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## Preserve Protect & Promote.

Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association (Pure Waters) is a nonprofit working to safeguard Seneca Lake water quality for everyone who has the privilege of knowing it. Our programs tackle the many challenges facing the lake and its watershed, made possible by the support of members, donors, and volunteers.

Learn more about how you can make a difference at [www.senecalake.org](http://www.senecalake.org)!

-  @senecalakepurewaters
-  Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association
-  @senecalakepurewaters

Cover photo courtesy of Riley Earl Films.

# The Seneca Lake Watershed

**A watershed is the area of land that drains into a body of water. It includes all surface and ground water. Keuka Lake drains into Seneca Lake via the Keuka Outlet—so Keuka Lake and its watershed are part of our larger Seneca Lake Watershed.**

The Seneca Lake Watershed is quite large at 712 sq miles. It includes parts of Ontario, Seneca, Schuyler, Yates, and Chemung Counties and is home to 28 towns, 11 villages, and 1 city.

Agriculture is the dominant land use in the Seneca-Keuka watershed with corn, soybeans, and forage as the primary crops farmed.

Seneca Lake is part of the network of lakes, canals and waterways that comprise the Oswego River Basin. The Oswego River Basin drains water north, towards Lake Ontario. All of the water in Seneca Lake leaves near Geneva through the Cayuga-Seneca Canal.

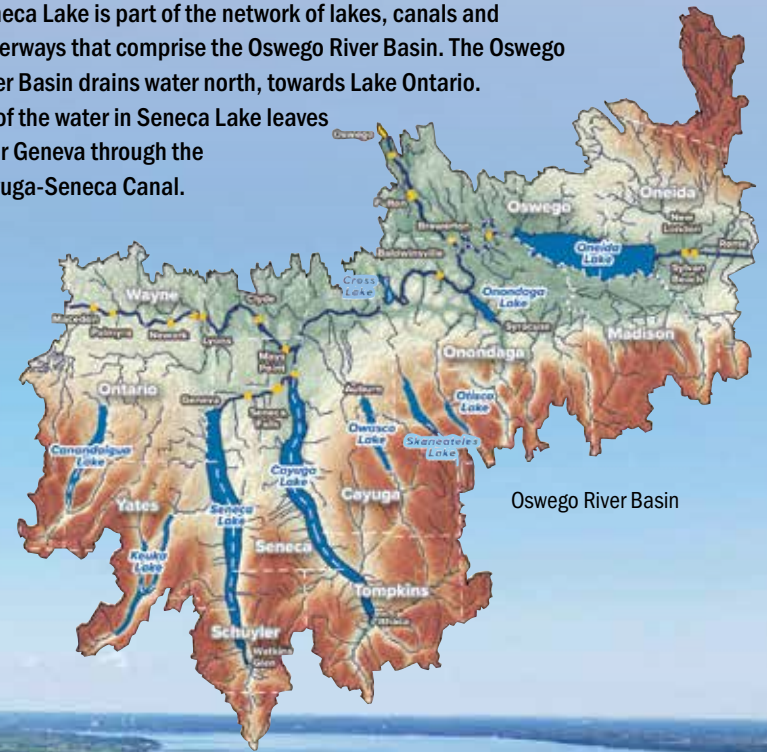
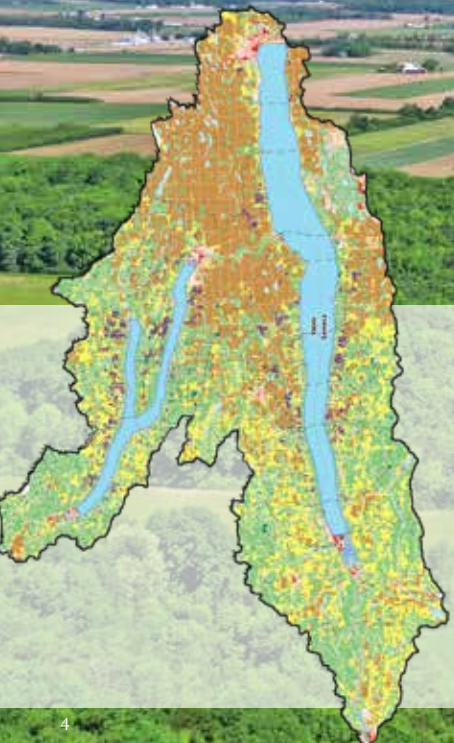


Image courtesy NYS upstate flood and mitigation task force



**LEGEND:**

Counties	Deciduous Forest
Study Area	Evergreen Forest
Lake / Pond	Mixed Forest
HUC12	Shrub/Scrub
<b>NLCD Land Cover</b>	Grassland, Herbaceous
Open Water	Pasture/Hay
Developed, Open Space	Cultivated Crops
Developed, Low Intensity	Woody Wetlands
Developed, Medium Intensity	Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands
Developed, High Intensity	Viticulture
Barren Land	

**LAND USE**

**42% Agriculture**




**31% Forests**



**6% Developed**



# SENECA LAKE SNAPSHOT



**BY THE NUMBERS**

- 38 MILES LONG**  
3 MILES WIDE AT IT'S WIDEST
- 68 SQ MILES**  
OF LAKE SURFACE AREA
- 78 MILES OF SHORELINE**
- 712 SQ MILES**  
OF WATERSHED AREA
- 618 FT** MAXIMUM DEPTH
- 4.2 TRILLION** GALLONS OF WATER
- 18-23 YEARS** WATER RETENTION TIME

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### Welcome Ben Klein Our New Association Director

Seneca Lake Pure Waters is excited to welcome Ben Klein as the Association's new Director. Ben brings over 16 years of experience in journalism, media, and communications to the role, and will lead the organization's efforts to protect and enhance the health of Seneca Lake and its watershed.

Ben has hit the ground running. In his first months, he has expanded Pure Waters' presence on social media, connected with media partners across the region to raise awareness about lake health issues including the spread of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid and aquatic invasive species, and has helped grow the organization's volunteer base and community outreach programs.

"The backbone of any nonprofit is the volunteers," Ben has said. "From the top to the bottom, I think we might have one of the best groups of volunteers in New York State."

We're grateful to have him leading the charge.

# A BRIEF HISTORY...



From its glacial formation to its use in early 19th Century transportation as part of the canal system, to its role today as a source of recreation and drinking water, Seneca Lake is at the center of the Finger Lakes Region.

The land around the lake supports significant agriculture and viticulture, driving a vibrant tourism industry and strong agricultural community.

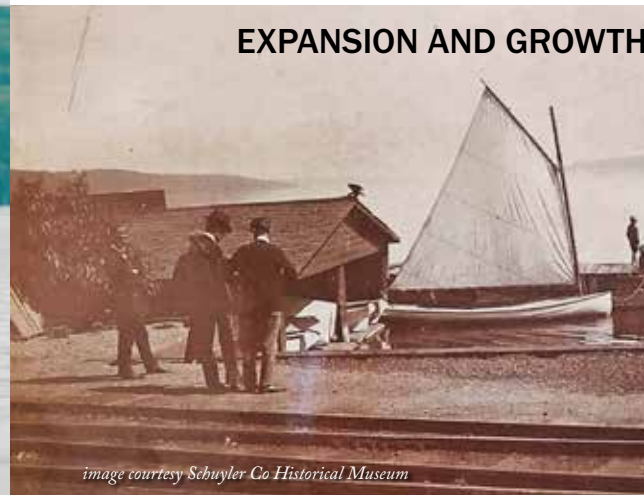
Boating, fishing, and swimming provide summer activities for many residents and summer visitors alike.

## A LONG LONG TIME AGO...

The Finger Lakes were part of an inland sea 200–600 M years ago. Then about 2 M years ago during the Pleistocene Epoch (Ice Age), glaciers up to 2 miles high carved and deepened the streams and valleys beneath them as they moved across the region. The glaciers deposited till and rock debris as moraines at the southern end of their travel, effectively damming the valleys and forming the Finger Lakes landscape as we know it today.

*image courtesy Paleontological Research Institution*

## EXPANSION AND GROWTH



*image courtesy Schuyler Co Historical Museum*

The Erie Canal in 1825 and the Cayuga-Seneca Canal in 1828—connected Seneca Lake to the outside world and markets and commerce brought steamships, barges and canal boats. From the 1820s to the 1850s hundreds of canal boats each year carried cargos of corn, coal, lumber, whiskey and other goods across the lake as part of the ‘superhighway’ of the era. Steamboats carried passengers and US mail.

## RAISE A GLASS!



The large size of the lake moderates the temperature, and makes the surrounding land ideal for growing grapes. Because of this, Seneca Lake has 40 wineries and vineyards—more than any other of the Finger Lakes. These wineries attract more than 600,000 visitors annually.

Seneca Lake **PURE WATERS** Association

# Annual Meeting

Thursday, September 10, 2026

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# Public Boat Launch Sites on Seneca Lake

## LAKEFRONT PARK

Located in Geneva on Routes 5 & 20. Concrete ramps. Temporary dockage. Parking for 20 cars & trailers. Operated by the City of Geneva.

## SENECA LAKE STATE PARK

On Routes 5 & 20 and 96A at the City of Geneva. Concrete ramps. Pumpout. Parking for 30 cars & trailers. Operated by Seneca Lake Resorts on behalf of NYS Parks.

## SAMPSON STATE PARK

On Route 96A, 12 miles south of the City of Geneva. Concrete ramps. Pumpout. Parking for 64 cars & trailers. Operated by Seneca Lake Resorts on behalf of NYS Parks.

## LODI POINT STATE MARINE PARK

On County Route 136, 5 miles west of the Village of Lodi. Concrete ramp. Parking for 68 cars & trailers. Operated by NYS Parks.

## SEVERNE POINT BOAT LAUNCH

On Severne Point Road, off Route 14, 8 miles south of Dresden. Concrete ramp. Parking for 30 cars & trailers. Good winter launch. Operated by the NYS DEC.

## SMITH MEMORIAL PARK

Located off Route 414 on Peach Orchard Road in the Town of Hector. Remote parking for 6 cars & trailers. Steep dirt access road. Launch for small boats and kayaks. Operated by the Town of Hector.

## CLUTE PARK

Located off Route 414 on Boat Launch Road on the canal portion of Catharine Creek. Concrete ramps. Parking for 60 cars & trailers. Operated by the Village of Watkins Glen.

SCAN HERE FOR BOAT LAUNCH DETAILS



Boat launch sites operated by NYSDEC are FREE to the public, however sites operated by other agencies may charge a fee.

# PROTECT YOUR WATERS

Prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are plants and animals that live in the water that are not from New York and hurt our native plants, animals, and the places they live. AIS also affect us by making boating, swimming, and fishing more difficult, making our time in the water less enjoyable. Once they are here, AIS are hard to get rid of.

## Watercraft Check Points



## Clean. Drain. Dry.

### BOATING AND FISHING EQUIPMENT



**Clean** - and remove all plants, animals, mud, and other items from your boat, trailer, and other equipment. Place in trash bins or AIS Disposal Stations.



**Drain** - all water from the boat (bilge, live wells, ballast tank) and any other equipment that may hold water.



**Dry** - boats, trailers, and all other equipment completely or let air dry for at least 5-7 days before use in another waterbody.

PLEASE DO NOT DUMP BAIT, FISH, OTHER ANIMALS, OR PLANTS INTO THE WATER!



Learn More

parks.ny.gov  
dec.ny.gov



Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Department of Environmental Conservation

# Aquatic Invasive Species in Seneca Lake

Invasive species are non-native to the ecosystem under consideration and a species whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic harm, environmental harm, or harm to human health.

Invasive species can hitchhike on boats and move in between waterways. They can also be introduced as bait for fishing, or dumped from aquariums when no longer wanted as pets. You can help protect Seneca Lake and other bodies of water from aquatic invasive species by practicing Clean, Drain, Dry. **There are MANY invasive species that have already made their way into Seneca Lake.**

## ANIMALS

Green Sunfish  
Banded Mysterysnail  
Scud, Euryhaline Amphipod  
Mud Bithynia  
Fishhook Waterflea  
Alewife  
Common Carp  
Asian Clam  
Rudd  
Sea Lamprey  
Zebra Mussel  
Quagga Mussel  
Round Goby  
Bloody-red Shrimp

*Lepomis cyanellus*  
*Viviparus georgianus*  
*Echinogammarus ischnus*  
*Bithynia tentaculata*  
*Cercopagis pengoi*  
*Alosa pseudoharengus*  
*Cyprinus carpio*  
*Corbicula fluminea*  
*Scardinius erythrophthalmus*  
*Petromyzon marinus*  
*Dreissena polymorpha*  
*Dreissena bugensis*  
*Neogobius melanostomus*  
*Hemimysis anomala*

## PLANTS

Eurasian Watermilfoil  
Curlyleaf Pondweed  
Water Chestnut  
Starry Stonewort  
Brittle Naiad

*Myriophyllum spicatum*  
*Potamogeton crispus*  
*Trapa natans*  
*Nitellopsis obtusa*  
*Najas minor*



**NOT IN SENECA LAKE YET...BE ON THE LOOKOUT!**

Hydrilla *Hydrilla verticillata*  
European Frogbit *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*

**Learn more about invasives at:**

<https://fingerlakesinvasives.org/>

<https://nyis.info/>

## INVASIVE

### Zebra & Quagga Mussels

(*Dreissena polymorpha* & *D. bugensis*)



## INVASIVE

### Curlyleaf Pondweed

(*Potamogeton crispus*)



# DEDICATION

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# HABs 101

## What You Need to Know

LOOK OUT FOR

# HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

Cyanobacteria blooms, sometimes referred to as **harmful algal blooms (HABs)** can affect the water quality and aquatic life in a waterbody. Some HABs produced by bacteria can create toxins that may also harm people, animals, and the local environment.

**HOW TO IDENTIFY A HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM**  
Algal blooms can make the water appear green, blue, brown, or red.

HABs can be blue, bright green, or brown—they may look similar to spilled paint, pea soup, or greenish colored particles floating on the water's surface. However, only professional water testing can confirm if HABs and toxins are present – so if you see it, avoid it! The NYS DEC has monitoring programs to report blooms. Visit the NTHABS website (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/77110.html>) or scan the QR code for more info. **SCAN QR CODE** for More Information

**SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE**  
\*Very depending on how the person or animal was exposed.

**EXPOSED?**  
Shower immediately. See a doctor or vet if symptoms occur.

- Eye, ear, headache, nose, skin and throat irritation
- Paralysis, respiratory illness and seizures
- Abdominal pain, diarrhea, liver and kidney damage and numbness
- Drooping, diarrhea, low energy, not eating, stumbling, tremors and vomiting

**WHEN IN DOUBT, STAY OUT!**  
Stay away from the water when a suspected HAB is present.

**TO REPORT PET OR HUMAN HEALTH RELATED SYMPTOMS IN ONTARIO COUNTY:**  
(585) 355-4343

- DON'T** Play with toys or mats on the shore
- DON'T** Let animals drink water and algae or silt
- DON'T** Swim
- DON'T** Fish or wade
- DON'T** Boat or kayak

Ontario County | CANANDAIGUA LAKE WATERBODIES ASSOCIATION | Seneca Lake PURE WATERS Association | CANANDAIGUA LAKE WATERBODIES COUNCIL | EPA

# HAB FACTS: What you should know!

## KNOW IT.

### What are algal blooms?

In general, most algae are harmless and are an important part of the food web. Certain types of algae can grow quickly and form blooms, which can occur in isolated locations or can cover an entire lake. On Seneca Lake, HABs normally start appearing in early August and stop appearing by mid-October.

### What are blue-green algae?

Blue-green algae are actually not algae at all, but rather a type of bacteria called cyanobacteria. It is normal for cyanobacteria to be present in lakes. However, this type of bacteria thrives in warm, nutrient-rich water and when conditions are right, the bacteria can grow quickly forming “blooms.”

### What are HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS (HABs)?

When blue-green algal blooms produce cyanotoxins, they are harmful. HABs in Seneca Lake have been found to produce microcystin and anatoxin, which can cause health issues in humans and animals. If individuals or animals are exposed to HABs and are experiencing adverse health effects, they should seek immediate medical attention.

### What do HABs Look Like?

HABs have different colors and looks. Some colors are green, blue-green, brown, black,

white, purple, red and black. They can look like film, crust or puffballs at the surface. They also may look like grass clippings or dots in the water. Some HABs look like spilled paint, pea soup, foam, wool, streaks or green cottage cheese curd.

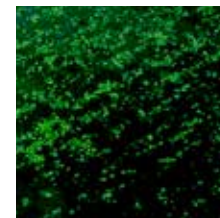
## AVOID IT.

### How do I know if a bloom is toxic?

Laboratory testing is the only reliable method for determining if a bloom contains toxins. It can be hard to tell a harmful algal bloom from a non-harmful algal bloom, so it is best to avoid swimming, boating, fishing or other recreation in discolored water that looks like it might have a bloom. Avoid eating fish caught from areas with a bloom. Never drink, prepare food, cook, or make ice with untreated surface water, even if there is no visible bloom.

## REPORT IT.

If you think you see a harmful algal bloom, fill out a Suspicious Algal Bloom Report Form and submit it with any pictures to: [on.ny.gov/habform](http://on.ny.gov/habform). You can also email: [senecahabs@senecalake.org](mailto:senecahabs@senecalake.org)



green dots or globs



parallel green streaks



spilled paint



pea soup

**Know it. Avoid it. Report it.**

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# The Seneca Lake Fishery

**Lake trout, smallmouth bass and yellow perch** have long been considered the prime fish for anglers in Seneca Lake. Other popular fish include rainbow trout, brown trout, landlocked Atlantic salmon, northern pike and largemouth bass.

NYSDEC fisheries surveys from the 2023 season have provided some updates as to the health of our fishery. The smallmouth bass survey showed that while the overall condition of smallmouth bass was good – based on the catch rates bass fishing is currently limited. In contrast – the yellow perch survey showed both excellent condition and much higher catch rates. The forage survey showed that alewife were by far the most common forage fish. Round gobies – one of the more recent invasive species to make its way into Seneca Lake – were also caught in small numbers during the forage survey. Their long-term impact on the fishery is still to be determined.

Seneca's fishery has benefited greatly in recent years from annual stocking of hatchery-reared lake, brown, and rainbow trout along with landlocked salmon. Brown trout and lake trout have been stocked since 1980. Salmon were added in 1988 and rainbow trout in 2012. The stocking rates vary from year to year and NYSDEC will continue to monitor the fishery to help them determine their stocking plans. Current stocking rates are 24,000 Atlantic salmon yearlings and 10,000 rainbow trout yearlings annually.

## Seneca Lake has a 'two-story' fishery.

That means that it has warm water fish such as bass, northern pike, and sunfish in its shallower and near shore waters and also cold-water fish including trout and salmon in its deeper, colder waters. Small or shallow lakes that don't have cold, well-oxygenated waters throughout the summer cannot support trout and salmon.



Lake Trout



Smallmouth Bass



Yellow Perch



Round Goby



Rainbow Trout



Scan here for Seneca Lake  
Fishing Regulations



**Geneva is the 'Lake Trout Capital of the World'**  
and hosts the National Lake Trout Derby every year on Memorial Day weekend. 2025 was the 61st year of the annual derby!

PHOTO CREDITS: Atlas of inland fishes of NY, NYS Museum



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# The Seneca Drums: A Mystery Being Solved

For centuries, people living near Seneca Lake have reported hearing mysterious booming sounds. Low, rolling rumbles seem to come from nowhere in particular, sometimes on perfectly calm days. Known locally as the “Seneca Guns” or “Seneca Drums,” these unexplained sounds have puzzled scientists, historians, and residents alike.

Now, that mystery is finally getting the scientific attention it deserves. In early 2026, a team of Cornell geoscientists deployed a network of eight sensitive seismic monitoring instruments around the southern end of Seneca Lake. Each sensor (roughly the size of a coffee mug and buried just two feet underground) is capable of detecting tiny earthquakes, train vibrations, lightning, and sharp acoustic signals traveling through the ground. The project, funded through the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability, is paired with conductivity sensors on the lake bottom.

Sonar surveys have already revealed 144 craters on the lakebed, believed to be caused by escaping methane gas, pointing toward natural gas seeps as the most likely source of the mysterious booms. Until now, however, no one had directly recorded the events as they happened. This new network aims to change that.

The one-year project is led by Professor Geoffrey Abers and Dr. Ben Uveges of Cornell University. If you own land near the Seneca Lake shoreline and would be willing to host one of the monitoring instruments, the team would love to hear from you. Contact information is available at [senecalake.org](http://senecalake.org).

# Understanding Seneca Lake Water Levels

Water levels in Seneca Lake naturally rise and fall with the seasons. Higher in spring from snowmelt and rain, lower through summer and fall. The lake’s outflow is managed through the Cayuga-Seneca Canal by Relevel Power, which operates hydroelectric facilities in Waterloo and Seneca Falls. Their goal is to generate clean energy while keeping lake levels within target ranges set by federal regulations.

In a typical year, that system works reasonably well. But in 2025, Seneca Lake’s level was outside the normal range for approximately seven months. The lake rose sharply through spring from prolonged rainfall, then dropped well below summer targets during a drought-like summer and fall. In the first months of 2026, we have seen the lake level rise up to 12” in just days of rain, drastically raising the chance of flood damage. High water can damage docks, erode shorelines, and threaten lakeside

structures. Low water creates navigational hazards, strands boats in their lifts, and stresses aquatic ecosystems.

Water can flow into Seneca Lake faster than it can flow out. The downstream area is relatively flat and outflow is regulated, so the lake drains much more slowly than it fills. Long-term climate trends including wetter springs, more intense storms, and hotter, drier summers are making these swings more frequent and more extreme.

You can sign up for Seneca Lake Alerts to receive text notifications about lake level changes, harmful algal blooms, and other hazardous conditions at [senecalake.org/lakealerts](http://senecalake.org/lakealerts).

Sign up for Seneca  
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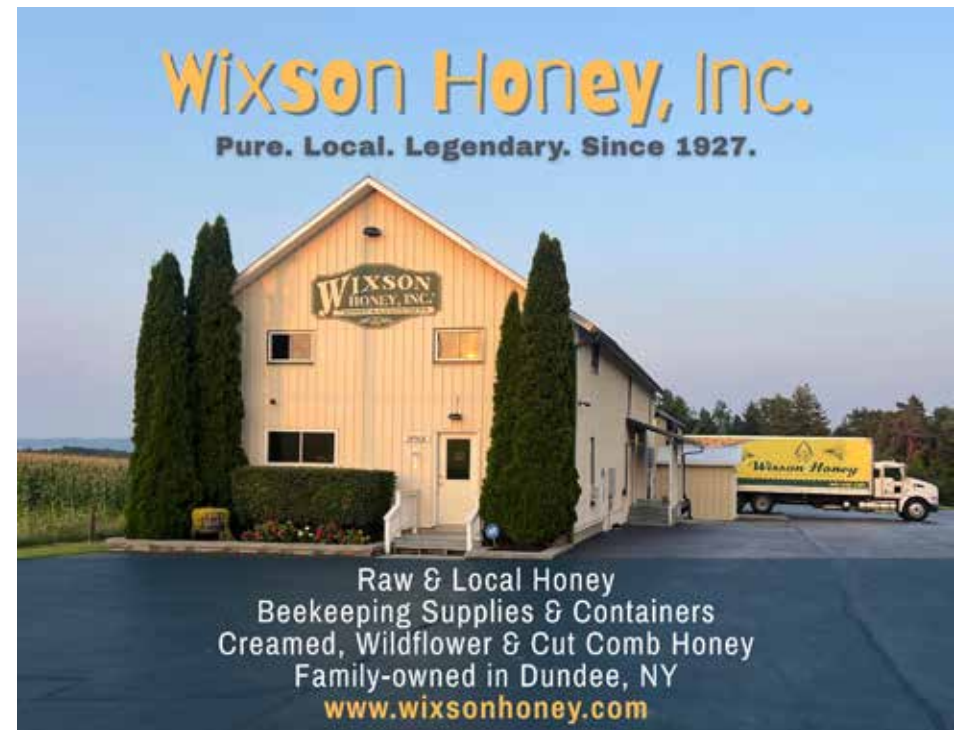
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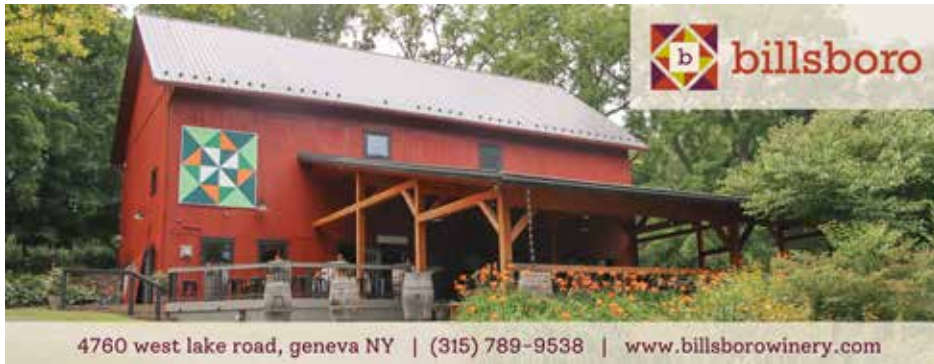


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