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2017 Spring Newsletter

Presidents' Message

Dear Members,

Winter has finally loosened its grip, and we are appreciating a taste of spring weather at the lake. Before long we will be welcoming back our summer residents, and we will all be enjoying everything that Echo Lake has to offer.

The summer boating season will soon be in full swing, so the threat from aquatic invasive species will increase. Our access greeter program is Echo Lake's first line of defense in protecting the lake. This program relies on funds from grants, dues, and donations. Thank you to Keith Gee, with guidance from Cindy Swanson, for securing the 2017 Aquatic Nuisance Grant provided by the VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation. Fund-raising activities, such as the Color Challenge, will also help to supplement this grant.

As the 2017 summer season quickly approaches, we are busy planning a variety of programs and activities. Please consider volunteering for, or participating in, our upcoming programs and events. As you read through this newsletter think about the ways in which you can help ELPA in our mission to protect Echo Lake.

Patti Lennon, Co-President
Larry Martin, Co-President

Financial Status

Over the past few years, we have steadily been increasing our bank balance. This year members have generously stepped up and increased their donations to the Association. The Color Challenge has proved to be an important source of income, but its success is weather dependent. Our annual expenses are in the range of \$17,000, most going toward the greeter program at the state landing.

Our current ending balance of \$23,969.67 gives us something of a cushion for the next couple of years. However, it is unclear what level of grants we will receive in the coming years. The new administration in Montpelier has voiced its intention to reduce spending and it is uncertain the extent of funding that will be available for environmental interests going forward. This year, upon the request

of the State Committee, we did not apply for the Vermont Watershed Grant, eliminating some \$4,500 in grant funding.

Given the uncertainties of the future, even with our best efforts, it will be a challenge to acquire the necessary funds for day-to-day operation. In addition, it is almost a certainty that Echo Lake will at some point fall victim to an aquatic invasive species and the clean up work will no doubt be expensive

Grants and Appropriations

ELPA relies heavily on grants and appropriations to fund our activities to preserve the health of Echo Lake. Each year Vermont makes grant funds available to municipalities and not-for-profit community organizations, like ELPA, to preserve the health of the State's lakes and ponds. ELPA and the Town of Charleston jointly apply for grant funding each year. ELPA has benefited by receiving almost \$107,000 over the past decade to fund its Access Greeter Program.

VERMONT WATERSHED GRANT

The Vermont Watershed Grants Program is a joint effort of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department and Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. The grant program is funded by sales of the Vermont Conservation License Plate. On average, the program distributes \$90,000 per year, funding 10-15 one-time projects that *“protect, restore, and enhance Vermont's waterways.”* Over the past several years ELPA has been awarded this grant numerous times in support to our Access Greeter Program.

In 2016 we were approved for a \$4,500 grant for 2016, but the State Committee that approves these grants expressed concerns about funding the Access Greeter program into the future: *“The Committee encourages the Town (Charleston) and Association (Echo Lake) to explore other options for making this program (Access Greeter) more self-sustainable and less reliant on Watershed Grant funding”*. Consequently, we did not apply for the Watershed Grant for 2017.

AQUATIC NUISANCE GRANT

The Department of Environmental Conservation oversees the Aquatic Nuisance Grant Program. The purpose of this Program is to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive and nuisance species. It has helped some 67 lakes develop access greeter or similar programs. Funding for this program comes from motorboat registration fees and in recent years has distributed just short of \$500,000 annually. ELPA has been the recipient of an Aquatic Nuisance Grant for eleven consecutive years, being awarded \$6,390 in 2016 and \$6,280 for 2017.

TOWN OF CHARLESTON APPROPRIATION

The Town of Charleston has voted to appropriate \$1,000 to the ELPA, which funds will be received some time in July.

TENTATIVE NATURE OF GRANT FUNDING

We did not apply for the Watershed Grant for 2017 upon request of the State Committee. As a result our bank account will receive that much less funds this year. Our Aquatic Nuisance grant could likewise someday be in jeopardy — the state could have a budget shortfall, the Department of

Environment Conservation could decide not to fund Echo Lake because of the success of its past efforts, a new Administration could decide to shift environmental priorities. To prepare for that possibility, ELPA must continually be building financial reserves to get us through times where our grants don't cover our expenses and we must be seeking new sources of revenue, whether it is grants, one-time donations, bequests, and so forth.

Lakebed Survey

Spring is here and it's time to begin thinking about the 2017 lakebed survey. The lakebed survey, conducted by trained [Vermont Invasive Patrollers](#), is our critical second line of defense in insuring that the waters of Echo Lake are not infested by milfoil or other invasive species. Our first line of defense is our greeter program at the state boating and fishing access. Unfortunately, the access is not covered 24/7 and we cannot guarantee that every boat will be inspected or every snippet of milfoil found and removed before boats enter our waters. There have been instances where infected boats have entered the lake undetected. That 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 are done twice each summer — once in late June/early 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 and hope to have more volunteers this summer. Many hands make light work. We hope you will consider participating. Please contact our Lake Bed Survey Coordinator, Peggy Stevens, at 723-5951.

There are two training sessions available, Friday June 9th from 12:30 to 3:30 in Newport, and Saturday June 10th from 10:30 to 2:00 in Brattleboro. You can register online at <http://dec.vermont.gov/forms/vip-workshop-registration>. Workshops and materials are offered at no cost to participants. Space is limited. For more information, contact Ann Bove at ann.bove@vermont.gov or (802) 490-6120.

Ideally, our goal is to have lakefront property owners commit to patrolling their shoreline to ensure seamless coverage, VIP trained or not. Peggy is on call to anyone with any questions, trained or not, and she will be contacting lake patrollers soon with plans for how to divvy up the map for surveying this summer.

Water Quality Lay Monitoring

Last summer Peter Engels and Mike Vinton again served as our lay monitors, measuring the water quality of Echo Lake. There were no changes in either the measurement technique, or in Echo Lake's water quality, which remains one of the cleanest in the state.

One of the biologists from the State Lakes and Ponds Division did comment that we are somewhat dependent upon Seymour Lake, since Seymour is the main source of water for Echo Lake, and serves as a "settling pond" for Echo Lake.

The results from last summer's testing can be found at:

<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/IWIS/ReportViewer.aspx?Report=LayMonLakeReport&ViewParms=False&LayMonID=ECHOC>

For more information about lay monitoring, see <http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/monitor/lay-monitoring>

Access Greeter Program

The boat inspection program is scheduled, once again, from Memorial Day thru Labor Day. We have funding to support five twelve-hour days a week. Hopefully, the remaining two days will be covered by volunteers.

The program's success is dependent on two factors —paid staff and volunteers.

We encourage anyone with two hours available on Monday or Tuesday to contact Jean and Terry O'Brien at 723-4082 or at obrien6417@yahoo.com. Greeting boaters is a satisfying experience. The benefit is not just the actual intercepts of invasive plants but also the increase in awareness promoted by our presence there. No training required. Looking forward to another clean water summer on Echo Lake.

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 (kayaks, canoes, boats) and equipment (skis, tubes, floats, anchors, fishing tackle) before entering the lake. We will continue to work together to help keep Echo Lake one of the cleanest lakes in Vermont.

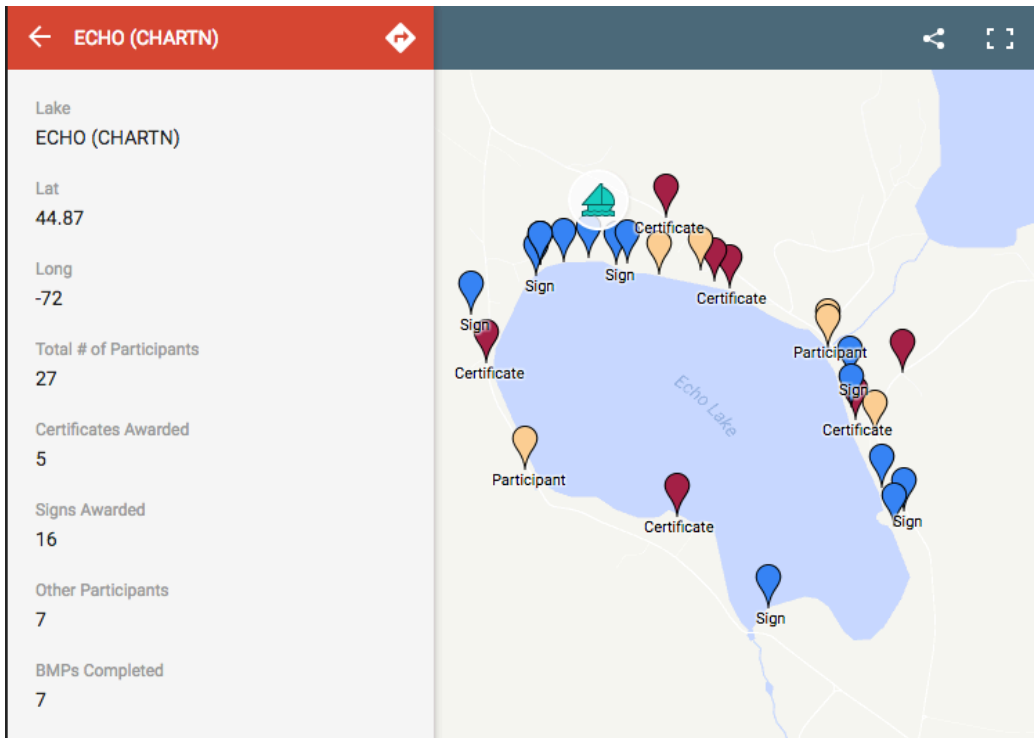
Lake Wise

Amazing news!!! Echo Lake is the first lake in the State of Vermont to have qualified for the Gold Lake Wise Award.

The goal of Lake Wise is to establish a new normal; a new culture of lakeshore landscaping that models lake friendly living, has excellent storm water runoff practices, and is proven to help protect the lake. The criteria for the Gold Lake Wise Award is that 15% of the total shoreline properties have received individual Lake Wise awards for properties that are well managed, using shore land Best Management Practices, and are maintained to care for the lake.

To earn the Lake Wise Award a property is evaluated in four categories: Shore land; Recreation Area; Driveway; Septic and Structure. Properties that have passed two of the four categories earn a Lake Wise Certificate. Echo Lake property owners have responded to the call with gusto.

- 27 property owners have participated in the evaluation process.
- 7 property owners have improved their properties by instrumenting Best Management Practices
- 5 properties have been awarded a Certificate for having met two of the four requirements
- 16 properties have received the individual Lake Wise Award



There are 94 shorefront properties on Echo Lake. With 16 of those properties receiving the Lake Wise Award, we have passed the 15 percent threshold at 17 percent.



Byron and Sue Fish with their dog, Major

A lot to be proud of, but we shouldn't stop here. No resting on laurels. We hope that more property owners will sign up for evaluations this summer. If you're interested, contact Susan Czerepak at susanczerepak@gmail.com or Tracy Shadday at traceyshadday@gmail.com. We'll arrange for Amy Picotte, Lakeshore Manager with the Watershed Management Division of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, to visit your sites. We'll also be arranging to get Lake Wise Awards to recipients for posting and for the presentation of the Gold Lake Wise Award. All in all, quite an accomplishment.

Green Up Day

Once again Ann Hunsiker coordinated the ELPA Green Up Day effort. It was windy but not rainy, which was a welcome break in the weather. For the most part the roads are pretty clean due to regular clean up from some dedicated walkers. There were a few bad spots but overall the roads around the lake look good!

We did notice some trash that couldn't be reached from the road but might be removed from in the lake. If you are out on the water in a canoe or kayak, please take the time to go slowly along the lake edge by any roads to look for and remove whatever trash may be found.

Thanks to everyone who helped.

Echo Lake Color Challenge

The Echo Lake Color Challenge has become the major fundraiser for our organization over the last two years. This family fun event has received enormous support from local businesses, our community and membership, alike. Please join us for the third annual Echo Lake Color Challenge on Sunday, July 2nd at 10:00 a.m. The event is open to people of all ages and all abilities. Walkers and runners travel a gentle, rolling 5K loop on West Echo Lake Road while being showered with colored powder at five color stations throughout the course.



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

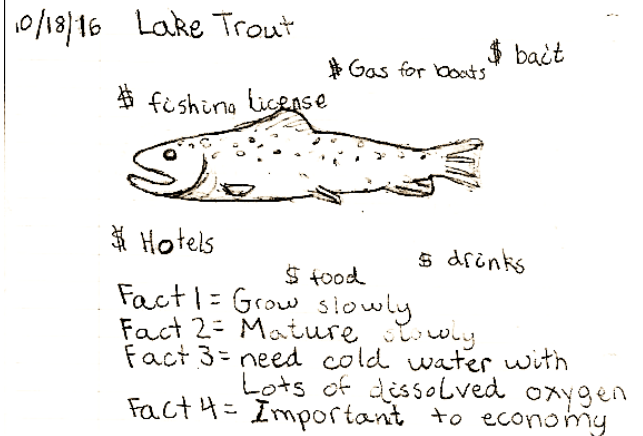
“team” of four friends, family, or neighbors. Team registration fee is \$50 per team of four people; day of event team registration is \$60.

See you at the 2017 Color Challenge!

Community Outreach

Eighteen 4th and 5th grade students at Charleston Elementary have been working on a year-long science unit focused on Echo Lake with staff from Siskin Ecological Adventures and funded by the Echo Lake Protective Association.

Classroom visits have built the scientific language necessary to utilize outdoor investigations to instill a deep appreciation of both the ecological and economic importance of Echo Lake. Familiarity with college level “Nerd Words” — as we have affectionately come to call them — such as “oligotrophic,” “poikilothermic,” “benthic macro invertebrate,” “zone of hypoxia,” and “biomagnification,” have fostered an increased sense of academic self-confidence among students.



Coupled with hands-on investigations, science inspired art, and seasonal trips to Echo Lake itself, this Echo Lake Protective Association supported programming has instilled a deeper understanding and appreciation of the role Echo Lake plays in our Charleston community.

Summer Fun

This year we’re planning something a little different for our Annual Picnic, which will be held on Saturday, August 12th on the Beam property at the west end of the lake. To add to the festivities we’ve arranged for rockabilly, country, blues, and swing by Li’l Deb and Big Wind. This band plays regularly at the Orleans Country Club. Stay tuned for more information on time and so forth.

Vermont Conservation License Plates

A reminder that half of the proceeds derived from the sale of Vermont Conservation License Plates goes towards funding the Vermont Watershed Grant Program. If you are a Vermont resident, please consider purchasing a Vermont Conservation License Plate to support this program.



Get Involved

If you are not already a member, please consider becoming one. If you don’t want to be a member, consider being a “Friend” for a contribution of \$25. The 2017 Membership Dues and Donations Form

is attached. If you are interested in becoming more involved or volunteering there are several options.

- Membership Committee – Tom Wagner – wagsvt@gmail.com
- Fund Raising – Patti Lennon – pattilennon@aol.com
- Lake Survey – Peggy Stevens – pegnericstevens@gmail.com
- Access Greeter – Terry Obrien – obrien6417@yahoo.com
- Green-up Day – Ann Hunsicker – ahunsicker17@gmail.com

Important Dates

- May 27, 2017 – Board Meeting
- July 2, 2017 – Color Challenge
- July 22, 2017 – Annual Meeting
- August 12, 2017 – Annual Picnic
- September 9, 2017 – Board Meeting

Please visit our website for more information - <http://www.echolakeassociation.net/>

Welcome to Echo Lake



2017 MEMBERSHIP DUES AND DONATIONS FORM

MEMBER/FRIEND INFORMATION

NAMES:

EMAIL:

1. _____

2. _____

MAILING ADDRESS:

Street: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

ECHO LAKE ADDRESS:

Street: _____

Phone: _____

ECHO LAKE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION DUES & DONATIONS FOR 2017

DUES: Individual: _____ \$15

Family: _____ \$30

Our goal is to have 100% of property owners on Echo Lake to be members of ELPA.

Friends of Echo Lake: _____ \$25

“Friends” of Echo Lake will be included on our mailing list but will not have a voting interest in the organization. If you are a frequent visitor to the lake and don’t want to become a member, then please consider helping us preserve the lake by becoming a “Friend.”

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:

\$300 _____ \$200 _____ \$100 _____ \$50 _____ 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