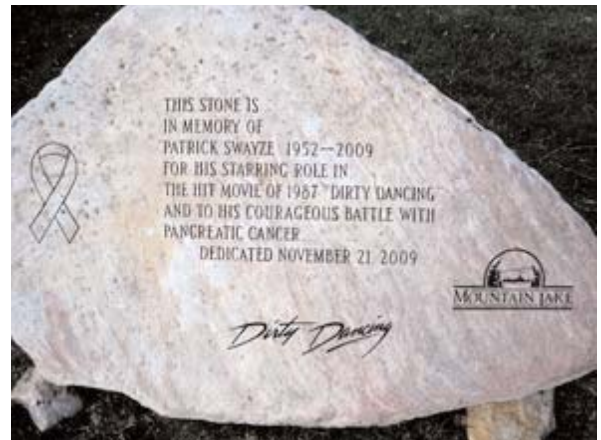




## Visit Giles County and Mountain Lake Hotel

Mountain Lake is one of only two natural fresh-water lakes in Virginia, and is the highest lake in elevation east of the Mississippi.

- Located nearly 4,000 feet above sea level, Mountain Lake sits on a basin that's made up of four different rock substrates and their corresponding fault lines, which allow water to flow out year round at a remarkable rate.
- Water has been flowing into this basin for eight to 10,000 years, but didn't start accumulating until about 6,000 years ago when earthquakes caused the rocks at the North end of the lake to slide down from the surrounding mountaintop and create a semi-permeable "dam" at that site. This resulted in the creation of a pond or lake as water accumulated faster than it could leave.
- Since the lake is fed entirely by springs and ground water from this basin's fault lines and surrounding mountaintop, and water is always flowing out, the level of the lake corresponds to the amount of rainfall we have each season; a lower lake level means less rain, a higher lake level means more rain.
- The earliest known written evidence of Mountain Lake comes from 1751 when Christopher Gist of the Ohio Land Surveying Company became the first European to lay eyes upon it.



The lake is fed by cold underground springs that rarely allow the temperature to rise above 70 degrees on the surface and 46 degrees on the bottom.

- The first known owner of Mountain Lake was Henley Chapman, an early commonwealth attorney who helped frame the Virginia Constitution in 1829.
- Because settlers used to "salt" their cattle in the basin of the lake, the original name for Mountain Lake was Salt Pond. The mountain is still known as Salt Pond Mountain.
- By 1857 Salt Pond was being operated as a pleasure resort by the new owner, General Herman Haupt of Pennsylvania. Mr. and Mrs. Haupt purchased the first hotel license for the resort and named it Mountain Lake.
- In 1864, after the battle of Dublin, Union General George Crook marched his troops over Salt Pond Mountain to the present day Union, West Virginia.
- Frank Woodsman of Charleston, WV purchased the property in 1891. A short time thereafter, the Porterfield family acquired Mountain Lake. The Porterfield family owned the lake for over 30 years in the early 1900s and greatly refined the cuisine and hospitality.
- Most of the cottages at Mountain Lake carry the original names given to them by their builders almost 100 years ago.
- Originally a guest of Mountain Lake, William Lewis Moody of Galveston, Texas purchased the property in 1930. Mr. Moody erected the large, native sandstone hotel that stands today in 1936.
- Upon Mr. Moody's death, the hotel was passed on to his daughter, Mary Moody Northen. Upon her death in 1986, the Mary Moody Northen Endowment took over ownership of the hotel.
- In 1986, the feature film and box office hit, "Dirty Dancing" was filmed at Mountain Lake.