



Fall 2017

Issue No. 183



Photo by Craig Charlton

Where eagles share

Report on the Annual Meeting 2017

Over 80 people attended our annual meeting which was held on August 5th at the Community Center in Oxford. Maine State Game Warden Anthony Gray entertained and educated the crowd with a discussion of regulations affecting Maine waters, as well as the day to day challenges of being a warden. The state of Maine currently employs 120 wardens and 3 are assigned to Thompson Lake; Tony is one of them. In the summer, he spends much of his working day in a boat patrolling Thompson and other lakes. His primary concerns are water craft safety and the protection of wildlife. The numbers of accidental drownings in Maine are up in 2017, many of which were avoidable with the use of personal floatation devices.

Search and rescue is an important part of game wardens responsibility. Tony is a member of the state Dive Team and is often involved with water retrievals He pointed out that the state encourages the use of name labels for non -motorized boats. These labels include the name and phone numbers of the owner of the watercraft. This is very useful when wardens come upon lost watercraft and attempt to return them to the owners. They are also helpful in search efforts for people that may have been using the watercraft. These labels are available at the TLEA office, they will be kept in the “Clynk bag” box outside on the steps during the snow free months.

This presentation was followed by committee reports and elections. Jade Doyle, our Treasurer, reported on TLEA finances. We have embarked on a Capital Campaign for milfoil removal which will require a strong commitment from the membership and anyone interested in the protection of the lake. Other programs, such as the Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) and the Courtesy Boat Inspectors (CBI) also face challenges as grant money is becoming scarce and expenses rise. Reports from our committees on water quality, milfoil mitigation, the YCC and the CBI program are presented later in this issue.

Dr. Sarah Rice and Peter Siebert were elected as new directors to the board. Karen Brown, Kathy Cain, Pete Laverdiere, Jade Doyle, Rosemary Nicklaus and Sharon rice were re-elected to terms that extend to 2019. Sue Ellis and Tom Ray stepped down as directors; we thank them for their dedicated service.

TLEA Program Reports 2016

Milfoil Mitigation

(Submitted by Scott Bernardy)

The TLEA Milfoil Mitigation crew wrapped up the 2017 milfoil management season in mid-September after more than doubling the hours we spent on the lake last year. The increased hours were used to fabricate and place over 1 acre of tarps in Pine Point and suction harvest roughly 2 acres of lake area around lake front properties on the north side of Pine Point Cove. Since Pine Point is the largest area of milfoil infestation on Thompson Lake, comprising more than 10 acres, it will take a sustained effort to reduce this mass of invasive aquatic plant growth here and prevent fragmentation and spread to other parts of the lake.

The goal of our Milfoil and other Invasive Species Mitigation program is to lay down tarps and suction harvest 3 acres per year in Pine Point Cove for the next 4 years. We will continue to manage infestation in the 4 other smaller coves throughout the lake and conduct underwater surveying of all the shallow soft bottom areas that are favorable zones for milfoil growth.

The major concern in Pine Point is the fragmentation of the milfoil by motor boats and the subsequent spread about the lake. We have constructed a biodegradable barrier on the lake bottom at Pine Point to establish a boat channel for lakefront property owners to access the lake without chopping up the milfoil. Our dive crew also removed over 19,000 pounds of milfoil from the 2 acres that lie between the boat channel and the property owners docks. There is 1 more acre to clear between the boat channel and lakefront property. Since the suction harvesting does not clear 100% of the milfoil, subsequent passes of suction harvesting is required annually. The dive crew placed tarps that will be rotated throughout the next several years. They started in the shallowest part of the cove and will over winter the tarps in the lake for this season.

Thompson Lake is contains 4,400 acres, 400 of which are susceptible to the migration and growth of milfoil. These areas consist of shore land that is less than 15 feet deep and have soft underlying land. Prior to the 1970's there were no invasive plants in Thompson Lake. A small colony of variable leaf milfoil was transported to the lake in the 1980's and this subsequently spread to nine locations in the lake with colonies ranging from a few hundred square feet to 10 acres. Our Milfoil Mitigation efforts have eliminate 90% of the milfoil colonies outside of Pine

Point, but these areas will inevitably be re-infested if we do not drastically reduce the growth of milfoil in Pine Point. TLEA kicked off its Capital Campaign this year to raise the necessary funds to mitigate this threat to Thompson Lake. The protection of this natural resource, its recreational and aesthetic quality as well as our property values depend on the outcome of this program. We will need your financial support to accomplish this monumental but achievable task.

Capital Campaign for the Mitigation of Invasive Aquatic Species

TLEA is committed to win the battle against milfoil and other invasive species threatening the lake. As outlined in the previous article, our Milfoil Mitigation Crew is off to a good start in Pine Point, but this project is labor and material intensive. It costs \$21,000 just to fabricate 1 acre of benthic barriers (tarps) and that does not include the cost of barrier placement. It is estimated that this will cost in excess of \$400,000 over 5 years. The placement of tarps and suction harvesting in Pine Point will cost \$100,000 a year for the 4 years and then we will establish a lake survey program to prevent and remove invasive species throughout the lake in the 5th year. We will receive some grant money from the EPA and other sources, but we will need the help of all of those who appreciate Thompson Lake.

We launched our Capital Campaign for this project in June with a letter to all property owners on the lake. We have reached out to businesses that are associated with the lake as well. So far we have received pledges for \$193,000 from 266 individuals. We see this as a good start but we have a long ways to go. If you have not responded to our request for funds, please do so. If you have given already, we thank you and ask that you consider giving more. ***If you would like to make a contribution or pledge, contact Kathy Cain at kathryncain@myfairpoint.net or call at 207 539-9122.*** Generations to come are counting on you!

Keep in mind that if you responded to the letter this past summer soliciting funds for this project, this was not for membership dues and they are paid separately.

Water Quality Report

(Submitted by Scott Williams)

Heavy snowmelt from last winter, combined with the moderate rain that we experienced in the spring, resulted in substantial storm water runoff to Thompson Lake from its watershed during the spring and early summer. Spring and early summer rain typically sets the stage for lake conditions that occur during the rest of the season. As a result, Thompson Lake was notably less clear than its historical

average from May through July; although conditions did improve somewhat during the late summer, as drought conditions once again prevailed. Secchi disk readings were in the 7-8 meter depth range (23-26 feet) until August, when readings improved to 9 meters. Historically, water clarity readings in Thompson may run as deep as 10-11 meters during the late summer. A more in-depth analysis of conditions in the lake last summer is forthcoming. (Editor's note: You'll just have to wait for the 2018 spring edition of the Observer!)

Courtesy Boat Inspection

(Submitted by Marcia Matuska)

CBI, Courtesy Boat Inspection, has been busier than ever this past season. We continued to inspect boats on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at the launches of Thompson Lake Marina in Casco, Pismo Beach and the Outpost, but we did not staff Robinson's Marina. We will consider staffing Robinson's next year as I noted more boaters using this launch this past summer.

A total of 707 boats were inspected entering the lake and 496 were inspected leaving the lake. That is 1203 inspections, 43 more than last year. Once again, the Thompson Lake Marina had the most inspections (604).

Three clumps of plants were removed at the Marina. They were all noninvasive and included needle spikerush, creeping spearwort, pipewort, dwarf watermilfoil, and pondweed species.

Maine has relatively few invasive aquatic plants. It is important that we inspect our boats before and after launching to keep our lakes as free from invasive plants as possible. Thanks for your cooperation.

Youth Conservation Corp

(Submitted by Steve Arnold)

YCC is one of our most important efforts to protect the water quality of the lake. Unfettered runoff from exposed land, launches, roads and drive ways is the largest contributor to phosphorous levels in the lake and resultant algae growth.

This year the YCC team was led by a new crew chief Ryan Curtis and completed 8 erosion control projects. The projects included a variety of Best Management Practices (BMPs) including the installation of razor bars and box culverts to divert and direct runoff. We also experienced an increased demand for the installation of rip rap to stabilize eroding shorelines. This is due, in part, to higher than usual lake water levels this spring.

The YCC receives its funding from a small grant, member donations , plus what we charge individual property owners for the work we perform. The cost of the program has increased year-over-year while our grant has significantly diminished. This year the YCC ran a deficit of almost \$13,000.

The TLEA is exploring a number of different funding options for the YCC for 2018. Unfortunately, without new sources of funding the future of the YCC is uncertain. We will keep you posted on our progress.

Membership 2016

(Submitted by Rosemary Nicklaus)

As we come to the end of another beautiful summer season I would like to summarize our 2017 membership standing. Membership support has remained essentially flat each of the last two years. Only about 48% of the property owners around the lake have made 2017 membership contributions to the Thompson Lake Environmental Association (TLEA). This precious lake is continually threatened and your contributions support our mission to preserve the natural beauty, water quality and biological diversity of the lake. I want to thank all of our loyal supporters.

TLEA is served by a dedicated group of volunteers and members who want to continue protecting our lake. Please become an annual contributing member and support TLEA. I would also ask that if you have an employer that has a matching gift program that you apply for matching funds.

A short note: If your mailing address has changed or if you have sold your property please send us these changes so we can maintain an accurate membership list. One of the best ways to communicate with us is via email. Please contact TLEA at this email: mmtlea@gmail.com . Thank you.

We can protect Thompson Lake only through consistent annual financial support and by working together!

Please make your 2017 membership contribution today.

Briefly Noted

Loon Count: Peggy Dorf and her loon counting crew saw 14 adult loons on Thompson this past July. Six chicks were also spotted, an all time high. This count is associated with the Maine Audubon Society and is held the 3rd Saturday morning of July. If you can help, contact Peggy at peggydorf@ymail.

Correction: The Greeley Brook clean up that was done was this past June was organized by the the Otisfield Conservation Committee, not the Otisfield Historical Society, as reported.

Farewell to Tom Ray

Tom is stepping down from our board after many years of dedicated service to the lake. Tom became a TLEA board member in 1972, having been recruited by then president Fred Peterson. Tom was an energetic and productive board member from the start. He participated in many of the projects to improve the lake. He took on the responsibilities of president from 2002 to 2008. Tom then continued to put in his hours as the director of the YCC program until 2016. That's right; Tom has been working to protect the water and shore lands of the lake for 44 years. Our CBI, YCC and Milfoil Mitigation programs would not be where they are now without Tom's leadership and work ethic. He is true environmentalist.

We will miss Tom's smiling face and good nature at our meetings, but he will still be around on the lake. Tom and his wife Phyllis live on the lake near Bass Cove, on property that Tom's family purchased in 1956. You may see him on the lake fishing with his grandchildren. If you do, give him a big wave and "thanks" for all the work he has done for the lake.



Thank you Tom!

Visit our website:
www.thompsonlake.org
CONTACT TLEA: 207-539-4535
EMAIL: mmtlea@gmail.com

Thompson Lake Environmental Association
P.O. Box 25
Oxford, ME 04270

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

OBSERVER

Published three times annually by the
Thompson Lake Environmental Association
(207) 539-4535

Editor: Paul Cain

Non-Profit
Organization

**U.S. Postage
PAID**

OXFORD, ME 04270
Permit #71