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**PHASE II OF THE MESSALONSKEE LAKE WATERSHED PROTECTION PROJECT
DRAWS TO A SUCCESSFUL CLOSE WITH MORE FUNDING ON THE HORIZON**

Oakland, Belgrade, Sidney, Mount Vernon- Over the past two years, Friends of Messalonskee (FOM) and 7 Lakes Alliance have been working together with the community and towns around the Messalonskee watershed to protect lake water quality. A watershed is a lake and the surrounding land that drains into it. Phase II of the Watershed Protection Project focused on remediating erosion and stormwater runoff from public & private roads, residential properties, and driveways around the watershed, as well completing a wide range of community outreach and education. The project was made possible by a Maine Department of Environmental Protection (Maine DEP) 319 Clean Water Act Grant of \$111,884 in federal funding, as well as \$136,007 in local match funds. FOM fully funded and participated in the Watershed Survey that resulted in the Watershed Protection Plan.

As part of the project, the 7 Lakes Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) installed 35 best management practices (BMPs) (e.g., roof dripline trenches, infiltration steps, shoreline stabilization, etc.) across 18 properties and stabilized 410 feet of shoreline on Messalonskee Lake. In addition, 18 road and driveway improvement projects were completed with the help of local contractors and municipal road crews, including two projects with the Town of Mount Vernon. Community outreach milestones include: Twenty-seven LakeSmart evaluations resulting in seven new LakeSmart awards, two Shoreline Buffer Workshops, two Gravel Road Workshops; six newsletter articles; and presentations at seven road associations and two FOM annual meetings.

There is more work to be done, but the Phase II watershed protection project has made a difference: the erosion control work installed across the watershed is estimated to prevent 64 pounds of phosphorus and 108 tons of sediment and road materials from getting to the lake each year. This progress is set to continue as 7 Lakes Alliance has been approved to receive a Phase III grant for \$112,570 from Maine DEP for addressing more erosion on roads and residential properties across the watershed in 2025-2026 in partnership with FOM.

The Messalonskee Lake Watershed Protection Phase II Project was sponsored in part by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. The funding was administered by the Maine DEP in partnership with EPA. 7 Lakes Alliance served as the grantee and technical lead for the project. Ecological Instincts served as consulting Project Coordinator to 7 Lakes Alliance and in partnership with Friends of Messalonskee (FOM). In-kind contributions included volunteer assistance from FOM (education & outreach, LakeSmart), the project Steering Committee (which includes representatives from FOM, the Towns of Belgrade, Oakland, and Sidney, local road associations, private landowners, the Town of Mount Vernon, and Maine DEP.