



Upcoming:

2024 Winter Membership Meeting

Mt Lake Firehouse, **Thurs, Feb 8 at 7pm**

An important meeting to review and discuss the MLCA's plans and programs for the year ahead, including water quality and weed management, community events and activities, and much more. Please plan to attend.

Thank You to all Members!

As we say goodbye to 2023 and hello to 2024, we recognize and offer our deep appreciation for the fantastic membership support that keeps the MLCA going strong. Total membership in 2023 remained solid at 127 total members, including 23 new members. Thanks to this ongoing support, the MLCA is well-positioned to continue and expand our efforts to study, protect, improve and celebrate the Lake, on behalf of all members. We look forward to a productive — and fun — year ahead. We urge all Lakers to help further the mission of the Lake Association by renewing or becoming a member in 2024. By joining forces as a community, we can do what's best for Mt Lake and all who cherish it.

Board of Trustees

Robert Ballou	President
Daniele Nevins	Vice-President
Buffy Harrison	Treasurer
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History of Mountain Lake - Part 1

Much of what we do as an Association focuses on our future — on keeping Mountain Lake clean, healthy, beautiful and enjoyable for years to come. But we also feel a special kinship with our past and find it fascinating to reflect upon the lake's early years. Accordingly, we are pleased to launch a new initiative, aimed at compiling and documenting the history of Mountain Lake. It's a story that connects us to our past, so it's one we all share.



To get the ball rolling, we are devoting this edition of our newsletter to the early history of the lake. Our plan is to expand on these story lines and post them on our website. We'll also post highlights on our bulletin board across from the Firehouse. We'll draw upon the historical resources we're able to find, as well as input from the community. Over time, we look forward to compiling the definitive account of Mountain Lake -- our natural and human history, from the early days through the good 'ole days. It promises to be a fascinating journey, and we look forward to doing it together, as a community.

As we unearth our historical roots, we recognize and honor the seminal role played by the Native Americans who first discovered and inhabited our area.

The Beginning

Who were the Lake's first inhabitants, and first settlers? It turns out the first inhabitants, or at least discoverers, arrived at about the same time the lake was formed, which makes for a really great story.

To start at the beginning, we need to look back some 12,000 years, to about 10,000 BC. It's challenging to find information dating that far back for our region, but there's enough evidence to piece together a sense of what it must have been like.



Prior to 10,000 BC, a massive glacier, known as the Laurentide Ice Sheet, covered the eastern portion of the North American continent. In our region, the edge of the glacier had pushed south to about the south end of what is now Warren County, so we were right on the edge. At its peak, the ice sheet at the Delaware Water Gap was estimated to have been 2,000 feet thick! Around 10,000 BC, the glacier began to melt and recede to the north, leaving behind a virgin landscape that had been under ice for more than 50,000 years, freshly carved by the dynamic forces of ice, rock, and water. One notable feature to emerge was a deep basin tucked within a mountain ridge — a ridge now known as Jenny Jump Mountain. That basin was filled by the melting glacial runoff, becoming what we now know as Mountain Lake.

We can only imagine the splendor of first discovering Mountain Lake, soon after it was formed by the retreating glacier. Who might have been the first person, or peoples, to happen upon the lake?



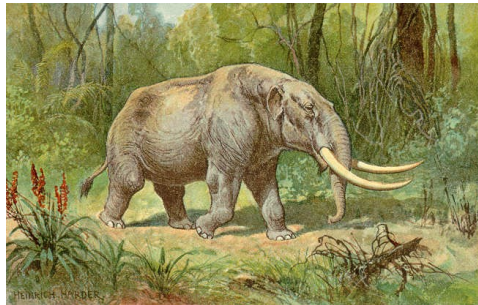
At about the same time Mountain Lake formed, the first humans to inhabit North America were making their way east. About 2,000 years earlier, they had migrated from Asia, walking across a land bridge that once connected the regions now known as Russia and Alaska. While humans had existed in the Old World for about 300,000 years, no human had set forth in North America until about 12,000 BC. As the glaciers started to melt, these first peoples, who became known as Paleo-Indians or Paleo-Americans, spread south and east into the new land. They would have been the first to discover Mountain Lake.

The Early Years

We have a good understanding of the natural history of Mountain Lake thanks to geologic and fossil evidence. However, the native people of our region had no written history, and left few traces of their existence.

Much of what we know about the region's prehistory is a result of work done by archaeologists and scholars to reconstruct the life and culture of the native people and their ancestors through the study of artifacts, seeds, pollen, bones, and other clues found in the soil. The most definitive compilation of our region's prehistoric past can be found in *The Lenape-Delaware Indian Heritage, 10,000 BC to AD 2000*, written by Dr. Herbert C. Kraft of Seton Hall University in 2001.

At the time of the lake's formation and discovery, the climate was much colder, so the lake would have been an unlikely place to live year-round. There were no hardwood forests; only marshlands, tundra grasses, and scattered evergreen trees. Cold-adapted animals such as woolly mammoth, mastodon, musk ox, caribou, moose-elk, and giant beaver lived throughout the region.



In 1971, the skeletal remains of a mastodon were found in Liberty Township, off Lake Just-It Road. It was determined to be an adult female of modest size. It was dated by carbon-14 as 10,995 years old. Imagine seeing that beast strolling down what is now Lakeside Drive!

The earliest evidence of Paleo-Indians inhabiting our region is the Plenge Site, located on the Musconetcong River near present-day Washington, NJ. Here, many distinctive stone tools and weapons, including skillfully made fluted spear points, have been found, dating back to about 10,000 BC. Based on the large quantities of artifacts left behind at this site, it may have been used as a base camp by one or more groups for extended periods of time.

Perhaps Mt Lake was discovered by a group who had first found their way to the Plenge Site, then roamed north, along a stretch of land corresponding to what is now Route 31, crossing over what is now the Pequest River, then following the stream leading up to the lake. There is no evidence to suggest they may have first stopped at Hot Dog Johnny's along the way.

The Rest of the Story

What happened over the next 12,000 years are stories to be told in succeeding chapters, as we continue our journey into our past. Those accounts will reveal that succeeding cultures of indigenous peoples lived in our area and likely established encampments at the lake. Over time, the original Paleo-Indians gave rise to the Lenni-Lenape people, the Native Americans who inhabited our region 500 years ago when the first Europeans arrived.

The transition of the lake from a place inhabited by indigenous peoples for some 12,000 years, to a place settled by Europeans upon the discovery of the New World, is an important, and sad, part of our past. We will do our best to tell it with honesty, respect, and pride.

As a preview, we offer, in part, one of the legends of the Lenni-Lenape people, reflecting their reverence for and their naming of the place we now know as Mountain Lake.

The Legend of the Lake

When the Great Spirit sent the ice masses grinding and grumbling down from the northland, it hollowed out of the rock and clay at the foot of Jenny Jump Mountains, a beautiful silvery lake which the Indians called Marwakekawang but which with the coming of the white men, was changed to the less romantic name of Green's Pond and still later Mountain Lake and again, as though to make up for the two previous common place names, it is now known by some as Lake O' the Mountain. The Lenape Chieftain, Sanhica, ruled in primitive splendor around and about this lake.

Stay tuned for part two of this legend ...

Photo credits and references: (1) Pennsylvania Archaeology website, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Collection; (2) John Kraft, Ancient America: Learning Lenape, NJSkylands.com; (3) Kenneth Pletcher, Wisconsin Glaciation, Britannica.com; (4) Peopling of the Americas, Paleo-Indians, Wikipedia; (5) Ed Yong, The Extremely Fast Peopling of the Americas, The Atlantic, 2018; (6) Geology: Impact of Ice Ages, NewJerseyAlmanac.com; (7) Frank Shampatore, History and Directory of Warren County New Jersey, 1929; (8) Ted Pallis, Garden State Mastodons, New Jersey Geological and Water Survey, Report 43, 2019; Mastodon Painting by Heinrich Harder; (9) Diorama at University of Iowa; (10) Dean Quigley, Paleo-Indian Time Period, painting.

Ruth Ballou Environmental Activism Award

Presented annually by the MLCA to those who make outstanding contributions that help the Association fulfill its mission to promote the conservation, preservation and improvement of the Mountain Lake Watershed, and to raise the awareness of all who experience it.



2022 Recipient: Larry Supp

Larry Supp is a dedicated environmental steward. As Chair of the Liberty Township Environmental Commission, he serves as a community leader on a host of issues pertaining to the protection and preservation of our local natural environment.

As a volunteer with the MLCA, Larry is actively involved with the Association's lake monitoring program. Every two weeks from April through November, Larry is part of a team that goes out on the lake to take water quality measurements and collect samples; then driving the samples to the lab, about an hour away. Over the past several years, Larry has helped collect a huge amount of data for the lake, helping to track and understand its status and health.

Of particular note, Larry developed a unique spring-loaded water sampling device — using a PVC pipe and wiffle balls! — enabling water samples to be collected from various depths in the lake, including close to the bottom at 30+ feet. The sampler works like a charm and is used regularly by the lake monitoring team.



2023 Recipient: David Rogers

As an elected member of the Liberty Township Committee, appointed member of the Lake Subcommittee, and volunteer member of the MLCA, David Rogers has emerged as a lead advocate for Mountain Lake and our lake community.

Dave has been instrumental in pursuing state funding for a Green Infrastructure Project at the Town Beach and Boat Ramp. He has also spent many hours working with Township staff to submit a grant application for state funding for a lake plan.

He is always the first to nudge his colleagues when it's time for the Subcommittee to meet, always one who listens to what others have to say, and always one who follows through on what needs to be done on behalf of the lake. He serves in the important role of liaison to the Township Committee on issues pertaining to Mountain Lake. He is always thoughtful, positive, and good-natured in his approach.



All of us at the Mountain Lake Community Association thank and congratulate Larry Supp and David Rogers, the two most recent recipients of the Ruth Ballou Award, as well as all prior recipients, for their environmental stewardship, dedicated service, and ongoing contributions to the health and welfare of Mountain Lake, its watershed, and our community.

Prior Award Recipients

- 2007 Duane Copley
- 2008 Eileen Greason
- 2009 Rob & Alice Bechok
- 2010 Carolyn Pullman
- 2011 Marge & Frank Joseph
- 2012 Beverly Gloumakoff
- 2013 Shannon Schaaf
- 2014 Liza & Joe Thomas
- 2015 Susan Dingsor & Arthur Strock
- 2016 Lynn Gilmore
- 2017 Ryan Leonard
- 2018 Rich Larsen
- 2019 Phil and Lorna Woolridge
- 2020 Chris Shand
- 2021 Lorraine Theil

Volunteers Needed

The MLCA is an all-volunteer organization. We rely on volunteers to help with all of our programs and activities. There are many ways to lend a hand, and a little help goes a long way toward keeping the Lake clean and healthy, keeping the MLCA strong and effective, and engaging the Lake community. Here are just a few examples of programs and activities where help is needed:

- ◆ Lake and stream monitoring
- ◆ Aquatic plant surveys
- ◆ Fish and wildlife observations
- ◆ Data management
- ◆ Website design and management
- ◆ Newsletters and communications
- ◆ Photography
- ◆ Community events
- ◆ Litter cleanups
- ◆ Mt Lake history

If you're willing to help out with any of these programs and activities, or have ideas of your own, please email us at MLCA.wag@gmail.com or message us on Facebook. Thanks!

Holiday Cheer Radiates at the Lake

Congrats to the winners and all who participated in this year's annual Holiday Lights Contest

BEST DECORATED WITH INFLATABLES



ANN AND JIM
HONAN

BEST DECORATED WITH LIGHTS



LESLIE AND MIKE
STILLWAGON

BEST DECORATED DOOR



MARIE EMERY
AND
TERRY CALANDRA

BEST DECORATED NEIGHBORHOOD



JODI THOMPSON



DEBBIE MURPHY



ELAINE AND MARK
GALLAGHER

InCollage

MLCA Volunteers Help Keep Mountain Lake Community Clean and Beautiful

Litter Cleanups around the lake are a key component of the MLCA's annual activities. On October 15, 2023, volunteers conducted a targeted cleanup of a wooded area along Lakeside Drive West, which sadly was strewn with trash. The group filled and pulled out many bags loaded with bottles and cans and other litter. Thanks to Patricia Hofmann who coordinated the event, to staff from the NJ State Park Service who picked up the bags for disposal, and to all who participated.



Additionally, throughout the year, volunteers regularly pick up litter, and log the amounts, while walking around the Lake.

The reward for these annual clean-up efforts is twofold — a clean and beautiful lake community, and recognition from the Warren County Clean Communities Program via grant awards, which totaled \$800 in 2023. Thanks to Kelly Spaar, Warren County Clean Communities Coordinator, and Jenn Breslin, Liberty Township Deputy Clerk, for their ongoing support.