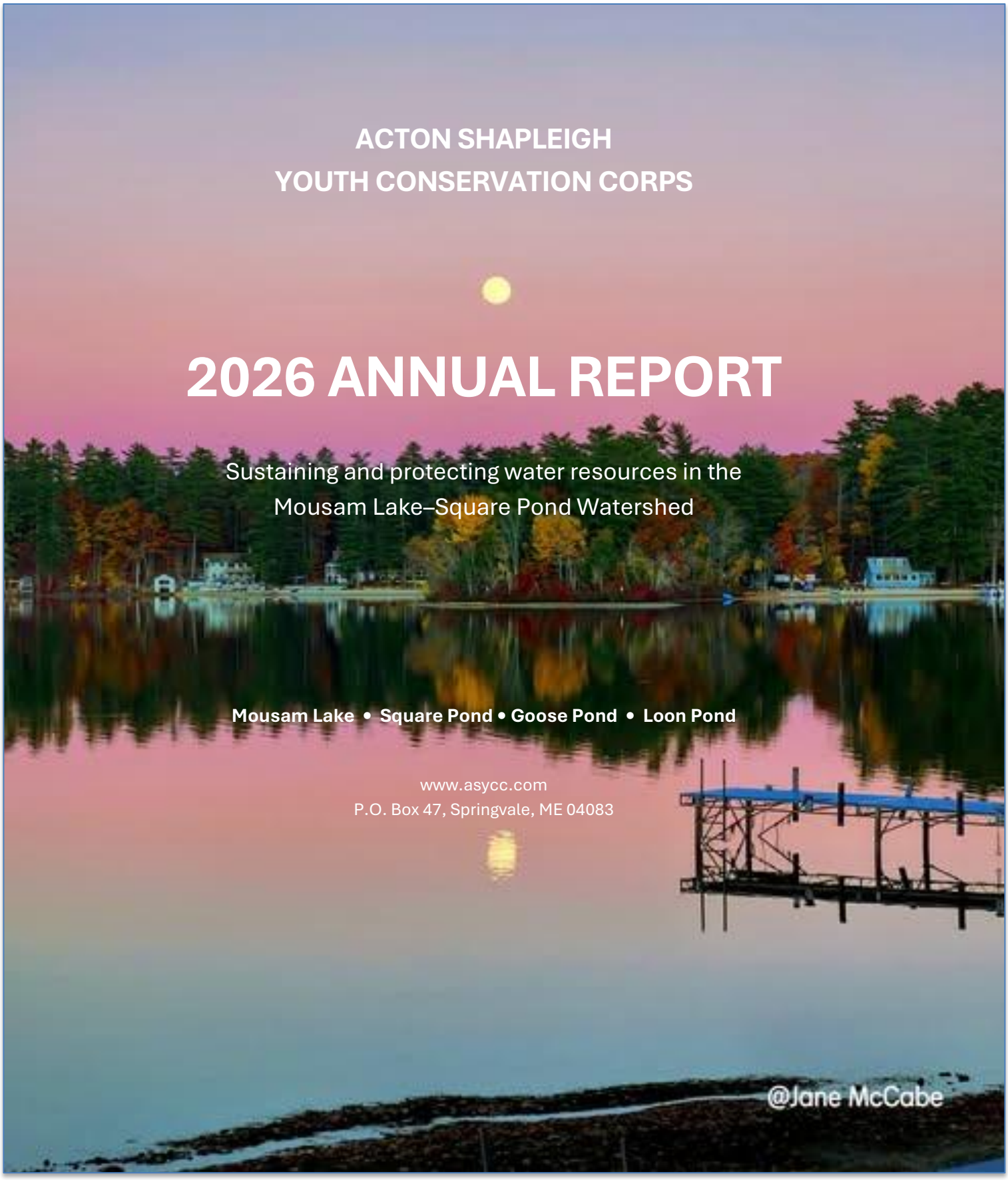


ACTON SHAPLEIGH
YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS

2026 ANNUAL REPORT

Sustaining and protecting water resources in the
Mousam Lake–Square Pond Watershed

Mousam Lake • Square Pond • Goose Pond • Loon Pond

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A Message from the Board of Directors

As we reflect on the 2026 season, the Acton Shapleigh Youth Conservation Corps (ASYCC) remains committed to protecting the waterways of the Mousam Lake–Square Pond Watershed, including Mousam Lake, Square Pond, Goose Pond and Loon Pond. Since our founding in 2001, our work has centered on education, community outreach, technical assistance, erosion-control practices, invasive-plant patrols, and courtesy boat inspections.

This year, we especially want to recognize Jane and Elias Thomas of EXIT Key Real Estate in Shapleigh for their longstanding commitment and generous support of ASYCC. Jane has the record as the most longstanding Board member in our history, providing years of service and dedication to our mission. Together, Jane and Elias have led our fundraising efforts, including their longstanding donation of golf balls for our annual golf tournament.

Beyond their direct contributions, Jane and Elias have helped introduce new watershed property owners to the organizations that play an important role in protecting our lakes, including ASYCC, SPIA, and MLRA. Their efforts have helped strengthen community awareness and participation in watershed protection.

Partnership is essential to this work. ASYCC values its collaboration with the Mousam Lake Region Association (MLRA), the Square Pond Improvement Association (SPIA), the York County Soil & Water Conservation District (YCSWCD), and a newly developing regional nonprofit organization - the Alliance for Watershed Stewardship in Southern Maine (AWSSM). These relationships help bring together expertise, funding, volunteers, and local knowledge to advance water-quality protection and invasive-species prevention.

We are also grateful to our staff, donors, partner organizations, local youth, and community members. Their commitment helps preserve the health of our lakes and the quality of life they support.

With gratitude,

The ASYCC Board of Directors

Joe Borst – Treasurer

Kent Haake – President

Scott Lansberry – Operations Director

Jane Thomas – Fundraising Director

About ASYCC

The Acton Shapleigh Youth Conservation Corps is a nonprofit organization founded in 2001. ASYCC works to protect Mousam Lake, Square Pond, Goose Pond, and Loon Pond—the waters of the Mousam Lake–Square Pond Watershed.

ASYCC delivers educational programs, conducts community outreach, provides technical assistance, carries out courtesy boat inspections, supports invasive-plant monitoring, and implements erosion-control measures. Its mission is to safeguard local water resources for their ecological value and for the benefit of residents, businesses, and visitors.

ASYCC's work is supported by municipal partners, lake associations, grants, fundraising, and private donations. The organization also provides local employment opportunities through its conservation programs.

Program Funding & Support

Thanks to everyone who helped make the 2026 ASYCC year successful!

- Town of Acton, Maine
- Mousam Lake Region Association
- Province Lake Golf Course
- Rosenkrans Foundation
- Dan Davis Sales
- Town of Shapleigh, Maine
- Square Pond Improvement Association
- Private Donors
- Exit Key Real Estate
- Pension Professionals

2026 ASYCC Staff

Erosion Control Crew

- Bryce Allard - Shapleigh
- Ethan Allard - Shapleigh
- Michael Mastraccio – Shapleigh
- Cyric Grunhuvd - Shapleigh
- Rylee Santos – Sanford
- Dakota Syman – Shapleigh
- Rowan Winchell - Sanford **(Crew Leader)**
- Samone Gallagher - Acton
- Sam Dunbar - Acton
- Luke O'Donnell - Hampstead, NH
- Julia Dochtermann - Alfred
- Jules Dochtermann – Berlin Germany
- Sam Corely - Shapleigh

Courtesy Boat Inspectors

- Anastasia Colomb - Waterboro
- Glenn Dochtermann – Alfred
- Sam Dunbar - Acton
- Michael Mastraccio – Shapleigh
- Adrianna Mitchell - Sanford
- Erma Roberge - Rochester NH
- Samantha Rumney - W Newfield
- Dakota Syman – Shapleigh
- Julia Dochtermann - Alfred
- Jim Dochtermann - Alfred
- Samone Gallagher - Acton
- Don LaLievre - Acton
- Carrie Phinney - Shapleigh
- Natalie Rothwell - Acton
- Bryce Allard – Shapleigh

Invasive Plant Patrol

- Carrie Phinney – Shapleigh
- Natalie Rothwell – Acton
- Samone Gallagher – Acton
- Sam Dunbar – Acton

David Burns, Program Director, Alfred

Jim Dochtermann, ECC Assistant Director, Alfred

2026 at a Glance

PROGRAM AREA	2026 RESULTS	NOTES / SOURCE
Courtesy boat inspections	8,350	7,243 Mousam; 1,107 Square Pond
Inspector hours	4,298.5	Mousam Lake and Square Pond
Erosion-control projects	14	Residential and municipal
Erosion-control materials installed	188 Cubic yards mulch 8 Cubic yards stone 6 plant buffers 1 rubber razor diversion	Mulch, stone, trenches, etc.
Invasive-plant patrols	10	Survey and Swollen Bladderwort harvesting
Youth and seasonal employment	22	Total staff count

Courtesy Boat Inspection Program

The Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) Program helps prevent invasive aquatic plants and organisms from entering local water bodies. Inspectors educate boaters and inspect boats, trailers, and associated equipment at the public launch sites on Mousam Lake and Square Pond.

Inspectors look for aquatic plants and fragments and share prevention information with boaters. Inspections include boats, trailers, personal watercraft, fishing tackle, lines and ropes, and water toys. Public education and careful inspections are important tools for protecting all four watershed lakes and ponds.

Invasive aquatic species can damage freshwater ecosystems, affect wildlife and recreation, degrade water quality, and create costly management challenges. Preventing their spread is far more effective than responding after an infestation becomes established.

2026 season coverage and results

This was a near record season for total boat inspections (second highest in our 26 years). The table above shows further season details for our work that started April 25th and ended October 11th. The table on page 11 shows further information on how this season compares to last year and 2020 (our highest season ever for boat inspections due to Covid).

We have been able to continue a higher level of staff inspection hours on Square Pond for several years now, especially with the threat of Swollen Bladderwort now active in Mousam Lake. But we are now faced with a new and difficult operations challenge at the Mousam boat launch. A directive from the Maine IF&W director has forced the ASYCC to move boat inspections from very near the boat launch docks, to a location near the launch entrance. We worked with both the MLRA and SPIA to try to change the IF&W directive with a commonsense solution, to no avail.

The relocation of the inspection area has created a problem, particularly during periods of heavy boat traffic. A single inspector cannot consistently monitor both incoming and outgoing traffic, and congestion could potentially extend onto Route 109.

To address these safety and operational concerns, ASYCC adopted a staffing schedule that maintained two inspectors at the Mousam Lake launch during all operating hours. While this approach improved coverage, it also resulted in substantially higher operating costs that are not sustainable under our current funding structure. So, in 2027 we will reduce staff back to original scheduling and face the possibility of missing inspections on some boats on busy days.

Invasive Plant Patrol and Lake Association Partnerships

Invasive Plant Patrol (IPP) work supports early detection and response. ASYCC staff and volunteers work with partner organizations to survey local waters, identify potential invasive species, and support prevention and removal efforts.

Our IPP crew carried out a total of 10 different IPP surveys throughout the summer. Two surveys were carried out at orphaned waterbodies that do not have an established program or trained IPP surveyors available. The YCSWCD was awarded a grant to do this work that we participated in.

Mousam Lake Region Association (MLRA): Swollen Bladderwort

The MLRA Dive Team had another very successful year, organizing and executing six invasive Swollen Bladderwort (Utricularia Inflata) extractions across Goose Pond, Oak Cove, Williams Cove, Hamms Cove, Hubbards Cove, and Carpenters Cove. Together, 145 volunteers contributed 434 work hours to remove 214 gallons of invasive plants (roughly 28,000 individual plants).

The MLRA also received grants from the DEP that were used for commercial Diving Assisted Suction Harvesting (DASH) and were able to purchase and set up their DASH boat to carry out harvesting of Swollen Bladderwort. This resulted in the harvesting of 1,030 gallons via the commercial company SMIAM, and 281 gallons via the MLRA DASH boat. In addition, the MLRA teamed with the ASYCC to hire 3 college interns who surveyed several areas of Mousam Lake and harvested 47 gallons of Swollen Bladderwort, often by snorkeling.

In comparison in 2025, the MLRA's ongoing work to remove swollen bladderwort, combined commercial mechanical DASH harvesting with manual removal by the MLRA Dive Team. The 2025 total was 3,056 gallons of plant material removed: 2,890 gallons by DASH harvesting and 166 gallons manually by volunteers.

Square Pond Improvement Association (SPIA): Chinese Mystery Snails

Even though the ASYCC does not actively participate with invasive Mystery Snail removal, it is worth reporting on those efforts by SPIA volunteers. In 2025 SPIA's long-running effort to manage Chinese mystery snails through the Square Pond Snail Snatchers removed 2,142 pounds of snails on seven organized dives, and 38 certified divers. We did not have full details on the 2026 removal information at the time of this publication but can report 2,516 pounds of snails were removed.

Erosion Control Crew and Youth Conservation Corps

The Erosion Control Crew (ECC) implements on-the-ground conservation practices that help protect water quality. The program also provides local high-school and college-age students with meaningful seasonal employment and practical experience in environmental stewardship.

The ECC serves property owners in the Mousam Lake, Square Pond, Goose Pond, and Loon Pond watersheds. A project typically begins with a homeowner requesting a technical-assistance visit. After assessing site conditions and property use, the Program and ECC Directors recommend appropriate erosion-control Best Management Practices (BMPs). The landowner receives a summary or technical report and an agreement describing responsibilities and maintenance expectations.

The ASYCC crew labor is provided free of charge, while the property owner pays for and arranges the required materials to be on site before the scheduled start. We do charge an all-inclusive project fee that includes overhead (van rental, equipment, technical site visit and planning, help with obtaining all necessary town and DEP PBR permits). Also, when using the ASYCC, the landowner gets the DEP Permit By Rule permit fee waived by the DEP.

2026 projects and outcomes

The ECC program provides more than erosion-control services. It gives local students practical experience in conservation, teamwork, problem-solving, and environmental stewardship. Each project offers an opportunity to learn how property management decisions affect the health of our lakes and surrounding watershed.

In 2026, we installed 1 rubber razor diversion, placed more than 8 yards of crushed stone, 6 native plant buffers and spread out 188 yards of erosion-control mulch. The work took place at 9 residential properties and five municipal properties.

Featured Project for 2026

162 Apple Road, Shapleigh

Details: The property was suffering from rather extensive erosion and had been getting worse through the years. The ECC crew spent the better part of the week installing check dams, applying soil conservation mulch, resetting a rubber razor water deflector in the road, and installing a large catch basin with crushed stone above the boat launch. It was our first large project of the season and the ECC team really pulled together, joined by CBIs, to tackle heavy work spreading large amounts of mulch, moving large stones, and digging a large ditch. There were sudden on-the-spot repairs that needed to be done on wheelbarrows that crew members tackled happily and efficiently. The project site was very secluded on a peninsula jutting out into a quiet corner of Square Pond. The crew members were allowed (and encouraged) by the property owners to swim, fish, and take lunch breaks right on the water. The site needed a lot of help from the ECC and it provided several educational lessons for the crew in best management practices in erosion control.





771 13th St, Acton

Details: Due to continued rain runoff issues, we will return to this property to expand the mulched areas installed last year and complete the other 50% restoration of the stone infiltration steps.




782 West Shore Drive, Acton

Details: Rain runoff from West Shore Road and driveway are contributing to erosion around the house and lower property area. 16 yards of soil conservation mulch spread on a path leading from the driveway to an area below the house closer to Square Pond.




10 Charles Samuel Way, Shapleigh

Details: Water runoff erosion is evident in several areas around the main house and lower part of the property. Soil conservation mulch (16 yards applied in several strategic locations).




19 Elm Street, Shapleigh

Details: Major runoff from multiple sources including Elm Street and neighboring property are contributing to severe erosion at the bottom of the road where there is a sharp turn, and into the shoreline and boat launch. Several areas heavily mulched to stem the flow until the road is re-paved/re-worked. Plantings (shrubs) done in the mulch area closest to the shoreline. The neighbor is a cooperating friend who wants to help.




7 Elm St, Shapleigh

Details: Last year we did a large project with mulch and catch basins on the upper part of the property. Runoff from neighboring properties and the nearby road are still contributing to erosion below. We applied soil conservation mulch in strategic areas.




Treasure Island Association, Treasure Island, Shapleigh

Details: A shared Right of Way (ROW) off of Treasure Island Road on the southeast end of the island was mostly mulched with soil conservation mulch.




65 Old Loop Road, Shapleigh

Details: An 85' ROW foot path to the lower Mousam needs stabilization due to heavy erosion. Soil conservation mulch applied along with a few plantings.




Maintenance and community projects

Routine maintenance helps keep erosion-control measures functioning and reduces the risk of soil loss, runoff, and water pollution. Every year we carry out clean-up and maintenance at both town beaches (Mousam Beach and Square Pond Beach) and do maintenance on the 13th Street culverts.

Mousam Beach

Details: "The Foot" is a public town beach area at the southern foot of Mousam Lake. The mulch that was placed just above the beach area several years ago and needs re-establishment. Heavy rain events have the potential to breach the lip on the edge of the road and flood this area.





Historical Program Statistics

MEASURE	2025 RESULTS	2026 RESULTS	2020 RESULTS (Highest ever)
Courtesy boat inspections	7,804	8,350	9,323
Mousam Lake inspections	7,014	7,243	7,702
Square Pond inspections	790	1,107	1,621
Plant fragments collected and submitted	123	218	316
Confirmed invasive plants	14	34	0
Mousam Lake inspector hours	1,855.5	2,881	1,858.5
Square Pond inspector hours	1,193.5	1,417.5	957
Erosion-control mulch installed	198 yards	188	Not Available
Crushed stone placed	More than 20 yards	8	Not Available
Dripline / dry-well trenches	16	1	Not Available
Properties receiving ECC work	16	14	23

Looking ahead

ASYCC's continued priorities are to protect water quality, strengthen invasive-species prevention and early detection, support practical erosion-control work, educate watershed residents and visitors, and create meaningful conservation employment opportunities for local youth.

Looking ahead to 2027, ASYCC must carefully balance its conservation responsibilities with the financial resources available to support its programs.

The increased staffing requirements at the Mousam Lake boat launch during 2026 have created operating costs that cannot be sustained under our current funding structure. Consequently, we anticipate reducing inspection hours, delaying the start of the inspection season until approximately the end of May, and returning to a more limited staffing level at the Mousam Lake launch.

These adjustments will require inspectors to prioritize incoming boats during periods of heavy traffic. While this approach may reduce our ability to inspect every boat entering and leaving the lake, our primary objective will remain the prevention of new invasive-species introductions.

We also anticipate reducing some Erosion Control Crew staffing and operating days. These decisions are difficult, but necessary to maintain the long-term financial stability of the organization.

Contact

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