

Janice Douglass



To start with, I have been occupying space on Millsite Lake for about 65 years. My Mom took me for a few swims in the lake before I was born, compliments of my brother either falling or jumping off the dock.

My grandparents started coming to Millsite in the very early 1900s. Various family members purchased property and built summer camps on Millsite, probably among some of the first buildings. My parents and grandparents were lucky to be able to purchase land from Mr. Groner in 1955. We put up a tiny building in 1956; our neighbors built about the same time. Mr. Groner told my Dad if he could get four people who wanted lots then he would build the road. Needless to say, the four lots were sold. Our “new” camp was built in 1971, and I helped with all the building challenges so have quite a knowledge of carpentry and all the other skills needed for building and caring for a summer camp.

As a young child I would spend hours in the water, on shore, or walking thru the woods. I could identify plants and flowers. I could catch fish, including putting the bait on the hook, taking the fish off the hook, and even cleaning them. I would swim without the help of flotation devices and would stay in the water until “pruned,” then catch fire flies late into the night.

We used to drink the water from the lake and not think a thing about it. But, as more people and boats arrived on the lake we had to re-think that option. I can still see the bar of Ivory soap floating in the water – not a good site. As I grew older I would attempt to stop the neighbors from using shampoo and other products in the lake or cleaning and painting their dock while it was still in the water. I attempt to educate people on how best to “use the lake”.

I am a graduate of Liverpool High School, and Oneonta State College with a BS in Education. I taught Home Economics for 33 years and am still teaching Driver Education at a community college in Syracuse.

My summer jobs included Assistant Director of the Youth Conservation Corp at Herkimer Community College as well as working as a Counselor for Urban Ore, a summer conservation program through Herkimer County Cooperative Extension for students in grades 3-12. I would also offer workshops on edible wild plants both in the Herkimer area, at DEC youth summer camp in Rushford, NY, and at Rogers Environmental Center in Sherburn, NY.

I am an avid kayaker. I was taught by my swim coach at Oneonta State, she was an Olympic kayak coach in two Olympics. I used to race, but now I just enjoy the time on the water. My husband of 30 years has been converted to kayaking but he still holds out for a canoe from time to time.

I have spent some time hiking in the Adirondacks but have figured out that the inside of a cloud looks the same no matter what mountain you may be on. I would rather spend my time on the water.

As a member of the board of the IRLC, I hope to be able to offer my background as an environmental educator, and my interest in clean water related issues. I have been doing water testing for Millsite through NYSFOLA and the CSLAP program for about 18 years. I am very interested in what is happening to the Lakes and what can be done to protect them. I am a licensed herbicide applicator. I attend conferences to learn about new products, and what can be done to control invasive weeds naturally or with the help of other sources.

On Millsite, I was involved with the testing of septic systems and do water testing two times each summer to see how healthy the water is. It also helps point to possible problem areas.

Encouraging lake residents to plant lake friendly shrubs and plants around the lake is another project I am interested in as well as planting bird friendly plants.

I am interested in the IRLC because once this generation is gone, what will be left for future generations? I can now feel comfortable knowing that many acres of land and water will be protected. We are like the “big brother,” but we are the good guys. It is important to keep people up to date on what is happening to the environment, and how they can help preserve it. It is important to save the wildlife, forests, lakes and rivers. They cannot protect themselves – we have to help.