



2016 Spring Newsletter

BOARD MEMBERS

Patti Lennon, Co-President
Larry Martin, Co-President
Bill Mann, Treasurer
Jeffrey Fernandez, Secretary
Nancy Engels
Terry O'Brien
Jean Wilson
Mike Vinton

Dear Members,

The loons have returned! After a very warm winter, the official ice out was April 12 on Echo Lake. As we look forward to another beautiful summer on our pristine lake, we should give thanks for the hard work of many of our members who insure that it remains natural and void of any invasive species, such as milfoil.

We have had a successful year, securing both the Vermont Watershed Grant of \$4,500 and the Aquatic Nuisance Grant of \$6,390. Thanks again to Cindy Swanson for continuing to write these grants for ELPA. Also, we raised additional funds from our Color Challenge Run/Walk organized by Patti Lennon. This was a fun event. If you missed it in 2015, please consider participating, even as a spectator on July 3, 2016.

The grants provide much of the funding for our organization. However, the Watershed Grant is not intended to be a perpetual source of income. We also rely on dues and donations from our members. The programs operated by ELPA benefit the landowners and others that utilize the lake. So, please remember to send your annual dues on the attached form and considered making an additional donation.

Special thanks to Susan Czerepak for improving and updating our website. Check it out to stay informed.
<http://www.echolakeassociation.net>

Larry Martin

Blueberry Plant Sale

Susan Czerepak

The Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds (FOVLAP) promotes the Buffers for Blue Lakes program, which encourages the planting of vegetative shoreland buffers, particularly blueberry bushes. In years past FOVLAP provided grants for these plants, but no longer funds the program.

To do our part in protecting our lake, this year ELPA succeeded in making arrangements with Spates Florist in Newport for blueberry bushes at a reduced price. Blueberry bushes ordinarily cost \$29.00 per plant. We were able to make numerous varieties of high, medium-high, and low blueberry bushes available to our membership at a significantly reduced cost of \$15.50 for a May pick-up and \$22.50 for June pick-up.

Over a dozen ELPA members have responded and over 60 plants ordered. Because of the enthusiastic response, Spates extended our deadline for ordering to April 8th. We will be transporting the blueberry bushes to a convenient location here on Echo Lake for pick-up and will provide instructions for planting.

Blueberry muffins, blueberry pancakes, and blueberry pies should not be far behind. Enjoy!!

Lake Bed Survey

Peggy Stevens

As the coordinator of the Echo lakebed survey team, I am hoping to round up more volunteers for the lakebed survey crew. For those who don't know, we have been inspecting the shoreline lakebed for the past several years as a backup to our Greeter program at the boating and fishing access. While those inspectors are the first line of defense against milfoil or other invasive species, we cannot guarantee that every boat will be inspected or every snippet of milfoil found and removed before boats enter our waters. Unfortunately, there have been instances where infected boats have entered the lake undetected. We have dodged those bullets, but this is why the survey of the lakebed within 15 feet or so of the shoreline is so critical.

If found soon enough, it is sometimes possible, with the help of Natural Resources staff, to eradicate a small patch of milfoil before it takes firm hold and begins to spread. The surveys technically only need to be done twice each summer- once in July and once in late August/early September- and on average take a couple of hours each time. Last year we fell short of enough volunteers to cover the entire Echo Lake perimeter- not good! Most of our surveyors are covering extensive amounts of shoreline and it is too much to ask they do more. We need more volunteers, preferably lakeshore property owners who could cover their nearby sector by kayak, canoe or swimming.

Most, if not all, of our current surveyors are VIPs- state trained by Natural Resources staff to identify milfoil and other invasive species. However, it is not required that you be trained- if you see something questionable, any trained VIP could then be called upon to identify lakebed plants. We would like to offer the VIP training again, and will let you know of available trainings, dates and times as we hear from Bethany Sargent, our Natural Resources point person.

Thank you for considering this urgent request and responding to me at 723-5951.

VIP training will take place in late June. The exact date and location has yet to be determined. We'll keep you posted.

Peggy Stevens

Vermont Better Roads

Larry Martin

There has been a considerable amount of silt and run-off entering the lake along East Echo Lake Road near the inlet and the intersections of Camp Winape Road and Barney's Pebble Road. Alan May, Better Roads Coordinator, visited the site and made recommendations for improvements. Colleen Kellogg, Asst. Town Clerk & Treasurer, Town of Charleston, has applied for a grant with Vermont Better Roads (formerly "Better Back Roads.")

We would like to see these improvements implemented as soon as possible, and we support the Town's request for a grant to fund these improvements through Vermont Better Roads. The Vermont Better Roads Program was established to help with funding to support projects on town roads that would improve water quality. This project would involve improvements to town roads that directly impact our water quality in Echo Lake.

Water quality legislation is increasing the need for all towns to have a formal inventory of "road related erosion problems and/or storm water problems affecting water quality." Charleston intends to prepare an inventory of possible issues. If you notice a potential problem, landowners can bring these issues to the attention of the Road Foreman or Selectboard. Projects will be prioritized based on a number of factors, including ANR mapping. A request doesn't always mean immediate action, but having the project in queue helps budgeting and grant seeking. If you have a concern you can report the issue to Colleen Kellogg, Asst. Town Clerk & Treasure, 802-894-2814 or Charlestonadmin@comcast.net.

WATER QUALITY

Peter Engels

We test the water in Echo Lake for Clarity, Phosphorous Content, and Algae content. We go out about once a week, during June, July and August. Testing is done at two locations, which we find using GPS. At location 1, clarity is measured using a standard Secchi Disk, lowered to a depth where it begins to disappear. From this depth, we obtain water samples, which we process using the standard protocol used in all Vermont lakes. These samples are picked up by the State, which then does a chemical analysis to measure Phosphorous and Chlorophyll content. Since suspended Chlorophyll is generated by Algae in the water, and Phosphorous is a primary chemical needed for plant growth, these two measurements, along with observed water clarity, are, in effect, a measurement of the health of our lake.

The data from each year is published the next Spring. The results from last Summer should be available on line about now, and in published form by late May. All the data from past years, for all lakes in Vermont that are part of this program, can be found on line at:

<https://anrweb.vermont.gov/dec/dec/LayMonitoring.aspx>

Echo Lake's water quality is consistently number two in Vermont. The only lake that is better is Maidstone, although other lakes like Seymour are very close. Clarity varies during the year; it is best right at ice-out, and deteriorates during the summer.

Access Greeter Program

Maryanne O'Brien

Paid and volunteer staff will once again be working at the VT Fish and Wildlife boating access area. Watercraft inspections for Eurasian watermilfoil and other aquatic invasives will be conducted from Memorial Weekend through Labor Day Weekend. Funding through grants, dues, and donations will again allow our staff to cover the access five days per week, twelve hours per day. Our three paid access greeters (Cheryl, V, and Ed) will be checking watercraft entering and exiting Echo Lake, as well as educating boaters to "Clean, Drain, Dry" their watercraft.

The new access greeter program coordinators are Terry and Jean O'Brien. If you would like to volunteer to help check boats at the access, please contact them at obrien6417@yahoo.com. And, as always, a reminder to all to let your boating guests who enter Echo Lake from a private dock to thoroughly inspect and remove any aquatic material from watercraft before entering the lake. We will continue to work together to help keep Echo Lake one of the cleanest lakes in Vermont.

Financial Report

Bill Mann

Our current financial condition is healthy. We have been fortunate to obtain grants to cover the majority of the cost of our access greeter program, which was approximately \$14,000 last year. The dues and donations we receive from our members cover the balance of the program. Our dues and donations from members last year were down from prior years, so send in your membership form with your dues and hopefully a donation. Last year we held our first Color Challenge 5K along West Echo Lake Road. This event was extremely successful raising almost \$2,500. This year's event will be even more exciting. We continue to build our bank account to prepare for the time that we don't receive the grant monies that allow for the maintenance of the access greeter program. The grants we have been receiving are not guaranteed and are likely to be reduced in future years, so your support is crucial to protecting the quality of water in Echo Lake.

Green Up Day

Ann Hunsicker is organizing volunteers to assist in cleaning up the roads surrounding Echo Lake on Vermont's annual Green Up Day, May 7, 2016. If you'd like to participate, information is available on our web site.

Color Challenge

Patti Lennon



Echo Lake Color Challenge

Join us for the second annual Echo Lake Color Challenge on Sunday, July 3rd at 10:00 a.m. Walkers and runners will once again travel a 5K loop alongside beautiful Echo Lake. Participants will be showered with colored powder at five color stations throughout the course. This is a family fun event that is open to people of all ages and all abilities.

Last year we had more than fifteen businesses sponsor our event. Over 150 participants and thirty volunteers made our very first Color Challenge a great success. Some of our participants wore costumes while others pushed baby strollers. We had everything from serious runners to first time road racers.

We are keeping the registration fees the same as last year for people who pre-register for the event. Once again, we will provide sunglasses, white t-shirts and post-race snacks. You can pre-register online at Active.com or download our mail-in registration form from www.echolakeassociation.net. Individual registration fee is \$15 per person; day of event registration is \$20. Or you can form a “team” of four friends, family, or neighbors. Team registration fee is \$50 per team of four people; day of event team registration is \$60.

See you at the Color Challenge!

Vermont Watershed Grant

We have been approved for a \$4,500 grant from Vermont Watershed Management Division for 2016. Thanks to Cindy Swanson for her continued work on writing the grants for ELPA.

While we were approved for the 2016 Watershed Grant, the Committee that approves these grants had some concerns including the following statement: “The Committee encourages the Town (and Association) to explore options for making this program more self-sustainable and less reliant on Watershed Grant funding”. Therefore, the ELPA Board is attempting to build up reserve funds and consider additional alternatives to help fund the Access Greeter Program.

Half of the proceeds derived from the sale of Vermont Conservation License Plates go towards funding the Vermont Watershed Grant Program. Please consider purchasing a Vermont Conservation License Plate to support this program.



Aquatic Nuisance Grant

We received a \$6,390 Aquatic Nuisance Grant for 2016! Cindy Swanson also prepared this grant and thanks all of the members that put in volunteer hours. These in-kind volunteer hours helped us to secure this funding.

Important Dates

July 3, 2016 – Color Challenge
May 28, 2016 – ELPA Board Meeting
July 23, 2016 – Annual Meeting
August 20, 2016 – Annual Picnic
September 3, 2016 – ELPA Board Meeting

Check out our website for more details.



2016
MEMBERSHIP DUES AND DONATIONS FORM

MEMBER/FRIEND INFORMATION

NAMES:

EMAIL:

1. _____

2. _____

MAILING ADDRESS:

Street: _____

City: _____

Phone: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

ECHO LAKE ADDRESS:

Street: _____

Phone: _____

ECHO LAKE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION DUES & DONATIONS FOR 2016

DUES: Individual: _____ \$15

Family: _____ \$30

DONATIONS:

The protection of Echo Lake from the incidental contamination with aquatic invasive species is a continuous effort that incurs expenses. Would you be willing to make a donation to help protect the water quality of our lake?

Yes, I'd like to contribute to fund the water quality protection programs:

\$200 _____ \$100 _____ \$50 _____ \$25 _____ Other _____

ELPA is a 501(c)(3) organization; your dues and donations are fully tax deductible.

Thank you from your ELPA Board!

ELPA Use

Date Rec'd. _____ Check # _____ Acknowledgement Sent _____

MAIL TO: TREASURER ELPA
P.O. BOX 41
EAST CHARLESTON, VT 05833