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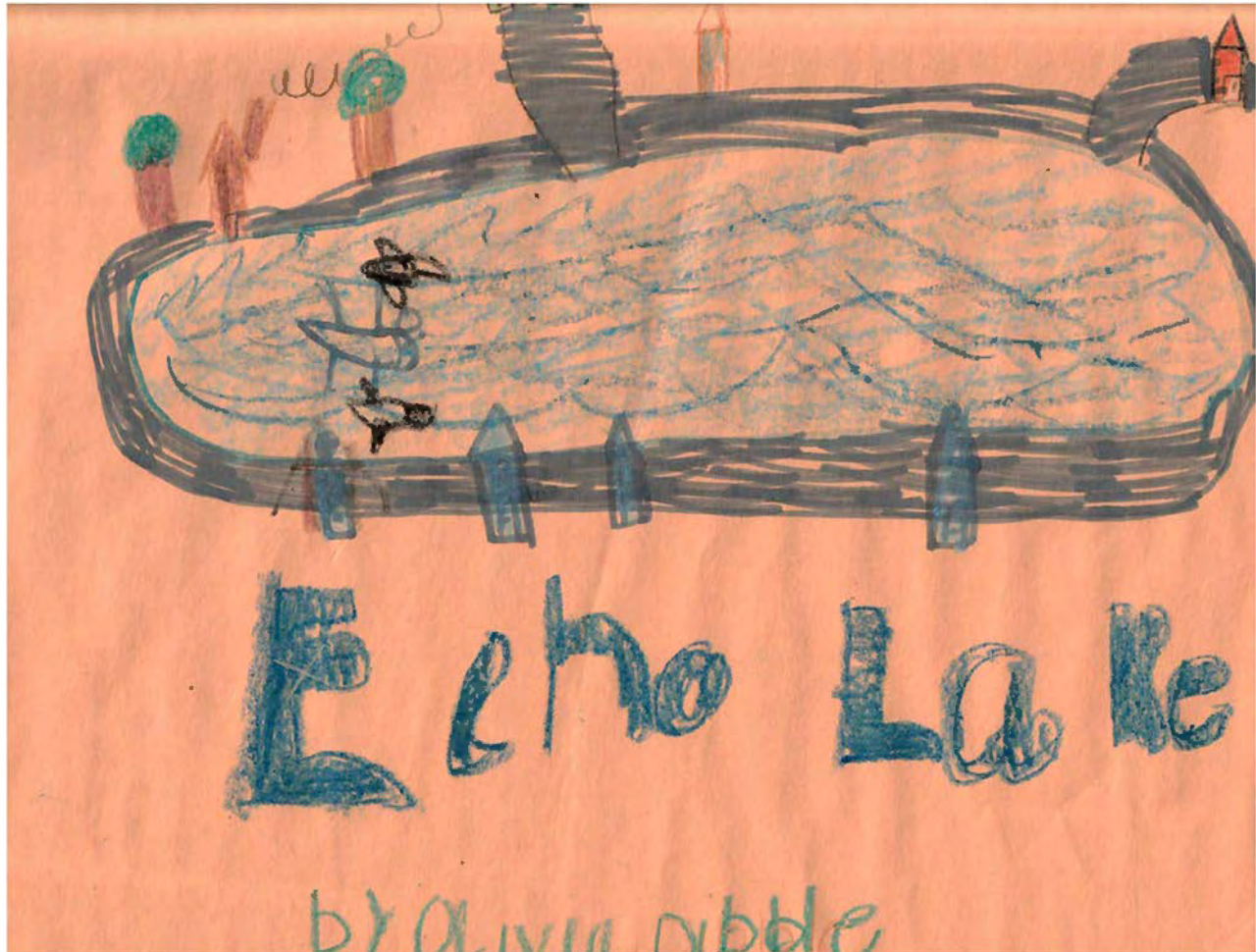
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ELPA 2024 Spring Newsletter



“Echo Lake” by Olivia Dibble, age 7

ELPA MISSION STATEMENT

The objective of the Association is to promote the welfare of Echo Lake which lies within the boundaries of the Town of Charleston, Vermont. The Association will work to maintain the quality of Echo Lake, the waters, native wildlife, and habitat for all to enjoy for generations to come.

ELPA President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

The ice is out, the loons have returned and mud season is a faint memory. As the Spring season unfolds, we find ourselves appreciating all that the season promises: renewal, growth and optimism. Spring also provides us an opportunity to build on and make new friendships as well as witness the lake waking up to a range of activities that include fishing, boating, kayaking and swimming.

In the pages that follow, you will find events, updates and initiatives that reflect a common commitment to preserving and enhancing the natural beauty of our cherished lake. A strong commitment to conservation, such as the lake access Greeter Program and the Color Challenge, a popular community event that reflects a spirit of good will for residents and guests from the surrounding area will be addressed. While we are indeed fortunate to be connected to such a vibrant community it will be important that those of us who enjoy the lake do not become complacent when it comes to protecting the quality of life on the lake. Respecting our shorelines by protecting against erosion, the need for safety for swimmers, and safeguarding the lake from the introduction of Aquatic Invasive Species are three steps that can be taken with minimal effort on our parts. Uniting as a dedicated and committed community in these efforts will clearly enhance our time "at the lake" in the months ahead.

At this time, I wish to thank a dedicated and active Board of Directors. Their support and commitment to a host of agenda items and details is invaluable.

While it is only April, I am eagerly looking forward to the Color Challenge, which will take place on July 7, the Annual Association Meeting on July 20, and the Association Picnic to be held on August 10. In the meantime, I wish you a pleasant spring season and start to the summer.

Karl Koenigsbauer, ELPA President

Lakebed Survey Report – Peggy Stevens

An outgrowth of the Echo Lake VIP Access Greeter program occurred years ago when Leslie Matthews of Lakes and Ponds Division came to Echo expressly to provide training in lakebed surveying. In kayaks, snorkels and wet suits, we toured the lakebed, from shoreline perimeter out to about 20 feet, with Leslie using the scopes made and provided to us by Leslie, we became familiar with the native, naturally occurring vegetation and developed a sense of what we might find and where in the lake. This has become an annual volunteer ritual by about a dozen dedicated Lakebed Surveyors. In late June, and then again in late August or early September, volunteers survey their assigned sections of the lake to search for aquatic invasives that may have escaped inspection and begun to establish themselves. If detected early, it is possible to reverse the infestation by calling in Lakes and Ponds biologists to perform eradication procedures. If a sample of an unfamiliar species is found rooted or floating, that sample is sent to Lakes and Ponds for review. Recently, we started sending photos rather than mailing samples, which has actually been very effective in identifying questionable samples. Every section of the lake has an assigned surveyor, and sections overlap to ensure coverage. We use a geological survey map of Echo to organize our survey and record findings- what vegetation is found where.

We also use the form provided by Lakes and Ponds to record dates and specifics of surveys. Over time, that mapping data has helped us track trends in what species are found/likely to be found where; when density of vegetation changes and where; places where the lake bed may be filling in, and helps us to speculate why these data points might be occurring or changing. For example, vegetation is most dense at the inlets of Echo's brooks, which may be point sources for nutrients from runoff. Our LaRosa Partnership Program initiative will help to figure this out. Thus far, and knock on wood, Echo Lake has fended off invasive species, but rising Phosphorus trends are a current concern.

In terms of equipment, we are very low tech; we don't use special mapping tools or other apps though we aware that these tools are available. Kayaks and pontoon boats are commonly used in the lakebed survey, and many surveyors swim and snorkel. The scopes made of plexiglass screwed onto black plastic culvert pipe were provided by Leslie many years ago and are still in use, especially handy when surveying from kayaks. Data are recorded on documents provided by Lakes and Ponds division and submitted by mail; electronic documentation option is available as well.

Maintaining our volunteer team is essential in doing this important work. We divide the lake shoreline into sections and assign a section or sections to each volunteer. Obviously, the more volunteers the better! We are very fortunate to have a few volunteers to pick up the slack if our numbers decline, which has occurred from time to time.

We also reach out annually to invite shoreline property owners to patrol vegetation in their own "front yards", so to speak, and report any changes in vegetation to the Lakebed Survey Coordinator, Peggy Stevens (802-723-5951) who will assess the situation, identify the vegetation, or send a sample to the lakes and Ponds Division for identification. Fortunately, no mitigation plans have had to be carried out due to the success of our first line of defense, our access greeter program. We don't use tools to harvest samples from the lake bed, we don't disturb anything growing in the lake bed, we do grab anything that may be floating that looks suspicious. Recent use of cell phone cameras to send photos have been effective. For the coming year, the Lakebed Survey team is actively seeking new members to assist us in this crucial effort. Two surveys, one in late June and another in late August or early September are all that is required. A sunny, calm morning is the best time to get out there as the visibility is optimal then.

We plan to have a meeting of surveyors, TBA, in May when everyone has returned to the lake. Then we will assess who are our volunteers, make sure new volunteers can receive VIP training at the earliest opportunity, and divvy up the lake shoreline sections to ensure full coverage. Ideally, we could provide an opportunity to train all property owners to get to know their own lakebed and report any changes, questions and concerns. Our success is due to the commitment and dedication of our ELPA community, our Access Greeter staff and volunteers, and our lakebed surveyors.

Thank you all!

Total Solar Eclipse over Echo Lake April 8, 2024



Photo credit to Susan Czerepak

How to Build an Integrated Vermont Invasive Patrollers (VIP) Program – Peggy Stevens

The following is an article Peggy Stevens wrote for FOVLAP at their request, since we have such an effective VIP program, one we have built over many years as ELPA:

The Charleston, Vermont Echo Lake Protection Association's Vermont Invasive Patrollers Program was initiated in the early 2000's, with the establishment of our Public Access Greeter Program (or Greeter Program). Credit is due to the enthusiasm and willingness of the first dozen or so ELPA members to participate and be certified as Vermont Invasive Patrollers (VIP).

In addition to the required Greeter Training, the VIP training provided by the DEC Lakes and Ponds Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Program is a must for any start-up Greeter, employee or volunteer, in order to ensure thorough inspection of vehicles, boats and trailers before launching and the ability to identify any potential aquatic plant or animal threats. Greeter inspections are performed by eye and hand to remove weeds from vehicles, boats or trailers. Even as all weeds are removed from vehicles, boats and trailers in the inspection process, being able to identify suspicious weeds and send them off for review by the AIS Program biologists is key. A VIP trained volunteer serves as a resource to inspectors, receiving suspicious samples from Greeters and sending them to Montpelier for review. Protocols for doing inspections are key parts of the AIS Program training, as well as providing guidance about roles and responsibilities of inspectors, how to communicate effectively with boaters, what to do if a boater is uncooperative, and what support is available from VT Fish and Wildlife in that case. Though not required, several Echo Lake VIPs have attended second and third VIP workshops for an update and refresher. The schedule of trainings is made available on the AIS Program webpages, early in the season so folks can sign up.

This Greeter inspection process also enables inspectors to:

- educate the public about invasive species
- to know which water bodies are infested by invasives, and
- to know why clearing weeds from boats, trailers and vehicles when leaving a water body is not only required by law but essential to preventing future infestations next time the boat is launched in a different water body.

Echo Lake Protective Association obtains grants from the VT DEC Lakes and Ponds Program to establish our Greeter Program, supplemented by funding from ELPA and an annual grant from the Town of Charleston. This combined funding pays trained Greeter staff, who cover the busiest hours at the access from May to September. VIP trained Coordinators make sure off hours are manned by trained volunteers who are crucial to the success of our program. We provide 12 hour/day coverage May to September.

Over time, countless Echo Lake Access Greeter staff, volunteers, and concerned property owners have been trained as VIPs in local VIP workshops. ELPA has sponsored workshops in Charleston and Morgan and accessed workshops provided elsewhere. AIS Program staff and VIP trainers have attended ELPA annual meetings as well, to provide general information about all of the different Lakes and Ponds Programs that are available including the VIP Program, Greeter Program, LakeWise, Lay Monitoring Program, Vermont Loon Conservation Project, and others.

A key advantage in our AIS Prevention Program's success is the commitment by our first line of defense, our VIP trained volunteers and paid Greeters, fully supported by the second line of defense, our volunteer Lakebed Surveyors, as well as our project Coordinators and of course our ELPA Board members. The integration of our programs enhances the quality of the surveys and explains our success to date.

An outgrowth of the Echo Lake VIP and Greeter Program occurred years ago when Leslie Matthews of the AIS Program came to Echo expressly to provide training in lakebed surveying. In kayaks, snorkels and wetsuits, we toured the lakebed, from shoreline perimeter out to about 20 feet, with Leslie, using the viewing scopes made and provided to us by Leslie; we became familiar with the native, naturally occurring vegetation and developed a sense of what we might find and where in the lake.

This has become an annual volunteer ritual by about a dozen dedicated Lakebed Surveyors. In late June, and then again in late August or early September, volunteers survey their assigned sections of the lake to search for aquatic invasives that may have escaped inspection and begun to establish themselves. If detected early, it is possible to reverse the infestation by informing AIS Program biologists to conduct an early detection and rapid response program and assist in

eradication procedures. If a sample of an unfamiliar species is found rooted or floating, that sample is sent to biologists to review. Recently, we started sending photos rather than mailing samples, which has been very effective in identifying questionable samples.

Every section of the lake has an assigned surveyor, and sections overlap to ensure coverage. We use a geological survey map of Echo to organize our survey and record findings- what vegetation is found where. We also use the form provided by the AIS Program to record dates and specifics of surveys. Over time, that mapping data has helped us track trends in what species are found/likely to be found where; when density of vegetation changes and where; places where the lakebed may be filling in and helps us to speculate why these data points might be occurring or changing.

For example, vegetation is most dense at the inlets of Echo's brooks, which may be point sources for nutrients from runoff. Our LaRosa Partnership Program initiative will help to figure this out. Thus far, and knock on wood, Echo Lake has fended off invasive species, but rising phosphorus trends are a current concern.

In terms of equipment, we are very low tech; we don't use special mapping tools or other apps though we are aware that these tools are available. Kayaks and pontoon boats are commonly used in the lakebed survey, and many surveyors swim and snorkel. The view scopes made of plexiglass screwed onto black plastic culvert pipe were provided by Leslie many years ago and are still in use, especially handy when surveying from kayaks. Data are recorded on documents provided by AIS Program and submitted by mail; electronic documentation option is available as well. We also don't use tools to harvest samples from the lakebed; we don't disturb anything growing in the lake bed; we do grab anything that may be floating that looks suspicious. Recent use of cell phone cameras to send photos has been effective.

Maintaining our volunteer team is essential in doing this important work. We divide the lake shoreline into sections and assign a section or sections to each volunteer. Obviously, the more volunteers the better! We are very fortunate to have a few volunteers to pick up the slack if our numbers decline, which has occurred from time to time.

We also reach out annually to invite shoreline property owners to patrol vegetation in their own "front yards" so to speak and report any changes in vegetation to the Lakebed Survey Coordinator, who will assess the situation, identify the vegetation, or send a sample to AIS Program for identification. Fortunately, no mitigation plans have had to be carried out due to the success of our first line of defense, our Greeter Program.

Recently, our partnership with DEC in the La Rosa Program has helped us to learn more about water quality issues in Echo, and where concerns may be occurring, and identify areas in need of protection or remediation. In combination with our Lay Monitoring team, this effort to maintain optimal water quality will also support lake quality in general by discouraging unhealthy growth of vegetation.

The AIS Program staff provides excellent resources in their VIP trainings with photos and drawings to help in identifying aquatic invasive species. These are updated from time to time. Continuing to provide resources - handbooks, posters etc.- would help us as we seek to expand our programs. We hope the AIS Program will continue to provide local, in person VIP training opportunities, although virtual trainings are effective as well.

ELPA continues to raise awareness and provide information on Lakes and Ponds Programs via our newsletters, annual meetings and person-to-person interactions around the lake. We appreciate the active partnership we have built and maintained with the State, the Town of Charleston, and our Echo Lake community to preserve and protect our lake for future generations. Most of all, we appreciate the dedication and diligence of our volunteers here on Echo Lake, without whose energy and commitment we could not sustain such a successful AIS prevention effort.

(Final Version of FOVLAP article edited and approved by Kim Jensen, VT DEC Lakes and Ponds Program)

Access Greeter Report: Karl Koenigsbauer

Since 2002, the Vermont Public Access Greeter Program has expanded operation to access points at 32 lakes and ponds statewide and those numbers are increasing annually. The goal of the greeter program is to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species and help educate lake visitors about invasive species. Inspecting watercraft for invasive species is key in preventing the introduction of a variety of aquatic species. Maintaining a robust greeter program is far more effective and economically sensible than eradicating invasive species once they are established. The ELPA greeter program has been extremely effective over the years by having three paid greeters that cover the access five days a week. I am pleased to report that our paid greeters will cover the lake access seven days this summer, along with two volunteer greeters.

2023 information from Olin Reed, who heads up the State Greeter Program:

Greeters representing 34 locally run programs provided coverage at 38 launches on lakes and ponds across Vermont.

Greeters greeted and educated 27,141 visitors about AIS.

Greeters inspected 21,628 watercraft of various types.

Greeters recorded and removed 1,184 organisms from watercraft.

Of the 580 instances of an AIS encountered, approximately 96% were identified as Eurasian watermilfoil.

The above data clearly points out just how important the State and Local Greeter Programs are to maintaining and protecting our lakes and waterways in the state. The commitment and dedicated approach that our greeters take on a daily basis in the summer at the Echo Lake access is invaluable in safeguarding the lake from the introduction of AIS in what we currently believe is void of AIS. While we recognize that AIS could find its way in the lake, we are confident that our efforts will continue to meet the goal of enjoying a lake free of AIS.

Green Up Day May 4, 2024: Ann Hunsicker

Green Up Day is almost upon us! This year it will be held on Saturday May 4, 2024. Our thanks to all who participate every year. It's great to have the lakeside looking so clean as we get into the season.

We can always use more volunteers if you want to participate and get outside with us! Green Up can include our roadsides as well as the lake. Green Up is more than just the satisfaction of having done something for our environment. Find a friend or family member to work with and enjoy the time together, get some great exercise and wave to your neighbors!

Please let Ann know if you can volunteer this year by emailing her at ahunsicker17@gmail.com

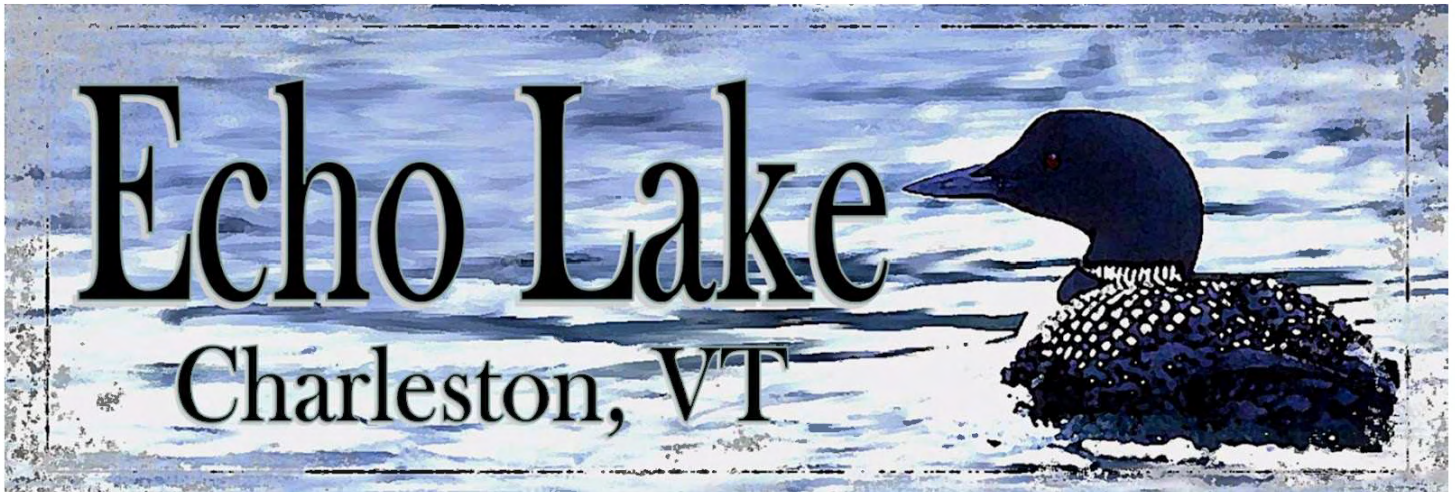
It doesn't take long and is an important part of keeping our lake healthy. Join us and make it an annual tradition!

Echo Lake Protective Association Merchandise!

Clothing options (also hats and totes) with the ELPA logo embroidered are available for ordering at the Echo Lake Protective Association website www.echolakeassociation.net



New Items for 2024 ELPA Merchandise: Dawn Bechtold



Happy Spring!

The ELPA merchandising team has a few new items to add to our selection of Echo Lake apparel and other goodies. The proceeds of each sale go into the Contingency Fund for future needs in keeping the health of our pristine Echo Lake. We are offering all the same items as last year, and adding sweatshirts, long sleeved t-shirts and a larger size cap! The Sweatshirts will be printed and the caps can either be embroidered or printed with Echo Lake. We also have an Echo Lake refrigerator magnet for sale, which is 2" x 6", cost \$15.00.

Please go online to our ELPA website at www.echolakeassociation.net and look under the tab of Activities, then Logo Merchandise and you will see all the items we have available for purchase this summer. You can find the specifics of each item, including color and sizing options.

Sweatshirts: adult or youth, screen

Hats: embroidered or printed

Long sleeve t-shirts

Magnets

The following **deadlines** for ordering ELPA merchandise in 2024 are:

June 15 with a delivery date of approximately July 4

July 15 with a delivery date of approximately August 10 picnic

Aug 15 with a delivery date of approximately Labor Day

Thank you for your support of Echo Lake Protective Association!

Color Challenge Run: Sunday July 7, 2024



Photo credit to Jean Wilson and Cindy Smith

ELPA is once again hosting the Color Challenge on Sunday July 7, 2024. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to be with your family, friends and neighbors while supporting the lake you love!

Our family fun run is open to people of all ages and all abilities. You can walk, skip, or run the gentle, rolling 5K loop on West Echo Lake Road while being showered with colored powder at five color stations throughout the course. After the race enjoy post-race snacks and a chance to win amazing raffle prizes.

You can save money by pre-registering. 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. The couples' registration fee is \$30; day of event registration is \$40. See you at the 2024 Color Challenge!

Visit the ELPA website for registration forms: <https://www.echolakeassociation.net/activities/color-challenge/>

We will be counting on the many volunteers to help us pull off another successful year! If you would like to volunteer to assist with this event please email karljk1950@gmail.com

See you at the 2024 Color Challenge!

Treasurer's Report: Ann Hunsicker

Let's start with some very good news. We had about \$30,000 more in the bank at the end of 2023 than we had at the end of 2022. We continue to receive outstanding support from our members and our community.

The primary driver behind the increase in our funds this year is due to the timing of payments on our Aquatic Nuisance grant from the State. We received two payments for this grant in one year. We also did very well with our fund raising this year from both the Color Challenge as well as the sales of logowear. Our income from interest has also increased.

ELPA's expenses were in line with what we had budgeted, with our greeter expense coming in a bit lower than expected. This is primarily due to most of the greeters not working beyond Labor Day. In 2023, 82% of our expenses went towards our greeter program. That number was 74% in 2022, 78% in 2021 and 85% in 2020.

Our contingency fund is making good progress towards the initial goal of \$100,000, set by the board several years ago. We currently have almost \$83,000 in this fund. We have the funds invested in CD's, maturing at two different times during the year, some in the spring and some in the fall. Should we need to access this money due to an invasive occurrence, we should have some money available at whatever time it is needed.

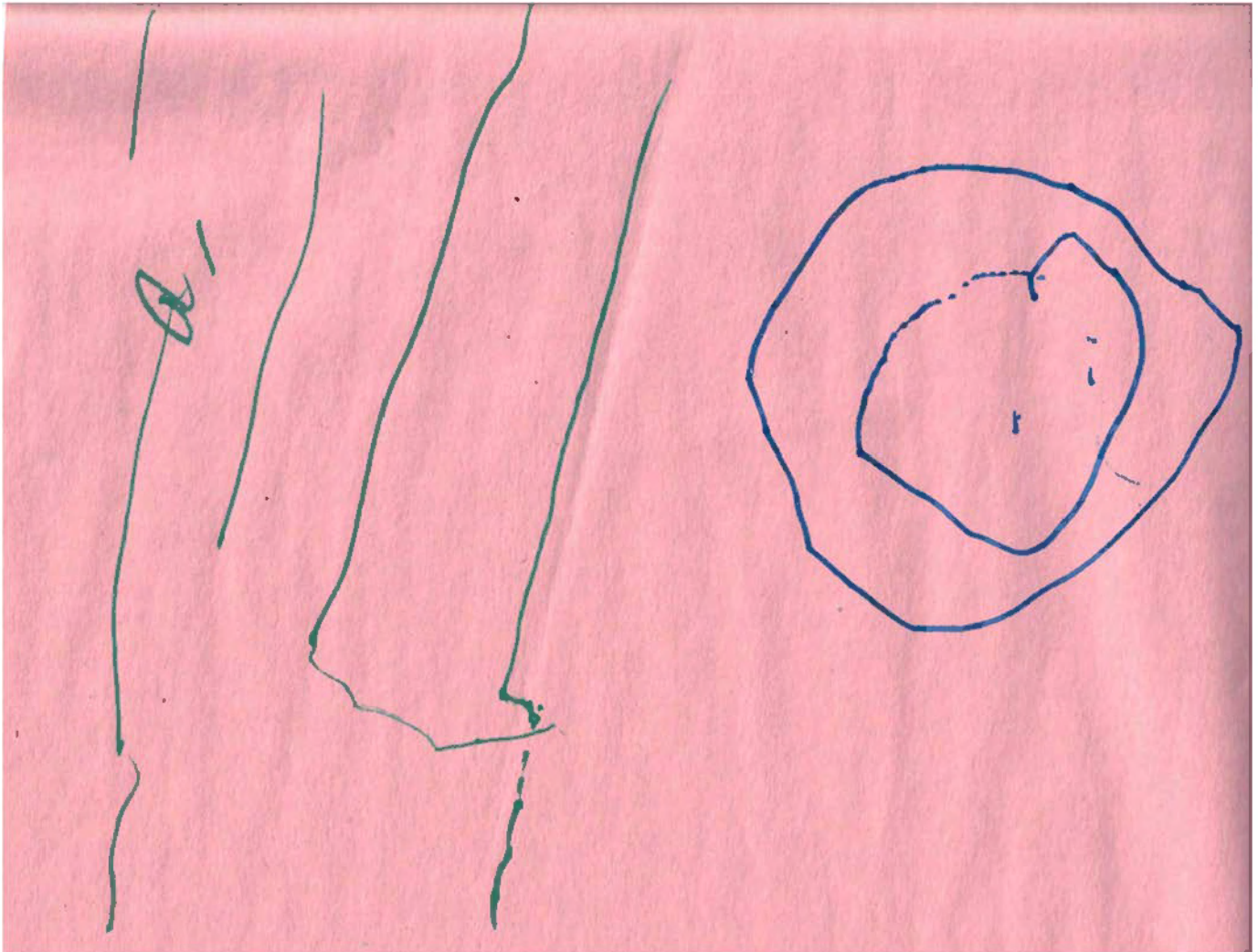
Thanks to all of you who make everything we do possible. We are a 501(c)3 organization so all dues and donations are tax deductible. You can mail your contributions or we have the ability to receive payments through PayPal. Please click on the Support ELPA tab on our website for further information. You can also support ELPA by making donations from your IRA.

Investment Committee: Peter Bestenbostel

The ELPA board established a contingency fund with an initial target of \$100,000. The funds stated purpose is to provide funding to assist in remediation of any invasive species contamination in Echo Lake when it occurs. When the time comes this fund will provide a vital resource to the lake community, enabling it to react swiftly and thereby hold down any remediation costs.

The Echo Lake Protective Association contingency fund is currently invested with two institutions. A 9 month CD which comes due in July 2024 and is valued at \$57,000, and in an effort to ladder our investment in the contingency fund the board also established two additional CD's. A one year CD with Passumpsic Savings which comes due in May 2024 and is valued at \$10,258, and a 6 month CD at Passumpsic which comes due in March 2024 in the amount of \$15,250. When it matures the larger CD with Passumpsic will be rolled into a savings account until May when it will be combined with the smaller one and renewed for a full year. These investments bring the approximate value of the fund to \$82,478.

As always the growth of the fund will be largely determined by the success of ELPA in event fundraising like the color challenge and in securing private gifts through donations as a not for profit organization. The board will be making decisions about additions to the fund annually. It may also be time to ask the board to review the initial funding target. Those strategic choices will define the growth of the fund.



Echo Lake artwork by Ben Dibble, age 3

HISTORY OF “ICE-OUT” AT ECHO LAKE

The day in Spring when a water body in Vermont becomes completely ice-free from shore to shore is known as the “Ice-Out date.” Larry Slason has been tracking the dates over the past decade. Maybe others have records of earlier years. The date of Ice-Out is subjective rather than scientific, but it’s fun to track. The latest Ice-Out on record for Echo Lake is May 23, 1973!

April 26, 2011

April 4, 2012

April 24, 2013

April 29, 2014

May 3, 2015

April 12, 2016

April 21, 2017

May 4, 2018

April 27, 2019

April 24, 2020

April 12, 2021

April 19, 2022

April 16, 2023

April 12, 2024

LOON UPDATE

The loon raft has been placed along the Echo Lake shoreline beside a wooded section near George Thompson’s property. Signs have been placed nearby to remind people to please give the loons space to manage their nest. Please respect these signs and the raft, and encourage family and friends to do the same. Harassing the wildlife is illegal in Vermont. Here is hoping for a successful season for the loons!

Thank you to George Thompson and Matt Breton for managing the loon raft and signs!!

LAKE WISE PROGRAM --- Tom Wagner A Lake Friendly Property

Why is it important to have a lake friendly property?

Recent Vermont lake science from the National Lake Assessment conducted by the EPA shows that Vermont ranked lowest in the northeast ecoregion and in the nation for degraded shoreland disturbance. Shoreland disturbance can be directly related to degraded water quality and aquatic habitat. Most importantly, except for this year, Echo Lake's phosphorus levels have been rising. Phosphorus is a naturally occurring element that feeds lake algae, a healthy part of any lake ecosystem. But too much phosphorus can put a lake out of balance, feeding massive algae blooms that smell terrible, turn water green, degrade wildlife habitat, and potentially harm human and pet health.

You can find phosphorus in lots of places – pet waste, fertilizers, household cleaners, motor oil – none of which should ever find their way into a lake. But the biggest source of phosphorus is sand and soil that is washed into a lake after a rain event. Thus, we need everyone to pitch in and help protect the health of our lake by maintaining a shoreline that helps prevent pollutants from entering our beautiful lake.

Simple Steps to a Lake Friendly Property:

Create a buffer of vegetation at the shoreline. An easy solution is to not mow near the shoreline, because grass lawns do not act as a barrier for water runoff. Eventually your no mow zone will fill in with naturally seeded wildflowers, and your shoreline will help reduce pollutants from entering the lake. Lake Friendly properties are more natural than suburban — preventing erosion, providing wildlife habitat, food for pollinators, cooling shade, privacy screening, and so much more. Utilize Vermont's Best Management Practices to limit runoff.

https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/documents/LakeWiseInfoSheet_LakeshoreBuffers.pdf

<https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/lakeshores-lake-wise/bmp>

Pump your septic. Because of the results of our Lay Monitoring, we now know that there is evidence of caffeine in Echo Lake. The presence of caffeine indicates that wastewater from septic systems is entering our lake. The recommendation is to pump your tank every three years.

Clean up your pet waste. Just like human sewage, untreated pet fecal matter is harmful to waterways. It is extremely high in fecal coliform bacteria, nitrogen, and phosphorus. If “left to nature,” pet waste and the associated disease-causing organisms, such as giardia and salmonella, can be washed away by stormwater into our lake. Stormwater pollution is one of the leading causes of water pollution nationally. Too many bacteria make water unsafe for drinking and swimming. Pet waste can also add extra nutrients to local waterbodies, which can increase plant growth and algal blooms. So please scoop the poop!

Use Phosphorus Free Products. The results from our caffeine sampling indicate that wastewater from septic systems is entering the lake. Thus, we can lessen the discharge of phosphorus by using products that do not contain it. If you feel the need to fertilize your lawn, you must use phosphorus free fertilizer. It's the law in Vermont. Use phosphorus free dishwasher and laundry detergents, and all cleaning products.

There are now wide options to choose from. While not suggesting that you buy these products on Amazon, Amazon has a search feature at the top of the page that readily enables one to find phosphorus - free products. A search for phosphorus free (fill in the blank) will yield many results. Seventh Generation, a local Vermont Company, and Mrs. Meyers are two well-known companies that offer phosphorus-free products. BUT, read the label to be sure of any product you use. If you would like information about how to make your property lake friendly, email: echolakewise@gmail.com

SPRINGTIME IN THE ECHO LAKE WATERSHED

Photo Credit to Peter Bestenbostel



LAY MONITOR REPORT – Tom Wagner and Mike Vinton

Despite the heavy rains in the summer of 2023 and the many washouts of roads and streams that feed Echo Lake, our Phosphorus readings declined significantly. The only blip was recorded in July after the major washouts on West Echo Lake Road when our Phosphorus readings doubled from the previous week's reading. Our excellent Secchi Disk reading, which measures clarity by the depth the disk is visible, also radically changed after the storm decreasing by 5 meters, or close to 16.5 feet. But the lake bounced right back from that shock to excellent readings.

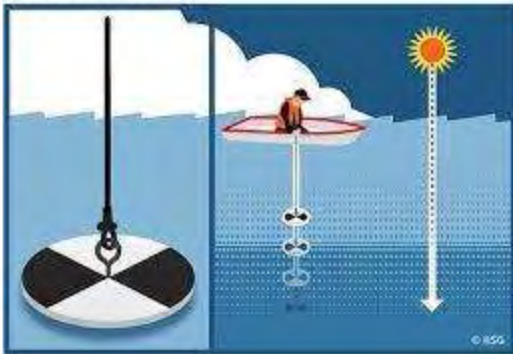
We used a new device to collect samples, a Van Dorn sampler, and the hose, which has been used for many years. Our Phosphorus readings were much lower using the Van Dorn, and we have been given permission to stop using the hose. Readings from the hose were always suspect according to Mark Mitchell, the Limnologist who oversees Lay Monitoring.

So, the great news is that our Phosphorus readings in 2023 averaged 7.4 ug/L (Parts per Billion) compared with 13.8 ug/L in 2022. In the 5 years 2018 to 2022 we averaged 11.3 ug/L. So, the decline is significant. Chlorophyll readings were also below our historical average. Our Phosphorus and Chlorophyll readings mean that we continue to qualify as an A(1) lake, and we remain one of the cleanest lakes in the country and Vermont.

We also tested for indications of caffeine in the water, an indicator of septic issues. We did have a reading above the reporting limit indicating that there is most likely some wastewater pollution from septic systems.

Total phosphorus concentration is sampled to determine a lake's level of nutrient enrichment. Nutrient pollution is one of the most widespread environmental issues in lakes. Unnaturally high levels of phosphorus caused by human activity can result in excessive growth of algae, cyanobacteria, and aquatic plants while decreasing water clarity. Sources of phosphorus include: shoreline erosion, run-off from dirt roads, failing septic systems, agricultural runoff, residential runoff, and erosion from construction. Chlorophyll testing measures the concentration of algae and cyanobacteria in Echo Lake.

Secchi Disk



Water Quality – How You Can Help

- Stop Invasives: Clear ALL plant and animal matter from your boat, kayak, paddles, anchor, fishing gear, etc. BEFORE entering the water.
- Don't Foul the Lake: Keep trash and plant clippings out of the lake. Avoid gasoline spills. Don't bathe in the lake.
- Check Fishing Gear: Ensure your fishing tackle is lead-free.
- Scoop the Poop: Put all pet waste in the trash. Prevent pathogens, such as round worms, E. coli, Giardia, and salmonella from entering the lake.

MEMBERSHIP: Elaine Carpenter and Mark Bechtold

The Echo Lake Protective Association memberships are coming in! We are pleased that 32 memberships have already been paid for 2024. Some of our members made an additional donation which is greatly appreciated. As we look forward to another summer on the lake, here is a reminder of what your ELPA contributions support.

ELPA dues and donations are put towards maintaining Echo Lake. Annual income is used to hire boat greeters, monitor water quality throughout the year and provide ecological educational opportunities for children in Charleston. We are also building a contingency fund which would be used to remediate any invasive species in our lake, should that occur.

Our boat access greeter program begins in May and ends in September. This is our front line of defense in keeping invasive species, like milfoil, out of our lake. It is one of the most expensive lines in our budget and contributions help to maintain this program.

You may access a Dues and Donations form or contribute electronically at <http://www.echolakeassociation.net/13-2/>

Dues and donations are fully tax deductible as ELPA is a 501(c)(3) organization.

We hope that you are able to enjoy some time at Echo Lake soon. Please remember the ongoing work of the Echo Lake Protective Association to keep the lake enjoyable for so many.

REMINDER: DON'T FORGET TO PAY YOUR 2024 MEMBERSHIP DUES!!!

GO TO www.echolakeassociation.net

Click Support ELPA

REGISTER TO PAY ELECTRONICALLY OR BY MAIL
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Please visit and “like” our new Facebook page at:
Echo Lake Protective Association, VT

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

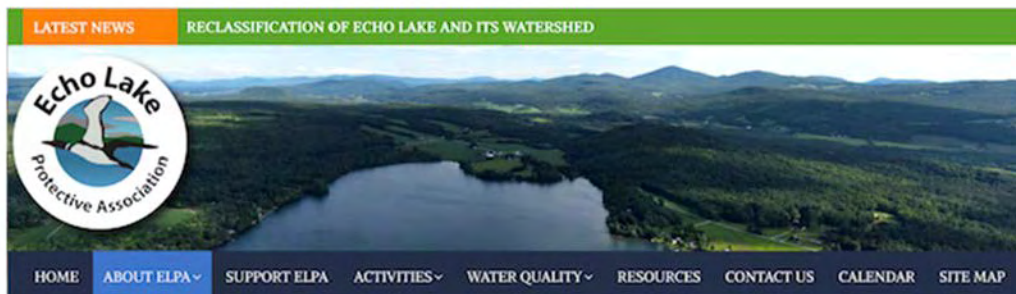
ELPA Doesn't Work Without Volunteers ... Maybe you'd like to pitch in. There are lots of opportunities, including but not limited to ...

- Volunteer time as a greeter at the boat access.
- Participate in the lake survey as a Vermont Invasive Patroller.
- Help the Membership Committee.
- Offer updates to the website.
- Supply photos and ideas for our Facebook page.
- Help out with the Color Challenge, where a variety of volunteer opportunities are available.
- Host a workshop.
- Help with set up and cleanup of our Annual Picnic.
- Become a Board member.
- Participate in Green Up Day.
- Help with trail maintenance.
- Write an article for our newsletter.

Whatever your experience and skills, we would be happy to point you in the right direction. Contact Karl Koenigsbauer at karljk1950@gmail.com

Visit our website and explore! <https://www.echolakeassociation.net/>

Thank you to Kristen Wilson for updating and maintaining the website!!



Water Quality: Holly Bull

New Wake Boat Rules:

The State of Vermont has recently adopted new rules to regulate the use of wake boats and wake sport activities. Under these regulations, wake boats in wake sport mode are prohibited on 43 of Vermont's 73 lakes that allow motorized crafts. On the remaining 30 of which Echo Lake is one of them, operation in the wake sport mode is only permitted within a wake zone, which is at least 50 contiguous acres that are 500 feet from shore on all sides and 20+ feet deep. A Home Lake provision was included to control the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species. A wake boat owner must declare a "home" lake each summer. If a wake boat owner leaves their home lake and puts their wake boat in a different lake, they must have their ballast tanks decontaminated at a state approved facility when they return. Out-of-state visitors must also have their wake boats decontaminated before they are allowed to enter any Vermont lake.

The Echo Lake Protective Association (ELPA) has submitted a petition to the Agency of Natural Resources to prohibit wake boats and wake sport activities on Echo Lake because we feel these new rules are woefully insufficient to protect our water quality, shoreline, and lake users. Unfortunately, the petition process takes time, is not guaranteed to be approved, and will not go into effect this summer.

For more information on wake boats and the new wake boats regulations go to: Responsiblewakes.org

Avast Ye! Buoys!

For the summer of 2024, the Echo Lake Protective Association is implementing an educational program to remind motorized boat operators about the established "200' Rule". Operating a vessel (except sailboats) at greater than "no wake speed" within 200 feet of: the shoreline, a person in the water, a canoe, rowboat, or other vessel, an anchored or moored vessel with a person on board is a violation of Vermont boating laws. "No wake speed" is the operation of a vessel that does not produce a wake, not to exceed 5 miles per hour.

Keeping motorized boats 200' or more from shore not only protects Echo Lake's water quality, but it also reduces shoreline erosion and keeps lake users safe. So, please respect Echo Lake by respecting Vermont boating laws.

Note: The new rule for wake boats operating in wake sport mode supersedes the established rules for conventional motorboats.

The "200 feet from shore" rule is an important and protective law. Because it may be difficult to gauge how far 200 ft is, ELPA is helping our lake users and property owners by deploying 2 buoys. These buoys will be placed at various spots on the lake and moved throughout the summer. ELPA wants to target the most vulnerable areas, like shallow areas that are more susceptible to the stirring up of legacy phosphorus, which is phosphorus that rests on the lakebed.



Photos? Stories?

Do you have a photo that captures a special moment on the lake that you'd like to share – a sunset, a fish, a cookout, a dive from a dock? Perhaps a poem or story? Some adventure or observation or special event or concern or reflection? We love contributions for our ELPA newsletters. Our goal is to have this newsletter be informative and reflect a sense of community. Any contributions may be sent to the ELPA Secretary at EchoLakePA@gmail.com Stay tuned for more beautiful artwork created by Echo Lake youngsters in the Fall Newsletter!

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.



ELPA ANNUAL PICNIC

The ELPA picnic will take place at the property of Peter and Nancy Engels again this summer. Mark your calendars for the ELPA Annual Picnic on Saturday August 10, 2024!

Charleston Elementary School Program: Peter Bestenbostel

For several years now ELPA has sponsored two environmentally focused programs at Charleston Elementary School. One integrates lake and watershed studies into the third grade curriculum (SISKIN), the other works with older kids in a more hands on approach after school to explore Echo Lake and the surrounding watershed (NorthWoods). Both the Siskin program for third grade students at the school and the after-school program provided by NorthWoods for older students are underway this school year!

In past years I have stopped in at the schools open house to meet the staff and discuss the program. This past fall Holly Bull developed a hands on demonstration project to display in the Gym during the open house. Other organizations have done this and we figured why not? The demonstration project met with so much success with the kids we decided to try again this coming fall.

In an effort to potentially expand the program a bit I have put in a grant funding request with Vermont Community Foundation for some matching funding to enable us to do a bit more with the kids. Sadly, at this time VCF has not found our project worthy of funding but we will try again. I mean, local community group seeks matching funds to support an environmental enrichment program at rural elementary school??

What's not to love?

IN REMEMBRANCE

Jean N. (McCamley) Wilson, 86, of Glastonbury, CT passed away peacefully on Thursday, November 16, 2023 after a courageous journey with Alzheimer's.

Born in Philipsburg, PA, she was the daughter of the late Martin and Anna J. (Silensky) McCamley. She graduated from Georgetown University in 1959 with a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. While playing the organ in the university chapel, Jean met her husband Donald King Wilson, Jr. and sealed their fate of 59 loving years together, raising nine children.

Jean led a full life devoted to her Catholic Faith, caring for her family and many others. After university, she worked as a registered nurse and then became an amazing homemaker, moving multiple times while her husband served in the US Navy. As her family grew, she volunteered in her community at every level, always connecting with those in need. She was active in her church St. Patrick- St. Anthony as a Eucharistic Minister and volunteered at the House of Bread soup kitchen in Hartford, CT. She also volunteered in the Glastonbury school music department and at Watkinson School in Hartford, CT coaching soccer. She loved cooking, gardening, animals, playing the piano, organizing holiday family gatherings and especially looked forward to seeing her great/grandchildren. She was an avid reader and a staunch supporter of education, making significant contributions to various charitable organizations, including the NorthWoods Stewardship Center. In her downtime, she enjoyed watching soccer and basketball, annual trips to Bermuda and spending summers on Echo Lake in East Charleston, VT. Hiking the Shore Trail was a "Must-Do" activity. Throughout her life, she was private and stoic, but determined and brave, making an indelible mark on those around her. Ultimately, she found the greatest joy and peace in her family, helping others and tending to her beautiful gardens. She will forever be missed by her family and all those who loved her and were touched by her kindness.

Submitted by Jean's daughter, Kristen Wilson

Echoing Hospitality

By Greg Carpenter

Off East Echo Lake Road, next to the Lake Seymour outlet, lies a business called the White Birch Lodge. Most people living around the lake are aware of it and have even walked by it on a daily basis, but have you ever wondered how this century old Mom and Pop got its start?



(Center: Elizabeth and AC Gallup)

The location, known today for recreation and leisure, was the brain child of AC and Elizabeth Gallup. This Charleston, Vermont couple purchased the land from JS Sweeney on July 18, 1919.

In 1921, these two visionaries founded a popular retreat they called “Echo Camps”. Word spread quickly about their new lodging and the lake’s outstanding fishing. High demand immediately ensued. This development encouraged AC to add more cottages in 1922 and 1926. By 1931, landing a four- pound Laker became a common occurrence and demand for accommodations rose to levels that forced many hopeful guests to be turned away.



After a fantastic 15-year run, the Gallups sold their highly successful business to George Donovan in 1936. But before heading out to their new home in Eustis, Florida, a large farewell reception and party were given to Mr. and Mrs. Gallup by friends to thank the couple for their kindness and hospitality. The couple were so beloved here that the celebration went on for days.

Once George Donovan and his wife Lou of Stowe took over, they changed the resort name to the Donovan's Echo Lake Club which they ran for 16 years. During their ownership, people from all over the world would vacation there. The Executive Committee of the New England Outdoor Writers would gather at the camp each year as well as renowned writers of fish and game magazines.

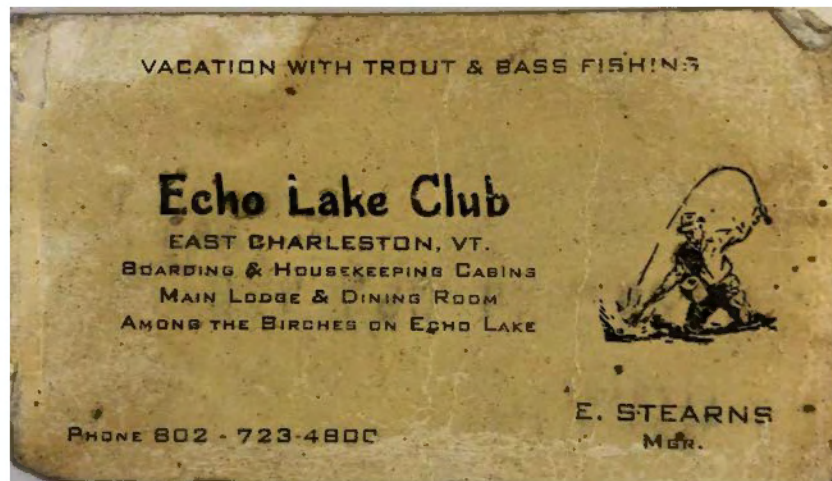
George Donovan, a restaurateur by trade, then sold the Echo Lake Club to David K. Patrick of Shelburne in 1953. At the time of purchase, Patrick stated "the fishing camp will be the first in Vermont to have canoe and guide service." That service would include Echo and the surrounding lakes in the area.



The Echo Lake club was then sold to Elliot and Emelene Stearns of Tarrytown, NY, in 1958. During the time Patrick owned it, he became a federal Fish and Wildlife Service warden and was sent to Alaska. During that period of time David leased the club to 2 men from Maine to run it. By the time David decided to sell it, the cabins and boats had seen better days. Wanting to run a top-notch operation, the Stearns invested in the resort by having the boats repaired and the cabins renovated.

By 1970, Andy Pato had changed the company name to its present-day name- the White Birch Lodge. Today the White Birch Lodge is run by Linda Studer.

Looking back who would have predicted AC and Elizabeth Gallup's foresight would still be felt around the lake today? Thanks to their imagination, fishermen and vacationers are still enjoying their innovation some 103 years later.



Sources:

“Change In Management” The Barre Times, (Barre, VT.) May 6, 1957.

Studer, Linda, Interview, Owner of the White Birch Lodge, (Charleston VT.) November 11, 2022.

Kellogg, Colleen, Interview, Assistant Town Clerk; Treasurer at Town of Charleston, (Charleston VT.) October 3, 2022.

“Echo Camps Opened” Express and Standard, (Newport, VT.) May 8, 1931.

“East Charleston” Essex County Herald, (Island Pond, VT.) September 2, 1926.

Photos courtesy of the Charleston, Vt. Historical Society.

“East Charleston” Caledonia-Record, (St. Johnsbury, VT.) September 21, 1936.

“Holiday Due Restaurateurs” The Times Argus, (Barre, VT.) August 10, 1961.

“Echo Lake Club Under New Management” Essex County Herald, (Island Pond, VT.) April 11, 1958.

“David Patrick Buys Donovan’s Echo Lake Club” The Burlington Free Press, (Burlington, VT.) August 31, 1953.

“Echo Lake Club Rendezvous For Fisherman” Essex County Herald, (Island Pond, VT.) September 4, 1947.

SAVE THE DATES – Tom Wagner

There will be two workshops/tours in July held in collaboration with Seymour Lake Association and Echo Lake Protective Association:

On July 8, 2024 Seymour will host a water quality workshop with useful information for those thinking about creating a Lake Wise property or for those who want to make sure that any work they do follows Best Management practices, or for those who want a refresher on how to comply with the Shoreland Protection Act. The workshop will provide information on wastewater treatment options, installation of water bars in driveways, invasive plants and removal/treatment, and tree planting and pruning in compliance with the Shoreland Act. Local professionals will discuss these topics.

On July 25, 2024 there will be a garden tour of four Lake Wise properties, two on each lake. At each property we will discuss with the property owner the steps that they took to transform their property into Lake Wise status and admire beautiful gardens. If you have been considering transforming your property to meet Lake Wise standards or are interested in how to implement Best Management Practices to improve the health of Echo Lake, you will come away with useful information and ideas.

At our final stop we will wrap up the day with drinks and snacks.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT DATES FOR 2024:

Green Up Day – Saturday May 4, 2024

Color Challenge Run – Sunday July 7, 2024

Water Quality Event – July 8, 2024

Annual ELPA Meeting – Saturday July 20, 2024. Location TBD.

Garden Tour – July 25, 2024. Tom and Amy Wagner to host drinks and snacks afterward.

Annual ELPA Picnic – Saturday August 10, 2024 at the property of Peter & Nancy Engels

ELPA Board Meetings – Thursday May 16, 2024 and Thursday September 12, 2024

Echo Lake Shore Trail: Carol Martin

The NorthWoods trails closest to Echo Lake are the Echo Lake Shore Trail (maintained by ELPA volunteers) and the Wolcott Trail; both trailheads start at the kiosk on the East Echo Lake Road. These are beautiful, easy hikes! If you would like to help to maintain the shore trail please contact Carol at 802-535-1052 or carol.martin@weidmann-group.com

[Echo Lake Protective Association](#)
[PO Box 41](#)
[East Charleston, Vermont 05833](#)

[For more information, visit our website -](#)
<https://www.echolakeassociation.net/>



[Photo by Doug Gimler](#)

Submitted May 1, 2024 by Lori Kempton, ELPA Secretary