

The THOMPSON LAKE

OBSERVER

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Conservationists at Work: YCC Crew Members (left to right) Josh Grenier, Cory Parent, and Tyler Wax replacing razor bars. (Photo: Jerry Wax)

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well, the summer is over and it turned out pretty fine. After a soggy start, the weather even cooperated most of the time.

Our annual meeting on August 6 at Agassiz Village was well attended. Dr. Scott Bernardy spoke about invasive species, mostly plants, and explained his volunteer monitoring program. If you'd like to get involved next year, call the TLEA office and leave word.

John Robinson, one of the owners of the Robinson Mill, spoke about possible plans for the mill complex, including condos, a marina, and boutique shops, maybe even a lakeside restaurant accessible by boat. Mr. Robinson also briefly discussed the water level and assured us the dam is under controlled and constant supervision. The firm is also considering opening up the road that once ran through the mill between Pleasant and King Streets.

The second annual I-Did-a-Paddle on August 13 was a great success with 26 boats participating, including a five-person war canoe. It was a warm morning, and the lake was like glass, a welcome sight after last year's high waves and wind. We hope even more of you will join in next year. A fine cookout greeted us at Pismo Beach where we finished.

Sadly, TLEA has no vice-president this year: We could find no one willing to serve as VP with the idea of taking over the presidency the next year. Tom and I will not be serving as co-presidents after this year's term. We would love to have some one or two willing to accept the presidency. The co-presidency worked well, so volunteer and bring a friend. You'll find it rewarding working with the ambitious, capable, fun and friendly directors.

As fall approaches, we say farewell to those who just spend the summers on the lake. We wish you all a safe, happy, and healthy winter.

And finally, please remember to keep the moon and stars in sight, and switch your security, yard, and pole lights off at night.

Sue Ellis, Co-President

FREE MEMBERSHIP OFFERED TO NEW RESIDENTS

TLEA has a good deal for residents new to the lake or area – a free one-year membership in the Thompson Lake Environmental Association. This membership includes a welcome-wagon packet of informational materials which explain how to help maintain the good quality standards of the lake and also suggest where to find out more. It also includes a subscription to our quarterly publication, the TLEA *Observer*, and free access to the resources in the TLEA headquarters.

Our friends at Belanger Realty in Poland are helping us sponsor this free offer. If you know of any newcomers who might be interested, please let them and us know.

Our goal, of course, is to get **everyone** around the lake to join TLEA. **To take advantage of this offer – which expires June 1, 2006 – please send in the form below.** Return form to TLEA, PO Box 25, Oxford, ME 04270.

Name _____

Mailing address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

911 Lake Address _____

Town on Lake _____

When did you buy the property? _____

Previous owners _____

OVER FORTY BRAVE SOULS PADDLE THE LAKE END-TO-END

August 13, 2005, dawned clear, hot, and windless, the perfect setting for TLEA's Second Annual Motorless Regatta on Thompson Lake. The I-Did-a-Paddle launched from Thompson Lake Marina in Casco at 9 a.m., and the last canoes and kayaks reached Oxford's Pismo Beach about noon. Organizers counted forty-one paddlers, rowers, and passengers, with a total of 26 participating boats, plus several support boats.

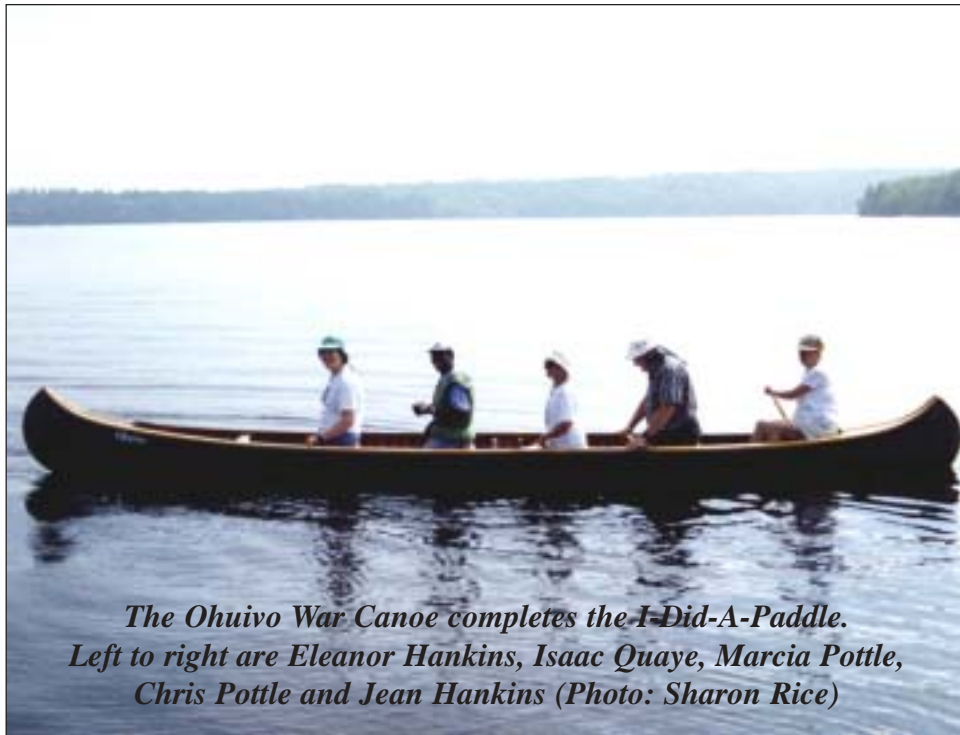
The biggest craft to make the 9-mile paddle was the venerable green war canoe, "Ohuivo," belonging to the Hankins family. Measuring twenty-five feet, it was built about 1914 by Old Town Canoe Company. It served campers at Camp Ohuivo in Otisfield for many years. Several years ago Dave Hankins restored it to pristine condition. This year its five-person crew consisted of Jean Hankins, Chris and Marcia Pottle, Isaac Quaye (from Ghana), and Eleanor Hankins. The canoe made an unscheduled detour over to the east shore to show itself off to modern Ohuivo residents before chugging into Pismo Beach. According to Jean Hankins, "The hardest part of the day was getting the boat up out of the barn in the first place. It weighs about a hundred pounds, so the second hardest thing was for us to get it onto the Subaru. But once we got everyone into the canoe, the paddles really dug into the water, and 'Ohuivo' was a joy to ride down the lake."

Like last year, Linda and Craig Carey did their push-me pull-you act, with Linda and Craig sitting back to back in their canoe, Linda paddling and Craig rowing. Whatever it takes!

Four support boats containing thirteen helpful souls handed out water and encouragement. This group included Ros Ebacher, Sharon Rice, Bob Cotton, and Art and Ann Bellwood. On reaching Pismo Beach, the survivors—and a few more—were treated to a Caggiano cookout of hotdogs, hamburgers, chips, and watermelon. Some 30 people ordered T-shirts to commemorate the day.

The day's events were planned by Co-chairs Sharon Rice and Jane Fahey. Chief cook at Pismo Beach was Tony Caggiano, assisted by Maddy Caggiano and Joe Kiley. The essential clean-up crew consisted of Joe, Jerry, and Tyler Wax, Joe Caggiano, and Joe Kiley.

This event seems destined to attract more and more boaters each year, and planning has begun already for the Third Annual Thompson Lake Paddle in 2006.



*The Ohuivo War Canoe completes the I-Did-A-Paddle.
Left to right are Eleanor Hankins, Isaac Quaye, Marcia Pottle,
Chris Pottle and Jean Hankins (Photo: Sharon Rice)*

MILFOIL INSPECTORS FIND FEW PROBLEMS

Although the weather was good this summer, with lots of sun and few rainy days, boat activity on the lake was noticeably less than in the past three years. This was the conclusion of TLEA's three milfoil inspectors who spent the summer at the marina in Casco, Pismo Beach in Oxford, and the Landing in Oxford.

Chris McVety of Otisfield, Elizabeth Slattery of Bethel, Callia Talmor, a Cornell University student, and Jennifer Chase put in a total of 455 hours this summer, providing assistance and checking 603 boats to make sure they were not carrying plants either into or out of Thompson. Last year in the same time frame they checked 700 boats.

This summer the inspectors found plant fragments on only 26 boats. Of the 26 samples, two turned out to be variable leaf milfoil, in both cases attached to boats leaving Thompson. The other 24 samples were native species. They reported that nearly all of the boating public appreciates the often repetitious work the inspectors perform in educating boaters about the problems of hitchhiking plants.



TLEA's newly painted office at 345 King Street, Oxford, was a busy place this summer. (Photo: Bob Tracey)

WANTED: A BARGE OR BOAT FOR YCC

The YCC is looking for someone to donate a boat they can use as a kind of barge to transport rocks and other supplies for their lakeside or island projects. What they're looking for doesn't have to be fancy but should be lake-worthy. A aluminum row boat twelve feet or longer would be ideal. It does not need a motor. If you've got a candidate for this job, give Jim Bishop a call at 539-4445, or leave a message at the TLEA Office, 539-4535.

REMEMBERING APRIL 20

April 20 was the official ice out day this spring. We didn't mean to keep everyone in suspense: we just forgot to announce it in the last *Observer*. The editor takes full blame for this omission.

This year we had three lucky winners who picked the right date: Ed Phillips, Steve Drottar, and Carl Deleckto. Belated congratulations, all three!

And next year will someone please remind us to publish this vital news in a more timely fashion?

REPORT ON ANNUAL MEETING

TLEA's annual meeting was held this year at Agassiz Village on August 6. As usual, the most crucial business was to elect officers and directors. Sue Ellis and Tom Ray were re-elected as co-presidents for one year. The vice-presidency remains vacant. Chris Pottle was re-elected as treasurer, and Jane Fahey will serve as secretary. Directors elected to serve until 2007 were: Art Bellwood, Tony Caggiano, Jane Fahey, Jean Hankins, Joe Kiley, Chris Pottle, Marcia Pottle, Sharon Rice, Tom Ray, Jerry Wax, and Joe Wax. Kathy Cain and Frank Papineau will serve as directors for one year. Continuing as directors until 2006 are Scott Bernardy, Jim Bishop, Bob Cotton, Peggy Dorf, Sue Ellis, Ed Leonard, Stan Tetenman, and Bob Tracy. TLEA is fortunate to have so many directors choosing to continue.

Events Chair Sharon Rice reported on the ice out contest, the loon count, and this year's I-Did-A-Paddle. Jane Fahey reported for the Education Committee on Lake Day and the "Hey You" lake tour. Joe Kiley and Jim Bishop provided details about this summer's YCC program and milfoil inspection program. Scott Bernardy and son made a power point presentation of Scott's volunteer project to map and, we hope, eradicate Thompson's milfoil. He credited the Maine Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants with training his group to identify water plants and explained that next year the MCIAP will visit Thompson, one of the twenty-six Maine lakes where variable milfoil has been found. Following Scott's talk, we were treated to a fast-paced video made by Joel Dulberg, Thompson's resident videographer, showing last year's I-Did-A-Paddle event.

The morning's keynote speaker was John C. Robinson, representing Robinson Manufacturing Company, the Oxford woolen mill which recently ceased operations. Robinson, the sixth generation of his family to be involved in the mill, first gave a brief history of the company. The mill's early success, he said, was due mainly to its production of fine blue woolen cloth for Civil War uniforms. Robinson stated that one reason for the mill's closing after 155 years was the economic effect of the September 11 disaster. He revealed plans and drawings for the redevelopment of the mill area. These include the reopening of the road and bridge between Pleasant and King Streets and a mixed use of the present mill buildings. Many of questions raised by those attending involved the dam and water level. Robinson stated that the Company will continue to own and operate the dam which controls the water flowing out of Thompson. Asked about how the Company regulates water level, he stated that Mother Nature is the biggest variable. Another important factor limiting Robinson's freedom to raise and lower the water level is the DEP's mandate of a certain flow downstream. He stated that late this spring, with its heavy rains, the flow from the dam was 101 cubic feet per second, only 4 less than the maximum. Even with that heavy discharge, the lake level remained higher than usual.

YCC COMPLETES 28 MAJOR PROJECTS AROUND LAKE

“The costs to restore the lake are enormous when compared to costs of prevention.” This simple statement explains why the Youth Conservation Corps is so important to TLEA, Thompson Lake, and the towns that comprise its watershed. This year, as in previous years, the YCC crew put in many hours of hard labor in an effort to meet their goals. These goals were to complete as many erosion control projects as possible; to educate landowners about potential environmental hazards; to correct high-impact problems immediately; to prevent future problems within the watershed; and to provide on-going training on water quality and erosion control methods for the crew members.

Some examples of the projects undertaken by the crew will show how well the YCC completed its goals. At Chuck Lefebvre’s log cabin home on Canada Hill Shores in Otisfield, the problem was caused by a culvert installed by the state under State Route 121 which was directly aimed at the back of the cabin. The runoff from the highway caused severe damage to the Lefebvre property and carried sediment and refuse directly into the lake. Here, using materials which cost the landowner only \$73, the YCC dug a twenty-foot trench and created two retention basins which they lined with geo-textile fabric and six-inch rip-rap (rocks) to slow down and filter the water before it reached the lake. At Marcia Planchett’s home on Howling Wolf Lane in Oxford, the construction of three box culverts diverted the water from running directly down the road and into the lake. And on the south shore of Sand Island in Otisfield Cove, the YCC brought in a quantity of rip-rap to prevent further bank erosion.

The YCC’s work breaks down into some interesting statistics. In all, the crew completed 8 jobs involving rip-rap, with a total of 27 yards placed. They installed 19 box culverts, for a total of 302 feet. And they put in 13 razor bars, adding up to 212 feet. All such completed projects should make a real difference to Thompson’s water quality.

This year’s crew was coordinated by Joe Kiley, with Emily Bastian as crew chief. Crew members were Kelsey Libby, Josh Grenier, Cory Parent, Tyler Wax, and Chris Wight. Oversight of the YCC is provided by a TLEA committee composed of directors Jerry Wax (chair), Jim Bishop, Tony Caggiano, Jean Hankins, Joe Kiley, and Chris Pottle. In addition to volunteer support from TLEA, funds to support the YCC came from the towns of Casco, Otisfield, and Oxford and from several individual TLEA members.

MANAGING THE MILFOIL MENACE

This year, 2005, has seen the beginnings of milfoil management on Thompson Lake. At TLEA's annual meeting in August, our Environmental Committee chairman, Scott Bernardy, presented facts about some of the plants threatening the lake today and discussed plans to enlist property owners and others to help manage these invasive plants.

Variable leaf milfoil is one of those plants. It's been in Thompson for over twenty years. Most likely the plant was introduced as a single fragment of milfoil attached to a boat coming in from outside Maine. In 2002 a University of Maine Farmington survey led by Dan Buckley found thirteen sites of milfoil infestation. Currently the worst spot is in the Greeley Brook Cove area of Oxford, where the milfoil has infested an area equivalent to three football fields. And milfoil is only one of eleven aquatic plants that potentially threaten our lake community.

Proper management of this menace requires many volunteers working at different tasks. The first component of this management consists of lake monitors. This summer several monitors surveyed various areas of the lake for milfoil infestation. In the future, these lake monitors will be able to attend a half-day course of training in identifying the other invasive aquatic plants. This should enable our lake monitors to identify any new invasive plants making their way into the lake. Such early detection will help the spread of any new menace.

The second component of milfoil management involves its removal. At present there are two main methods. The first is the use of benthic barriers, weighted tarps that block out light. The other method is removing the weeds by hand pulling. Both methods must comply with strict Maine DEP guidelines. In August TLEA obtained DEP's approval to begin removing variable leaf milfoil. With the help of volunteers Scott Bernardy, Tim Blake, and many others, we began placing benthic barriers in the Edwards Cove area of Otisfield.

Removing variable leaf milfoil infestation is a slow job. There's no quick fix. It requires years of perseverance to succeed. But without such management, shallow areas of the lake, those where the water is less than fifteen feet deep, are at risk for becoming matted with heavy milfoil vegetation.

Milfoil management is a new program for TLEA, and its success depends on how many hard workers get involved. If you have a non-motorized boat and are

interested in helping out, please call **Scott Bernardy** at **878-5380**, or email him at drbinme@banet.net.

Many thanks to all the lake monitors who've already signed on and demonstrated their strong commitment to preserving the health and vitality of Thompson Lake, especially: **Bill Allanach, Jim Attianese, Scott Bernardy, Tim Blake, Maddy Caggiano, Brad Cook, Rosemarie and Joel Dalberg, Sue Ellis, Allan Gillis, Chris and Marcia Pottle, Tom Ray, Sharon Rice, Helene Sterry, Bob Tracy, Joe and Jerry Wax, and Carl Wight.**

JOIN US ON YCC SITE TOUR

On Saturday, October 22, starting at 9 a.m., TLEA will show the YCC's summer accomplishments around the lake to members, town officials, and anyone else who's interested. This tour provides a good chance for the public to see first hand how the YCC has solved difficult erosion problems by installing buffers, razor bars and sand culverts.

Those planning to attend are invited to the TLEA office at 345 King Street for coffee and doughnuts and a brief introduction at 8:30 a.m. TLEA will provide transportation as needed. To sign up for the tour, please call the TLEA office at 539-4535.



Dan Vining, commanding the excavator, gingerly places fill on the shore of the Landing in Oxford. (Photo: Bob Tracy)

NEW IMPROVEMENTS MADE TO ROUTE 121

The timing was perfect. Right after the publication of the summer *Observer*, which included an article wondering when the State Department of Transportation was going to make good on their pledge to make more improvements to Route 121, we suddenly noticed DOT trucks coming and going from the Oxford section of 121 known as the Landing. This section, you may know, runs close to the lake and, like the Greeley Brook Causeway, had been deteriorating for years, with guardrails and silt disappearing into Thompson. Because the town of Oxford maintains a boat launch ramp here, the Landing can be a busy place, particularly in the spring when fishermen are putting boats in and out of the lake. TLEA directors have been the loudest complainers about conditions here, and for the last few years have taken the initiative in letting the state know the road situation at the Landing was both unsafe and environmentally destructive.

On July 11, MDOT began repairs under Maine's Surface Water Quality Protection Program, originally filed by TLEA. According to Danny Vining, the project foreman, an additional three feet of asphalt was added to the shoulders of the highway. The work included approximately three hundred feet on both sides of the road, from the parking area near the boat landing, extending south to a knoll in the Canada Hill area. Dan Mitchell of Connecticut, who was constructing a garage just across the line in Otisfield, donated some recently-excavated rocks to be used as fill.

The parking area for the Landing on the southbound side of the road was graded and resurfaced with a stone-gravel mix which is expected to pack very solidly. On both sides of the road state workers installed guardrails similar to those installed last summer further north near the Greeley Brook causeway.

The project, which lasted about two weeks, took the efforts of some eight to ten MDOT workers and involved several pieces of heavy equipment. Any inconvenience suffered by motorists during the relatively short construction process should be offset by the greatly improved safety of the road and the enhanced water protection of Thompson. Good work, MDOT and TLEA!

TLEA IS LOOKING FOR SOME HELP FROM MEMBERS

Look out! TLEA is on the prowl for new directors and new committee members. One of TLEA's assets is a strong committee structure, but that structure is only as strong as the individual members who belong and contribute. While all directors serve on one or more committees, several of these committees also have members who have never been directors. So, if you have some extra time to spend, consider serving as a director or joining one of our committees. There's a good fit for just about everyone.

Directors attend one meeting a month during the spring, summer, and fall, and alternate months during the winter. These meetings are traditionally scheduled for Friday evenings. Directors who are mainly summer residents are welcome to serve.

Not the director type? Why not consider joining a committee? Following is a list of these committees and what they do. The Finance Committee, directed by Treasurer Chris Pottle, keeps track of TLEA's income and expenditures and prepares the yearly budget. The Environmental Committee, headed by Scott Bernardy, has the big job of monitoring the quality of the water in the lake. Recently they formed a Weed Watchers Group to survey the invasive plants in Thompson. The YCC oversight committee, chaired by Jerry Wax, supervises the summer activities of the Youth Conservation Corps and the Milfoil Inspectors. The Education Committee's chief responsibilities have been running Lake Day and other programs for young people. Another of their jobs is to award yearly scholarships. The Membership Committee, chaired by Marcia Pottle, keeps track of members and dues and also devises strategies to attract new members. Our most creative committee, the Events Committee, organizes social events and fundraisers like the I-Did-a-Paddle. Sharon Rice is chair. The Publications Committee, with Jean Hankins at the helm, produces this quarterly newsletter and other publications when necessary. The House Committee, chaired by Bob Cotton, oversees the maintenance of the TLEA office. And the Nominations Committee is the group that looks for new directors and officers – and committee members.

If interested in joining any of these committees, either for a few months in the summer or for a longer term, please contact the chairman of the committee or leave a message at the TLEA office, 539-4535.



Photo: Tom Ray

SIGN UP NOW FOR YCC HELP NEXT SUMMER!

Even though most of us are just getting around to thinking of fall and winter, right now may be the right time to sign up for assistance next summer from the Youth Conservation Corps. Because the YCC can only handle a limited number of projects each summer, getting on their 2006 list early makes good sense. According to Jim Bishop, this summer the YCC's focus was on installing razor bars and box culverts, both of which have proved effective deterrents to soil and road erosion. In fact, a Maine DEP study in 2003 showed that sixty percent of the chronic erosion problems on lakes is caused by runoff from private and public roads. If you think you might benefit from YCC help, give Jim Bishop a call at 539-4445, or leave a message at the TLEA office, 539-4535.

UMAINE BIOLOGIST STUDIES THOMPSON'S MILFOIL

You, too, may have been puzzled at the sight of a young woman wading through the shallow water at the Greeley Brook causeway in Oxford, making her way between two signposts stuck in the water. It turns out her name is Jackey Bailey, and she's not releasing trout or counting salmon. Instead she is studying milfoil eradication, with Thompson Lake one of the nine lakes in southwestern Maine she is investigating. Jackey, who lives in Poland, is working towards her master's degree at the University of Maine in Orono.

The focus of her two-year study is determining the best way to get rid of milfoil – whether it's placing a barrier over the lake bottom, pulling the weeds out by hand, or cutting them down. Three of the other lakes she's investigating are Auburn Lake, Hogan Pond, and Little Sebago. Returning a phone call, Jackey said she hopes to have all her data analyzed and the results in in November. We expect to learn something from this important study.



"Never doubt that a small group of concerned individuals can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." -- Margaret Mead

LOON COUNTERS FIND 16

Thompson's loon population remains about the same as last year. This year those participating in the Audubon Society's annual loon count, which took place on July 23, reported seeing 13 adults and 3 chicks, all of latter around Sand Island in Otisfield Cove. According to Peggy Dorf, TLEA's loon count coordinator, the Sand Island chicks soon disappeared, but later in the summer two chicks were seen in the northern part of the lake, near Greeley Brook causeway. According to past issues of the *Observer*, the number of loons counted has fluctuated greatly in recent years. While in 2001 the counters found only 2, in 2003 the number was up to 19. This suggests that weather conditions and other natural factors may influence the final count.

TLEA DIRECTORS, 2005-2006

Art Bellwood	Oxford	539-2322
Scott Bernardy	Otisfield	878-5380
Jim Bishop	Otisfield	539-4445
Tony Caggiano	Otisfield	
Kathy Cain	Auburn	783-7531
Bob Cotton	Oxford	539-2387
Peggy Dorf	Oxford	539-2973
Sue Ellis (Co-Pres.)	Poland	539-2939
Jane Fahey (Secretary)	Otisfield	627-4936
Jean Hankins	Otisfield	539-2521
Joe Kiley	Otisfield	743-0014
Ed Leonard	Casco	627-6257
Frank Papineau	Casco	627-4767
Chris Pottle (Treas.)	Oxford	539-2218
Marcia Pottle	Oxford	539-2218
Tom Ray (Co-Pres.)	Poland	998-5034
Sharon Rice	Poland	998-2088
Stan Tetenman	Poland	998-2767
Bob Tracy	Otisfield	539-4188
Jerry Wax	Oxford	539-2662
Joe Wax	Oxford	539-2662

MAINE'S FOLIAGE REPORTS

As we go to press late in September, we looked out the window and realized that the trees here in Otisfield are beginning to turn. Then we learned that we don't have to rely on first-hand observations: We can find get a foliage report on-line! For those of you who aren't privileged enough to live in Maine year round and want to know when to come enjoy the fall colors, this may be a help. According to a press release from Maine's Department of Conservation, DOC rangers will report foliage conditions statewide every Wednesday through October 12 on <http://MaineFoliage.com>. You can also get updated reports and information by calling the Maine foliage hotline at 1-888-MAINE-45. And learn more about Maine's fall touring routes and outdoor activities at <http://www.visitmaine.com>.

**Visit our website at:
home.gwi.net/~tlea**

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