



Summer 2023

Issue No. 200



Watershed Survey Volunteers at Work

(Photo by Paul Cain)

Annual Meeting

The Thompson Lake Environmental Association 2023 Annual Meeting will be held at the Oxford Recreational Hall, King St., on Saturday, August 5 from 9:00-11:00 AM. We will have progress reports on our programs, an environmental presentation, and elect our board directors. The new nominees for the board are: Danny Crowley and Guy Roberge. The directors up for re-election are: Bill Booth, Kathy Cain. Jade Doyle, Ken Mendelson, Sarah Rice, Sharon Rice and Peter Siebert. Kathy Cain will be stepping down as President, and Ron Armontrout will be taking on this role. Susan O'Byrne will also be moving on from the Secretary position, to be replaced by Candace Nelson. Scott Williams, formerly director of the Lake Stewards of Maine, will give a talk entitled "Maine Lakes in the Era of Climate Warming", an important topic in view of a recent algal bloom in a neighboring lake.

Mark this date on your calender to hear about the association, environmental issues involving the lake, and once again meet up with your neighbors and friends. As usual, there will be an assortment of baked goods and treats. What a great way to celebrate the lake and learn how we can protect it. See you there.

Program Reports

Watershed Survey 2023

We are pleased to announce that the watershed survey of Thompson Lake is now complete. On May 19 and 20 of this year 38 volunteers and 17 Technical Leaders from the Maine DEP and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts set out to accomplish this formidable task. We inspected approximately 90% of the properties in the watershed, and the remaining areas were inspected on June 22. This is quite an accomplishment; the last survey was done in 3 phases and took 2-3 years! We will now create our non-point source (NPS) Tracker Site that will document the erosion sites throughout the watershed to develop a watershed protection plan. This will qualify TLEA, property owners and the local towns to apply for 319 Grants for erosion control projects. These projects could potentially receive funding by late 2024. The watershed survey will qualify Thompson Lake for these funds for 10 years! This is the best way for us to protect the water quality and beauty of Thompson Lake.

The previous survey was done in 2008- 2010 and resulted in obtaining \$362,871 of federal grants over 4 implementation phases for erosion control projects throughout

the watershed. These projects require a 40% match and “in kind” services are credited. As an example of the impact of these projects, in just phase IV (2014-16) of the most recent 319 Project, 30 erosion sites were evaluated by the local County Soil and Water Conservation staff, providing specific recommendations on erosion control to towns and property owners. 12 large erosion abatement projects were completed, *preventing 27 tons of sediment entering the lake each year*. The town of Poland used some of these funds for significant road improvements of the Johnson Hill Road. TLEA used some of these funds for our YCC program and community education.

Our thanks to all who showed up for the survey. WMTW Channel 8 covered the event, and our volunteers described the intent of the project very well. This can be seen at the link <https://www.wmtw.com/article/volunteers-work-to-protect-thompson-lake-from-erosion/43959640>. We had many positive interactions with property owners, and we were able to provide them some advice on how to control erosion. Non-point source pollution from erosion presents the largest threat to the water quality of Thompson Lake. TLEA is committed to working with the local towns and property owners to identify and mitigate erosion throughout the watershed.

LakeSmart

Our LakeSmart program has been very busy this summer. The team has inspected 7 properties as of the end of June, and a total of 23 inspections are currently scheduled. The team consists of TLEA members Candace Nelson, Jade Doyle, Kathy Cain, Hobart Hardej, Marcia Matuska, Ken Mendelson, and is led by Ron Armontrout. The team recently participated in a training session with Andrea Stevens of Maine Lakes, the state organization that administers the program. Betsy Peterson and Kate Ryan received training and they will soon join the LakeSmart team.

LakeSmart is an educational program that helps lakefront homeowners manage their landscapes to reduce erosion and protect water quality. Homeowners fill out a questionnaire; the LakeSmart team uses this information and their observations for a 5-part evaluation: driveway and parking areas, outdoor structures, outdoor areas, shoreline buffer and water access, as well as buffer integrity. The homeowners receive a written evaluation outlining methods to control runoff and reduce erosion. The LakeSmart Award is given to properties that have high levels of erosion

control. If you are interested in having an inspection, contact Ron Armontrout at: director.tlea@gmail.com.

Youth Conservation Corps

TLEA Board member Jim Skinner reports that the YCC program is very busy this summer working on erosion control projects along the lake. Chris Stoechner, an educator at Oxford Hills High School has returned as Program Coordinator and 2 Buckfield High students, Noah Marston and Owen LaPointe, have signed on as crew members. Jim and Chris will consult with landowners regarding erosion concerns on their properties. They can develop remediation plans, obtain the necessary permits, and provide cost estimates for the prospective projects. The crew provides the muscle for jobs such as box trenches, razor bar, mulching, infiltration steps and planting of vegetative buffers. If you have concerns about an erosion problem on your property and would like to get the YCC involved, contact Jim at YCC@ThompsonLake.org.

Milfoil Removal Update

Alex Bernardy, our Milfoil Crew chief, reports that overall, the lake is looking great. They have visited all high priority areas of the lake this season and observed minimal grow back since last season. This could partly be due to the slow start of the summer this year with the colder temps and lack of sunlight. They have seen this with the slow rise of native plants as well.

By mid-June the crew had removed approximately 6-10 bags per day from the Pine Point area and they will routinely remove up to 2 bags of milfoil plants in other areas of the lake, per visit.

In early June, Alex and the crew discovered many fresh milfoil fragments floating around Pine Point. These fragments were small, 2-4 inches in length, which suggest the original plants were hit by a boat nearby. Alex is planning to do a survey around the mouth of Pine Point on the next sunny day of work (“...if that ever happens”). The visibility is much greater in and out of the water when the sun is shining, making the survey more efficient.

Since 2008 the TLEA Milfoil crew has hand pulled or suctioned over 200 tons of milfoil the lake. From 2017- 2021, ten acres of infestation in the Pine Point area was covered with benthic barriers, resulting in a further removal of 350 tons of milfoil. In a span of 12 years 550 tons of milfoil have been removed from Thompson Lake!

Courtesy Boat Inspections

TLEA Board members Marcia Matuska and Danny Crowley report that this summer we have courtesy boat inspectors stationed at all 4 boat ramps of Thompson Lake. We have 3 returning inspectors and 4 new inspectors. So far, 5 plants have been removed from watercraft, all were identified as native.

CBI is one way that TLEA is preventing the introduction of invasive species into Thompson Lake, or the transport of species to other lakes. This is an extremely important program that serves many lakes statewide. It is supported by grants from the Maine DEP. Our inspectors are only stationed at the ramps on the weekends and holidays, their purpose is to not only inspect, but to instruct boat owners how to prevent the transfer of plants or animal species. So, please remember to clean, drain and dry your boat before and after you enter any body of water!

Agassiz Village

If you are boating along the Abrams Point area you may have noticed the undeveloped expanse of waterfront, log structure dining hall, recreational fields, and assorted cabins of Agassiz Village and wondered what goes on there. Lisa Carter, the Executive Director of the camp provided the Observer with this report on AV:

You may not be aware of a magical place on Thompson Lake that enriches children's lives from under resourced New England communities. This place, on the southern end of the lake is Agassiz Village. It was founded in 1935 to give kids from marginalized communities the opportunity to explore nature, grow as individuals, and return home to thrive in their own communities. In 2022, Agassiz Village gave 462 girls and boys, ages 8-17, this opportunity. Families pay, on average, \$135 for their child to attend camp for two weeks. The true cost for two weeks of camp for one child is well over \$1,600. The camp depends on the generosity of others who fund scholarships for the children. As such, support from donors who share this vision is essential to continue providing youth who would not otherwise have access to this unique, life-changing opportunity.

It is critical to keep Agassiz Village's 330 acres, two miles of lake front and two islands undeveloped and safe from future development so everyone who visits Thompson Lake, and hundreds of at-risk youth can continue to benefit from this untouched, scenic stretch of the Lake. AV's large, minimally developed acreage

reduces risks of negative environmental impacts, protects the lake water quality and provides shoreline protection.

It is why Agassiz Village staff felt it very important to participate in the Thompson Lake Environmental Association's watershed survey this spring to identify areas of non-point source pollution from erosion, keeping the greatest threat to lake water quality at bay. We believe, as many Thompson Lake residents do, our top priority is the stewardship of the land and the preservation of lake for future generations.

To learn more about Agassiz Village, you are invited to an open house for Thompson Lake residents on Saturday, July 22, from noon to 2pm. To RSVP contact Mike Smith at msmith@agassizvillage.org or 781-860-0200 ext. 1007. To make a donation, visit www.agassizvillage.org/support-us or mail a check to Agassiz Village, 71 Agassiz Village Ln, Poland, ME 04274. Agassiz Village also accepts donations of furniture, canoes, life jackets, boats and other household items. For a list of needed items go to our website www.AgassizVillage.org or shop from our Amazon wish list at <https://a.co/6yQrd7y> Volunteers are also welcome.

Thank you, Lisa and your crew, for your work with disadvantaged kids and helping to protect the lake!

Briefly Noted

Annual Loon Count: This was held on Saturday, July 15 from 7:00- 8:00 AM. If you can volunteer, please contact Peggy Dorf at PeggyDorf@gmail.com.

Poison Ivy: Does your property contain poison ivy? Removing this often requires spraying herbicides, this should be done by a certified professional. Unfortunately, YCC is not certified to do this. Never burn it- this will aerosolize plant fragments and can cause respiratory distress.

Website: If you haven't already, check out our new website at <https://thompsonlake.org>. Membership renewals and donations can be made through the website!

Clynk Program: Don't forget to support TLEA by donating your used bottles to our Clynk program. The Clynk bags can be picked up at the TLEA office or at 37 Black Island Rd. For more info call the TLEA office at 539-4535.

Lake Books: TLEA will be sending The Lake Book, a handbook for lake protection to all our members. This published by Maine Lakes. *Check out our introduction.*

In Memoriam: Karen Brown

We were saddened to hear that Karen Brown, long time TLEA Board member and Secretary, passed away this past spring. Karen and her husband Bob were originally from Haverhill, Mass. Back in the 1980's, they built a log cabin in the Abram's Point area of Thompson Lake. They had many memorable summers at the lake with their children; Alyson, Tim, and Cindy. After retirement Karen and Bob toured the U.S.A. in their newly acquired RV. They mostly enjoyed their time with their kids and grandchildren. Bob passed away in 2020.

Karen was an energetic and productive member of the board. She dutifully saw to the functions of Secretary and was active with our Events Committee, helping to organize the Annual Meeting, fund raisers and our annual barbeques. Karen was an good volunteer and brightened up our meetings. She had an irrepressible wit and a sparkle in her eye at all times. We will miss her.



Karen Brown

Visit our website at:
www.thompsonlake.org

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

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