



LAKEFRONT LIVING CHARACTER AREA

Overview

There are four areas depicted as Lakefront Living on the County Character Area Plan; these include the areas surrounding Brantingham, Chase and Beaver Lakes, and Lake Bonaparte. All four areas are surrounded by Forestry Character Areas and are located in or adjacent to the Adirondack State Park, with Lake Bonaparte the only area located outside of the Adirondack Foothills. Nearly all the uses in these areas are single family detached structures that are used for permanent or seasonal residences, with occasional small scale convenience retail or services. Although small in physical area, the character of these locations is significantly different from the surrounding landscape, with the proximity to water resources providing additional support for a separate Lakefront Living category.

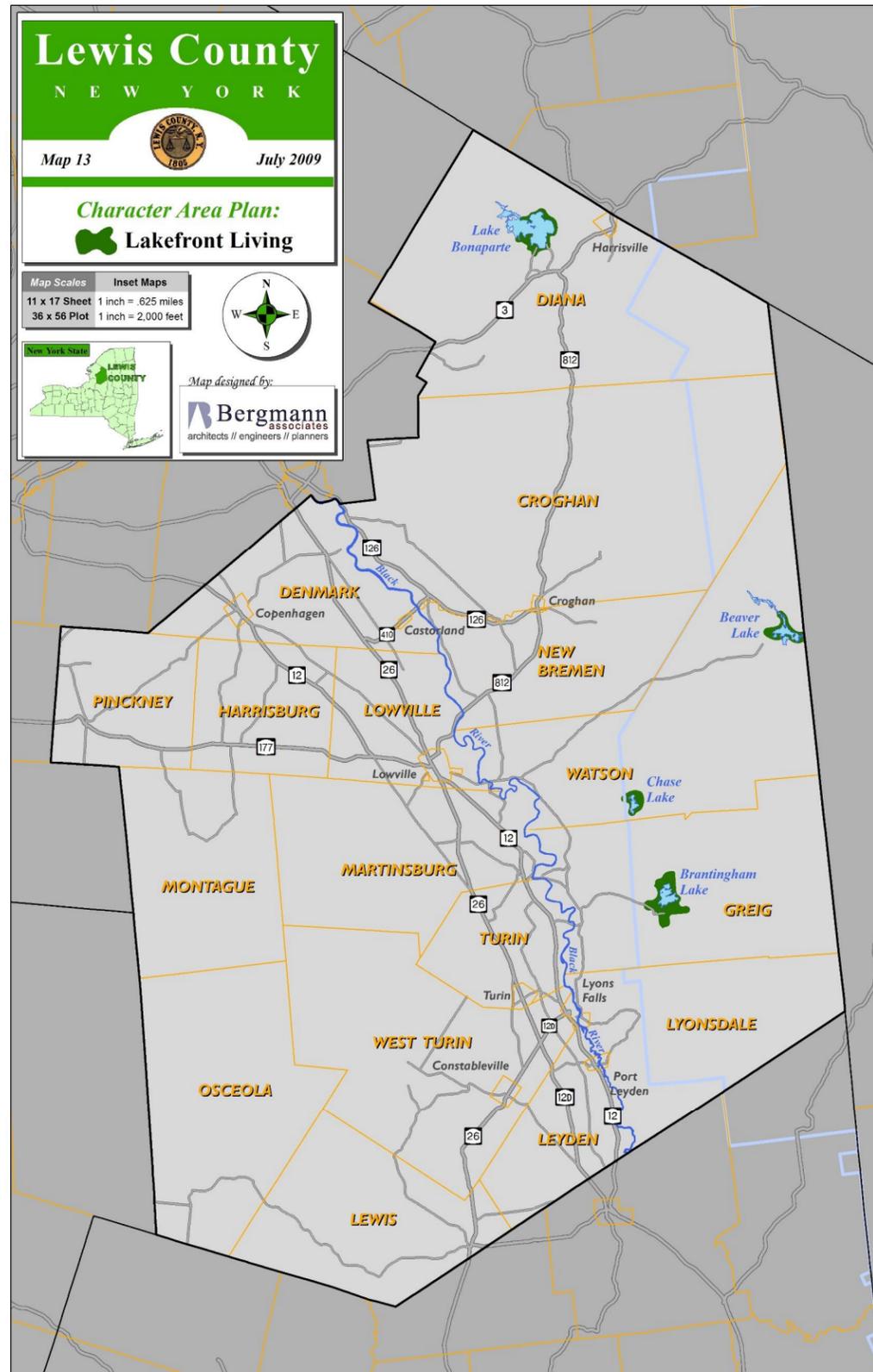
This character area contains a mixture of older and contemporary housing stock. The most recent national real estate boom brought about a dramatic increase in new and redevelopment of lakefront properties during the past 10 years. As a result, places such as Brantingham Lake do not have any remaining public frontage along the shoreline.

The real estate boom drove up property prices significantly, resulting in property reassessments that have negatively impacted the tax requirements for long-time residents. The influx of seasonal and year-round property owners in these remote locations has also brought about conflicts between the services local municipalities are able to provide and the expectations of new land owners.



Typical Lakefront Living residence in the Brantingham Lake area.

However, benefits of the recent real estate boom include an increased municipal tax base, an influx of disposable income to be spent on local goods and services, the added attention and draw for tourism and recreation, and the improved image of the county. Municipalities and residents must recognize and balance the benefits and drawbacks of growth and change to their advantage.



Design Considerations

Primary design considerations for the Lakefront Living Character Areas include the provision of public access to the waterfront, where feasible, and the protection of water resources. Lewis County has very few large lakes available for public recreational use. The high demand for property in the Lakefront Living areas has led to a dramatic privatization of these important natural resources. Municipalities should work with willing landowners to develop public access plans for these and other small lakes and ponds to ensure accessibility for future generations of residents and visitors. The retention of public access to these lakes will be extremely important to Lewis County's developing tourism industry. Visitors are drawn to the beautiful landscapes and vistas of the county's forests, and the promise of direct access to water resources will retain and expand the tourism economy. Chase Lake and its shoreline is completely developed and controlled by a resident's association, therefore providing public access is not recommended for this location. Opportunities for public access in other locations should be further investigated as they arise.

Additionally, the status and effectiveness of private infrastructure in these character areas is becoming an increasingly important topic of discussion. Municipal sewer and water infrastructure is not available to lakefront residences, therefore aging and undersized septic systems are of concern, specifically around Brantingham Lake (septic systems in Chase Lake are not a concern in that respect). Many existing systems were installed before the advent of strict NYSDEC standards. While regulation of this infrastructure is out of the hands of local municipalities, the investigation of potentially failing systems and the development of mitigation measures is something that could be addressed by a consortium of towns in conjunction with the APA and NYSDEC. The goal of such a program should be to improve the effectiveness of the systems and the safety of the environment, not to punish property owners. This consortium could seek grant funding for investigations and repairs/replacements to limit the burden on individual property owners.



The scarcity of buildable lakefront property around Lake Bonaparte has caused significant competition and development on the little available shoreline, as can be seen above.