

## This Stone Wall is All in the Family



(Before and After pictures of the Breakwall project)

Around 1928 my grandfather purchased property on Conesus Lake, on the east side and north end, and built a small cottage. He built a breakwall out of medium-to-large field stones to hold back the waves and prevent erosion.

Eventually, the cottage was purchased by my parents. My brother Rob and I had the chore of putting stones that had been dislodged by the ice back onto the wall. We usually did this in the fall when the water was low. That stone breakwall still stands today.

Eventually brother Rob acquired the property. The stone breakwall covered much of the 100-foot lot, but not all of it. Rob went to the DEC and received a permit to finish the wall on the portion of the property that didn't have a wall.

I own the property to the north of Rob, our brother Tom owns the next property and Howard Stewart owns the one after that. Our three properties total about 110 feet. No zoning restrictions existed back in the '40s and '50s so each of us have narrow lots. There was an old cement breakwall covering the three properties that was built by the original owner. This breakwall was falling toward the lake and was in general disrepair.

The three of us decided to replicate what Rob had done and we approached the DEC. It turns out that while it was one project we needed three separate permits because three different properties were involved. The DEC guided us through the application process and granted the permit. While the DEC has regulations as to what they can grant, I must say that they were most helpful and accommodating.

We had the stone wall built last December, sharing the expense proportionately. The DEC was pleased with the outcome and said so in a letter to all three of us. Stone walls such as ours are desirable for two main reasons: (1) they dissipate the wave energy and reduce the backflow of water; (2) they provide a natural habitat for the lake critters that help keep our lake healthy.

I am pleased to say that with my grandfather's help my two brothers, our neighbor, and I have created nearly two hundred feet of natural stone breakwall. It's not only good for the lake but it looks good too.

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