of lots for the community were slow, but the restaurant, named the Port of Missing Men after a 1907 novel by Meredith Nicholson, became a great success. Rumors about the source of the popularity abound. Was it driven by the availability of spirited beverages during prohibition? Or the availability of spirited women? Or could it be the outstanding scenery of the location? In any case, the restaurant went out of business by the 1940's and eventually fell into disrepair. An heir to Henry Anderson demolished the building at the end of World War II.

Development around the Three Lakes

In 1957, a group of investors purchased the New York parcels for a residential development they planned to call Eight Lakes Estate. However, Westchester County wanted recreational and camping land, and condemned the property. Westchester County subsequently acquired the parcels in 1959. The land became Mountain Lakes Park, putting an end to lingering residential development interests for that property.

Lake Waccabuc Association



Photo courtesy Jean Lewis

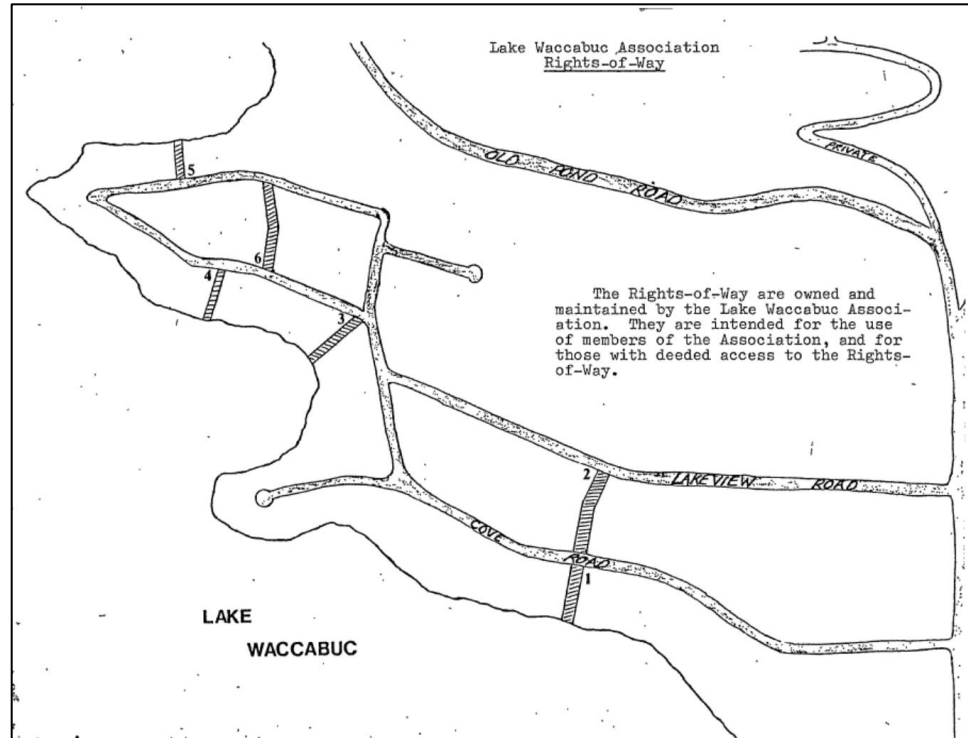
The area “behind the pillars” that encompasses Cove, Lakeview, and Old Pond Roads started as summer camps and gradually grew into the full time residences that are there today. The Lake Waccabuc Association formed in 1949. The initial issues were to address the lack of paved roads and a concern about the problems from the Dicken’s boat rental business on Cove Road. Neighbors wanted to address intrusions on private property, refuse left on shores, and parking issues. Members paid \$50 to have the roads scraped and oiled. The roads were eventually turned over to the Town. The association maintained the deeded rights of way, and over time, the association became the owner of all of the rights of way.

Early activities as described in Lake Waccabuc Association documents included visits to the old ice house and to the spring on the south shore of Waccabuc, treks to the Port of Missing Men and to the lookout, and, when high stream flows allowed, tubing down the Waccabuc River. Community ball games were popular at fields off Lakeview Road.

Development around the Three Lakes

A young people's group promoted and enforced boating rules. Annual events from early days included swim races, canoe races, and fishing derbies for youngsters. The culmination of the season was the annual boat pageant around Labor Day, with decorated boats competing for prizes.

Today the Lake Waccabuc Association manages rights-of-way and maintains the docks. The association also holds year-round social events for their members.



Development around the Three Lakes

Lakeside Association of Lake Waccabuc



Photo courtesy Jean Lewis

Lakeside Association of Lake Waccabuc is a private association made up of ten houses that have deeded rights to the Lakeside right of way. The original landowner created the association in 1966 and gave it to ten of his friends to insure that they would have water access. The homeowners pay for maintenance of the common dock, right of way, and lawn area. Members may keep their boats on the property. For years, neighbors with lake rights paid a nominal fee to launch their boats from the Lakeside Association's right of way.

South Shore Waccabuc Association

The South Shore area is on the southeastern edge of Lake Waccabuc. The first camp on the South Shore was built in 1913, and 20 cottages existed by 1920. The association now consists of 30 homes, each with its own lake front access. The road is private and maintained by association members.



Development around the Three Lakes

Twin Lakes Village

Jessica Palmer purchased the land that became Twin Lakes Village from Henry B. Anderson in 1906. She sold it to the Peninsula Development Company (PDC) of White Plains in 1948. The PDC subdivided the land into lots along Oscaleta Road and in Twin Lakes Village. Restrictions on the use of the land date from the Palmer sale and are included in the PDC covenant and current sale deeds. Maps submitted to the Lewisboro Planning Board in 1949 showed plans for a clubhouse at the current beach location, with park areas on both Oscaleta and Rippowam. Obviously not all these plans came to fruition.



Photo courtesy Jean Lewis

Ferne Bendel remembered that her family was the first to look at the lots in Twin Lake Village. She and her husband Charlie lived on Long Island with their three small children. Ferne had been a competitive swimmer in her youth, so Charlie and she were searching for lakefront property. When they heard of properties on a lake in South Salem, they drove up on the first day of the Peninsula Development Company sale. Two men representing the developers were standing by a card table on Oscaleta Road at the end of what is now Twin Lakes Road. Ferne recalled, "We were their first prospective customer, and they told us to go down the road and pick out a lot! The road was just a dirt road that was built up in the center. We were able to drive the car along the built-up part looking for a lot with a shallow lakeshore for the children. We looked at several beautiful lots near the end of the road, but the lake at each one dropped off quickly. So we started back toward the beginning of the road. At one point Charlie stopped the car and climbed down the

Development around the Three Lakes

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Development around the Three Lakes

steep bank to Lake Oscaleta. He came back up and said, 'Yes, there's a beautiful lake down there! Let's buy this lot.' We went to the Peninsula offices the next day, bought the lot, and spent every weekend for several years coming up while Charlie built the garage and house. We used the house in summers until Charlie retired, and then we moved up here permanently." One of their daughters, Shannon, enjoyed the lake so much that she and her husband, Dave Robinette, bought the house next door.

The PDC Covenant established The Two Lake Club as the homeowner's association for Twin Lakes Village in 1948. The Two Lake Club assesses fees and maintains the beach property. Originally, the roads in Twin Lakes Village were also the responsibility of the Two Lake Club. Membership in the club was a prerequisite to purchase land in the Village. When this became an impediment to house sales in the 1990's, club bylaws were modified to allow a prospective buyer to become a conditional member by entering a purchase contract. The roads, Twin Lakes Road, Orchard Drive, and North Lake Circle, were transferred to Town ownership and maintenance, leaving the beach area the club's primary focus. The Two Lake Club also manages the entrance and beachfront, as well as social events for the community.

Disappointed with the quantity of the water supply, community members bought the Twin Lakes Water-works from the developer in 1965, and resident volunteers manage it to this day.



Two Lake Club beach.

Development around the Three Lakes

Lake Oscaleta Association



The Lake Oscaleta Association held their first annual meeting in 1955. Although some of the homes date to the early 1900's, that appeared to be date of the first formal organization for this area. This association manages Knapp Road, a private road that provides access to the homes in the community on the south shore of Lake Oscaleta. A right of way and dock provide access for those without lakefront.



Development around the Three Lakes

Perch Bay Association

In 1947, the Mead family began exploring the sale of the Perch Bay area, on the south shore of Lake Waccabuc, and East Ridge parcels, on the eastern edge of the second nine holes of the Waccabuc Country Club golf course. The Town's planning board approved the first version of the Perch Bay subdivision in 1949. From the start, the houses without lake frontage – those south of Perch Bay Road and those along East Ridge Road - were granted access to Lake Waccabuc through the current Perch Bay Association easement. The westernmost lakefront lot was reserved for the Waccabuc Country Club beach from the initial subdivision plans.

In 1954, encountering trouble selling large lots along Perch Bay Road, Mead Properties subdivided some lakefront and non-lakefront properties. By 1961, 19 lots were sold, and East Ridge was extended to make one more lot, which was sold with lake rights. All of the lots without lake frontage had deeded lake access through two lots at the end of Perch Bay Road.

Homeowners discussed purchasing the common area from the Meads in 1961. They desired to preserve the area in a natural state and to limit development to a shared dock and beach area. Although this initiative did not result in the purchase of the land, it laid the foundation for an organized Perch Bay Association.



Development around the Three Lakes

By 1969, the Studwell Foundation had acquired the residual unsold properties from Mead Properties, and wanted to liquidate their remaining holdings. The Studwell Foundation agreed to sell the shared lake access property to the adjacent landowner, who reassured all the easement holders that their access would remain unchanged. Studwell Foundation documents at that time indicated that lake access did not add value to the East Ridge properties, so deeded lake access was no longer included in any subsequent sale of the remaining East Ridge parcels.

The Perch Bay Association encompasses 28 properties. The purpose of the organization is to facilitate and promote the enjoyment of the lakefront, and preserve the easement area for the use of future generations.

Waccabuc Country Club

The history of the Waccabuc Country Club is well documented in a celebratory centennial book. Waccabuc Country Club offers members a unique feature – a beach club on the shore of Lake Waccabuc. The club obtained the nine-acre parcel from the Mead family in 1960, together with the Robert Hoe boathouse. The club upgraded the docks in 1966, and added the deck and snack bar in 1970. Day camp activities center on the lakefront. Waccabuc Country Club has generously supplied the location and support for the Three Lakes Council's Annual Meeting.



Development around the Three Lakes

Waccabuc Landowners Council



Photo from Waccabuc Landowners Council website

Waccabuc life centered around the small Waccabuc Post Office built in 1890. In 1973, the US Postal Service decided that the structure was dilapidated and would close. The Field Association, a local group formed to protect against poachers, responded. After much discussion, the Postal Service agreed that the Post Office could stay open if building improvements were made immediately. The Waccabuc Community Services was formed to take that action. Waccabuc Community Services purchased the post office building and land from Mead Properties, and renovation was completed in 1974. In 1999, the US Postal Service financed further expansion of the building.

The Waccabuc Community Association formed in 1981 after the theft of silver from several homes, to address community issues of "burglaries, vandals, and trespassing; increased land development; insensitive use of the land; and a lack of social cohesiveness within the community." Waccabuc Community Association incorporated as Waccabuc Landowners Council, and then Waccabuc Community Services transferred ownership of the Post Office to Waccabuc Landowners Council. Waccabuc Landowners Council now manages the Post Office property, provides community beautification activities and social events, and aims to meet the modern needs of a growing community. The 250 members reside in properties that surround Mead Street.

Special features of the Three Lakes

Those who love our lakes can claim every aspect is special: the towering hills to the north of Waccabuc and Rippowam, wooded shorelines that persist in a suburban community, excellent fishing, wildlife sightings, boating and swimming. Here are some standouts.

The island and its “Indian Ovens”

The island in Waccabuc has been a destination for boaters and swimmers for years. The island was advertised as an adventurous destination for visitors to the Waccabuc House in the 1800’s. The rocks provide clear evidence of glacial striation. Their east – west orientation, like the long axis of the lakes, is not the typical glacial direction.

According to the [History of the Town of Lewisboro](#), the native inhabitants of the area treated these features with reverence, believing that The Great Spirit provided them.



Indian ovens and glacial striations. Photo courtesy of Linda Broudy.

Special Features of the Three Lakes



Indian Ovens on the island at Lake Waccabuc, N. Y.



Photo courtesy Janet Karl



Special Features of the Three Lakes

The channels between the lakes

The channels that join the three lakes enable a shared sense of community. Using the channels, lake residents can visit all three lakes and enjoy their distinct vibes, wildlife, and scenery. Some geologists posit that the three lakes were one larger lake after the glacier that molded them retreated. Now wetlands and small streams hydrologically connect the three lakes. The channels are a result of the need for water to supply a growing New York City.

The New York City water department built an outlet structure for Lake Waccabuc in the mid 1800's to increase the supply of water, which fed the Croton Reservoir. The concrete gate at the



Outlet structure in 2014.

outlet from Lake Waccabuc was built about 1870 when New York City's Croton Water Department added Lake Waccabuc to its water supply system.

A prolonged drought in 1876 affected the capacity of the NYC drinking water supply. News articles in the Brewster Standard and the Putnam County Standard cite city efforts to use water from area lakes to increase the flow to the existing reservoirs.

Special Features of the Three Lakes

“‘Everywhere the old outlets are being sunk lower,’ said the Standard of the work being conducted by 300 men on seven lakes and ponds. The task involved cutting down lake outlets by several feet, blasting new outlets and hand-digging six-foot-deep canals through quicksand and swamps of man-sized water lily roots to make pathways from one dwindling water source to another....’ Some owners are taking advantage of the low water to dig the shore deeper and build walls farther out, as land is valuable here, especially on deep water fronts,’ the Putnam County Standard reported.” [From Galusha, Liquid Assets.]



Paddling the channel between Waccabuc and Oscaleta

On September 25, 1877, Darius Benedict “signed, sealed, and delivered” a contract with the New York City Department of Public Works which, for the price of one dollar, allowed the city access to the waters of North Pond and South Pond. In addition, the City paid \$75 for the rights to “cut down and lower the outlets or passageways between North Pond and South Pond and Lake Waccabuc”. The city only had until January 1, 1878 to complete this task, so the channels had to have been dug in the last three months of 1877.

Special Features of the Three Lakes

A description of the 1881 water supply shortage is in this account written by Edward Wegmann, the Division Engineer directly responsible for much of the NYC planning and construction done at this time: “The year 1880 was the driest recorded in the Croton watershed since water was introduced in New York in 1842... Severe as was the drought of 1880, it was surpassed by that of the following year. Although the total amount of rainfall for 1881 amounted to 46.33 inches, less than five inches fell during July, August, and September....Early in October 1881 the rights to draw water for the remainder of the year from Lakes Waccabuc ... were purchased. By the energetic measures stated above, the danger of a water-famine was once more averted....”



Outlet structure.

According to residents, the outlet structure was originally fitted with removable boards, allowing a degree of control over the lake level. Reportedly, the residents engaged in a great deal of discussion and discord about the preferred level of the lake. At some point, this dispute was resolved: the boards disappeared, and the frames that had held the boards were bent and rendered unusable.

Down-county areas continued to look north to supplement their drinking water sources. A newspaper article from 1965 discussed the City’s interest in attempting to tap northern Westchester lakes, including Waccabuc, for additional water supplies.

Special Features of the Three Lakes

The bridge where Oscaleta Road crosses over the channel was a popular spot for group photos.



Old bridge over the channel. Photo courtesy of Ken Soltex

Special Features of the Three Lakes



Photo courtesy Fred and Tina Cowles

Special Features of the Three Lakes



Photo courtesy Fred and Tina Cowles

Special Features of the Three Lakes

As pictured on the preceding pages, Oscaleta Road crosses over the channel between Lakes Waccabuc and Oscaleta. Jim Wilson, who was the land surveyor that mapped Twin Lakes Village and lived with his wife Tudge on western end of Lake Rippowam, told Paul Lewis about the effect of Hurricane Hazel in 1954: "There was a lot of rain, and that is what made life difficult. The lakes rose substantially. The water was half way up the boat storage areas beneath houses on the shore of Lake Oscaleta!"

The bridge across the Waccabuc-Oscaleta channel was under water and could not be crossed. The bridge was low then. On the other side of the mountain, the rain from the hurricane washed out Hawley Road at both of the stream crossings, and it was a long time before Hawley Road reopened. With the Oscaleta bridge gone and Hawley Road washed out, people in Twin Lakes Village and the Waccabuc community off Oscaleta Road were isolated, unable to get out by car.

Some Twin Lakes Village residents crossed Lake Oscaleta in canoes that they left along the south shore, and then walked to Salem Market on Spring Street (now Lily's Deli) for groceries.

Paul also recounts that Lake Waccabuc rose so high because of the hurricane's rain that people could, and did, canoe through Wayne Van Tassell's house - in one door and out the other! (The house is at 22 Cove Road.)

Jim Wilson designed the replacement bridge used at that time. Janet Andersen remembers canoeing under an old bridge: "As kids, we would scare ourselves. Our thrill was to paddle through the channel and wait underneath the Oscaleta Road bridge until a car traveled over, causing a rain of pebbles and dirt. Convinced that this time for sure the bridge was going to collapse, we paddled out as fast as we could. We were relieved to live another day so we could return and repeat the excitement."

Special Features of the Three Lakes

In 1967, the Town Highway department decided to replace the culvert and raise the road. As documented by Chuck Cantine in the Highway department files, the original design called for the excavation of all of the muck under the roadbed. The town put this proposal out for bid twice, with no respondents either time, and the estimated cost was in excess of \$100,000. The town revised its plans to place the approaches on the existing ground, and again could not attract any bids. On the fourth advertisement, one bid finally was received and it was accepted.

The first task was to raise the roadbed. As the gravel fill was deposited on 350 feet of roadway, “the muck boiled up and as layer after layer of gravel was placed it continued to boil.” The foundation settled as much as two feet each day: “there was no other solution but to put in more material.”



Culvert under Oscaleta Road

Blasted stone replaced gravel, and filling continued until “the weight of the stone crowded the mud”. Eventually the road was stabilized. When the Town removed the old bridge, they found

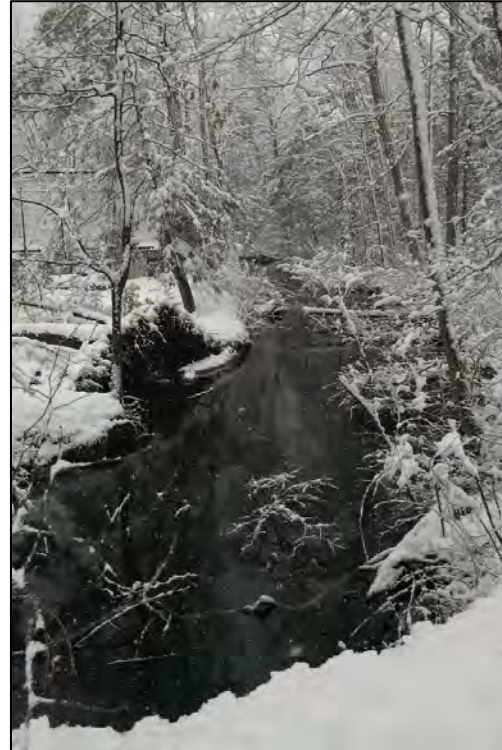
Special Features of the Three Lakes

the channel bottom was composed of layer upon layer of large stones. The new corrugated arch expanded the width of the passage underneath the road from 7 to 15 feet wide. A penciled note on the drawings indicates that the final cost might have been \$40,000.

The channel from Oscaleta to Rippowam under Twin Lakes Road is less grand and can sometimes be challenging for boaters to find. In dry weather, the short channel is easiest to traverse in small boats with a shallow draft.



Culvert under Twin Lakes Road



Channel between Oscaleta and Rippowam

Special Features of the Three Lakes

Castle Rock

Castle Rock has been an iconic emblem of Lake Waccabuc from the time of Waccabuc House. Promotional articles described “Castle Rock, a bold, abrupt cliff, with endless romantic walks above and back of it” and “a bare majestic cliff, rising out of the lake, with a cleared level track above it running back to the mountain”. Published estimates of its height range from 60 feet to 100 feet, undoubtedly higher when one is bragging about scaling it.

Jumping from Castle Rock has been a longtime rite of passage for community members. Even old Mead family records show their concern with trespass on Castle Rock. This parcel was originally part of the preserve transferred to The Nature Conservancy in 1981. However, The Nature Conservancy rapidly transferred the parcel back to the Meads because of their problems with interlopers. Castle Rock is now privately owned, and the issue continues.



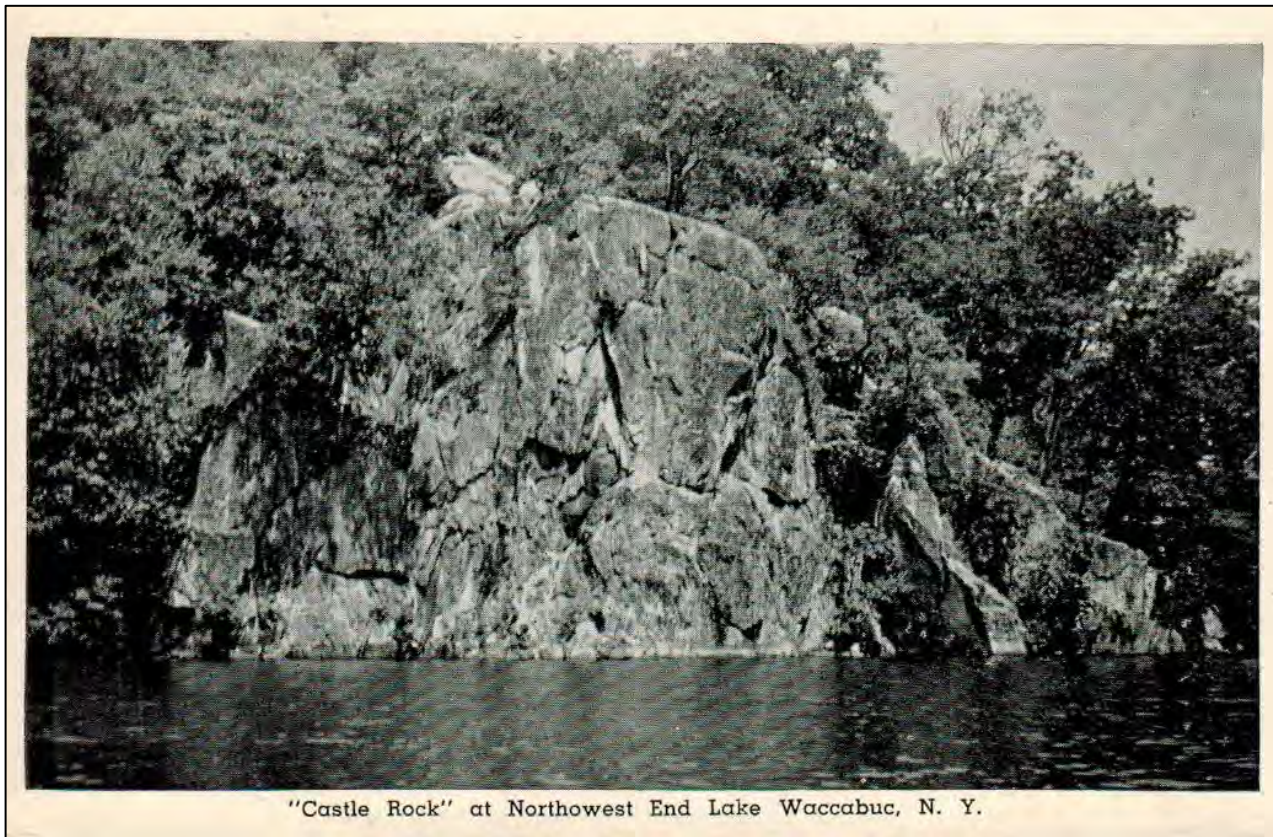
Courtesy Studwell Foundation, Mead Chapel



Special Features of the Three Lakes



Special Features of the Three Lakes



"Castle Rock" at Northwest End Lake Waccabuc, N. Y.

Special Features of the Three Lakes

Overlooks and vistas

When the activities around the lakes were farming, pasture, or logging, vistas of the lakes were available from many locations.

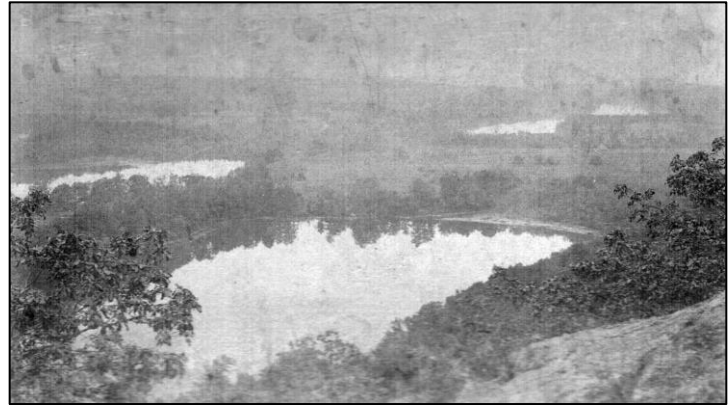
These views of Lake Waccabuc are from the vicinity of Mead Street, looking east.

*Photos: Mead Studwell Foundation,
Mead Memorial Chapel*



Special Features of the Three Lakes

The photo to the right is labeled: "Three Lakes from Sunset Rock". Maureen Koehl found it in a collection of photos attributed to Mrs. Cyrus Russell.



The photo at the bottom left of the page was in the same group of photos. The photo is captioned "Fanny Burr & Dr. Sloat, 1891."



Mountain Lakes Park remains a popular spot for a good view of the lakes.



Special Features of the Three Lakes



1902 postcard. The three lakes as seen from Mountain Lakes Park.

Special Features of the Three Lakes



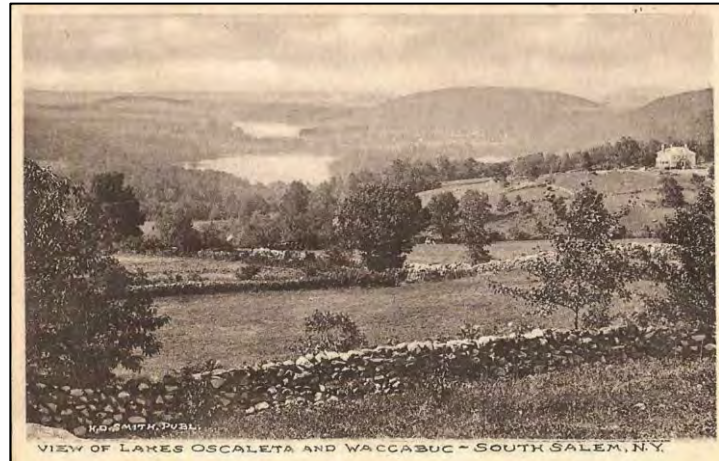
This location was a popular location for postcard photographs.

Special Features of the Three Lakes



Three Lakes from Mountain Lakes Park

Special Features of the Three Lakes



This view is from the Ridgefield Academy, in Ridgefield, CT. Tree growth indicates that the photos in these postcards were taken years apart.

Three Lakes Council



In the late 1960's, community residents recognized the need to bring together people from the various lake organizations to work collectively to protect the three lakes. Residents formed the Three Lakes Council as a non-profit community organization in October 1970. That year was a period of intense environmental interest and saw the first Earth Day, the formation of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the signing of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Clean Air Act. Gladys Wolkoff, the first President of the Three Lakes Council, stated that the council would treat the Three Lakes as one watershed area rather than three separate lakes.

The founding documents say the purpose of the Three Lakes Council is:

- “(a) to develop and encourage reasonable controls and safeguards for the benefit of a majority of the residents of the Community so as to enhance the enjoyment by such a majority of the lakes...known as Waccabuc, Oscaleta, Rippowam, and their watershed; and
- (b) through scientific research and education of residents of the Community, to study, improve, and maintain the quality and condition of the waters of said lakes and their watershed.”

As a watershed organization that addresses issues on all three lakes, the Council recognizes the importance of working through the various lake associations and stakeholders in the preservation of the lakes. The board of directors represents each of the following: Lake Oscaleta Association, Lake Waccabuc Association, Lakeside Association of Waccabuc, Perch Bay Association, South

Three Lakes Council

Shore Waccabuc Association, Two Lake Club, Waccabuc Country Club, and Waccabuc Landowners Council. The organization also has at-large directors.

The Three Lakes Council was granted 501(c)(3) status in 1976. The organization continues to lead and coordinate environmental efforts for the Lake Waccabuc-Oscaleta-Rippowam watershed. The Council's mission remains to preserve and protect the lakes and the entire 2,200 acre watershed through education, research, conservation, prevention, and stewardship.

The three lakes share geology, climate, and weather. The lakes are surrounded by single-family homes, often on wooded lots, and parts of the shores have limited development. The types of plant and wildlife are similar. Yet the lakes each are unique, and the lakes may diverge quite widely in water characteristics seasonally, creating a challenge for limnological explanations. Each has its own ambiance, partially because of the differing sizes and shapes.

Lakes Data			
	Rippowam	Oascaleta	Waccabuc
Surface area (acres)	34	65	138
Maximum depth (feet)	20	36	47
Lake volume (million gallons)	150	412	3,696
Flushing rate (times / year)	4.7	3.2	1.4
Watershed size (acres)	279	1282	2,196
Watershed that is water (%)	20%	17%	17%

Three Lakes Council

Lake Rippowam is the smallest and shallowest lake, and the north shore is largely undeveloped, consisting of Mountain Lakes Park and private land. Wildlife Preserve owns some wetlands at the west end of the lake. Springs supplement intermittent streams falling from the steep north shore as the source of lake water. Today paddles or electric motors power most boats on Rippowam, although Town code allows 10 hp motors. When the quiet is broken, the dominant sounds are those of children at play.

Lake Oscaleta is the middle lake in size and depth, and is the intermediate lake in the chain of three lakes. A stream originates in Round Pond in Connecticut and enters the lake through the wet marsh at east end. About 44 acres of wetlands at the east and west ends of the lake are protected by Wildlife Preserves. The Two Lake Club beach area at the northwest end of the lake has floats and a children's play area. Two docks and multiple boat racks support lake use by those Twin Lake Village homeowners without lakefront. Neighbors chat with each other from docks or boats. Like Rippowam, motor boats on Oscaleta are limited to 10 hp. Oscaleta has a reputation as a world-class largemouth bass fishery.

Lake Waccabuc is the largest and deepest of the lakes. It is widely known because of its photogenic Castle Rock and Indian Ovens. The public can walk the trails at Long Pond Preserve. Many locals are acquainted with the lake through the Waccabuc Country Club's beach area and day camp. This is the most active of the three lakes, with more boats than on the other two lakes. Town code allows motors up to 25 hp on this lake, so residents can tube and water ski. New York State classifies Lake Waccabuc as a class A lake, since some shoreline homes draw their household water from the lake. Anglers have caught record fish on this lake. About 20% of the shoreline is protected from development.

Fifty Years of Environmental Leadership

During its first 50 years, the Three Lakes Council has fostered the preservation and protection of the three lakes and watershed. Our efforts, all carried out by volunteers, include education and outreach, land protection and stewardship, lake studies and research, and invasive species prevention and control.

The Council remains the only area organization with interests across all three lakes, focused on scientifically based environmental actions. The list of volunteers who have contributed over the past five decades is extensive, and none of it would have been possible without the financial support of the community. Please see our website and our newsletters for more information about the volunteers who are the foundation of all we do.

This section revisits some of the noteworthy historical projects of the Council.

None of this could be done without the support of the community. Our sincere thanks to each one of you.



Three Lakes Council

Lake Waccabuc Aerators



In 1972, Union Carbide explored the business opportunity of lake aeration. Introducing oxygen into the bottom of anoxic lake provides ecological benefits, including support of a cold-water fishery and enhanced bacterial action in the sediments. Importantly for eutrophic lakes, introducing deep water oxygen will also reduce phosphorus transfer from the sediment into the water column. Union Carbide chose Lake Waccabuc as a test site for this technology. Lake Oscaleta served as a control lake to compare changes in water quality.



With the agreement of the Three Lakes Council, in 1973, Union Carbide used a helicopter to lower two aerators into deep portions of Lake Waccabuc. Waccabuc Country Club allowed them to place a compressor on their shore to pump air to the aerator units. Union Carbide operated the equipment and performed studies from 1973 through 1975.

In August of 1973, Union Carbide stocked 2100 trout in the lake to test if the aerators provided enough oxygen in the cold bottom layer of the lake for the fish to survive.

In 1975 Union Carbide turned aerator ownership and operations over to the Three Lakes Council. The Council continued operating the system from Memorial Day to Labor Day each year through 2004. Electricity to operate the system was expensive, and additional funds were required to repair multiple breakdowns, including replacing the compressor, and a revamp and refit of the aerator units. A major retrofit took place in 2002. Council meeting minutes show that the aerators consumed extensive volunteer time and energy as well as Council funds.

By 2004, testing made it clear that the system as configured did not supply enough oxygen in the deep water to keep phosphorus from entering the water column from the sediment. The Council determined that the cost of operating and maintaining ineffective aerators was not justified, and ceased aerator operations in the spring of 2005.



Three Lakes Council



Additional information is on the Three Lake Council website:
<https://www.threelakescouncil.org/reference/aerator-history>



Water Quality Assessments

One of the important programs of the Three Lakes Council is our regular monitoring of the water quality of each of the three lakes. The primary research program that provides us this information is CSLAP, Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program.

CSLAP is a NYS Department of Environmental Conservation program to assess lake water quality

across the state. This program depends on volunteers to make physical observations and to sample the waters of our lakes. Certified labs analyze the water samples collected on the lakes. Reports are not only beneficial to the individual lake, but when combined with the reports from all the lakes across the state, they provide an accurate reflection of lake conditions. In addition, the availability of data across a lengthy time horizon allows trends for individual lakes to be teased out of the data.

Lake Waccabuc was one of the four initial lakes in the CSLAP program when New York State started in 1986, and, sampled by Peter Beardsley, it continued as part of the program until 1996.



Three Lakes Council



In 2006, Three Lakes Council began sampling all three lakes under the CSLAP program. Samples are taken every two weeks, which captures the conditions over the entire season. One of the amazing findings is how three lakes that share the same watershed, geology, and weather will have such different water conditions over the course of a year. Explaining the divergence brings an additional learning level to the analysis. Because the three lakes are CSLAP participants, they are also included in various ad hoc studies authorized by the state. This means that sometimes the canoe gets quite loaded with sampling gear.

The Council supplements the normal CSLAP sampling with “shoulder season” sampling to gather information between the spring and fall turnovers.

Our lakes also are able to participate in algae and harmful algal bloom (HAB) testing. The HAB analysis indicates the type of algae and the levels of certain toxins. As a result, if testing indicates any concerns with the water quality, the Council can notify the community via the Three Lakes Google group. As climate change heats our lakes, the survey for algal blooms and analysis of water samples becomes a more vital function of the Council.



Boat stickers to fight invasive species

The Three Lakes Council has worked to prevent the introduction of invasive species. Early concerns about the spread of zebra mussels led to the introduction of boat stickers in 1993. Since human transport on boats is the primary vector for the spread of invasive species, the Council wanted to limit the transport of boats from other bodies of water to our lakes. Boat stickers help identify boats that belong to lake residents, so the absence of a sticker may indicate a transient boat. The publicity for boat stickers also helps to publicize the danger of invasive species to our lakes. We also provide guidance on how to clean boats. Stickers also help the return of wandering boats to their owners.

Three Lakes Council boat stickers have gone through a few generations. Since the days of the first boat stickers, the danger of invasive species has only multiplied, and the number of invasive species at nearby waterbodies has proliferated. While animals were the invasive species of initial concern, invasive plants are an additional priority. As our lake waters warm because of climate change, plants can grow faster and for a longer season, increasing their impact to our lakes. The Council continues to recognize the importance of boat stickers as a preventative tool in the fight against the spread of invasive species.



Three Lakes Council

BEEP – Brazilian Egeria Eradication Project



An ongoing focus of Three Lakes Council has been to stop the introduction of new invasive species to our lakes. Invasive species are defined as species that are not native to the ecosystem and are likely to cause economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health. Once introduced, invasive species can spread easily because predators and competing species are absent.

A Three Lakes Council plant survey in 2008 found a new invasive species in the north cove of Waccabuc. The plant, *Egeria densa* or Brazilian elodea, was a concern because of its capability for rapid growth, said to be a foot a day and 100 acres a year. NYSDEC considers the plant as a top threat. It spreads across the surface of the water and prevents swimming or boating. By outcompeting other plants, it causes ecological impacts.

Three Lakes Council stepped forward to address the issue. The invasive was only in one cove of one lake, but it had the potential to affect all the lakes and all lake users. In consultation with neighbors and experts, the Council identified suction harvesting as the preferred eradication option. Months of intense work followed to obtain permits, raise the necessary funds, and engage a vendor to hand pull and suction harvest the plant from the lake.

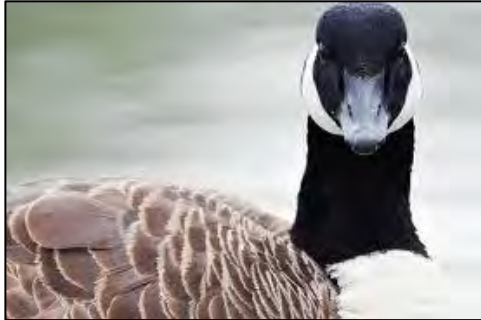
Suction harvesting began in June 2009. After six weeks of harvesting, volunteers dove in and searched for the plant 3 to 5 days a week into October. Any suspicious plants were removed. The weekly in-lake monitoring resumed in the spring of 2010, finding and removing one plant. No plants of this species have been found since 2010.

Eradication of an invasive species is a rare event, and deserves celebration! The Council continues to monitor and search for new or returning invasives that threaten our lakes.



Three Lakes Council

Geese Management



Three Lakes Council uses surveys to ask the community about their concerns with the lakes. In 2006, 88% of the respondents said Canada geese and their droppings are a problem, and overwhelmingly supported the Council addressing the issue using approved protocols.

Three Lakes Council studied research and then took action to control the geese population. It turns out that a little bravery and a lot of corn oil can make a difference. Oiling geese eggs will stop their development. If the geese do not have goslings to tie them to our lakes, they will fly to greener pastures during the summer.

We began action in 2007 where property owners gave permission, and learned to ignore the noise and the agitated geese. We saw that they got right back on the nests when we left. We were probably more upset than the geese!

At our peak year in 2008, intrepid volunteers oiled 113 eggs in 27 nests. Thanks to the dedicated members of the “geese team”, we have continued oiling eggs every spring since 2007, cumulatively oiling over 700 eggs. Every year, a few geese have successfully raised goslings.



Geese management has been successful at improving the quality of life and decreasing the pollution in our lakes. Our surveys confirm that this action remains a popular initiative in our three lakes community.

Watershed Stewardship and Long Pond Preserve

While owning property is not a primary purpose of the Three Lakes Council, we believe it conforms to our mission of stewardship and environmental protection. In 1996, the Council acquired two parcels on Oscaleta Road that contain wetlands adjacent to Lake Waccabuc. Holding this property ensures that no one can jeopardize the wetlands and the health of the lakes. This also set the precedent for our acquisition of Long Pond Preserve.

The history of Long Pond Preserve begins with the Mead family. The Studwell Foundation hoped to preserve the pond meadow and some of the other lands on the western end of Lake Waccabuc. Mead family members and seven other residents banded together to purchase land at the west end of the lake, and donated 38 acres to The Nature Conservancy in 1969. The Conservancy opened the area to public use for passive recreation. A non-adjacent parcel of land included Castle Rock. The Nature Conservancy sold that acre parcel back to the Meads in 1985 because of the trespassing on Castle Rock.



Three Lakes Council

Long Pond Preserve was logged and used as pasture in the 1800's. A mixed-hardwood forest and groves of hemlock have mostly reclaimed the upland areas. About five acres of wet meadow between the lake edge and Mead Street are the exception. The meadow is both aesthetically

pleasing and great wildlife habitat. Marshy areas persist along portions of the lakeshore, and intermittent streams flow to the lake.



Over time, The Nature Conservancy changed its priorities and decided to transfer smaller parcels to local organizations. Three Lakes Council, recognizing that preserving the watershed was essential to protecting the waters of the lakes, agreed to take ownership of the preserve in the fall of 2015.

Owning the preserve has enabled us to take stewardship actions. The Three Lakes Council has participated in the DEC Trees 4 Tribs program on the preserve. We planted trees and willow stakes along Waccabuc Creek to stabilize the soil and cool the stream, improving habitat and water quality. We have also taken actions to control several different invasive plants on the preserve.

Long Pond Preserve continues as a preserve open for hiking, birding, and enjoyment of nature.

Onward

We commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Three Lakes Council. Our organization was founded the same year as the first Earth Day, when people came together to celebrate and protect nature. Our organization continues to celebrate and protect our lakes.

Our goal is to be stewards of the lakes, so that they are preserved or improved for future generations. The lakes reflect the actions of people in the watershed and beyond. The challenges are great. Many of the challenges result from human behavior. Humans can take actions to limit the impacts of polluted runoff, aging septic systems, lack of lakeshore plantings, improper fertilizer and pesticide use. We can work to slow climate change, which will impact our lakes and the plants and wildlife around them.

The seeds of the environmental movement were planted fifty years ago. The Three Lakes Council continues to nourish that harvest through education and outreach, systematic research, and recommendations based on science. Despite the uncertainties of the current times, we look forward with hope and optimism to the future on our three lakes: Waccabuc, Oscaleta, and Rippowam. Working as a community, we can ensure that these lakes will be the basis for joyful memories for generations to come. We are grateful to the support of the community as we move forward.

Onward, together.

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