



Laurie Gee, President
Ann Hunsicker, Treasurer
Susan Czerepak, Secretary
Holly Bull
Steve Gratton
Lori Kempton
Pam Koenigsbauer
Carol Martin
Samantha Stevens

ELPA Fall Newsletter
Fall 2020

President's Message from Laurie Gee

Dear Members,

Oh, 2020! There's never been a year quite like it, and I think we're all trying hard to have some cautious optimism that the new year will be a whole lot brighter. Winter seems to have arrived faster than usual here on the lake, after early and fast--but spectacular--fall colors. I'm happy to report that the lake level is up several inches from where it was a month ago. Dozens of mergansers have gathered on Echo and are still plying the waters. There have been at least 5 loons together on the lake the last couple of days. They are greying along with the scenery, and I suspect they're discussing their escape plans.

All who were lucky enough to be here this summer can attest to the beautiful (but dry) weather we enjoyed. Given the need to socially distance, it sure helped that many of us were able to walk, bike, fish, and kayak a lot--great and safe ways to be able to chat safely with our neighbors and feel a little less isolated. We sorely missed the usual ELPA-sponsored social gatherings--the Color Challenge, in-person annual meeting, and picnic.

During the virtual annual meeting, we elected two new board members, Lori Kempton and Pam Koenigsbauer. We look forward to the first meeting when it's safe for the board to sit around the same table and truly welcome Lori and Pam! One silver lining--far-flung members let us know how much they appreciated the chance to take part in the on-line annual meeting, so we will look into offering that option even as we get back to gathering in person post-COVID.

I extend a big thank-you to our ELPA members, committee members, and Board for your many volunteer hours, dues and donations, helping to keep Echo Lake such a wondrous place to live and play.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your families.

Please stay safe,

Laurie Gee, President

Treasurer's Message by Ann Hunsicker

Our thanks go out to the many who helped make this year a good one for Echo Lake in the midst of a pandemic. Back in March we could not have anticipated the support of so many members who have paid their dues, made donations, and volunteered.

Our support from the Town of Charleston and the State of Vermont helped to sustain our paid greeters for another year with no known invasives. Due to the way Labor Day fell on the calendar and the Board's decision to keep the greeters a little longer, our greeter expenses ended the year higher than in the

past. We all missed having the opportunity to see people (and raise some funds) at the Color Challenge and the picnic. Our annual meeting was held remotely. We were able to continue our support of the educational programs at the Charleston Elementary School. However, we will still end the year with enough cash to add to our contingency fund, although in a smaller amount of \$5,000. This fund will give us the means to address a potential infestation of invasive species in a timely manner.

Thanks again to all of you who sustain ELPA by volunteering,

becoming informed and also by your financial support. There is still time to make a year-end donation or pay your annual dues if you haven't already done so. Here is the web address for the page on our website to get you started:

<https://www.echolakeassociation.net/dues-donations/>

ELPA is a 501(c)3 organization so all dues and donations are tax deductible.

Echo Lake Protective Association
PO Box 41
East Charleston, Vermont 05833

For more information, visit our website
- <https://www.echolakeassociation.net/>



REMINDER

DON'T FORGET TO PAY YOUR 2020 MEMBERSHIP DUES

JUST GO TO echolakeassociation.net

CLICK ON **Support ELPA**

REGISTER TO PAY ELECTRONICALLY OR BY MAIL

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

How was your time at the lake last summer? A quiet kayak paddle, sighting the loon chick with its parents, sunset over the lake, watching the meteor shower in the midst of northern Vermont's deep, still darkness; these were some of summer's gifts in the midst of these turbulent times.

We hope you will help us keep Echo Lake the jewel that it is. If you haven't paid your dues for 2020 yet, or if you want to get a head start on 2021, please find the link below. The lake needs you.

We need you, now more than ever!

The ELPA Membership Committee

<https://www.echolakeassociation.net/dues-donations/>



And winter is not far away

Lay Monitoring

By Holly Bull

You may ask “What is the Lay Monitoring Program?”

The Lay Monitoring Program (LMP) is the State’s premier volunteer water quality monitoring initiative. Established by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in 1979, the LMP trains and equips volunteers called Lay Monitors. Lay Monitors gather water samples at established sites on their lake. Water samples are collected every week between Memorial Day and Labor Day, with a minimum of 8 weeks, to establish a summer mean. These citizen scientists will meticulously prepare the samples for the lab using quality assured methods and strict protocols. The purpose of this program is to help establish baseline water quality conditions and track long-term nutrient enrichment. This data, collected over years, is the best way to understand the health of a lake.

Over the years, changes have been made to the LMP. While the mission remains resolute, technology has brought about new ways of doing the work. The introduction of GPS to guide the Lay Monitors to their sites, as well as online data submission, and online databases for public viewing. Yet, the bulk of the work still rests on the shoulders of the Lay Monitor. Echo

Lake has been very fortunate to have had a Lay Monitor since the start of the program. Dedicated volunteers like the late Eric Stevens, who was our first, to Pete Engels, our current Lay Monitor. Peter Engels has been Echo Lake’s Lay Monitor since 2004. For 17 summers, Peter has diligently collected samples. Peter does not work alone; he is assisted by Mike Vinton. Together, with Mike driving the pontoon boat and Peter handling the water samples, these two committed volunteers ensure that the water samples are collected, processed, and get in the hands of the State. It must be stressed that the work these two do over the summer is invaluable and deserves the appreciation of all of us who use and love Echo Lake.

For more information, go to DEC’s website

<https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds>

Also, check out ELPA’s web page at

<https://www.echolakeassociation.net/water-quality/>

Hello... Hello.... Hello..... by Greg Carpenter



Drawing of James Whitelaw

Have you ever wondered how Echo Lake got its name? Or Echo Pond as it was officially called prior to 1982. It's been written that James Whitelaw, a native of Scotland who came to America in 1773, is said to have been given credit for doing so. James, as a young man well trained in surveying before coming to the United States bought land in Ryegate, VT in 1774 before starting up the Scots-American company. In 1783 Whitelaw was named Deputy Surveyor of the State of Vermont to assist Ira Allen, Vermont's first surveyor, and later promoted to Surveyor-General to straighten out town boundaries and land disputes. Much of northern Vermont was unsettled at

that time and town lines were in disarray. One of Whitelaw's jobs during this period of time was to clean up the boundary mess and establish Vermont's first official map.

During his 17 years in this role, he also had a chance to play a hand in naming a pond, river and even a county found in Vermont. Echo Lake is one of them. According to Esther Swift's book, *Vermont Place-Names* Echo was named "because the slightest noise in the area sets up distinct echoes". Interestingly, Vermont has more than one lake with the same name.



Vermont's first official map created by Whitelaw in 1796: Charleston was called Navy until 1805 in honor naval officer Abraham Whipple of Rhode Island



Whitelaw's gravestone

The other Echo Lake is in the town of Plymouth. Mr. Whitelaw was laid to rest in Caledonia county not too far from the town of Charleston. He was buried in 1829 in the Blue Mountain Cemetery in Ryegate, Vermont.

Source

Swift, Esther M, Vermont place names. The National Survey. 1977 Manuscript, by James Whitelaw, 1792-93; Wilbur Collection, University of Vermont Library

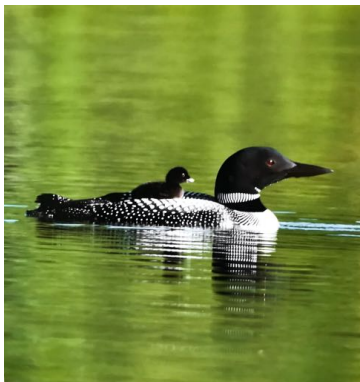
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/121725062/james-whitelaw>

Echo Loon Adventures

By Laurie Gee

Many of you will remember that our loon pair used the man-made nesting platform, hatched 2 chicks in 2017, and raised them successfully. They hatched 2 again in 2018, but the chicks were gone by 5am the next day--we assume they were eaten by the mink that were so prevalent that summer. Later that summer, the loon pair nested a second time and laid 2 eggs, but those eggs never hatched. Last summer (2019), the new location of the nesting raft was not ideal, and even though the loons found it and checked it out many times, they never laid eggs.

The summer of 2020, our loon pair made use of the relocated nesting platform on the west shore of Echo and laid 2 eggs the last week of May. One chick hatched the morning of June



25th, followed Mama off the nest, tumbled into the water, and was swimming with its parents in no time. The second egg never hatched. At first this

seemed disappointing, but Eric Hanson (Vermont Center for Eco-Studies) told us the second egg is viewed as an insurance policy. He came over to get the failed egg we'd retrieved from the nest and sent it to a lab in Maine, which uses the unhatched eggs to measure mercury levels in Vermont lakes. Eric always has a good story or two, and this trip was no different. After being told that one of our adult loons had *just* come into our neighbors' shore and attacked and killed a mama common merganser and one of her 6 ducklings, he had no comforting explanation except that some loons are more territorial than others, especially when a chick is involved. Nature can sure seem harsh! Then Eric asked whether we'd like to see the dead loon he had in the back of his truck. He had just collected it from Newark Pond with the intent to freeze it, then mail it to Tufts Veterinary School for a necropsy. (Since the school was closed due to the pandemic, Eric mentioned he'd be adding it to a freezer that already housed 6 or 7 dead loons awaiting necropsy!) We all marveled at the sheer size of that beautiful loon and appreciated the chance to see it up close. I'm glad to report that within 2 hours, our friends who'd witnessed the loon attacking the merganser saw the other mama merganser swim by with her usual dozen, plus the 5 orphaned ducklings!

Our Echo Lake community has lost a dedicated environmental steward and pioneer of best management practices on the lake. Arvin Anderson passed away earlier this year at age 82 leaving a legacy of stewardship.

Arv and his young family moved to East Echo Lake Rd in 1969, and he immediately began to improve the lake's water quality. He had noticed that a significant number of camps and seasonal campers were sending sewage directly into the lake. This prompted him to form the Echo Lake Protective Association on October 3, 1970 along with Lyle Silloway, Karleen Lamson, Dexter Bennett, Andrew Pato, and Jack Sloan, with the purpose of "preserving and protecting the natural beauty and water quality of Echo Lake and the surrounding area by promoting and maintaining the welfare of the people in the area

thereby".



Arvin Anderson, Princeton Alumnus

He not only used the Lake Association as a vehicle to educate about water quality and shoreland protection, he enthusiastically became a steward of his property, enlisting his two young daughters during the summers to help stabilize

the shoreline and plant seedlings. Anderson Point is now a textbook example of how Vermont wants its shorelines to look. His dedicated work to protect the lake was rewarded when his property was one of the first on the lake to be awarded the Lake Wise Award.

Arvin and the family also maintained a small farm on the property raising a couple of cows, pigs, and sheep, as well as tending to a large vegetable garden. Since 1969 he maintained a log of ice in and ice out dates, and a log of first and last frost with the number of growing days.

His two daughters Lynne and Karen and their families intend to maintain the property as seasonal residents.

Lakebed Survey Report

By Peggy Stevens

The second phase of our lakebed survey was completed in early October this year, with no invasive species found by our fifteen volunteers. The survey covers every section of the Echo Lake shoreline, and is performed in early summer and then once more near the close of our season. Our volunteers inspect the shoreline and lakebed up to twenty feet in depth, where invaders like Eurasian milfoil can take root and thrive. Forty hours of volunteer time were logged and documented.

Many of our volunteers also document the types of vegetation found in each section surveyed. This provides a catalog of the type and amount of plant life in Echo. We now have a historical basis of comparison of what species may be found where. As recent trends show, in most cases there is less density of vegetation in many parts of our lake. This year, oddly, several tires were discovered and removed from the lake bottom. It has been suggested that these tires, which present an environmental hazard, may have been placed by fishermen in an effort to provide habitat for some fish species. We will continue to be on the lookout for tires as well as invasive plants in the future!

Documentation was sent to Kimberley Jensen of the Lakes and Ponds Division of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Kim thanked our survey team for their efforts serving as the second line of defense against invasives, supporting our Access Greeters in keeping Echo Lake's native vegetation free from aquatic species that would endanger the health of our lake.

Submitted by Peggy Stevens on behalf of Susan Czerepak, Larry and Lisa Martin, Tom and Amy Wagner, Ann and Steve Gratton, Lori Kempton, Holly Bull, Mary Kenison, Peter Bestenbostel and Ann Hunsicker, Patti Lennon and Maryanne O'Brien, and Hugh Hawkins.

Investment Committee Report

By Peter Bestenbostel

The Echo Lake Protective Association contingency fund is currently invested in a one-year CD with Community National Bank at an interest rate of 0.75%. Given the current economic climate this was the best rate the investment committee could find and it was secured through the diligent negotiations of our treasurer. The CD comes due in September 2021 and

is currently valued at \$48,417.19. This includes the \$5,000 addition authorized by the board this year. The board has agreed upon an initial target for the fund of \$100,000. The fund's stated purpose is to provide funding to assist in remediation of any invasive species contamination in Echo Lake.

Fully staffing our access greeter program was more vital than ever this year, as we inspected 50% more boats than we did in 2019! We owe deep gratitude to Maryanne O'Brien and Patti Lennon for once again stepping in to serve as coordinators of the program. COVID-19 restrictions made it a more arduous responsibility than usual, but they set the tone and helped everyone get through the required training, leading to a very busy and successful season. We thank the following volunteers who worked 3-hour shifts per week throughout the summer: Maryanne O'Brien, Jim Brophy, Mike and Margie Vinton, Peter Bestenbostel, Pam and Karl Koenigsbauer, Laurie and Keith Gee, and Oliver

Hamerla. These dedicated volunteers covered the access from 6am-6pm Mondays and Tuesdays. Our three paid greeters covered the 12-hour shifts Wednesdays through Sundays.

There were zero instances of Eurasian Watermilfoil or any other invasive detected on watercraft entering our lake, although three aquatic weed samples were sent in to the State for identification.

Financial support for our access greeter program was provided in part by Vermont's Department of Environmental Conservation. Your generous financial and in-kind donations played a critical

role as well. This program is ELPA's largest expense and the centerpiece of our efforts.

We encourage anyone interested in becoming actively involved in maintaining the excellent water quality of our lake to volunteer as an access greeter. Please email Laurie Gee (laurie.eckels.gee@gmail.com) if you can volunteer a few hours a week next summer to help in this worthy effort.

A Crayfish Too Many by Tom Wagner

On May 23rd Denis Fortin, who lives on Lake Seymour on Camp Winape Road, received a call about a dead Loon on Echo Lake. Denis is involved with putting out the loon nests on both Echo and Seymour and reporting observations to Eric Hansen of the Vermont Center for EcoStudies. He discovered a male loon washed up in front of the Borden's residence near the access. It weighed 10.3 pounds and was 30 inches long. Its throat was impacted with crayfish. The loon had been deceased too long to be sent off to Tufts University for necropsy.

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, of which we are a recipient. If you are a Vermont resident, please consider purchasing a Vermont Conservation License Plate to support this program.



As we all know, the summer of 2020 was a challenging time in many ways. Due to these challenges there was less Lake Wise activity than in past summers. Echo Lake continues to be the gold standard for Vermont Lakes. We are all fortunate that so many lakeshore owners take seriously the importance of helping maintain the quality of our beautiful lake.



The State of Vermont Lakeshore Manager, Amy Picotte, was able to make a single visit this year. She is pleased with the on-going efforts to keep Echo Lake free of invasives, and continued education of best practices proper shoreline management.

The town of Charleston continues to work with ELPA regarding the annual lakeside mowing and grading of the road in a manner that promotes reduced runoff and a healthier lake for all.

Anyone that would like more information on the Lake Wise Program. Please contact me or visit the Vermont Lake Wise Website

<https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds>

The ELPA helps to fund two programs working with the students of Charleston Elementary – one working with Siskin/Coutts and the other working with NorthWoods.

The program with Siskin / Coutts combines science- based teaching in the 3rd/4th grade classroom with a field trip to Echo Lake. This runs every school season, (except for Spring 2020 when school was shut down). The Fall 2020 session has been successful, and there are photos below from the Echo Lake visit.

Here is some feedback from Ms. Lahar, the teacher:

Once again, my students have enjoyed working with Jason Brueck (Siskin) and learning about the ecology of Echo Lake. Through classroom visits with hands on activities and field trips to explore Echo Lake, they have learned a great deal. Throughout the program, my students gain knowledge about Echo Lake and its importance in the Clyde River Watershed and in Charleston.

One of their favorite trips was visiting Echo Lake in the winter. After snowshoeing down to the lake,

they helped Mr. Brueck drill a hole in the ice using an auger. They found the ice was 30.5 inches thick. Before their visit, they learned about how warm blooded and cold-blooded animals survive in and around Echo Lake. They compared lake trout and otter and concluded that during the summer, lake trout would have the survival advantage and out-swim the otter. During the winter, the otter would be more likely to catch the lake trout. While hiking down to the lake they saw signs of a ruffed grouse,

whitetail deer, snowshoe hare, red fox, red squirrel and otter.

Later, reflecting on the trip, one of my students wrote that the trip to Echo Lake “was fun but informational but mostly fun.” This trip to Echo Lake was one of many educational and memorable experiences with Mr. Brueck.



Students hanging by the lake during a snack break and Hannah taking notes. Oct 2020

The program with Northwoods Stewardship Center is called the Echo Lake Explorers and runs after school. And Wyatt Peterson of Northwoods, who leads the Echo Lake Explorers program, reported the following:

I was overjoyed to learn that NorthWoods would be able to facilitate after school programs in person within the NCSU school district this fall, meaning that Echo Lake Explorers with Charleston students could continue! The group this fall consists of returning participants of years past and so we brainstormed new places to visit and new ways to explore them. So far, we have explored Sentinel Rock state park, searching for and identifying macroinvertebrates in a brook as indicators of water quality. Last week, we walked to the large beaver pond on NorthWoods property (accessible from Rt. 111) and discussed the importance of beavers as ecosystem engineers and beaver dams as

they promote species diversity and increase water quality.

This week we will explore the historic Telegraph Trail leading to the summit of Bald Mountain which was originally used to access the fire tower and cabin. The trail is surrounded by a young successional forest full of moose-browsed striped maples and so we will look for moose sign and discuss the fragility of the moose population in Vermont due to tick abundance. I look forward to the next session where we will focus broadly on the theme of land conservation through the lens of [Aldo Leopold](#) which will culminate in completion of a Leopold bench; a design by Leopold that represents the significance of impermanence in nature.

We are grateful for the support of the ELPA! Each program I see the Charleston students thriving and learning in this area where Echo Lake is a pillar of recreation and environmental stewardship.



Students on bank of Mad Brook en route to Bald Mountain

Maintenance activities on the Echo Lake Shore Trail and kiosk areas continued throughout the summer and fall. Holly Bull's diligence in checking the trail regularly kept our team of maintenance volunteers updated on the condition of the beautiful trail winding down to the lake. The trail was brushed back and grooves added to the bridges for better traction. Several blown down trees that had blocked the trail were also removed. Both the East Echo Lake Rd and Jordan Rd parking lots were mowed mid-summer to keep them welcoming and accessible. Brush mowing was also done in the field area above the East Echo Lake kiosk area in mid-October after the pollinators had moved on. We encourage you all to explore and enjoy these accessible, scenic hiking trails – thanks to our ELPA Adopt A Trail partnership with NorthWoods!



Sam Perron, NorthWoods Stewardship Center's Director of Forest Stewardship, led a group of intrepid ELPA volunteers for a half-day in August, removing phragmites at the East Echo Lake Rd kiosk area. Despite a couple of passing rain showers, they removed over 1,000 phragmites stems. The group's efforts continued the work at the "demonstration site" in the NorthWoods forest, which compares manual removal techniques of cutting versus pulling to see if one is more effective than the other.

Meghann Carter, NorthWoods Stewardship Center's Conservation Science Director worked with two of the NorthWoods staff and volunteers on mitigation of

phragmites on the NorthWoods Echo Lake shoreline property.

Meghann and Sam will be working on a long-term plan this winter to manage the lakeshore phragmites removal efforts in future years to ensure it doesn't spread around the lake.

Thanks to Sam, Meghann and the ELPA volunteers, Matt Breton, Tracey Shadday, Susan Czerepak, and Holly Bull, for their efforts to mitigate the spread of the phragmites invasive plants in and around Echo Lake!



