

The THOMPSON LAKE

# OBSERVER

Winter 2010

Issue No. 158



*View from corner of Ivory Hill and Cobb Hill Roads, Otisfield.  
(Photo Bob Tracy)*

***TLEA Gets Big Grant for  
Milfoil Eradication - See page 10***

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Gosh, it's December already. It seems like summer just began. As you know from all the Observer articles, TLEA accomplished a huge amount in 2009. This year's efforts make me proud to be a member of this hard working group of dedicated directors and volunteers. Thank you to all.

Sadly, we are losing our Membership/Milfoil fund raising chairman, Barry Jorve. He was the prime mover in increasing membership, in raising money for the milfoil project, and in producing our very special, beautiful web site. Barry is leaving Casco and moving to Connecticut to be closer to family and friends. Barry, we wish you the best of all possible worlds. We'll miss you!

On another note, the town of Oxford has taken ownership of Robinson mill building and the dam. They have assured TLEA they will monitor the dam and maintain water levels as previously agreed upon with Robinson and TLEA. We are breathing a sigh of relief. Now if the heavens just won't produce so much rain, we may see "normal" lake levels return next summer.

TLEA is happy to report that many folks lately have been looking more seriously at possible erosion problems on their properties. We are pleased to have them taking such an interest. The YCC is here to help. And now Otisfield landowners also have a special opportunity to receive Residential Matching Grants (see details on page 5). While you're at it, please remember that leaves and pine needle "duff" help absorb the phosphorus, so my mantra continues: "Love your duff."

Retaining the beauty of the night sky is another of my continuous refrains. Your yard lights might be great for you but not necessarily for your neighbor. Better to have a sensor light that comes on only if there's movement in your yard. With the new development out on Route 26, already I can see an adverse effect on my night sky. We enjoy pristine water, and we should also enjoy a pristine night sky.

We hope your winter is happy and healthy and that you can actively enjoy the lake. I kayaked the day after the ice went out in April, and I was still kayaking on November 18. See you out there!

Sue Ellis, Co-President

## HARD TO BELIEVE – BUT TRUE

About this time last year, the TLEA Board of Directors was faced with a significant problem. It had committed the Association to an aggressive six-year milfoil removal operation costing about \$35,000 a year. While we had six years to raise the money, the question still remained: How or where in the world would we find the \$215,000 necessary to pay for this essential program? One year later the results that are shown below are so good, they're hard to believe...but true!!

	<u>Gifts, Pledges and Grants</u>
Major Gifting Campaign	\$ 59,795
General Membership Campaign	37,950
Maine DEP 2009-2013	36,000
Maine Milfoil Project	40,000

**TOTAL \$173,745**

In the first quarter of this year 61 households responded to our Major Gifting Campaign by giving and/or pledging almost \$60,000, or \$10,000 more than our goal. And over the course of last year another 268 households made contributions totaling almost \$38,000 or \$8,000 more than goal. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection gave us a \$6,000 grant in 2009 that we expect will be continued over the next 5 years. And just last month, TLEA was chosen as one of seven Maine lake organizations to receive \$40,000 in 2010 for milfoil removal (more on this on page 10).

The Milfoil Fundraising Campaign will continue in 2010. Individuals who live on and around the lake will be given the opportunity to make a milfoil contribution along with their annual membership contribution. The towns of Casco, Otisfield, Oxford and Poland will be asked to approve grants of a few thousand dollars each, a worthwhile investment in property values around the lake and the property taxes that come from that. Finally, we will pursue foundation grants from companies and trust funds that support environmental causes in Maine. The bottom line is that a lot has been accomplished in fully funding our six year effort, but much still remains to be done.

## BE ON LOOKOUT FOR MEMBERSHIP ENVELOPE

Before 2009, the TLEA annual contribution envelope used to be mailed out inside the Winter Observer in January. But because we were starting the milfoil campaign fundraising and because we knew we needed to increase TLEA's membership, last year we decided to send out the membership envelopes in a separate first class mailing. Because we had such a tremendous success doing so last year, we decided to repeat the method this year. So, be on the lookout in mid-February for a letter from TLEA that includes a contribution envelope and asks you to become a member in 2010. Your small effort to send in your contribution promptly will significantly reduce the size of the effort TLEA will need to follow up with non-members later in the year. So please help us out by sending in your 2010 membership contribution sometime during February.

As most of you know, TLEA is an all-volunteer organization. There are no full time or part time employees. Therefore, unlike the case with most other charitable organizations, 100% of your contribution goes to support TLEA's many important programs. Thompson Lake is one of the most pristine in all of New England. But we need your 2010 membership contribution to help keep it that way. Thanks for your support.



*Looking up Otisfield Cove into Sucker Brook. (Photo Bob Tracy)*

## **ATTENTION: PROPERTY OWNERS!**

Do you own property in Otisfield that drains to Thompson Lake? Would you like assistance with erosion control on your property? If you answered “yes” to both these questions, have we got a deal for you...! TLEA has 2 programs that can help...

First, TLEA is pleased to offer FREE technical assistance to property owners. We call it a Thompson Lake Tune-Up.

How does it work? Let’s say you have a troublesome erosion problem. Just call or email us to request a Thompson Lake Tune-Up and we’ll send an erosion control expert out to visit with you – onsite and at your convenience – to offer suggestions. Sometimes, a fresh set of eyes looking at a problem is all that’s needed to find a solution. Remember...there’s no cost to you for a Thompson Lake Tune-Up.

That’s not all...!

TLEA has an additional program that will pay you up to \$300 to help install erosion control measures on your property. You simply need to match TLEA’s contribution by providing at least \$300-worth of cash, supplies and/or volunteer labor.

We call this a Residential Matching Grant. These grants are a perfect way to help you fix small residential erosion problems – like driveways or roof runoff – that, cumulatively, can have a BIG negative effect on the lake.

Thompson Lake Tune-Ups and Residential Matching Grants are offered on a first come-first served basis, so call or email TLEA now to reserve yours for this spring and summer. No enforcement is involved...we’re simply trying to protect Thompson Lake from the scourge of soil erosion... And we need everyone’s help!

Call Jeff Stern at 207-589-2723 or email him at [sternjm@hotmail.com](mailto:sternjm@hotmail.com) or go to [www.Thompsonlake.org](http://www.Thompsonlake.org)

Thompson Lake Tune-Ups and Residential Matching Grants are made available through the 2-year Thompson Lake Watershed Improvement Project – Phase III, Otisfield. Funding for this project, in part, was provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. Section 319 grants are administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection in partnership with EPA.

## TLEA MEMBERSHIP INCREASES 33%

Over recent years, the number of TLEA members has ranged from 390 to 407, up some years and down some years. But while membership was essentially level during the past five years, TLEA programs were growing in size and number and so were the dollars needed to support them. So the Board of Directors decided that we needed to put on a major push to increase membership during 2009. We set the ambitious goal of 600 members this year. We all knew a 50% increase would be next to impossible to achieve, but the TLEA membership committee said they would do their best.

Here's how we did it: Special 5x7 cards sent out in February. We were able to sign on four town chairpersons, and they found road captains to help out. We got approval to send out the Observer four times this year to everyone on the lake, not just members. Simultaneously we set up a sophisticated new website. Then in September we sent followup letters to selected non-members in September. The list of good ideas and good efforts goes on and on. And the result? A 33% increase to 530 members in 2009! Our thanks go out to the 115 brand new TLEA members and to all those past members who continued their membership in 2009. Thank you, thank you, thank you for your support! TLEA is a far stronger organization because you've joined us.

## BRIEFLY NOTED

- **Robinson Mill Dam, Oxford:** The town of Oxford has assumed ownership of the dam and has hired Craig Delano to do regular maintenance. This fall TLEA spent \$750 for a diving crew to clean rust from two-thirds of the rake at the dam in order to increase free water flow.
- **Sixth Graders Visit Acadia Park:** In early November, teacher Sandy Roderick accompanied three classes of 6<sup>th</sup> graders for an environmental education weekend at Schoodic Point. TLEA once again underwrote the group's travel expenses.
- **Milfoil removal plans:** To augment the work of the Hippobottomus, TLEA's Milfoil Committee is planning to construct 100 benthic (plastic) barriers, each 10 x 10, for deployment at various lake locations. Milfoil chair Scott Bernardy also hopes to create a GPS map of milfoil infestations in the lake.



*(Photo by Jeff Stern)*

## **HOW DO YOU WANT TO GET THE OBSERVER EACH QUARTER?**

There are now three ways you can get The Observer:

1. US Mail, the way it has always been done in the past
2. A PDF file attached to an email
3. By logging on to our website, [www.thompsonlake.org](http://www.thompsonlake.org), and selecting Publications – The Observer

If you would like to continue to receive the Observer via the US Mail, no action on your part is required. If you prefer email or the website, please follow the instructions below:

1. log on to our website: [www.thompsonlake.org](http://www.thompsonlake.org)
2. select Contact Us
3. complete the “Your Information” section
4. from the Email Receptient drop down menu, select: Publications – Jean Hankins
5. in the Your Comments section – please tell us how you would like to get your Observers in the future: email vs website.

## **PROJECT RESTOA BEGINS**

On November 10, 2009, seven TLEA directors met at the Oxford Town Office with consultant Jeff Stern and Maine DEP representatives Norman Marcotte and Wendy Garland to discuss the Otisfield erosion control project which TLEA has named RESTOA (Repairing Erosion Sites by TLEA in the Otisfield Area).

Marcotte opened the meeting by congratulating TLEA for its “dynamite application” for the Section 319 grant\* which awarded \$61,189 in federal funds for a two-year project to tackle 96 serious erosion problems impacting the Otisfield portion of the Thompson Lake watershed. The problems were identified during TLEA’s extensive survey in the summer of 2008. Grant funds will be supplemented by \$16,000 from the Town of Otisfield, with additional money from TLEA and several road associations along the lake shoreline. The total amount of the project is an impressive \$102,165.

According to Maine Nonpoint Source Program (NPS) guidelines, work will take place over a span of two years, following the signing of agreements by TLEA and the state, which began in December, 2009. The guidelines spell out such concerns as cost-share agreements with affected landowners and the hiring and payment of certified contractors. Planning for repair work on erosion sites should begin as early as January, 2010, with construction starting after the spring thaw. TLEA has designated Jeff Stern, owner of Fiddlehead Environmental Consulting in Harrison, as project coordinator. He will be assisted by a steering committee made up of TLEA members, representatives from road associations, Maine DEP, town government, and Oxford County Soil & Water Conservation District.

\*This refers to Section 319 of the federal Clean Water Act.

## **WHERE ARE YOU, ANYWAY?**

Of course YOU know where you live. But you probably have no idea of the number of hours TLEA volunteers spend trying to make sure WE know where you live. Each year we spend countless hours in the Casco, Otisfield, Oxford and Poland Town Offices poring over maps and tax records in an attempt to make sure our membership records have accurate addresses. A few minutes of your time could help us out tremendously.

We would greatly appreciate it if you provided us with the most up to date information on your whereabouts. Just follow the instructions on Pg 9:

1. log on to our website: [www.thompsonlake.org](http://www.thompsonlake.org)
2. select CONTACT US
3. in the YOUR INFORMATION section, fill in
  - your name
  - your permanent address, if your house on Thompson Lake is a “second home”
  - your email address
  - the telephone number at your permanent address
4. from the EMAIL RECIPIENT drop down menu, select Membership-Barry Jorve
5. in the YOUR COMMENTS section, please include your Thompson Lake home address if that is different from your permanent address
6. click on SEND COMMENTS

The information you provide us will NOT be on our website and will only be available to and used ONLY by TLEA. It will NOT be shared with other individuals or organizations.



*Old snow roller, located off Cobb Hill Road in Otisfield. (Photo Bob Tracy)*

## **ICE OUT CONTEST CLOSES MARCH 15**

Once again TLEA offers you a chance to win fame, and a little fortune, by entering our 50/50 ice out contest. The rules are the same as they've always been: Submit your name and \$5 per date guessed to TLEA by March 15. Last year, for the first time since we've been involved, no one guessed the correct date and the directors finally decided not to award a prize. This must mean that this will be your lucky year. Rather than print all the old ice out dates, as we've done in the past, we're including only the last eleven:

1999 – April 6  
2000 – April 8  
2001 – May 1  
2002 – April 2  
2003 – April 27  
2004 – April 19  
2005 – April 20  
2006 – April 2  
2007 – April 23  
2008 – April 24  
2009 – April 16

How this will assist you, we have no idea, but better pick a date in April. The only other clue we can give you is that, as of January 1, the lake is still not frozen. But since we have no list of ice in dates, we don't know how that information can possibly help. Anyhow, good guessing!

## **TLEA IS AWARDED \$40,000 FOR MILFOIL REMOVAL**

On December 9 TLEA received the good news that the Maine Milfoil Consortium (MMC) had awarded the Association \$40,000 to fight milfoil. In November the U.S. Congress appropriated \$500,000 to the Consortium to mitigate and control invasive milfoil in seven "test bed" lakes, of which Thompson is now one. With only ten days to submit an application, TLEA's directors burned some midnight oil. Kudos go to TLEA's ad hoc grant writing committee: Scott Bernardy, Bob Tracy, Chris Pottle, and Jean Hankins. A more detailed proposal is now underway. TLEA is proud to be one of the seven successful applicants! Stay tuned.

# ICE OUT CONTEST

## 50/50 PRIZE

Sponsored by  
Thompson Lake Environmental Association

Guess the date of "Ice Out" on Thompson Lake

Split the Total 50/50 with TLEA  
(Or divide half with other lucky guessers)

Final day for receipt of guess - March 15, 2010  
\$5 for each guess

Mail to: TLEA, PO Box 25, Oxford, ME 04270

Name _____
Address _____
Telephone No. _____
Date(s) _____
_____ dates @ \$5 = \$ _____

Visit our website at:  
[www.thompsonlake.org](http://www.thompsonlake.org)

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