

Thompson Lake Environmental Association

2026 Program Reports



Youth Conservation Corp (YCC)

The 2026 Thompson Lake Environmental Association Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) continues to demonstrate how local stewardship and youth leadership can work together to protect the long-term health of Thompson Lake. This summer, our crew of dedicated local young adults are partnering with lakeshore property owners to install erosion control and stormwater management practices that reduce sediment and phosphorus runoff before it reaches the lake. Over the past few months, the crew has completed numerous shoreline improvement projects, implementing several Best Management Practices (BMPs) including installations of rain gardens, native plantings, box culverts, catch basins and winding paths using Erosion Control Mulch (ECM). In addition, our staff continues to share conservation recommendations and educate landowners on practical BMPs that protect water quality. Beyond the environmental benefits, the program provides meaningful paid employment, technical training, and leadership experience for the next generation of conservation professionals. Every project completed represents an investment not only in healthier shorelines and cleaner water, but also in a stronger stewardship ethic that will help preserve Thompson Lake for generations to come



Courtesy Boat Inspections

- The mission is to identify any boats/trailers carrying plants and any other invasive species in or out of Thompson Lake; to promote awareness of invasive species in Maine Lakes & to promote steps for boaters to take to ensure they don't contribute to the spread to Thompson Lake or any other water body.
- Findings for all the inspections are reported to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.
- Our employed inspectors are working at the four public boat ramps on the lake during the summer season. They are scheduled to provide inspections on Friday from 2pm-6pm and both Saturday and Sunday from 10am-6pm, with exceptions due to adverse weather conditions.

Milfoil

After very successful milfoil reduction following the capital campaign of 2017-2020, milfoil growth in Pine Point had been significantly reduced. In 2024, a winter/spring season that experienced extremely late ice cover, January, and very early ice out, March, milfoil regrowth that spring and summer was significant and discouraging. The same aggressive regrowth was experienced again in 2025. In August, during a DEP site visit monitoring the equipment and work of our milfoil crew, the Greeley Brook area was identified as the primary source of the ongoing regrowth in Pine Point. It is believed significant quantities of milfoil detach/break free and drift through the causeway under Rt 121 into the Pine Point area. As of 2026, TLEA is implementing an intensive management program, installing (10) 40'x 60' benthic barriers in Greeley Brook to inhibit plant growth. In addition, dive crews have hand-pulled and removed 536 bags of milfoil so far this season. With each bag averaging 25 pounds, that totals more than 13,000 pounds of invasive plant material removed before potentially infesting the lake. This work in Greeley Brook will continue into September. Outside Greeley Brook and Pine Point, milfoil spread remains low, with only isolated plants requiring routine hand-pulling in individual coves that are monitored each season. Before our crew finishes for the season a complete survey of all areas of concern will be completed.



LakeSmart

Our LakeSmart Program is in its 6th year of doing evaluations on Thompson Lake. So far this year we've completed 5 LakeSmart evaluations, with more scheduled over the next couple of months. Since we started to participate in the LakeSmart program in 2021, we've completed more than 130 LakeSmart evaluations to help protect Thompson Lake's water quality. The LakeSmart Program is free, voluntary, and non-regulatory. Our team visits lakeside properties to evaluate potential sources of erosion and runoff, then provides practical recommendations to help reduce erosion and keep our lake healthy. We still have availability for additional evaluations this summer! If you'd like to schedule a free LakeSmart visit, please contact us at office.tlea@gmail.com.

Membership

We have 611 Members who contributed to TLEA in 2025 and 2026. One of our ex-Board Members searches through the real estate tax records for Oxford, Otisfield, Poland and Casco and compiles a list of all new property owners. In June, we developed a New Member Welcome Package that was offered to the 28 new property owners for 2026 and many have already joined TLEA with a generous contribution.

Website

In early 2026, the TLEA website at www.thompsonlake.org was redesigned to include a “Latest News and Updates” section with topics such as:

- Invasive Chinese Mystery Snail Identified in the Heath
- Things you can do to be loon-friendly
- Summer Water Level reached early
- Plan for the redevelopment of the Robinson Mill in Oxford
- Milfoil Management Planned for Greeley Brook Outlet

You can find online copies of our newsletter, The Observer, going back many years along with updates on all TLEA Programs.

Each year, more and more people are using the website to join and to renew their membership to TLEA – online it only takes 2 minutes.

TLEA 319 Grant Program

Our 319 Grant program provides funding for erosion control projects, our YCC and educational programs on environmental issues, and technical assistance for landowners who are reducing non-point source pollution into the lake. We supported 3 major road and path projects this past summer, resulting in significantly reduced run-off of pollutants at the Beechwoods Road in Oxford, Loop Road and Williams Way in Otisfield and Agassiz Village in Poland. These projects included re-grading of roads, widening and armoring ditches, creation of check dams and retention pools and placement of culverts. Individual landowners have received more than 7 Residential Matching Grants (RMG’s) for projects to address low and medium erosion impact sites on their property. 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 held multiple workshops in 2025, including a Gravel Roads Maintenance seminar, a Build Better Buffers exhibition on effective planting of vegetative buffers, and a Live Staking demonstration and discussion. We hope to continue this work in accordance with our 10-year Watershed Protection Plan developed in 2024. If any landowners or road associations wish to take advantage of this program, contact me, Paul Cain, at: tleawatershed2023.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.