

The THOMPSON LAKE

# OBSERVER

Spring 2007

Issue No. 147



*Here's where we are: Signpost on Forrest Edwards Road, Otisfield  
(Photo, Bob Tracy)*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With the disappearance of the winter ice, a new season is now upon us. We are looking forward to swimming, boating, fishing, and all the other lake oriented activities. And what better place for them than our crystal clear Thompson Lake? As all our members should realize by now, over the years TLEA has worked very hard to keep the lake that way.

The mission of the Thompson Lake Environmental Association is to preserve the natural beauty, water quality, and biological diversity of Thompson Lake. The TLEA promotes sound conservation practices through education and through monitoring and managing Thompson Lake and its watershed. TLEA also promotes water safety through education.

Our ongoing projects include **milfoil reduction**. Last year we placed benthic blankets in Otisfield and Edwards Coves. This year we anticipate using more aggressive hand pulling with the help of a vacuum boat. While these methods probably will not eradicate this *invasive species* from the lake, they should make the affected areas much more pleasant. Also, our **Youth Conservation Corps (YCC)** will be back at work supplying labor to any interested property owner in the area who needs help in solving runoff and other erosion problems. The YCC also provides summer jobs to local young people. In addition, our ongoing **boat inspection program** continues to be an effective way to prevent invasive species from entering or leaving the lake.

Other projects include continuing efforts to educate landowners and area school children. **Lake Day** is a full day field trip to Agassiz Village where some 200 children observe and participate in conservation practices. Also, TLEA offers **book scholarships** to college-bound students pursuing education in conservation or related subjects.

All work and no play make Jack a dull boy! **Fun things** are also planned for the summer. On July 21 we'll hold our next **I-did-a-Paddle**, from the south end of the lake to the Oxford Beach, followed by a cookout. The August 4 **Annual Meeting** will have a very interesting guest speaker. The second annual **Pig Roast** is slated for Agassiz Village on August 18.

This *Observer* is mailed to members and everyone else on the lake for whom we have an address. If you know someone who's not familiar with TLEA, please share this issue. We always need new members and new volunteers who, by helping the old volunteers, will keep the lake in the pristine condition that you found it in. Yes, that's our mission. Have a great summer.

Tom Ray, Co-President

## RISING PRICES ON THOMPSON LAKE

Most folks won't be surprised to learn that the prices of property on Thompson Lake have been going up steadily for most of the last few years. The table below, contributed by Belanger Realty in Poland, indicates what those prices have been. Terry Pomerleau, owner of Belanger, put this table together showing sales figures for Thompson Lake residential property over the past seven years. While noting that 2006 sales on Thompson were down almost 40% from the previous year, the Belanger team attributed the downturn to overpricing. "If a property is priced at or near market value," predicted broker Terry Hewitt, "it will sell."

### RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY SALES, 2000 - 2007 \*

	Selling Range Low	Selling Range High	Selling Range Median	Units Sold	Aver. Days on Market
2000	\$ 70,000	\$425,000	\$197,710	21	110
2001	189,000	395,000	290,080	10	79
2002	145,000	465,000	248,933	15	70
2003	135,000	650,000	369,460	15	100
2004	225,000	695,000	381,205	11	48
2005	297,500	1,000,000	530,406	16	123
2006	220,000	755,000	433,400	10	212
2007	340,000	355,000	347,333	3 **	175

\* The above figures do not include private sales. Statistics compiled from Multiple Listing Service. Units sold refer to actual waterfront sales. Properties not directly on the lake or which share frontage are not included.

\*\* As of March 1, 2007.

## YCC GETS GRANT FROM HANCOCK TRUST

This year's grant-writing committee, consisting of directors Jim Bishop, Kansas Wight, and Jean Hankins, is proud to announce that for a second year the Carol and David Hancock Charitable Trust in Casco, has given us a substantial grant to help fund the Youth Conservation Corps for next summer. In addition, the committee is pleased to announce the receipt of a second gift from an anonymous donor representing another charitable trust. We are grateful for both. So far TLEA's grant writers have mailed off about fifteen grant applications, and two more are in the works. Our fingers are crossed, too!



*Gone Fishin': Otisfield Cove Road, Saturday morning in February  
(Photo, Bob Tracy)*

#### **NEED HELP CONTROLLING EROSION ON YOUR PROPERTY?**

If your property is located in the Thompson Lake Watershed, the Youth Conservation Corps, can help! You pay for materials, we do the work!  
Call the TLEA office, 539-4535 for more information.

#### **NEW 2007 IRS RULE FOR CLAIMING DONATIONS**

Because the Thompson Lake Environmental Association is a charitable 501(c)(3) organization, your donations to TLEA are tax-deductible. As of January 1, 2007, a new law requires that you have a receipt for **every cash donation** you make, regardless of how small, if you expect to claim it as a charitable donation on your tax return. The receipt can consist of a cancelled check or a letter showing the name of the charity, date, and amount of contribution.

Because of this new rule, TLEA has decided to acknowledge every gift with such a letter. In the process of making this change, we've stopped sending membership cards. But if you would like a membership card, please let us know. We'll have a supply available at the **Annual Meeting**, scheduled for **Saturday, August 4**, at Kamp Kohut. Save the date!

## TLEA MOVES TO MANAGE MILFOIL

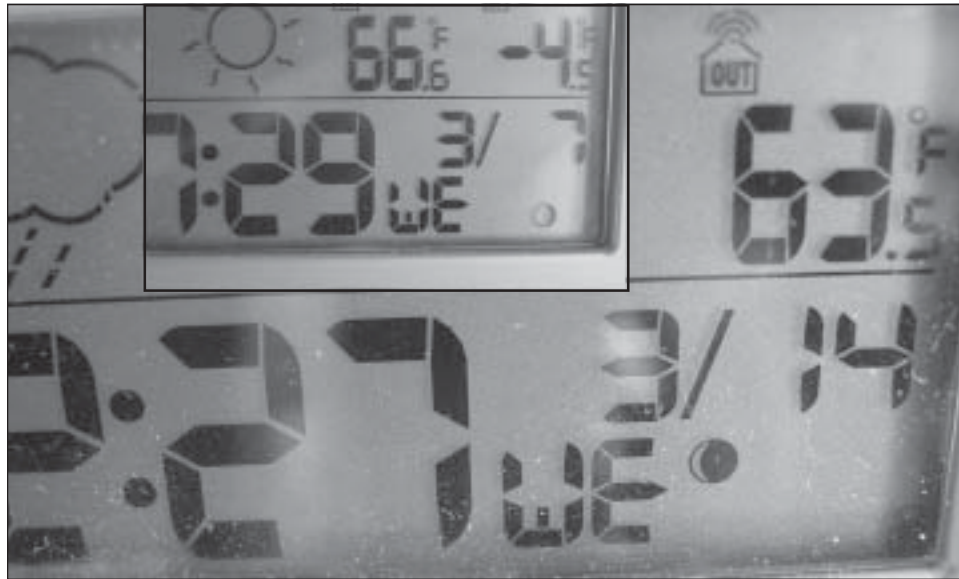
Last year TLEA continued its important work to help preserve Thompson Lake's water. Volunteers placed eight benthic barriers over *variable leaf milfoil* in Edwards Cove and Otisfield Cove. These barriers, constructed by volunteers, are weighted, opaque tarps which measure 30 by 60 feet and, once in place, cover about 1800 square feet. Most of Thompson's infestation sites are too large for the barriers to cover at one time. Therefore, after at least eight weeks, volunteers will move the barriers to adjacent spots. This will allow native plants to return to the barrier-treated areas.

As required by law, TLEA first obtained permits from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). To date, the DEP has approved such permits only for established lake associations like TLEA. Because improper methods of milfoil removal can actually spread the invasive plants instead of containing them, the DEP can impose a hefty fine for such illegal actions. Bear in mind that one harmless native-to-Maine milfoil plant which looks much like the invasive species is actually harmless. Leave plant identification to the experts!

TLEA's other initiative in milfoil management is its *Volunteer Lake Monitoring* program. This group's mission is to protect the lake by monitoring the progress of variable milfoil where it's known to exist. One way to do this is by mapping the infestation areas, using the University of Maine's 2003 mapping as a baseline. A second task is to keep searching for signs of any new invasive plant species. Our weed watchers will use kayaks, canoes, or a small boat, as well as swimmers and snorkelers to monitor assigned lake sectors. After some training in basic plant identification, our monitors will use topographical maps, a lake bottom viewing device, and an invasive plant handbook to help with plant identification. Nice calm sunny days also help.

Last season we had 17 *Lake Monitors* but still were unable to survey all Thompson's shoreline. We need many more volunteers both to manage and monitor variable leaf milfoil. If you're interested or have any questions, call TLEA's contact person, Scott Bernardy, 207-878-5380.

**CONGRATULATIONS** are in order to Josh Grenier, Skye Landry, and Tyler Wax, all three summer TLEA employees, who were named by the Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School as being among the top five percent of 2007 graduates. Josh and Tyler were part of the Youth Conservation Corps; Skye was a boat inspector for us last summer. **Good going, all!**



### TAKING MEASURE OF WINTER

The last couple of months have been cold in the Thompson Lake area, too. But, as usual, there have been some curious anomalies. Take a look at this photograph, which is actually a composite of thermometer readings on two different dates, just one week apart. (Please ignore the indoor temperature readings.)

In the inset picture, the date is shown as WE (Wednesday) 3-7, that is, March 7. At the time of the reading, 7:29 AM, the outdoor reading was -4.5 F (four and a half degrees below zero). In contrast, on WE 3-14 (March 14) at 2:27 PM, the outdoor reading was 63.5, which was 67 degrees higher than the low of just one week earlier.

One website that tracks the weather, Accuweather.com, notes that the low of March 7 set a record for that date. The high on March 14, although seventeen degrees above normal, was not an all-time high for that date. It missed by 7 degrees. For the month of February 2007, average daily temperatures in Oxford were below the daily norm on 18 of February's 28 days – on several days it was at least 13 degrees lower.

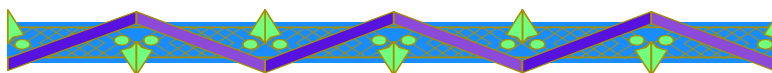
For the month of March 2007, up until the first day of spring on the 21, average daily temps in Oxford were below normal for 12 of those days, often by as much as 20 degrees. The March 14 high was the only day in that span when the daily high exceeded the norm by more than 7 degrees.

This is just a long way of saying, OHHH yeah, it's been cold!

## IN MEMORIAM

**Milio Poliquin** of Otisfield Cove Road, Otisfield, died in Norway, Maine, on January 11, 2007, at the age of 81. A World War II veteran, for many years he had been employed at Poliquin's Jewelers in Lewiston and after his retirement continued to repair clocks at his lakeside home.

In 1971 he and his wife, Rolande, purchased the camp on Thompson Lake where he spent the remainder of his life. Fishing was Milio's passion, and, as his published obituary stated, "The fish were always frightened when his boat left the dock." Residents of Otisfield Cove will remember him as a friendly and always helpful neighbor, the one you could count on to call you in the middle of the night when he spotted your unsecured boat floating down the lake. Milio leaves his wife Rolande, two sons, and several grandchildren, with all of whom he shared his long love of Thompson Lake.



## SUPPORT THE TLEA DIRECTLY FROM YOUR IRA!

Those of you who own an IRA probably have already had this tax information from educational institutions and charitable organizations that you support. If not, you should know that for the tax years 2006 and 2007, donations to tax-exempt organizations may be made directly from your IRA to the institution *without accounting for them on your tax return*. These untaxed IRA funds, then, go out as donations without any tax consequences to you. Because TLEA is a 501(c)(3) organization, the TLEA qualifies to receive such donations. This method is most advantageous to those taxpayers who take a standard deduction, who are receiving minimum distributions from their IRA that they don't immediately need, or who have such large incomes that their deductions are discounted. Unfortunately, this opportunity does not extend to 401(k) or 403(b) plans.

If this opportunity interests you, please call our Treasurer, Chris Pottle, at 539-2218 for more information. In any case, he wants to remind you to consider remembering the TLEA in your will.

Visit our website at:  
[home.gwi.net/~tlea](http://home.gwi.net/~tlea)

Thompson Lake Environmental Association  
P. O. Box 25  
Oxford, ME 04270

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