



Winter Newsletter

2025 Annual Report

Greetings! FOM is pleased to report the results of your membership dues and contributions over the past 2025 season.

FOM meets our mission to protect the lake and its natural resources by:

- supporting programs that remove and control milfoil;
- reducing and preventing polluted runoff into the lake;
- providing lake citizen education and training in lake protection skills

In this report, you will see details of how our partnerships fulfill our mission.

What's New?

2025 was the beginning of a "New Era" in milfoil control for FOM. For many years, FOM worked hard to keep the milfoil "at bay", assuring the lake was accessible. It is now time to implement new methods. The state Dept. of Environmental Protection (Aquatic Invasive Plant division) provided the vehicle for this with a new 5-year plan that expanded the resources for Messalonskee Lake necessary for a more aggressive milfoil removal approach and addressed the needs of the Belgrade Stream, the source of the Lake's milfoil. DEP regulates all milfoil work in the state.

These expanded resources for milfoil removal included extra weeks of hand-pulling and DASHing (Diver-Assisted Suction Harvesting). To implement these plans, 7 Lakes Alliance, with their larger organizational resources, is now the milfoil removal operator on the lake. Most notably, as you will see in the 7 Lakes article, herbicide treatments are being planned both

within lake as well as the Belgrade Stream, the major source of our milfoil. This is very exciting for the overall health of the lake!

The increased resources also lead to increased costs for FOM, beyond our ordinary budget resources. To support these new efforts, FOM went to "fundraising school" with a Consultant, Carrie Arsenault, and implemented new activities, including a Raffle for \$5,000, a summer Donation Appeal letter, and a focus on increasing new memberships. These efforts were successful and will be repeated in 2026 as our costs will not decrease. We thank everyone who supported us!

It's a New Era at the Oakland Boat Launch also!

Oakland Boat Launch closure notice for repairs July 6 – statement to FOM from Boyd Snowden, Oakland Environmental Services Director

"The plan is to begin construction on the boat ramp on July 6, 2026. According to Manter Construction (they are doing the in-water work for the ramp, the Town Public Works is constructing the out of water improvements), they anticipate 6 – 8 weeks to complete. I would assume that the project will likely take us into some time in late August, early September. We will do some postings on the Town Facebook and website as well, both before and during construction."

Note: FOM will also post updates on our website and social media sites.

Kathy Moore, President

Purpose of the Friends of Messalonskee Watershed

Mission

“To protect and improve the water quality and natural resources of our lake and its watershed using science-based conservation methods, education, and collaborative action, for the benefit of all.”

Vision

Our work will enhance the quality and character of the Messalonskee Lake watershed by reducing existing milfoil infestation and rates of new infestation spread, preventing the introduction of new invasive plants, reducing runoff of harmful substances into the lake, building strong community partnerships, and increasing public awareness of ways to protect the lake.

2026 FOM Board of Directors

Kathy Moore, *President*

Anne Berling, *Vice President*

Robert Nardi, *Treasurer*

Lisa Tarzia, *Secretary*

JJ Jurdak, *Bookkeeper*

2nd Vice President, Vacant

Tanya Athanus

Doug Fischang

Greg Mercier

Bill Tiernan

Janna Townsend

Richard Veilleux

Thank you to Peter Koons, who just retired from the Board! His many contributions are much appreciated. Peter's involvement with his Milfoil Survey Team project will continue!

Contact Information

friendsofmessalonskee@gmail.com

(207) 618-8723 • friendsofmessalonskee.com

2026 Summer Events and Classes

June 17: Conservation Planting Workshop,
1 PM – 3PM; Meet at Oakland Boat Launch

July 4: Boat Parade, 3 PM, Fireworks – 9 PM

July 13: Plant Paddle Class, 10 AM – Noon.

Learn how to kayak and identify invasive plants. Everything is provided!

August 8: Annual Meeting, 3 PM – 6 PM

Sunrise Bagel, Main St., Oakland

August 10: Plant Paddle Class, 10 AM – Noon.

Note: Sign-up for Plant Paddles through
RSU 18 Adult and Community Education

www.midmaine.maineadulted.org or **email FOM.**

BE OUR “EYES ON THE LAKE” LEARN HOW TO PROTECT YOUR LAKE

Danielle Boutin will be available to go to either individual cottages or groups of neighbors on the lake and teach plant identification, followed by either on- the-lake survey skills or shoreline Milfoil inspection skills – or both!

Adopt YOUR Shoreline: Learn how to identify and safely remove milfoil fragments from your shoreline so they don't take root. You'll be surprised where they hide! 27 people participated last year. Bring your neighbors!

Milfoil Survey Team: Learn how to identify milfoil, on a lake sector near you in a kayak, canoe or boat, and how to record milfoil findings with your cell phone GPS coordinates (no special app or skills needed!) Last summer, 19 surveyors made over 60 observations. It is easy, and very helpful for milfoil tracking and control.

FOM will send out e-newsletters and information on the website on all the events.

Contact us at **friendsofmessalonskee@gmail.com** or **207-618-8723** for more information.

Loon Count 2025

Ron Fluet, *Messalonskee Lake Loon Count Coordinator*

The 2025 Loon Count was held on July 19th from 7:00 to 7:30 AM across most of Maine. Maine Audubon organizes this event for each lake and tallies the results. The Loon Count always happens on the third Saturday in July, rain or shine. The Final 2025 count for Messalonskee Lake was the highest count we have had since 2014. We had 35 Adults and 2 chicks!

You might wonder how the Loon Count works?

On Messalonskee we divide the lake into eight sections and each lead counter for their section must survey their entire area in 30 minutes. Counters fill out section maps with locations and timestamps for each loon. Why 30 minutes? Loons move fast... Either by swimming or flying. The count maps for each section are collected by the lake coordinator and any loons that appear to cross section boundaries are eliminated from the count in one of the sections. We don't want the same loon, counted in adjacent sections, to be counted twice. There were only two chicks counted in this year's count but Gary Bennett and others saw more than two chicks total prior to the loon count. Given we have only 30 minutes for the entire section during the count, finding all the chicks, who might be hiding in safe areas, is challenging.

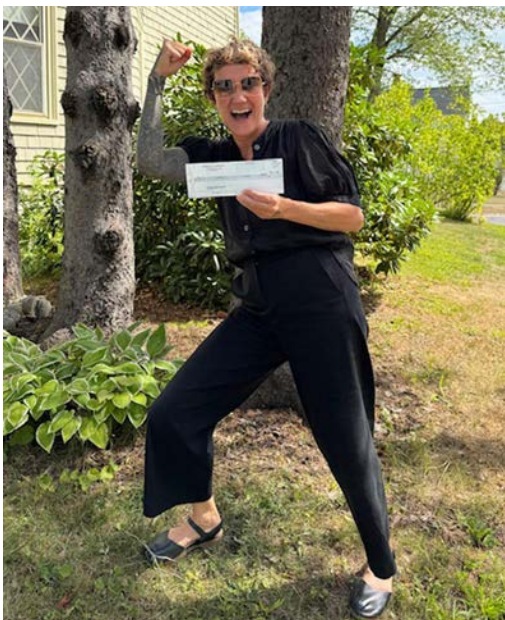


We also had 35 observers, in the 8 boats surveying the sections (one observer for each Loon LOL). Those are impressive volunteer numbers! Thank You to everyone who participated in the Loon Count. I have always said, we have the best counters!

Loon Count Crew, Front to Back:

Ron Fluent, Gidge Veilleux, Tina Veilleux, Anne Berling, Sarah Waycott, Willow

2026 Raffle!



Thank you for all who participated in our first fundraising raffle in 2025. We awarded a \$5,000 prize to a happy Jennifer Kenyon – seen on the left, and raised an additional \$7,500 that went towards milfoil remediation in partnership with the Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP), and 7 Lakes Alliance. As can be seen from Sharon Mann's article, a significant amount of milfoil was removed from our lake, and plans are underway to continue that effort through 2026. The plans for this year include herbicide treatments on some milfoil "hot spots".

The DEP will hold a public meeting when plans are finalized. 7 Lakes Alliance and Friends of Messalonskee will keep you well informed about the process. To support all these efforts, we will be holding our second raffle, beginning in early May. Stay tuned to the FOM website and social media for details!

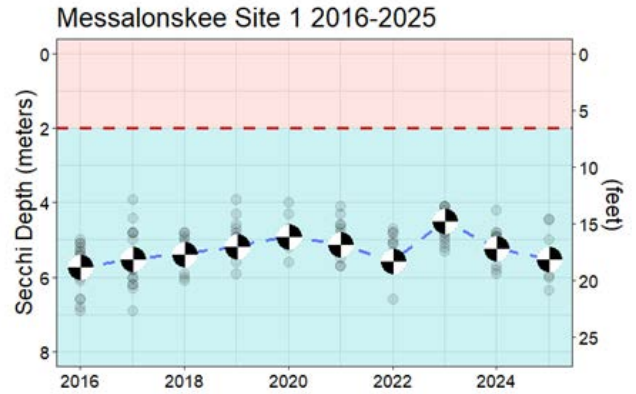
Messalonskee Lake Water Quality Update 2025

Matt Farragher, *Lake Scientist*, 7 Lakes Alliance

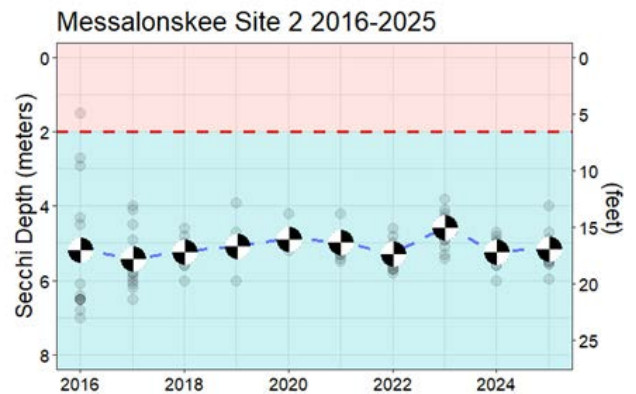
The Lake Science team at 7 Lakes Alliance made 15 monitoring visits to Messalonskee in 2025, from January through November. Messalonskee Lake had good water clarity once again, with an average of 18 feet at monitoring station #1 (112 ft depth, near Sidney boat launch) and 16 ft at monitoring station #2 (46 ft depth, near Blake Island). Both stations are in-line with the 2024 averages and the previous ten-year averages.

One difference between 2025 and other recent years was the brief but notable presence of *Gloeotrichia* (pronounced “glee-oh-tricky-ah”), or *Gloeo* for short. *Gloeo* is a type of cyanobacteria that forms large (1-2mm) colonies in deep, clear lakes in the late-summer. This year, there was a higher abundance of *Gloeo* in Great and Long Ponds than previous years, and the appearance of *Gloeo* on Messalonskee which only happens some years. *Gloeo*’s strategy for survival is different from most other cyanobacteria; the colonies develop in the bottom waters near sediment containing phosphorus (P), then they adjust their buoyancy with gas vesicles and rise to the surface where they can be distributed horizontally by wind-driven water currents. We suspect that the higher presence of *Gloeo* last summer was partially due to the drought that most of Maine experienced, which led to many lakes having above average water clarity. While the lack of rainfall reduced the amount of shoreline erosion and the introduction of P laden sediment into the lakes, it likely also contributed to the good water clarity that *Gloeo* was able to take advantage of, using the legacy P contained in the lake sediments.

While we cannot control the weather patterns we experience from year to year, we can certainly continue to do work on the shoreline to reduce the amount of sediment erosion that transports excess phosphorus into the lakes. To learn more about what you can do to prevent erosion on your property and other ways to protect the lake, you can get involved with the Friends of Messalonskee and by visiting 7lakesalliance.org.



Above: Ten years of water clarity from monitoring station 1, with the black-and-white Secchi disks representing the annual averages, and gray points showing individual measurements.



Above: Ten years of water clarity from monitoring station 2.



Above: An example of what *Gloeo* looks like near the shore (Lake Stewards of Maine).

Invasive Aquatics Program

Sharon Mann, Invasive Aquatics Program Director



In 2025, we were excited to begin working alongside Friends of Messalonskee and to quite literally get our flippers in the water to better understand Messalonskee Lake. It's a beautiful and meaningful place for many of us—personally, the marsh holds special significance for my family, as the end of my mother's street overlooks the marsh which has been the backdrop to countless unforgettable sunsets. Our work began with a full perimeter survey of the lake to familiarize ourselves with both native and invasive aquatic plant communities. These surveys were critical in building the knowledge needed to move forward with future herbicide treatments in the most heavily infested areas. For physical removal efforts, we prioritized northern and mid-lake sites that Danielle and others have worked tirelessly to manage over the past decade, ensuring that hard-won progress was not lost. We also expanded removal efforts into areas that have historically received less attention due to limited resources. Using certified divers, we were able to locate and remove milfoil in many deep-water areas. The full dive crew worked from June through the end of August, followed by a smaller fall crew supplemented by contractor support through September and October. Community monitoring continued to play a vital role. On multiple occasions, Danielle alerted our team to newly observed plants, allowing us to respond with same-day removal while already out on the lake. Looking ahead to 2026, 7 Lakes divers will return from June through August with a core crew, again supported by contractors into the fall. We are also planning to initiate several herbicide treatments, both within the lake and—critically—at the source of the infestation in Belgrade Stream. See the map for notes on potential herbicide areas.



2025 Highlights

- Full lake perimeter surveyed
- 5 new milfoil areas identified
- 1,674 hours surveying for and removing milfoil (7 Lakes)
- 6 weeks of DASH (contractors)
- 8,900 gallons of milfoil pulled
- 3,133 boats inspected
- 15 VWM fragments stopped by CBIs
- 9 Aquatic Plant ID workshops

Herbicide Treatment Key Facts:

Targeted control: ProcellaCOR is a selective herbicide designed to control invasive aquatic plants like milfoil while minimizing impacts to native species.

Low-dose application: It is effective at extremely low concentrations, ensuring limited chemicals in lake water.

Whole-plant control: ProcellaCOR works systemically, killing the entire plant, including the roots.

Reduced fragmentation: Unlike mechanical removal alone, treatments greatly reduce the risk of milfoil fragments spreading to new areas.

Fish and wildlife safety: When applied according to label requirements, ProcellaCOR has low toxicity to fish, invertebrates, and other aquatic wildlife.

Water use protections: Temporary water-use restrictions may apply immediately following treatment and are clearly communicated in advance.

Long-term management tool: ProcellaCOR is most effective as part of an integrated management strategy that includes monitoring, hand removal, and follow-up surveys.

More information is available at 7lakesalliance.org | Contact sharon@7lakes.org directly with concerns

Milfoil locations and Field Notes



Wiley & Flamingo ●

These sites are continuously reinfested by a feeder stream, so Wiley Cove was monitored weekly. Scattered VWM mixed with native plants was found and removed in 7–9 ft of water near the hazard. Both sites are responding well to pulling.

Brown Island & Mallard Cove ●

Mallard Cove was included in weekly pulling efforts, where VWM is mixed with native plants in shallow water. Danielle Boutin alerted our divers to a deep-water milfoil bed off Brown Island, which was removed the same day. Both areas are responding well to pulling.

Blake Sites ●

Blake “Hazard” has scattered VWM mixed with native plants and is effectively managed through pulling. Blake Cove is dominated by dense VWM monoculture and may be treated with herbicide in 2026–27

Loon Cove ●

Working around the resident loon’s schedule, divers conducted frequent VWM pulling at this site, with DASH treatment in the fall. Due to high VWM density, this area is a potential herbicide treatment site in 2027–28.

The Marsh & Belgrade Stream ●

These areas are heavily infested with VWM, including deep within sensitive nesting habitat in the marsh. Combined, they encompass over 1,000 acres, requiring treatments to be carefully planned and phased over multiple years. Potential herbicide treatments could begin as early as 2026–27.

Oakland Basin & Cemetery ●

This area was our 1st priority in June due to the risk of VWM fragments leaving the Oakland Launch. Early in the season, large rafts of VWM washed ashore along the ramp and beach. In deeper water (5–10 ft), VWM is mostly mixed with native pondweeds. This site is responding well to pulling and DASH.

Swartz Sites ●

These sites were visited weekly. VWM is mixed with natives and is responding well to pulling.



Juniper & Bangs Beach ●

Juniper Cove (~13 acres) contains dense VWM and will require herbicide intervention to achieve meaningful progress. At Bangs Beach, VWM is mixed with native plants and was managed through frequent pulling and DASH. Both areas are potential herbicide treatment sites in 2026–27.

Lake Shore Lodge ●

VWM fragments and rooted plants in shallow water were found and removed. This site will be closely monitored going forward.

Orchid & Poppy ●

Large rafts of VWM fragments regularly wash ashore in this area. Patches of VWM mixed with pondweeds were found in both shallow and deep water. All observed plants were removed, but additional survey work will be needed in coming years.

Football Field ●

The distribution of VWM in this area remains largely unknown due to depth, water clarity, and site size. Dive surveys were conducted, with pulling and DASH used to remove detected plants. This area is a potential herbicide treatment site in 2027–28.



*VWM = variable-leaf water milfoil

Friends of Messalonskee Watershed Protection Project 2025–2026 Round 2 DEP 319 Grant projects

The main purpose of the MWPP is to identify and reduce areas of soil and phosphorus erosion that greatly affects water quality. There's 3 programs:

- 1) Cost share (matching) funds provided for Road/Driveway construction (Non-Residential Projects);
- 2) Discounts are available for residential "hard landscaping" (YCC Residential Projects).
- 3) The free FOM LakeSmart program that provides owners with a free a property assessment and remediation plan. You can then contact YCC if you need help with the plan.

Both the Non-Residential and YCC programs are managed by 7 Lakes Erosion Control Division (Lynn Geiger and Stuart Cole). Janna Townsend is FOM's LakeSmart Coordinator.



Goals for the MWPP over 2 years	Achieved in 2025
18 Road Projects	7 Road Projects
24 LakeSmart Evaluations	12 evaluations
20 Residential YCC projects and 40 Best Management Practices (BMPs)	15 projects, 30 BMPs
2 Buffer/Conservation Workshops	1 Workshop; next one June 17, 2026
Reduce Sediment tons/yr	11.88 tons/yr
Reduce Phosphorus pounds/yr	6.47 pounds/yr
Reduce Nitrogen Pounds/yr	16.82 pounds/yr.

Why is Watershed Management Important?

Lynn Geiger, 7 Lakes Erosion Control Manager

Ever heard the saying "stuff" rolls downhill"? Well, you have to ask "what is downhill from your Messalonskee camp?" Answer: The lake. What we do on land affects the lake. Runoff (rainwater that doesn't soak into the ground) carries all sorts of pollutants with it, from pet waste to road salt to dirt. Dirt contains nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen, which can cause algal blooms if there's too much. In order to protect and improve the water quality of Messalonskee Lake, we need to reduce the runoff and sediment entering the lake.

The further runoff travels, the more momentum and energy it picks up, increasing its erosive potential. To reduce erosion and nutrients entering the lake, we need to reduce runoff, and the easiest way to reduce runoff is to keep it from forming.

3 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO REDUCE RUNOFF

Permeable pathways and minimizing impervious surface on your property gives the rain more places to infiltrate into the ground.

Catchment basins, like rain gardens, can intercept runoff and keep the area downhill from eroding. Swales and berms also break up the flow of runoff.

A vegetative buffer along the shoreline acts as the last line of defense to slow and capture runoff and the root system will strengthen the shoreline and decrease erosion.

Old Heritage Place 2025 Road Construction Project – Collaboration and Planning

Charlie Baeder, *GreenLands LLC, FOM Consultant*

The Old Heritage Place erosion control project is an example of successful collaboration and planning for a road construction project that requires those who receive the service to share the cost of that project to receive the match from DEP funding

The identified need for Old Heritage from the 2021 Messalonskee Watershed Survey was to reduce runoff and erosion from a gravel road located less than 200 ft from the lake. The road runoff carried dirt, sediment, and phosphorus directly into a stream which made it easy to reach the lake. The sediment and nutrients from the runoff provide a bed in the lake for invasive plants to root and the fuel for algae to bloom.

Planning for Old Heritage started in the fall of 2024. Several contractor bids gave 7 Lakes a ballpark estimate needed to start fundraising for cost share match funds required by the DEP 319 grant. Because Old Heritage does not have a road association, landowners adjacent to the project site were contacted individually, as were the Libby Hill North Owners Association. GreenLands LLC, FOM's Project Consultant, the Libby Hill North Association President (Andrea Fischang), 7 Lakes (Lynn Geiger and Stuart Cole) and FOM Board members worked together to coordinate the process needed to raise the match funds. Some of the erosion fixes (including ditching, culverts, tree removal, turnouts, and plunge pools) required agreements with individual landowners (Christopher, Delorie, Darling) whose properties were directly affected.

Once the road fixes were agreed to and funded by generous donations from individual landowners (Brian and Caroline Martin, Paul LaChance, Peter Walsh) as well as the associations, we also addressed streambank erosion where a footbridge over the stream links the Old Heritage and Cedar Village roads. Debris was first removed from the stream including a broken culvert and cinder blocks. The stream bank was then regraded and riprapped with stone to reduce erosion getting into the lake and to stabilize the bank. The icing on the cake was the donation of a new footbridge from Shawn Stevens, Mainly Docks, that will benefit the community for many years to come.

The Old Heritage project represents the planning, persistence, and collaboration of many people, from the initial watershed survey, to grant writing, to planning, to fundraising, to construction, and to the donation of the new footbridge. Over 25 people contributed to this project. Thank you all.



Above: Old Heritage Before

Below: Old Heritage After



Messalonskee is LAKESMART!

Janna Townsend, *LakeSmart Neighbor and Evaluator*

Thank you Messalonskee residents for becoming LakeSmart! This year 12 of our neighbors received FOM LakeSmart services and are working earnestly to better protect our lake.

In Sidney:

Gloria Farrington, Carol Billington, Mike & Krista Johnson, Barbara Levy, Sharon Gallant, and Mary-Beth Taylor

In Oakland:

Peggy Pellerin, Kathy and Janine Moore, Jennifer Kenyon, and JJ & Nancy Jurak

In Belgrade:

Denise and Tom Wilson, and Don Marden

4 LakeSmart Awards go to Don Marden, Barbara Levy, Mary-Beth Taylor, and JJ & Nancy Jurak

The remaining 8 FOM LakeSmart evaluations resulted in **LakeSmart Commendations!** This award demonstrates progress toward becoming LakeSmart.

Messalonskee needs your protection from nutrient pollutants! Rainwater runoff travels quickly and hard off your roof, crashing heavily onto and into the soil, then towards the lake bringing phosphorus from the lawns. Nitrogen from faulty septic may also travel into the lake. Erosion and runoff also comes from driveways and parking areas. These contaminants change the water composition, causing algae to develop and grow. In combination with warmer weather, we, on Messalonskee, have so far escaped experiencing Algae Blooms, which can harm the environment, wildlife and swimmers!

An Algae bloom is a rapid increase of density of algae. They sometimes develop naturally, but nutrient pollution, like phosphorus and nitrogen increases their frequency and intensity. It causes water to turn noticeably green and form a gelatinous coating on or just below the lake surface. This is often caused by industrial waste or agricultural runoff, but on Messalonskee, our 2021 Watershed Survey shows that **phosphorus is caused by the 51% of properties on our lake that have grass lawns that run directly to the lake!** We have yet to determine if or where we may have faulty septic. **It is important to have a professional septic inspection to be sure yours is working effectively.**

You can protect our water quality by building a vegetative buffer along your waterfront, leaving one or two pathways to the lake. A **'No Mow Buffer'** is the easiest way to create one. Simply don't mow 5-10 feet from the water's edge allowing nature to do the job for you. This method doesn't disturb the soil, which may cause even more erosion.



No Mow Buffer at Cedar Village.

Email Friends of Messalonskee for your own evaluation!

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR MEMBERS FOR PROTECTING THE LAKE!

FOM RECOGNIZES OUR:

Major Donors

Jeff, Lin & Robert Choate
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Belgrade, Sidney, and Oakland
for their generous support!**

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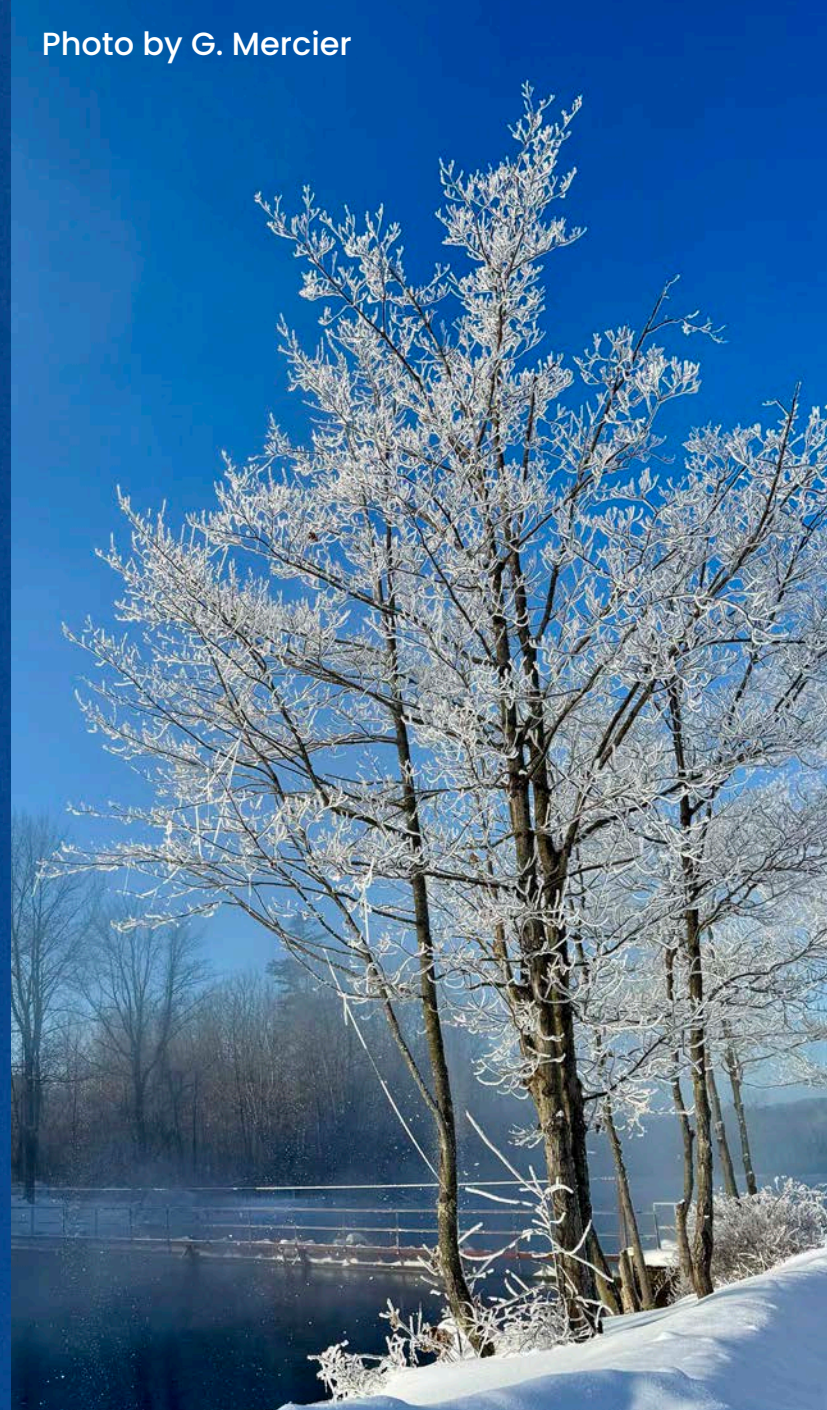


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