

# LAKE WARAMAUG ASSOCIATION

Spring 2023



PHOTO BY RUDY MONTEGELAS



[www.waramaugassoc.org](http://www.waramaugassoc.org)



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## Greetings

### from LWA's President Maria Mostajo

Recently, I walked along the lake road and as the wind picked up, I zipped my jacket, looked across the lake and began to envision the sights, smells, and sounds of spring and summer fun that are just around the corner. Automatically, a list formed in my mind of the things I had to do to in preparation for it all—plant more annuals, drag out the paddleboards, order new lifejackets, sign up for our bear-proof garbage container and find a new place to get the bikes tuned up.

As you find yourself returning to the lake and making your own lists of what you and your family have to do to ensure you are ready for all the summer fun, I hope that you will keep this newsletter handy and check out our website. Sign up for one of our hikes, offer to be a dock host for our inaugural block party on July 22nd and make a donation to the LWA. Your annual donation in any amount includes your LWA annual household membership and supports our time-honored traditions and new initiatives throughout the year:

- **Our beloved 4th of July Fireworks**
- **New Community Gatherings & Events**
- **Expanding Lake It Slow, Lake It Grow, Lake A Hike**
- **New Lake It Easy Boating & Water Safety**
- **Broadening Recreational Activities**
- **Educational Programs for Native & Buffer Plantings and Best Practices for our Sustainable Future**

Please visit [waramaugassoc.org/support](http://waramaugassoc.org/support) to make your 2023 donation online or mail a check in the enclosed envelope. Thank you for supporting the LWA!

*The LWA is 501c3 non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law.*

Interested in volunteering for a committee? Join us! Email [lakewaramaugassociation@gmail.com](mailto:lakewaramaugassociation@gmail.com) ■

## COMING SOON!

### New 2023 Merch!

Thanks to overwhelming merch popularity last year, we're excited to be releasing a few new pieces this year! Stay tuned for more details to come.



## CONNECT WITH US

Instagram: @lakewaramaug Tag us @lakewaramaug #lakewaramaug—and be sure to tag your canine companion photos #DogsOfWaramaug for a chance to be featured in our story. Find us on Facebook: LakeWaramaugAssociation.

Visit our website [www.waramaugassoc.org](http://www.waramaugassoc.org) for tons of Lake Waramaug info, resources, fascinating articles, and more. Sign up for our email list to stay up to date on news & events.



Little Lake Waramaug Rock at the State Park



Macricostas Preserve Hike with the Steep Rock Association

# Lake a Hike

## THE LWA SUMMER HIKING SERIES KICKS OFF JUNE 3 ON NATIONAL TRAILS DAY!

We are excited to begin our 2023 program which will run in June, July and August. Each hike will offer a different perspective of the lake, information about each of the trails in and around our watershed,

and important details about the health of the surrounding areas and how they impact our lake waters. All ages are welcomed and encouraged! RSVP online at [waramaugassoc.org/lakeahike](http://waramaugassoc.org/lakeahike) ■



The Pinnacle - Waramaug Rock

## LAKE A HIKE SCHEDULE 2023

### Saturday, June 3rd, 10am National Trails Day with Warren Land Trust

National Trails Day is the perfect opportunity to connect people in our community who share a love of nature. This first hike in our three hike series will explore the Graham Brush Connector Trail with the Warren Land Trust. Join us and help bring awareness to our local treasures and the preservation of the lakes's natural beauty.

This 5 mile hike winds through beautiful, unspoiled forest, lovely streams and a beaver pond. There are old stone walls, rock outcroppings of every size and shape, wild flowers, ferns and trees that run the gamut from saplings to old and stately. It's a longer hike and moderately challenging with a few steep climbs and several places where the terrain is rocky and uneven. There are also several streams to cross.

### Sunday, July 9th, 10am The Macricostas Preserve with Steep Rock Association

During the second hike of our series, we'll explore the newly expanded trail system at the Macricostas Preserve. The expansion includes an additional 1.5 miles of the Boulders Trail. Designed to last for decades with minimal maintenance requirements, the Boulders Trail is a testament to Steep Rock's commitment to creating sustainable recreational opportunities in harmony with the natural environment. This hike features a rustic log bridge, numerous sets of stone steps, glacial erratics, and breathtaking views.

A moderately challenging and guided hike up to the pinnacle Waramaug Rock with panoramic views of Lake Waramaug. The hike is approximately 5 miles with elevation of 1250 feet (climb is approximately 550 feet.)

### Saturday, August 5th, 10am Little Lake Waramaug Rock at Lake Waramaug State Park

Join us for our final hike of the season as we explore this hidden gem at the northern end of the lake. Join us afterwards for refreshments among the newly planted trees at the State Park and learn more about the LWA's Lake it Grow campaign.

This hike is approximately 1 mile, and features a moderate climb at the start. After that, it's an easy hike over the ridge line and offers a spectacular view of Lake Waramaug and the surrounding farmland.



PHOTO: IN GREEN/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



# Fireworks

by Sophia Schein

My entire life my family has bundled up into our sweatshirts and sweatpants, pulled up our socks to protect our ankles from mosquitoes, and lit flares before taking our boat out to the middle of the lake to watch the fireworks. We argue about how far past Arrow Point we should go, where to drop the anchor, and if we are drifting too much. Everyone in my family has strong opinions. As other boats arrive around us, a quiet calm falls over the lake. The last bits of sun fade from the sky. My brother and I get settled in the front of the boat, fleece blankets tucking us in. Our dad sits at the wheel, our mom beside him. The first bang rings out across the lake. Any remaining conversations fade away. For 15 minutes or so, we all gaze at the sky. I try to count how long it takes from

when the blast disappears into the night sky until the colors erupt into starbursts, cracklers, and willow trees, reflecting in the dark water around us. The willow trees are my mom's favorite. I like them too, but I think the cracklers are more fun. My heart drops when I realize it's the grand finale.

I'm 24 now. My brother will be 26 next month. The few times that I haven't been with my family on the boat watching the fireworks, my heart aches. It feels like the end of an era when I realize it's been a couple years since we've all been there together. It's no one's fault. It's just part of growing up. Someone's out with their friends. Someone's on vacation. Someone's stuck working in the city. But I don't want to let it fade, it can't. ■



## DID YOU KNOW?

The Lake Waramaug Association helps our community celebrate Independence Day each year by raising funds and producing the launch of our brilliant fireworks near the lake just after dusk. This tradition has been made possible by generous annual donations to the LWA by members and neighbors.

To support our 2023 Fireworks, please visit [waramaugassoc.org/support](http://waramaugassoc.org/support). Thank you!



**THE 2023 FIREWORKS CELEBRATION IS SATURDAY, JULY 1**  
Rain Date July 2



## Speed Limit Reduction On Route 45!

### A BIG Win for our Lake It Slow Advocacy

Working with the three towns, the Lake Waramaug Association convinced CT DOT to reduce the speed limit on parts of Route 45 from 45 MPH to 35 MPH, a big step in making our lake roads safer. We all need to continue to do our part and **Lake It Slow**.

#### Remember to

- Drive at—or below—the posted legal speed limit
- Watch out for walkers, runners, and cyclists around every curve
- Bike single file with traffic
- Run/Walk single file facing traffic—except at blind curves
- Display your LAKE IT SLOW lawn sign

CT State Troopers and speed radars will be out this summer to ensure vehicles obey the posted speed limits around the lake roads.

Need a LAKE IT SLOW lawn sign?  
Email [lakewaramaugassociation@gmail.com](mailto:lakewaramaugassociation@gmail.com) ■



# My Visit to the Gunn Historical Museum

By Christopher Spring

I had been meaning to go to the Gunn Historical Museum for the longest time but for whatever reason, never stopped in. Living in Roxbury we used to drive up to the State Park in the summer and fall and swim across the lake and walk or cycle around it. We would often wonder about the lives of Chief Waramaug and his beautiful daughter Lillinonah or why the Casino went bust. We have now lived on the lake for a number of years and still wondered. At last, I visited the museum and have returned several times....and have found the answers!

The latest exhibit "Washington, Connecticut: An American Story" highlights the rich history from the time of the early settlers and the various Native American tribes that lived around the area. The most famous of these was Chief Waramaug with whom the early settlers developed a good relationship. Unfortunately, he died in 1735 and, as legend has it, his daughter Lillinonah died in a



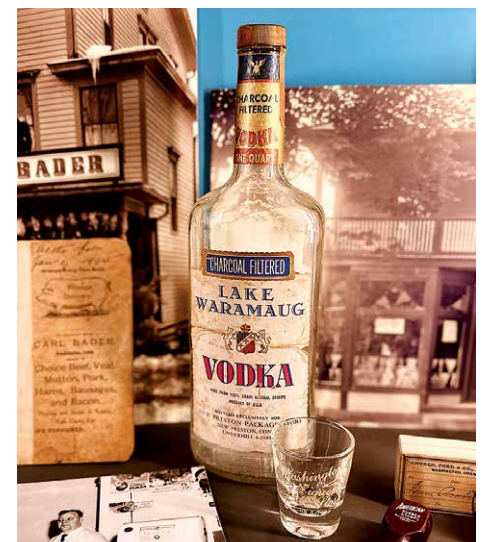
PHILLIP DUTTON PHOTOGRAPHY



1906 Shepaug Railroad Freight train with a crew of seven

Left: A Gray Squirrel Inn sign advertising Tea & Toast, located on Church Street, New Preston, Early 20th century

Below: Early 20th century Lake Waramaug Vodka bottled for the New Preston Package Store





1880s Image of the steamboat *Flirt* on Lake Waramaug



1903 Mr. Randall's Locomobile *Stanhope* was the first vehicle on the lake.

tragic boating accident with her settler lover. He leapt into the canoe she was traveling in, capsizing the boat, and they were both swept over the Great Falls to their deaths. It certainly wasn't the fairy tale ending I was looking forward to.

The New Preston Falls spurred a host of local industries along the Aspetuck River. The first mill started operation in the 1740s and at one point there were 21 water-powered mills on this small river. But my main interest in visiting the Museum was to better understand how tourism took off 100 years later.

On my latest Museum visit I was lucky enough to get a tour with the docent, Kenyon Clark. He has learned his subject very well and gave me a better understanding of the birth of the town and its history through the War of Independence, Civil War and the abolition of slavery, etc. He explained that the primary reason for the huge growth in visitors was the Shepaug Valley Railroad which started service in 1872 and continued until it was taken over in 1898 by the Housatonic Railroad. It offered service to Roxbury, Washington Depot and Romford and then went on to Litchfield before turning around. It enabled visitors to get to the lake in a timely manner and gave local industry and farmers access to a larger regional market. Twenty-five of the largest local farms switched to offering dairy products that could now be frozen and transported longer distances. Apparently, rumor had it that the Shepaug Railroad was the most crooked railway east of the Mississippi.

The railway changed the equation and hotels, restaurants and shops sprang up. At one point there were twenty-one hotels around the lake, the largest of which was the Wilson Hotel which accommodated 110

guests. One of the more entrepreneurial shops, The New Preston Package Store, sold Charcoal Filtered Lake Waramaug Vodka. In the early 1900s cars started appearing at the lake and soon visitors were arriving in their own vehicles. In 1903, the first car on the lake was Mr. Randall's Locomobile *Stanhope* which he regularly drove to New Milford.

Probably the two most famous lake attractions were the Steamboats *Flirt* and later *Crescent*. *Flirt* was a ferry boat based in Norwalk and had to be transported to the lake. It weighed 18 tons and needed 24 to 40 oxen to pull it and took 12 days to get here. The cost of the journey was \$150.00! A few days later after a fresh coat of paint, *Flirt*, watched by hundreds of people, was launched. *Flirt* eventually sank near Wrights Landing and was replaced by *Crescent* which carried on until 1912.

While I did not manage to get the full story on the Casino, I learned it was built in 1930 offering music and dancing, and that a restaurant and bar were added later. Where I come from a casino is a gambling establishment, which I understand was not the case on the lake. In fact, one of the major reasons it was so popular is the licensing laws at the time allowed an establishment that offered music and dancing to remain open an hour beyond when liquor was allowed to be served.

I urge you to go see this award-winning exhibit "Washington, Connecticut: An American Story." Admission is free. Gunn Museum hours of operation are Thursdays/Fridays 10am-4pm, Saturdays 10am-3pm, 1-hour guided exhibit tours every Saturday at 1pm. Please email [museum@gunnlibrary.org](mailto:museum@gunnlibrary.org) or call 860-868-7756 at least one day in advance to register. ■

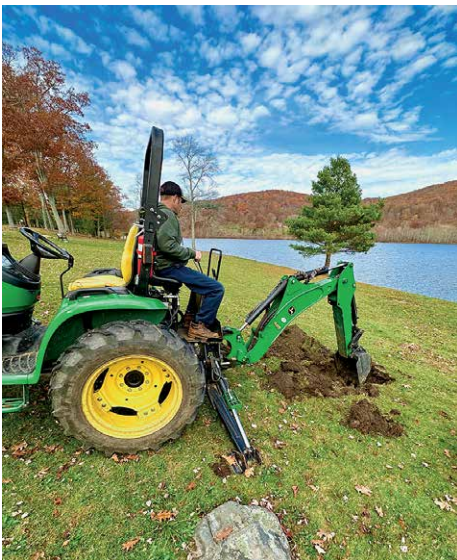


Above circle: 1920s photo of the three White sisters sitting on a rock wall at the Lake Waramaug Country Club with the bathhouse behind

Above: 1920s Lake Waramaug Casino sign

Images Courtesy of the Gunn Memorial Library & Museum except where noted.

Thanks to Gunn Memorial Museum and Library for their assistance with this article.



PHOTOS BY CHRIS SPRING

# Lake It Grow

*By Claire Guadagno*

I joined the LWA board last year and became a co-chair, along with Chris Spring, of the Lake It Grow Committee. The State Park had recently lost many trees due to age and disease, and so we reached out to the Lake Waramaug State Park's DEEP Supervisor Steve Merchant during the summer about the idea of donating trees and the idea was met with great enthusiasm. The State Park Supervisor was a willing partner in our project. Further discussions ensued which included Lake Waramaug Task Force's Executive Director Sean Hayden and resulted in the plan to purchase a variety of young trees with at least a 3" caliper for the park.

The final selection of trees included the Pin Oak, Maple 'October Glory', Sycamore, Red Maple 'Red Point', and English Oak. The trees were purchased at Kent Greenhouse and Gardens in Kent and Meadowbrook Nursery in New Milford. This selection includes trees native to Connecticut, those that would provide dense shade, those resistant to insect and fungal infestations

and those that produce strong color in the fall. In order to give the trees the best chance of surviving winter, it was decided that the planting would take place after the park closed for the season, thereby reducing foot traffic around the new plantings, and before the second hard frost.

Placement of these first 14 trees were thoughtfully scattered on the lake side of the upper portion of the State Park (going toward the LWCC) with an eye to place them "as if done by Mother Nature." Steve Merchant and his team offered their services to plant the trees and the LWA was most appreciative of the excellent care they provided while undertaking the plantings.

Phase 1 of "Lake It Grow" is completed, but we are busy planning Phase 2 for 2023. A large component of Phase 2 is raising awareness of the tree project, education about the need for trees at the State Park among LWA members and the 40,000+ annual State Park visitors, and a fund-raising campaign to support the project. ■



# Introducing Lake It Easy

## There's no place better than Lake Waramaug!

But our lake's small size and unique shape make it a place that requires extra care from all of us. That's why we're asking for everyone's help to "Lake It Easy" and keep the lake safe while you're on the water this summer.



### Boat Safe

Today's motorboats are heavy and fast, and can make strong waves that can be hazardous to other lake users, docks, and the shoreline. They may also impact water quality and aquatic habitat due to the lakebed disturbance.

*In addition to following all boating laws required by the State of CT, on Waramaug remember:*

- Slow down, shut it down, or avoid areas that seem crowded.
- Sudden stops are hard on boats so give people more space than you think they need.
- Tube manufacturers recommend a max speed of 20-25 mph for safe tubing because tube speed is much higher than your boat speed.
- When your ballasts are engaged, stay as far away from other boats, people and the shoreline. Empty ballasts when not in active use.



### Paddle Smart

- Paddlers always have the right of way over powered vessels.
- During peak water activity times, consider paddling closer to shore.



### Swim Aware

- Always swim with a buoy (and a buddy or spotter) in open water.
- During peak water activity times, consider swimming closer to shore.



### Did you know...



...that whether on a boat, kayak, canoe, or paddle board, CT State Law requires you must have an accessible and wearable life jacket for each person on board, even for your dog. Life jackets are required to be worn by children under 13 years of age + adults paddling between October 1 and May 31.

## BE BEAR AWARE



Mama Bear and her cubs on Lake Waramaug Road in 2022.

PHOTO BY PAULINE KELLEY

As bear sightings have been on the rise around the lake and throughout Litchfield County, on March 14th the LWA hosted "Bear Aware Night" on Zoom featuring Paul Benjuna, Wildlife Division Biologist at the CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection. His presentation was filled with practical, important information about the bear population in our area and how we can take simple actions to prevent up to 75% of conflicts with bears.

### 1. SECURE YOUR TRASH WITH A BEAR-RESISTANT TRASH CAN

Bears getting into your trash make up nearly 50% of all bear-related conflicts. To order your bear-resistant trash can, call or email All-American Waste/USA Recycling at 800-998-2984 x2235 or phatidani@usarecycle.com (Paul). Say "I'm a Lake Waramaug Association member" and receive one month free (pay \$11/month instead of the full rate of \$12/month your first year).

### 2. TAKE DOWN YOUR BIRD FEEDER

Bird feeders make up nearly 25% of all bear-related conflicts. Love birds? Remove your feeder and consider sustainable native landscaping in your yard to attract birds (not bears).

Bear sightings are common. Please report sightings to the CT Department of Environmental Protection—the direct link and more useful info about what to do (and not do) if you encounter a bear is on our LWA website: [waramaugassoc.org/association-news/black-bear-sightings](http://waramaugassoc.org/association-news/black-bear-sightings). If a bear enters your home, call EnCon Emergency Dispatch 860-424-3333 or 911. The DEEP Wildlife Division number is 860-424-3011.



# Coming Events

**Saturday, June 3, 10am**

**Lake A Hike:  
National Trails Day  
with the Warren Land Trust**

**Sunday, June 11, 10:30am**

**106th Annual  
Membership Meeting**

To be held in person at the Lake Waramaug Country Club. LWA updates & initiatives will be discussed. Refreshments will be served. Email [lakewaramaugassociation@gmail.com](mailto:lakewaramaugassociation@gmail.com) for the RSVP link.

**Saturday, June 17**

**Boat Ramp  
Summer Hours Begin**

June 17–Labor Day, Sept 4:  
Friday–Monday: 6am–Sunset,  
Tuesday–Thursday: 10am–5pm

**Saturday, July 1**

**Fireworks Spectacular**

Get ready to celebrate with our annual “Rim the Lake with Flares” at 9pm followed by a fireworks display starting at 9:30pm. Details coming soon!

*Rain date: July 2*

**Sunday, July 9, 10am**

**Lake A Hike:  
The Macricostas Preserve  
with the Steep Rock  
Association**

**Saturday, July 22**

**Save the Date!  
LWA's First Annual  
Block Party on the Lake**

**Saturday, August 5, 10am**

**Lake A Hike:  
Little Lake Waramaug Rock  
at the State Park**

**New this summer—  
YOGA ON THE LAKE!**

The LWA will offer yoga twice a month on Thursday mornings at 8am. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details on how to sign up and reserve your lakefront yoga with Julie Haesche for \$20/session.

**June 15 & 22  
July 13 & 27  
August 10 & 24**

# Dandy Lion

**For Hannah**

*by Christine Adams*

Is how you pronounced  
An unwanted plant,  
Shot through the violet vinca like  
A burst of yellow confetti,  
Its own high-styled  
Rebel, a wild flower  
Like you: tenacious,  
Resilient, hearty  
Landed here, on the  
prevailing winds,  
A seed carried  
On a child's breath,  
Without plan, or  
Preconceived notions  
On how it was supposed  
to be, or become,  
A culinary staple, a  
Lion's tooth, roaring her  
Own benevolent yawp  
Over a Samaritan world.

*Christine Adams is the author of "Setting the Table in the Age of Reason" to be released later this year by Propertius Press, Lynchburg, Virginia. She is a lifelong New Preston resident and passionate steward of the lake.*

## REMEMBERING PAUL FRANK 1933–2022

Lake Waramaug is a special place and Paul, who served on the Lake Waramaug Association Board for decades, recognized this and worked tirelessly to ensure that its unique beauty would be preserved for all to enjoy. We remember Paul with heartfelt gratitude.

## LAKE WARAMAUG ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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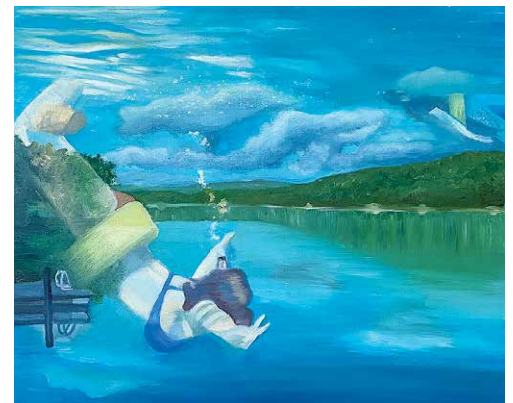
**Nancy Sarnoff Williams**

**Carolyn Hartman**

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**Lois Pinney**

*Bookkeeper*



# Diving In

oil on canvas

*by Carson Lender*

*Carson Lender is a rising sophomore at Duke University studying psychology and visual & media arts. "Diving In" won a 2022 Scholastic Silver Key.*