

THE THOMPSON LAKE  
**OBSERVER**

Fall 2025

Issue No. 207



*The frost is coming! - Photo by Kathy Cain*

## Milfoil Removal 2025

Milfoil Crew Chief Alex Bernardy reports that they removed a total of 17,515 pounds of milfoil from the lake this past summer, marking a 26.3% increase compared to 2024. Most of the plant growth was concentrated around Pine Point, with significant regrowth observed in the cove. Numerous small to medium-sized colonies, with some approaching 100 square feet, were discovered in the deeper waters beyond the cove's mouth. Approximately 25 colonies were found just north of Brigg's Island, an area where milfoil growth has been uncommon in the past. The crew also surveyed the high-risk areas of the lake for signs of regrowth. Aside from a few small colonies between Robinson Marina and Pismo Beach, no other new milfoil colonies were detected.

TLEA Board members Hobart Hardej and Brian Bond, Co-Chairs of our Water Quality/Invasive Species program, toured the lake with Alex and representatives from the Maine DEP in the late summer to assess the results from last season. Alex focused the tour on the area of Pine Point, including the causeway at Greeley Brook. Alex and his crew were successful in removing most of the regrowth at Pine Point, however a large colony of plants were identified at Greeley Brook, primarily along the west bank. The DEP personnel and Alex agreed that the Greeley Brook area is most likely the primary contributor to the regrowth at Pine Point and beyond. When the plants go dormant at the end of the summer, they become brittle, resulting in pieces breaking off and flowing into the lake. This is accentuated by heavy rains and increased water temperature.

This is a serious problem and may require the milfoil removal program to expand to Greeley Brook. Alex feels that this area of infestation could be mitigated with the use of benthic barriers (tarps), similar to what we used in the 10-acre area of infestation in Pine Point. The barriers work by blocking sunlight, eliminating photosynthesis which kills the plant and the root system. TLEA still has tarps that were used at Pine Point in serviceable condition, but most of the rebar will need to be replaced.

Variable leaf milfoil is an aggressive, invasive plant that threatens the beauty, recreational quality and economic value of the lake. We must be constantly vigilant in keeping this infestation in check, colonies in one part of the lake will spread to others through boat traffic, wind, and currents. ***TLEA plans to address this problem***

*in 2026, but we will need your support. The program is funded through membership dues, grants and donations.*

## 319 Grant Program

The 319 Grant program had a productive season assisting landowners, road associations and towns to improve their property and reduce erosion. 2025 was the first year of a 2-year cycle of funding. Seven Residential Matching Grants were used to assist local landowners with projects such as box culverts, driveway improvements, dry wells, placement of erosion control mulch and shoreline plantings. Landowners can receive up to \$750 of matching grants for these types of projects, usually done utilizing an outside contractor. Three Candidate Site projects were funded; the Beechwoods Road had re-grading of their road, ditch improvements and placement of culverts. Similar work will be done at the Williams Road area of Otisfield and at a walking trail at Agassiz Village in Poland. Our YCC program completed 6 projects for landowners and 3 are set up for 2026. The YCC trained crew supplies the hand labor, the landowner only pays for the materials. For details, see the next article in this issue. All the above projects are designed to reduce the run-off of phosphorous and other nutrients into the lake, thereby slowing algae growth and maintaining water quality.

We are pleased with the progress of this ambitious program, and we are already looking forward to the next grant cycle. *If your road association or town is interested in applying for a Candidate Site grant, we will be applying to the Maine DEP for these in the spring of 2026 for work that would be done in 2027.*

Residential Matching Grants are available now, there is a limit of 10 in the 2-year cycle. Our YCC will be accepting requests for work in 2026, as usual. If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity, contact Paul Cain at [tleawatershed2023@gmail.com](mailto:tleawatershed2023@gmail.com) or Emma Lorusso, our Project Manager at [projectdirector@androscogginswcd.org](mailto:projectdirector@androscogginswcd.org).

## Youth Conservation Corps

Program Director Jim Skinner reports that the YCC had a productive 2025 season. The crew, led by Project Coordinators Josh Wright and Jim himself, completed 6 extensive erosion control jobs throughout the watershed. These included building open top culverts, installing razor bars, diversion steps, laying down drip lines and erosion control mulch, as well as planting vegetative buffers. Jim and Josh have

lined up at least 11 jobs for 2026 and 10 referrals to the Build Better Buffers program, a collaboration with the McLaughlin Gardens.

The YCC program is partially funded by our 319 Grant, so for approved projects the landowners only pay for materials and not for labor or technical assistance, as long as funds last. The requests for participation in this program will be considered on a first come first served basis. This is a great opportunity to improve properties, control erosion and protect the lake from phosphorous run-off. If you have an erosion control project in mind for next year, contact Jim Skinner at [tlea.yccdirector@gmail.com](mailto:tlea.yccdirector@gmail.com).

## **LiveStaking Workshop**

As part of our Maine DEP administered 319 Grant program, TLEA and the Androscoggin Soil and Water Conservation District will be holding an interactive workshop on how to improve shoreline buffers with live staking on Friday, November 7, 1:00 -3 PM, meeting at the Thompson Lake Marina in Casco. This involves harvesting stakes from existing shrubs and implanting them along shorelines. This simple technique can dramatically improve buffers and stabilize an eroding bank with little cost. There will be hands-on demonstrations. Very useful! For more details, use this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1766949827499?aff=oddtdtcreator>

## **LakeSmart**

Ron Armontrout and the LakeSmart team had a very busy summer season, completing 26 property inspections around the lake. Overall, 12 LakeSmart Awards were granted for properties that had erosion control that met the standards of the Maine Lakes Association. Other property owners were instructed on how to improve erosion control and will have a chance to be re-evaluated in 2026. Our program is one of the most active in the state with 131 evaluations done in the past 5 years.

The LakeSmart program is free, non-regulatory, and voluntary. It also works with our Build Better Buffers program to assist landowners in establishing shoreline vegetative buffers. If you would like to take advantage of this program, in 2026, contact Ron at: [director.tlea@gmail.com](mailto:director.tlea@gmail.com).

## **Courtesy Boat Inspection**

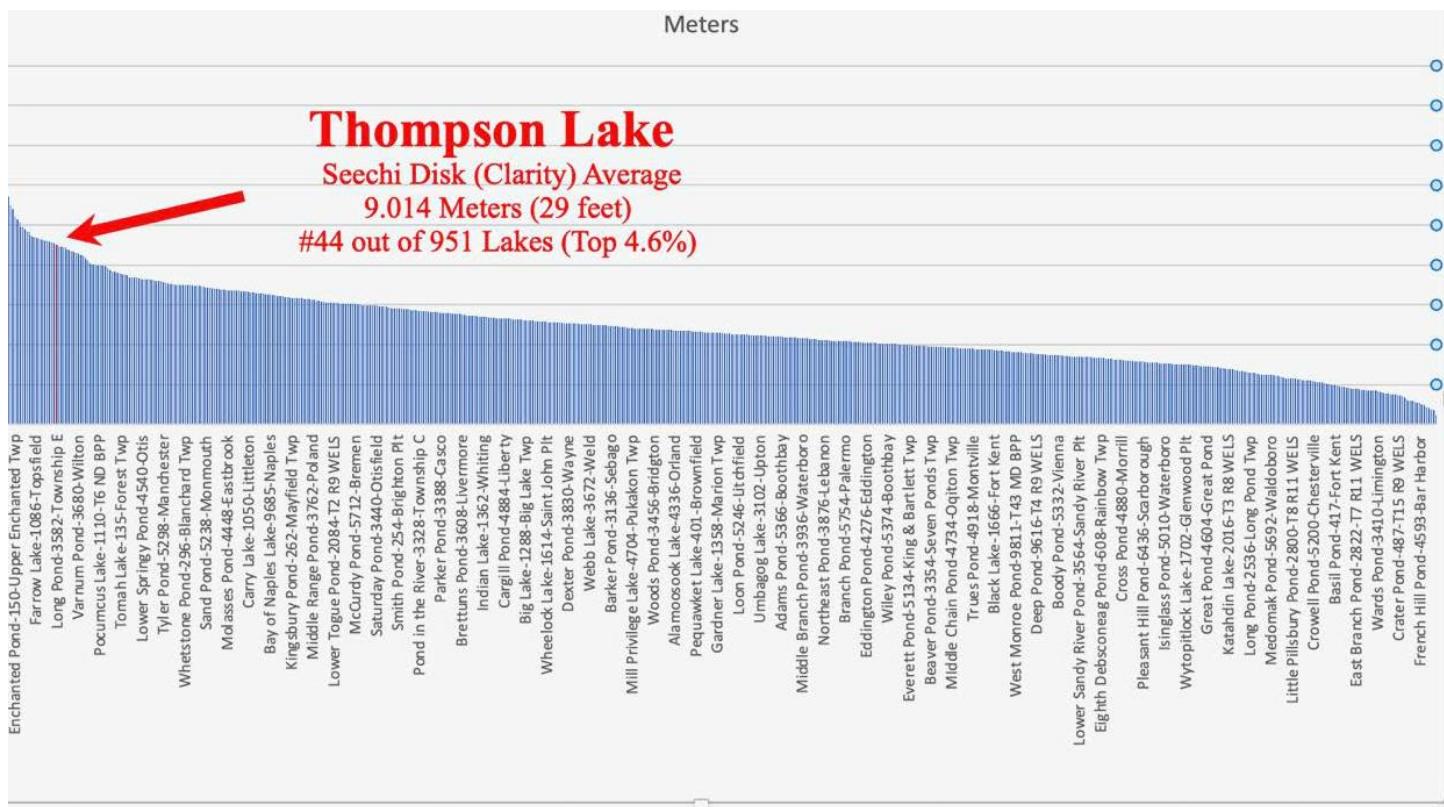
Board member Michael Sly reports that 6 courtesy boat inspectors were employed during the 2025 summer season, performing boat inspections at four public boat

ramps: Thompson Lake Marina in Casco, The Landing in Otisfield and Robinson's Marina and Pismo Beach in Oxford. Inspectors were onsite during the busier ramp times of Friday evening and morning through afternoon hours on Saturday and Sunday.

All inspections are reported to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. 1,215 inspections were made, fortunately no invasive plants were found. Our inspections serve the dual purpose of keeping any hitch-hiking invasive plants found on boats or trailers from entering or leaving Thompson Lake and to educate boaters on the importance of adhering to the Maine State regulations to prevent invasive species. *Remember, when leaving or entering a boat: Clean, Drain and Dry!* Invasive species are a growing threat to all Maine waters.

## Water Quality

Ever wonder how Thompson Laker ranks amongst Maine lakes for water clarity? According to Lake Stewards of Maine, we rank in the top 5%. What a valuable resource! At the same time, Maine DEP has listed the lake as environmentally "Threatened", mostly because of shoreline development and a slow flushing rate. We should not take this water quality for granted, it must be preserved!



## Thompson Lake Fishing Report

James Pellerin of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife reports that the fishery in Thompson Lake is, overall, in good shape. The good news is that

the town of Oxford has rebuilt and installed a fish screen for the center sluice of the dam at the outlet. There previously has been significant out migration of salmon in the fall spawning season through the center gate. This should improve the fishing in the lake, which already is considered one of the best.

## **Briefly Noted**

As a follow up on the article in our Summer issue on Beech Leaf Disease, more information on this threat and how to enhance vegetative buffers can be found at these links: [https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest\\_health/invasive\\_threats/beech\\_leaf\\_disease.htm](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/invasive_threats/beech_leaf_disease.htm)

<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/E376/>

<https://extension.umaine.edu/gardening/manual/plants-for-the-maine-landscape/>

<https://mainenativeplants.org/>

## **How Can You Give Back to Thompson Lake?**

Do you have a deep appreciation for Thompson Lake, its beauty and recreational opportunities? Does your family enjoy quality time at the lake? Are you involved in a business that relies on the economy of the lake? Perhaps you would like to help TLEA preserve this for other generations. We are looking for qualified Board members that will help us achieve our mission. If you are interested and would like more information, contact us at [tleawatershed2023@gmail.com](mailto:tleawatershed2023@gmail.com).

## **In Memoriam, Thomas Ray**

Former TLEA President Thomas Ernest Ray, 84, passed away on September 21, 2025, in Lewiston, Maine. TLEA would not be what it is today without the work of Tom. He was a long-time resident at the lake and was dedicated to the preservation of its beauty. Tom came on the TLEA Board in 1988 and led the association as President from 2002 to 2008. He organized our past watershed surveys and the development of our Youth Conservation Corps. He also was a major proponent of our Lake Day and “Hey You Cruise” educational programs as well as our annual meetings and cookouts. Tom was a joy to be around; he was gregarious, affable and had a smile for all. He believed in giving back to the lake community and it showed in his contributions to the association.

Tom grew up in Arlington, Mass. He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in engineering from Northeastern University. He worked for Honeywell and Beth Isreal Hospital until becoming the third-generation owner of Ray Engineering Co. in 1978, retiring in 2006. His major pastimes were reading, photography, gardening,

and following sports, especially the Boston Red Sox and Bruins. He was a 50+ year past Master of the Russell Masonic Lodge in Arlington, MA.

Tom's love for the lake began in 1957, when he, his father and brothers built the Ray's camp on Thompson in 1957. Their work paid off as over the years the family camp became the main gathering place for five generations of the Rays. When Tom wasn't working on his property, relaxing or fishing on the lake, you could most likely find him golfing.

Phyllis, Tom's wife of 62 years, notes that Tom was a loving husband, dad, grandfather, and great grandfather. His life was a tribute to the power of love, family, and a strong work ethic. In loving memory of Tom, the family asks that in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to TLEA; or the Alzheimer Association, dedicated to fighting the disease that impacted Tom and his family members.

TLEA, P.O. Box 25, Oxford, ME 04270      Website: [thompsonlake.org](http://thompsonlake.org).

Alzheimer Association, 383 U.S. Rt 1 #2C, Scarborough, ME 04074



We miss you, Tom!



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