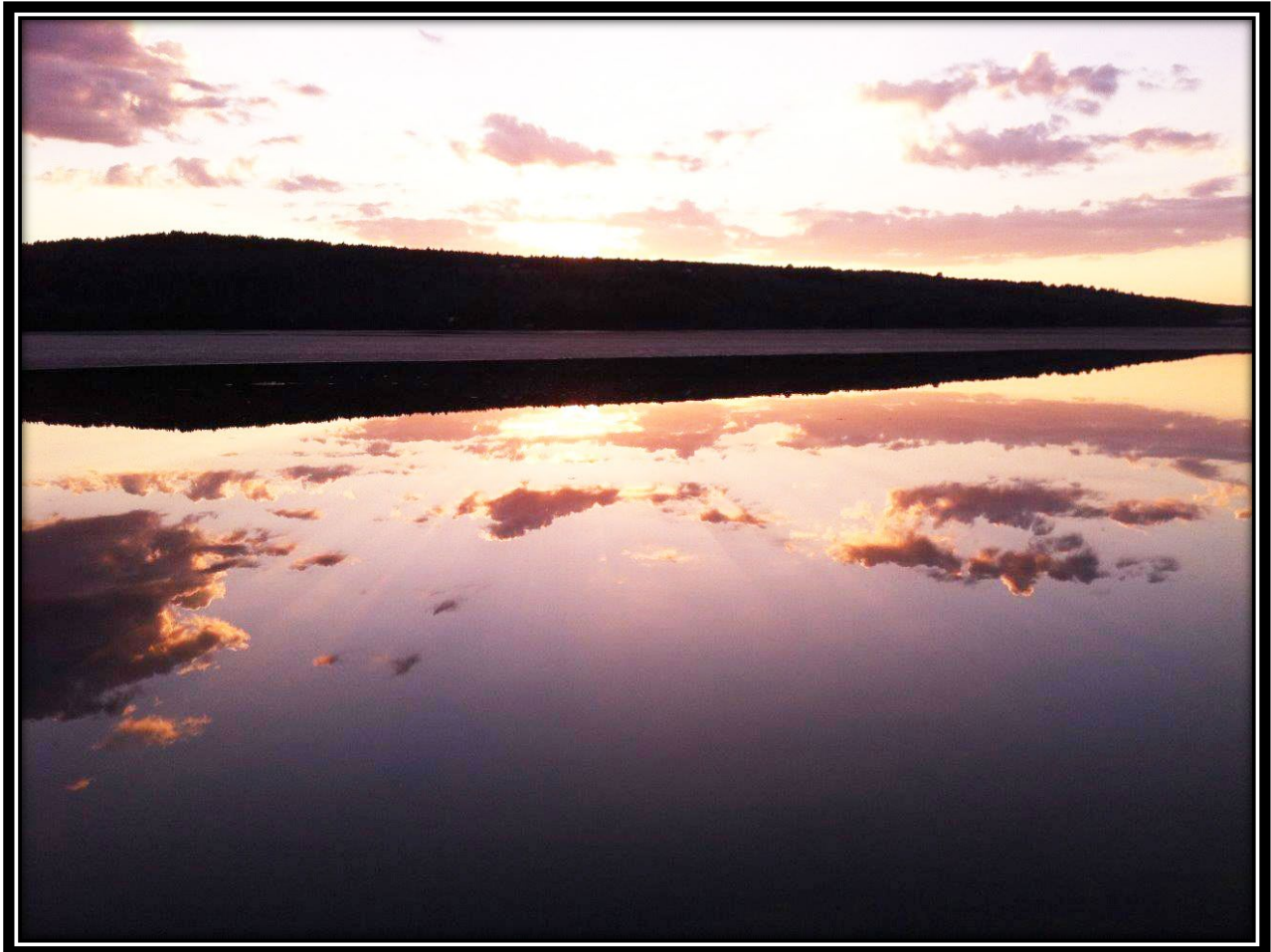


Spring 2026

Issue No. 208



Early Spring at Thompson Lake

President's Message

As the ice turns gray and gradually recedes, we anxiously await another season on Thompson Lake. Soon parka clad fishermen will be trolling for ice out salmon, only to be replaced, before we know it, by sunbathing passengers in motorboats and paddlers in kayaks and canoes. Spring is a great time to be on the lake; one can appreciate its solitude and quiet beauty and look forward to the bustling summer activities. Thompson Lake is a resource we all should appreciate.

We cannot take the exceptional water quality and natural beauty of the lake for granted; it is under increasing threats from shoreline development, non-point source pollution and climate change. This year the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) gathered data from scientists, community stakeholders, and lake associations to develop a web-based Lake Scorecard for all major Maine lakes. This study assessed Maine lakes for water quality, shoreland conditions, invasive plants and vulnerabilities for the future. In addition to our water quality analysis performed annually by our limnologist Scott Williams, the Scorecard is an indicator of the health of the lake and what to expect in the future. Our Scorecard is on the back page of this issue. As you can see, the largest threats to Thompson are run-off pollution, infestations of invasive species and shoreline development with loss of littoral (shallow water) habitat.

The programs of TLEA are the most effective means of addressing the threats outlined in this Scorecard. Our 319 Grant program, the Youth Conservation Corps, and the LakeSmart program focus on responsible development at our shoreline and reducing run-off to the lake. Our milfoil removal program is very active in removing this invasive plant and detecting new infestations or re-growth. Over 600 tons of milfoil has been removed or eliminated by this program! Our Courtesy Boat Inspection program checks watercraft entering or leaving the lake for invasive species and educates boat owners on this threat. Our education and outreach programs inform people how to protect the lake.

Preserving water quality of a lake is an ongoing battle. Warming waters, droughts alternating with extreme downpours, shoreline development, spreading invasives

and increased boat traffic are working against us. We need your support to continue this work. Please spread the word and encourage others to join TLEA.

We are always looking for dedicated volunteers to join the Board and “give back” to the lake. If you feel you have some expertise that could benefit the lake community, contact me at: tleawatershed2023@gmail.com.

Annual Meeting 2026

The Thompson Lake Environmental Association Annual meeting will be held at the Oxford Recreational Hall, King St., on Saturday, August 1, from 9:00-11:00 AM. Our keynote speaker will be Jordan Kimball of the Maine DEP. We will also have progress reports on our programs and elections for board directors. Mark this date on your calendar! 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!

319 Grant Program

We are proud to report that this program supported 3 major Candidate Site projects this past summer, resulting in significantly reduced run-off pollutants into the lake and improvement of roads and paths. The Beechwoods Road Association worked with us to obtain funds to re-grade their road, improve ditching, and establish check dams and retention pools. We worked with the town of Otisfield to make similar improvements to the Loop Road and Williams Way. Later in the summer, we worked with Agassiz Village summer camp to rebuild their walking trail to the shore, again to reduce the runoff of phosphorous and other pollutants.

Individual landowners around the lake received a total of 7 Residential Matching Grants (RMG's) for projects to address low and medium erosion impact sites. These owners received up to \$750 as a 50% match for projects such as box culverts, driveway improvements, dry wells, placement of erosion control mulch and shoreline plantings.

We worked with the Androscoggin Soil and Water Conservation District to hold 3 workshops in 2025. The first was a Gravel Road Maintenance workshop held in

June at the Otisfield Community Hall. A Build Better Buffers workshop was held later in the summer to educate landowners on effective planting of vegetative buffers at the shoreline. Finally, Emma Lorusso of the Androscoggin SWCD held a Live Staking interactive workshop in which participants learned how to harvest stakes from existing shrubs and implant them along shorelines to reduce erosion.

Our Youth Conservation Corp used 319 Grant funds to complete 6 erosion control projects for landowners.

Unfortunately, we were informed in early 2026 that because of federal cutbacks, the Maine DEP has put a hold on further 319 Grant applications. The funds that we applied for in 2025 are still active and will continue to support the Residential Matching Grants, YCC and education/outreach through 2026. We are hopeful that applications for further Candidate Site Projects will be open in 2027.

For those who are interested in applying for the remaining RMG's for 2026, requests can be submitted to Emma Lorusso at the Androscoggin Valley SWCD at projectdirector@androscogginswcd.org. Each request should include the landowner's name and address, as well as the sector/site# and description of the erosion issue, which can be found in the 2023 Watershed Survey Report at our website: thompsonlake.org, under the heading of "Watershed".

For any questions or more information about the 319 Grant Program, contact Paul Cain at: tleawatershed2023@gmail.com.

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

Milfoil Removal

We are happy to report that Crew Chief Alex Bernardy will be returning this season. Alex and his crew have detected an upsurge in the regrowth of milfoil in the Pine Point and Briggs Island areas, and new colonies have been found at the mouth of Greeley Brook which are contributing to this regrowth. In coordination with the

Maine DEP, we will be expanding the efforts of the milfoil team in this area and will place benthic barriers (tarps) at the brook to smother this infestation. This is essential in controlling the milfoil growth and preventing its spread to other parts of the lake.

All this work is labor intensive and expensive. We receive grant funds from the Maine DEP for this work, but we are mostly dependent on the dues and donations from our membership.

LakeSmart Program

TLEA will enter its 6th season of the LakeSmart program. This team of certified volunteers inspect properties to assess erosion control. Last summer, 26 property inspections were performed, and 12 properties earned LakeSmart Awards. The award is given to properties according to strict standards, but all owners are advised on what they can do to improve their property. They also will have an opportunity to have the property reassessed in the future. This program also collaborates with the Build Better Buffers program of McLaughlin Gardens of South Paris to provide expert advice on how to plant effective and attractive vegetative buffers.

TLEA Board member Ron Armontrout has worked with Maine Lakes association to develop this program; he has coordinated the training of a team of inspectors and scheduled many evaluations. Ron will be stepping down from the management of this program, but he and the team have already had a significant impact on the health of the lake. Research has shown that LakeSmart certified properties are as protective of water quality as undeveloped land!

Ron says: “Lake levels fluctuated a great deal last year with an unusually high spring level, and that leads to erosion. Thompson Lake is one of the cleanest lakes in the State, but it takes effort, and the LakeSmart program is an important opportunity for the property owners to help maintain the quality of our lake”. So true!

If you are interested in having a LakeSmart evaluation in 2026, contact Sarah Ferry at: office.tlea@gmail.com.

Youth Conservation Corps

Board member Doug Wight will be taking over for Jim Skinner as Director for our YCC Program. Jim will continue in an advisory position. We are very grateful to Jim; his dedication, hard work and technical knowledge have improved this program immensely. Doug and our Project coordinator, Josh Wight, are looking forward to a productive 2026 season.

The YCC provides technical assistance and hand labor to create erosion control projects for landowners, such as box trenches, diversion steps, drip lines, razor bar, placement of erosion control mulch and buffer plantings. If the project meets the criteria for our 319 Grant Program the landowner only pays for materials. This is a great way to protect the lake from harmful runoff and improve the appearance of a property.

Jobs are filling up fast. If you would like to take advantage of this program, contact Doug at: tlea.yccdirector@gmail.com.

Courtesy Boat Inspection

Proper inspection of watercraft entering or leaving the lake is the most effective way to prevent the introduction of invasive species to the lake. For instance, Eurasian milfoil has recently been detected in Maine lakes. This is an extremely aggressive invasive plant; even worse than the variable leaf milfoil we are presently dealing with and can be introduced by a boat that has recently been in an infested body of water. Consistent inspection of watercraft and educating boat owners about this threat is crucial.

Program Director Michael Sly reports that our Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) will be in full swing this season. Our inspectors will be at the 4 public boat launches of Thompson Lake on weekends from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Our goal this year is to hire more inspectors to spread out the workload.

If you are interested in joining the CBI team in protecting our lake, contact Michael Sly at tlea.treasurer@gmail.com. This is a paid position.

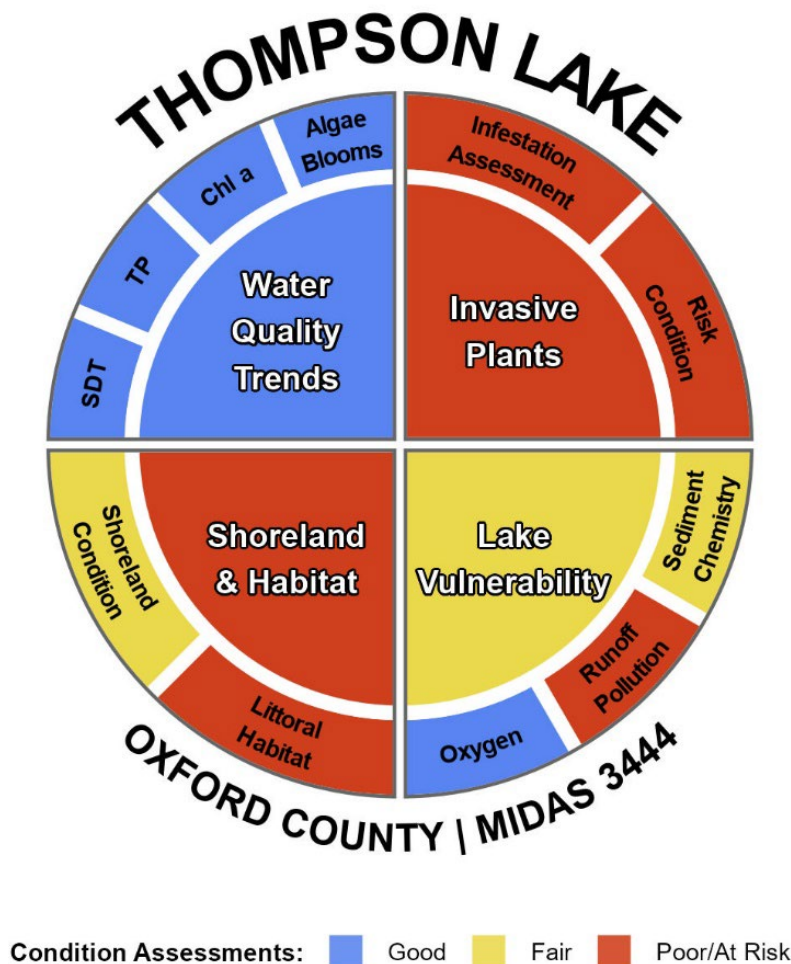
Briefly Noted:

Agassiz Village Volunteer Weekend: Agassiz Village is looking for volunteers to help with clean up to prepare for campers on Saturday, May 30. To learn how Agassiz Village provides a Maine lake experience for disadvantaged youths and sign up for this worthy cause, log on to: agassizvillage.org.

Hannaford Community Bag Program: TLEA has been selected as a non-profit partner in this program to support the community. During the month of April, TLEA will receive \$1 for every reusable Community Bag sold at the Hannafords on Pigeon Hill Rd in Mechanic Falls. *Please take advantage of this generous program.*

Loon Count: Will be held on Saturday, July 18. Please contact Peggy Dorf at peggydorf@ymail.com if you can help as a loon sighter.

Ice Out Winners: Did you get your guesses in? Winners will be announced in our Summer issue (still lots of ice at this writing).



Maine DEP Scorecard

Visit our website at:
www.thompsonlake.org

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