



**We Protect Lake George, Together.**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
LAKE GEORGE ASSOCIATION**

*Lake George, NY*

## THE SEARCH

The Lake George Association (LGA), the preeminent lake conservation and advocacy organization committed to protecting Lake George and promoting freshwater preservation, seeks their next Executive Director (ED). At a time when freshwater preservation and water quality face great challenges, the LGA seeks a leader to set a cohesive and ambitious vision to safeguard the natural treasure of the Lake for generations and accelerate the science-to-solutions impact of the LGA on Lake George, now known as the “World’s Smartest Lake”. This is a tremendous and challenging opportunity for an innovative, committed leader and ambassador to play a critical role in local preservation with potentially global impact.

Founded in 1885 as the first lake conservation organization in the country dedicated to safeguarding “The Queen of American Lakes,” Lake George has been preserved in part thanks to the LGA’s tireless advocacy. Having merged with The FUND for Lake George in 2021, the newly combined organization is a historic merger of expertise and resources to address unprecedented and dramatically escalating water quality threats. The LGA’s goal is a simple one—keep Lake George clear and clean now and for future generations. From stormwater runoff, to harmful algal blooms, to wastewater pollution, to invasives, to road salt—there is so much that threatens the pristine quality of Lake George and the region’s drinking water. To combat these human and climate related threats, the LGA’s core work is to advance science solutions to educate, inspire, and empower its residents, businesses, and visitors to take the personal protective actions necessary to keep this unique natural treasure clear and clean for generations to come.

And fortunately, they are not alone in the fight, as the LGA counts among its partners and supporters some of the region’s most brilliant and generous institutions, organizations, and minds. The LGA has architected and advanced a science-to-solutions, partner-driven model of freshwater protection designed for adaptation and scaling across the country and world-wide. The LGA brings together the world-class science of [The Jefferson Project](#) freshwater research partnership (a collaboration among IBM Global Research, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and the LGA). In addition, the [Lake George Waterkeeper](#), [Council of Science & Business Advisors](#), [Lake Protectors](#), and [Community Science Programs](#) all work together toward community education, public policy advocacy, and direct investments in protection programs to deliver an unsurpassed level of care for a lake unrivaled in its beauty and cleanliness.

Reporting to newly elected Board Chair, [Dr. John E. Kelly III](#) and the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will lead a well-resourced, multifaceted organization with a rich history, vital mission, and considerable promise for the future. The ED will oversee an operating budget of \$3.4 million with a remarkable endowment of \$18 million and a staff of 11 based out of the LGA office in Lake George, New York. The position calls for a creative, strategic, collaborative, and approachable leader and spokesperson who is deeply committed to the LGA’s mission to preserve the natural treasure of Lake George. Candidates should bring strengths in team and Board management, fundraising, and communications along with

stamina, high integrity, intellectual breadth, political savvy, exceptional relationship building skills, and passion for nature and advocacy. To learn more about the LGA, please click [here](#).

## **ABOUT LAKE GEORGE**

Lake George is located at the southern end of the famed Adirondack Park in Upstate New York. Adirondack Park, at 6 million acres in size, is the largest protected area in the contiguous United States. Established in 1892 to protect the region's natural resources, the park's vast acreage makes up roughly one-fifth of the entire state of New York and is roughly the same size as the state of Vermont. It is also three times the size of Yellowstone National Park.

Lake George, at 32 miles long, up to 2.5 miles wide, and with depths reaching 200 feet, is considered to be among the clearest and cleanest large lakes in the world. Formed nearly 10,000 years ago by melting glaciers, the Lake's water clarity and scenic beauty have awed residents and visitors alike for ages. More than 90% of the watershed remains as natural forestland, with nearly half of the forested acreage publicly owned by New York State and constitutionally protected as forever-wild Forest Preserve. Adding to its allure, Lake George is a headwater lake, fed by dozens of mountain streams and dotted with more than 170 islands of varying shapes and sizes.

Designated by New York State as a Class AA-Special waterbody, Lake George serves as the primary source of drinking water for surrounding communities and residents. The Lake is also the primary driver of the region's tourism economy, generating roughly \$3 billion in annual economic activity, supporting more than 500 tourism businesses (not to mention the many other businesses that provide products and services to the tourism industry), and accounting for nearly \$630 million in direct tourism spending.

In 1961, the New York State Legislature recognized Lake George as "an area so distinctive in natural qualities and scenic beauty that it is deserving of special protection," and created by act of law, the "Lake George Park," a 300-square-mile land and water expanse subject to special laws and protections under the jurisdiction of the Lake George Park Commission. Lake George is so special that its protected watershed exists within the larger Adirondack Park whose abundant waterways, in addition to Lake George, include 3,000 lakes and ponds, and 30,000 miles of rivers and streams. In the words of Senate Majority Leader and US Senator from New York, Chuck Schumer, "It's no secret that Lake George is one of the most breathtaking natural treasures in New York."

## **ABOUT THE LAKE GEORGE ASSOCIATION**

The Lake George Association is the preeminent lake-protection entity dedicated to safeguarding Lake George. Founded in 1885 as the first lake conservation organization in history, the LGA existed as its own entity until it merged with The FUND for Lake George in 2021. Today's LGA has a strong financial profile with a history of successful fundraising and achieving budgets. In recent years, the endowment has been doubled to its current size of \$18M. Responding to an urgent call to action, knowing that there are no subjects more pressing, consequential, and complex than those at the intersection of climate, environment, and society, the LGA deploys its considerable assets to advance a science-guided, partner-driven model of freshwater protection designed for adaptation and scaling across the country and worldwide.

Their goal may be straightforward—keep Lake George clear and clean now and for future generations—but the work is far from simple and far from complete. The LGA is a multifaceted non-profit encompassing the work of scientific researchers, educators, and policymakers into one dynamic organization. The core work of the LGA is advancing solutions to the lake's challenges. These include programs in four areas: 1) reducing the use of salt in roadway snow removal, 2) protecting the lake from new and existing invasive species, 3) improving the effectiveness of residential and commercial septic systems and municipal wastewater systems, and 4) managing stormwater runoff associated with extreme weather. To combat these challenges, they organize their programmatic work into two broad categories: Science-to-Solutions and Education.

The **Lake George Waterkeeper Program** has been integral to the LGA's science-to-solutions protection strategy since 2002, beginning as a FUND for Lake George program and continuing forward with the modern LGA. The mission of the Lake George Waterkeeper is to defend the natural resources of the Lake and its watershed by promoting compliance with existing laws, supporting scientific research, and upholding sound engineering principles that provide for the continuing protection of the Lake and the common good of the community. Using science and technology to document concerns throughout the basin, the Waterkeeper educates stakeholders with special reports, community events, and professional level educational seminars. Their outreach focuses on how human uses may affect water quality and the common-sense solutions that can protect the Lake. The LGA's Waterkeeper combines professional engineering expertise and extensive water quality monitoring and analysis with strategic science-based advocacy to assist the LGA in developing effective solutions to the greatest challenges facing the Lake and building strong public and private partnerships to support these solutions.

The work of the LGA is also bolstered and informed by the world-class science and technology of **The Jefferson Project** to guide the common goal of stopping water quality decline and achieving sustained protection of Lake George. Established in 2013, the Jefferson Project is a historic collaboration among the LGA, the world-leading technology, science and data analysis of IBM Research, and the science and technological expertise of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. The Project is equipped with the most comprehensive scientific databases for a freshwater lake and uses the information as a springboard to understand and solve systematic problems. The Project's state-of-the-art systems approach to problem solving fuses monitoring, modeling, simulation, forecasting and experimentation to inform and compel smart decision-making to secure ecosystem resilience in the face of long-term pressures from climate change and intensifying human activity on the Lake and around the entire watershed.

Central to the LGA's community-centric approach is the **Lake Protector Program**, which provides everyone with a relationship to the Lake—residents, businesses, and visitors—a [Lake Protector Profile](#) to help them take curated and tailored actions that will protect Lake George. In fact, the LGA's personalized profiles, with recommendations curated for 9,300 developed properties in the watershed, are the first of their kind. Deeply connected to the Lake Protector Program are the **LGA Community Science Programs**, which engage an enthusiastic volunteer cadre of community scientists as dedicated Lake Protectors. Community scientists participate in a variety of programs to monitor water quality in the lake, invasive species, harmful and concerning algae growth, and local wildlife through programs such as AlgaeWatch, Aquatic invasive species weekend, Salt Watch, Water Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators (WAVE), and the Citizen Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP).

The **LGA Education Programs** are informative and interactive with hands-on activities and experiments encompassing public K-12 and adult education, education for property owners and business and municipal

leaders, and community science programs. The most well-known of LGA's educational programs is [The Floating Classroom](#), which was founded in 1991 aboard the *Rosalia Anna Ashby*, and provides a traveling home aboard which future Lake Protectors have the opportunity to learn about the remarkable ecology and health of Lake George and how to protect it. On a fun and fact filled cruise, community members and school field trips investigate water quality parameters, measure water clarity, and catch zooplankton. Similarly, the [Bay by Bay Initiative](#), a remarkable education and philanthropic summertime endeavor, gathers people and communities in the lake locations they care most about along with dedicated friends of the Lake hosting gatherings to educate and engage property owners to support the Lake programs.

## THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director is the chief executive officer of the Lake George Association, reporting to and working closely with its Board of Directors, and responsible for the health of the entire organization, including a \$3.4 million operating budget, \$18 million endowment, eleven dedicated staff, nine seasonal staff, and five direct reports (Marketing and Communications Director, Managing Program Director, Director of Development, Director of Finance and Administration, and the Lake George Waterkeeper).

## CURRENT CONTEXT

Following several years of intensive change, including the merger, the death of a beloved founder, the retirement of their executive director, a new board chair, and the global pandemic, all while managing the health of the Lake and countless societal and environmental threats to its vitality, the staff and board of the LGA are eager to enter a period of reflection, stability, and planning. As the Board embarks on a strategic planning process, that the incoming ED will participate in and help to finalize, this next ED will join the organization at a critical moment in the LGA's history. On the horizon, the Board is eager to see the LGA continue its leadership trajectory. They will look to the next ED not only to sustain momentum but to identify and seize new opportunities that are well aligned with the LGA's mission and bring creative animation to the organization's next chapter of service to the LGA community and fresh water globally.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

***Vision & Strategy:*** The ED will join the LGA as the Board and Staff begin a strategic planning process. The incoming ED will work to coalesce and galvanize staff, Board, members, donors, and others in support of LGA's mission and values, while learning where the LGA has been and assessing where it needs to go. In finalizing the strategic plan, the next ED will help the LGA to crystallize its post-merger identity and plan for a cohesive future. The ED will assess current program activity, policy work, research, outreach, and engagement initiatives and help to align them with the strategic plan. While it will be important that the LGA stay proactively committed to their strategic goals, it is just as imperative that the ED help the LGA to remain nimble and responsive to the unexpected and sudden. For example, in recent history, the LGA has mounted an important and pressing campaign opposing the use of herbicide [ProcellaCOR](#) in Lake George. While directly connected to the LGA's mission to protect the Lake, a strategic plan could never account for every threat that might erupt. Proactivity and reactivity must be balanced in the LGA's next era.

***Development & Donor Engagement:*** The next ED must be an authentic, enthusiastic, and colorful storyteller with the ability to compellingly share the LGA's mission with diverse audiences. Fortunately for this hire, they will have the opportunity to cultivate philanthropy in a community that is extremely passionate about this Lake. The ED will lead fundraising through personal involvement, particularly with

major individual donors and prospects; through Board and volunteer engagement; and in partnership with the development staff. The ED will play a lead role in cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding major and planned gifts and other revenue sources for the LGA with a targeted \$3.5 million fundraising goal annually. The summer tends to be an extremely busy season for the LGA's development agenda given that most second homeowners are only on the Lake during this season in which the LGA hosts its annual Gala, a dozen or so Bay-by-Bay gatherings, and other private development dinners and cruises around the lake. Nonetheless, the next ED will think innovatively about how to increase support from second homeowners who may participate more actively in philanthropy at home, and how to sustain both support and engagement all year long. They must also continue to capitalize on early work to proactively engage the local business community and begin to cultivate a new and younger generation of donors.

**Community Leadership:** Recognizing that it takes a village to protect and save any natural resource, the incoming ED will arrive with a fresh outlook and open arms, embracing other local leaders and organizations with an accessible and authentic desire to partner widely, repair any broken relationships, and share the ever-important mission of preserving Lake George. The ED will serve as the LGA's key spokesperson and promote an even stronger and more widely recognized organizational brand that places a premium on inclusivity, trustworthiness, and bridge building. Even when disagreements erupt, and strong advocacy and opposition are necessary—recent debate around ProcellaCOR is a good example—the ED must bring political astuteness, civility, and respect to all community interactions. The incoming ED will be an active and approachable member of the greater Lake George and Adirondack Region community, interacting with local leaders and townships, elected officials and government agencies in Albany, the region's business owners, and other community leaders. Farther afield, the incoming ED will build and reinforce strategic alliances within and beyond the fresh water and conservation community to advance the organization's mission, influence public policy, and promote lake protection and viability.

**Team Leadership & Organizational Development:** The LGA's staff is passionately dedicated to the organization and the region, devoting immense time and energy to the LGA's mission and audiences. Merging two distinctly different organizations is not easy, and this next ED will be the first to lead the organization without having known the legacy LGA or The FUND for Lake George as individual units. As a result, the incoming ED will arrive with fresh eyes and the ability to serve as a unifying and empowering staff leader, continuing to knit the two organizations together to ensure an integrated, highly collaborative team. The ED will manage and leverage experts, working to sustain a culture that attracts, retains, and motivates a diverse team of highly skilled individuals. The ED will work closely with the Directors to develop their teams' distinct goals, helping to oversee and evaluate progress and outcomes that serve the LGA's strategic plan. The ED will be a strong and welcoming presence day-to-day in the office. An expert communicator and transparent decision maker, the incoming ED will actively reinforce the importance of rigor, quality, clarity, and creativity. Inheriting a newly merged organization, it will be imperative that the incoming ED take the time to assess the LGA's current organizational structure, understanding roles, purviews, portfolios, skills, and talents. Additionally, with at least one key retirement on the horizon, there will be an opportunity to make a critical hire and continue to evolve the team and its efficacy.

**Board Relations:** The LGA is fortunate to have an active, experienced, and immensely generous Board that provides tremendous wisdom, work, and wealth. The next ED will engage actively with the Board of Directors, drawing on members' knowledge and experience and provide them with concise, rigorously presented information to make sound strategy, policy, and governance decisions. Over the next few months, the new Board chair and Board governance committee will re-evaluate the Board's size and committee structure in the hopes of establishing a more nimble and responsive Board to support the new

era of the LGA. In recent years post-merger, the Board has been required to play an outsized role in guiding the organization. As the new ED emerges, there is an opportunity to help the Board understand their distinct role and how to most actively and respectfully participate in the organization.

### **THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE**

The Lake George Association seeks a proven, passionate, and personable leader to be their next Executive Director. While no single candidate will possess all the ideal attributes and skills, candidates should bring many of the following characteristics and qualifications:

- A strategic and visionary leader with a track record in setting and implementing strategic plans and driving success.
- Political astuteness and experience working effectively with elected and appointed state and local officials as well as business, civic, and neighborhood leaders.
- Proven ability to prioritize, lead, and inspire internal teams, foster creativity, and drive positive change in a complex environment.
- Aptitude and appetite for fundraising and effective ability as a storyteller; willing and able to make a persuasive case for philanthropic support to a broad base of donors.
- Demonstrated record of success in both building and repairing relationships across a range of constituencies; a natural convener with the capacity to unite disparate factions and parties.
- Ability to balance the multifaceted, competing needs of a dynamic organization that is often in the public eye, including (but not limited to) internal leadership, partnership building, philanthropy, and serving as a very visible and present public face and ambassador.
- Demonstrated understanding of finance, budgeting, and strong business acumen.
- Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, as well as the ability to promote a supportive and inclusive working environment.
- Tenacity, pragmatism, flexibility, openness, patience, humility, and a good sense of humor.
- Experience with how non-profits operate, addressing pressing environmental and social challenges, and working with an engaged governing Board are preferred.
- Above all else, commitment to advocacy for the long-term protection of the Lake is required.

Research shows that people belonging to structurally marginalized groups often only apply to jobs if they meet 100% of the qualifications. As no one ever meets 100% of the qualifications, we encourage you to apply if you feel that most of the above qualifications reflect your experience and expertise.

## LOCATION

Lake George is located in the Adirondack Park region of Upstate New York, protected by expansive mountains and old-growth forest along its 109 miles of shoreline. This cherished and lush paradise has most recently been a home and destination for year-round lovers of nature, second homeowners, and vacationers alike. Along the Lake, visitors discover charming towns and villages that offer a unique blend of the Adirondack Region's rustic heritage with the Gilded Age's elegance. For the lake and nature lovers that reside in the region or visit annually, the activities are endless, and include swimming, snorkeling, kayaking, waterskiing, picnicking or camping on the Lake's many islands or shoreline, boating, fishing, and hiking the Lake's bordering mountains that provide an epic view of the picturesque water. And for winter sports enthusiasts, a 40-minute drive will take you to Gore Mountain or Whiteface Mountain for downhill skiing, not to mention all the mountains of southern Vermont that are within reach. And for the Nordic enthusiasts, both Glen Falls and Adirondack Park offer boundless options. Additionally, the rich history of the Lake is memorialized by its forts—William Henry and Ticonderoga—that cap its northern and southern points as well as several museums and public parks full of monuments and sculptures that capture the region's vast significance.

Lake George itself is a remarkable location and a gateway to many other of the Northeast's most treasured cities. The LGA office in Lake George, NY is located relatively close to many of New York State's best residential areas including Glen Falls/Queensbury (a 15-minute drive), Saratoga Springs (a 25-minute drive), and New York State's capital, Albany (a 60-minute drive). Crossing Lake Champlain will take you to Burlington, Vermont in two hours, driving north will take you to Montreal and Quebec City in 2 and a half hours and 5 hours respectively, and in just four hours, one can drive to Boston or New York City. Additionally, the Albany-Rensselaer Amtrak station offers a convenient way to visit both cities in just 2 hours and 30 minutes. Albany International Airport is one of the top economic development generators in Upstate New York and offers 53 daily arrivals and departures with direct flights to many of the nation's largest cities including Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Philadelphia, New York City, and Washington DC.

## INQUIRIES, NOMINATIONS, & APPLICATIONS

The Lake George Association has engaged [Isaacson, Miller](#) to assist in the search. The target salary range for this role is \$180,000 to \$220,000 and will be commensurate with experience. Confidential inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications (resume and cover letter) should be sent electronically to:

Carrie Alexander, Karen McPhedran, and Marlyn Desire  
Isaacson, Miller

To apply electronically, please visit the [IM website](#).

*The Lake George Association believes in providing equal employment opportunity and does not discriminate against any applicant or employee based on veteran status, military status, race (including traits historically associated with race), color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, status of being transgender, age, pregnancy (including childbirth, lactation and related medical conditions), reproductive health decision making (including the decision to use or access a particular drug, device, or medical service), national origin or ancestry, citizenship and immigration status, physical or mental disability, certain arrest or conviction records, predisposition or carrier status, marital or familial status, the status of being a victim of domestic violence, genetic information (including testing and characteristics), known relationship or association with any member of a protected class, or any other class or status protected by applicable law.*