# THE THOMPSON LAKE OBSERVER

Summer 2025 Issue No. 206

Beech Leaf Disease at Thompson Lake- See article inside!

*Photo by Anne Madden*

## 2024 TLEA Annual Meeting

The Thompson Lake Environmental Association 2024 Annual Meeting will be held at the Oxford Recreational Hall, King St., on Saturday, August 2, from 9:00-11:00 AM. We plan to have a guest speaker, program reports, hold our annual election of board directors and vote on amendments to our by laws.

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. TLEA relies on member engagement to acieve our goal of protecting the lake for generations to come. As usual, there will be an assortment of baked goods and treats. Of course, we will raffle of some TLEA merch. ***Don't miss it!***

## 319 Grant Program for Non-Point Source Pollution

Our 319 Grant program for erosion mitigation is in full swing this summer. We have obtained funding for 3 major projects to reduce non-point source pollution of the lake caused by runoff. The town of Otisfield will start road improvements at Williams Way, Loop Road and Shore Road later this summer. The Beechwoods road association will start their road improvements this summer and Agassiz Village will start construction on improvements to their beach access path this fall. These projects will have total cost at approximately $60,000, over half of which will come from federal 319 Grant funds.

Another element of the program provides technical assistance to landowners who are considering erosion control projects and Residential Matching Grants for these projects with up to $750 of matching funds. So far, we have planned multiple projects which include infiltration steps, drip lines, rain gardens, box trenches and buffer plantings. These jobs are typically done using a private contractor, or for the DIY types, their own handiwork. All jobs require a site visit from a technical advisor, a Cost Share Agreement outlining the specifics of the project and the landowner's responsibility in maintaining the work.

And our Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) is now partially funded through the 319 Grant. Josh Wright and his crew have been busy installing Best Management Practice specified erosion control projects at multiple sites. Landowners with qualified projects will only have to pay for materials. For more details, see the section on the YCC Program later in this issue.

*Landowners, road associations and towns that would like to take advantage of this program should contact Paul Cain at tleawatershed2023@gmail.com or Emma*

*Lorusso, Project Manager at projectdirector@androscogginswcd.org*. We will discuss this program more at the Annual Meeting and further details are on our website.

*Funding for this project, in part, was provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. The funding is administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection in partnership with EPA. EPA does not endorse any commercial products or services mentioned*

## Youth Conservation Corps

Program Director Jim Skinner reports that the 2025 YCC efforts are in full swing. Our new Project Coordinator Josh Wright and his crew currently have Cost Share Agreements (CSA) for 6 projects, with more to come. These agreements are part of the 319 Grant process; they outline the specific erosion control measures planned and how the landowner will maintain the work after completion. On completion of the CSA, the work is done by the YCC crew with supervision from the Coordinator or Jim. The landowner is not charged for the YCC labor or technical advice.

The types of work being done include box culvert diverters, roof drip-line infiltration trenches, rubber razor bar diverters, erosion control mulch spreading and planting of native plants in shoreline buffer areas. To qualify for this program the property must have been noted as an erosion site in our 2023 Watershed Survey or have a site inspection done that documents runoff into the lake. The Survey is on our website, thompsonlake.org, and site inspections can be arranged through Jim. *Landowners that would like to take advantage of this program should contact Jim at: tlea.yccdirector@gmail.com*. This is an excellent way to reduce non-point source pollution of the lake and improve your property.

## LakeSmart

Our LakeSmart program is very active this summer inspecting properties and advising landowners how to reduce erosion and runoff into the lake. Our inspectors work as a team, and they have been trained through the Maine Lakes program on the causes of erosion and how to mitigate this. Property owners who have met the erosion control standards will receive a LakeSmart Award for display. For more information on the LakeSmart program, check out this link: https://www.lakes.me/lakesmart. The program is free, non-regulatory, and voluntary. *If you are interested in having the team visit your property, please*

*contact Ron Armontrout at: director.tlea@gail.com or our office administrator, Sarah Ferry at: office.tlea@gmail.com.*

## Milfoil Removal Update

Milfoil crew chief Alex Bernardy reports that they are hard at work detecting milfoil regrowth and removing this invasive plant. The crew is most active at Pine Point, which has isolated regrowth of mature plants. Significantly, some of these mature plants have been found beyond the mouth of the cove in open water. This poses a threat to the entire lake as these colonies can be fragmented by motorboats and migrate to other coves and shallow areas. Alex feels they can significantly reduce the regrowth in this area through extensive surveying of the cove and surrounding waters. The crew will also survey the entire lake looking for new colonies or regrowth.

## Courtesy Boat Inspections

Michael Sly, our Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) Program Director reports that we have five dedicated boat inspectors working at four ramp locations: the Thompson Lake Marina, the Landing in Oxford/Otisfield, Pismo Beach and the Robinson Marina. The inspectors are onsite Friday 2pm-6pm, Saturday & Sunday 10am – 6pm. The primary goal of this program is to inspect boats to ensure no invasive plants are passengers coming in or out of the lake. The secondary goal is to raise awareness for boat owners of the importance of inspecting their watercraft for debris which can harbor invasive species and result in infestations to Thompson Lake and other water ways. *Remember: clean, drain and dry before entering a waterway.*

The CBI program is funded through the CBI Cost Share Grant program of the Maine DEP and by membership dues and donations to TLEA. All inspection findings are reported to the State of Maine's Lake and River Protection Agency.

## Beech Leaf Disease – a Threat to Maine Lake Shore Buffers

*Submitted by Anne Larkin, TLEA Member*

Beech Leaf Disease (BLD), is caused by a foliar nematode and was first detected in Ohio in 2012 and in Maine in 2021. It has now spread to 15 of the 16 counties in Maine, and is clearly evident at Thompson Lake, with noticeable striped discoloration, thickening, browning and eventual loss of leaves. In combination

with the longstanding Beech Bark Disease, these conditions are a serious threat to our lakeside beech trees, with predictable wide die off over the next decade.

Beeches comprise a large part of the lake shore canopy and understory. These trees provide beauty as well as welcome shade and cooling in hot summers. They also serve as important habitat and an essential food source for insects, birds and mammals. In addition, they provide an important buffer preventing erosion into the lake, with their extensive root system providing soil stability. Protecting the lake shore from erosion is the most important measure in maintaining lake water quality. Managing this predicted rapid decline of the beeches is a measure we can start proactively now.

There are treatments for existing BLD which might be used for a specimen tree, but they only delay decline and are very expensive. A proactive approach to the loss of these important trees on our lakeshore properties is the planting of young, native shrubs and trees that will thrive along the lakeshore in the areas populated currently by beeches. The resources noted below have specific guidelines for how to plant alternative understory shrubs and trees around failing beech trees. The following are some appropriate species that will thrive here in Maine:

Trees: Red Maple, Mountain Maple, Black Gum (Tupelo), Eastern Hemlock, River Birch, American Hornbeam, Alternate-leaved Dogwood, Serviceberry and Alders.

Shrubs: Spicebush, Witch Hazel, Winterberry Holly, Buttonbush, Sweetgale, Highbush Blueberry, Red Osier Dogwood, Arrowwood Viburnum. These plants are excellent for populating bare areas of the shore, whether lawns or other previously used cleared areas.

In past years, we have lost several species from various diseases, such as our elms from Dutch Elm Disease, and chestnuts from the Chestnut Blight. Our forests do recover and become populated with other species that thrive with time. This comes with a risk of opportunistic invasive species taking advantage of the increased light from failing beech cover. We can and should protect our lake shore by understanding the threats to this common tree and acting now to provide succession plantings along our water buffers and in our lakeside wooded areas.

## Briefly Noted

**Annual Loon Count:** Will be held on Saturday, July19 from 7:00- 8:00 AM. If you can volunteer, please contact Peggy Dorf at PeggyDorf@ymail.com.

**Boat Wakes:** TLEA has placed "No Wake" bouys along the eastern shore near the Pismo Beach area and at the Thompson Lake Marina area. Boat wakes close to shore are disruptive to recreation and a major cause of shore erosion. State laws require that boats operate so that there is no wake when they are within 200 feet of shore, for "wake boats" the limit is 300 feet.

## In Memoriam, Peter Siebert

*Submitted by Candace Nelson*

Peter Siebert, a TLEA Director from 2017 to 2025, died in February 2025, a great loss to his family and our community. Peter graduated from Dartmouth College in 1976 and earned master's degrees from Middlebury College (Russian) and Clark University (Geographic Information Systems). Peter was a career professional in IT at a variety of companies before landing at Harvard University where he spent the last 17 years of his working life.

Peter's true passions, however, lay elsewhere -- on oceans, mountains, country roads and hiking trails. His family never tired of skiing in the White Mountains, sailing on Penobscot Bay, biking New England's scenic byways and camping on its rocky lakeshores. A good car, Peter said, sported a sailfish and two kayaks on the top and at least two bikes on the back.

In 2013 Peter and his wife, Candace Nelson, purchased their cabin on Thompson Lake to bring them closer to the activities they loved and ditch the weekend warrior routine. Peter and his two brothers already co-owned a 34 ft sloop anchored at Handy Boat in Falmouth, so the family could now enjoy both lake and ocean. To sail the lake, Peter built a wooden sailing dinghy, the *Blue Loon,* which is notable for its deep blue hull and bright red sail. Maybe you've seen it on the water?

Unfortunately, in 2000 Peter started a long entanglement with health crises that plagued him for the rest of his life. Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD) led to dialysis and eventually a kidney transplant; he survived lung cancer and struggled with heart disease and diabetes. In 2019 stomach cancer resulted in a full gastrectomy from which he never fully recovered. Peter relied on a feeding tube and his rich outdoor experiences shrank to short walks. Last fall, diabetes took its toll on Peter.

When he was initially diagnosed with PKD at age 50, Peter told his wife that he would be "lucky to make it to 70". Last August (2024) Peter and Candace

celebrated their joint 70th birthday in the shadow of a taco truck parked at Kamp Kohut. As Peter smuggled oysters and margaritas, ignoring doctor's orders and escaping his wife's watchful eye, it was clear to everyone that his spirit outpaced the limitations of his body. Peter's family and friends remember him as brilliant, funny, stoic, and kind. His humor was dry, and his intelligence keen. We have fond memories…..

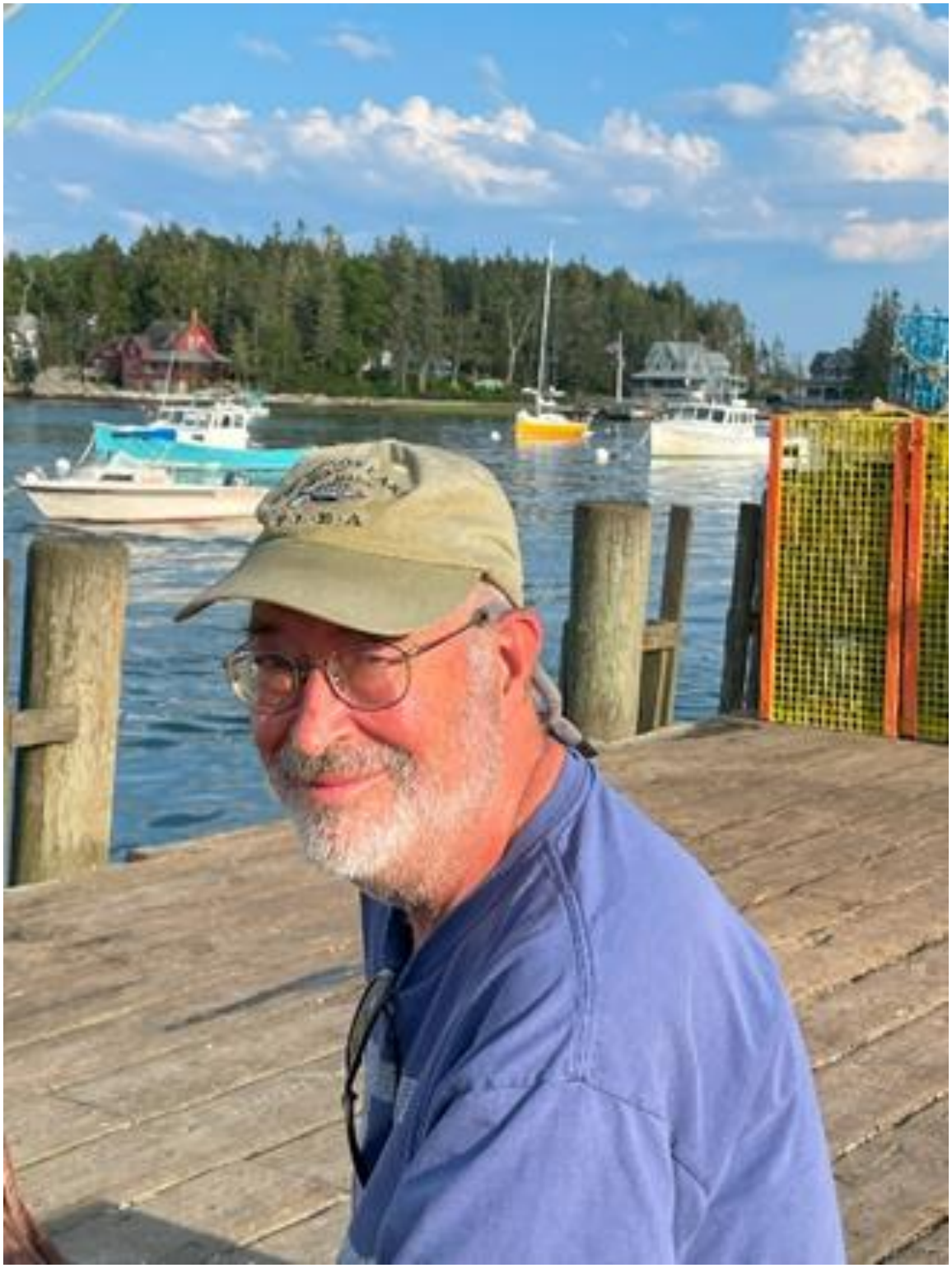

*Photo by Candace Nelson*

Visit our website at:
www.thompsonlake.org

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