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ELPA 2025 Spring Newsletter



Ruffed Grouse Spring 2025 – photo credit to Matt Breton

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,

Spring officially arrived on Thursday, March 20. While dedicated skiers may not be excited about warmer days and receding snow on trails, there is a definite sense of gratitude by many that winter is finally behind us, especially the past winter! While the ice on the lake, as of April 14, has yet to "go out" it will not be long when the loons will return for our listening pleasure along with eager anglers excited to catch the big one. Longer days, increased sunshine, budding trees and life on the lake is definitely appreciated. With the warmer weather and access to the lake for kayakers, anglers, and recreational boaters comes the worry of the introduction of invasive water species to our pristine lake. While a robust greeter program provides a good deal of comfort, it is incumbent on all of us to practice common sense preventive measures when launching any watercraft in the lake. Another concern that arises with the arrival of spring and early summer is the potential for heavy rain storms. Many of us remember the damage and the increased level of the lake in July of 2023 and then again, almost to the day, in July of 2024. Hopefully mother nature will grant us a well-deserved reprieve this spring and summer. While this message is not intended to dampen the excitement for spring and the season of rebirth it is simply a message of awareness of our individual responsibilities to maintain the quality of life that we all seek for the Echo Lake community. In the meantime, find time to take a walk around the lake and enjoy watching the lake and its surroundings come to life. We are indeed fortunate to have a national treasure where we can live life to the fullest, even in the winter!

Karl Koenigsbauer, President

Water Quality – Holly Bull



Sincere Appreciation and Immense Gratitude



To all our community and association members who attended, voiced their opinions, and wrote letters of support during the public hearing period regarding our petition to prohibit wake boats and wake sports, the Echo Lake Protective Association cannot thank you enough. Your input was crucial and a testament to your love and dedication to Echo Lake. All 160 compelling public comments submitted to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) fully supported our petition.

The DEC has determined that changes to the newly enacted 2024 Statewide Wake Boat Rule are needed based on weaknesses raised at the public hearings to prohibit wake boats and wake sports. This will be done through formal rulemaking, which can take up to 8 months. Unfortunately, the DEC has decided to align this rule-changing process with the submitted petitions, so it is unlikely that a decision on our petition will be made for the 2025 boating season. We will keep our members updated on any new information or developments.

What Does ELPA Test and Monitor on Echo Lake?

With climate change and the ever-increasing threats to our waters, the type of water testing and monitoring occurring on Echo Lake has expanded over the years. The Echo Lake Protective Association has participated in the State's Lay Monitoring Program since 1978. It has maintained a well-established and robust Vermont Invasive Patrollers program with enough volunteers to survey our entire lake for aquatic invasive plants. Since 2021, we have taken part in the LaRosa Partnership Program, which allows us to test phosphorus levels in the brooks and streams that flow into Echo Lake. Additionally, we've recently undertaken weekly testing for cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) at two locations on the lake. The association's Water Quality Team patrols for aquatic invasive animals like golden clams, zebra mussels, and spiny water fleas, which can harm our lake's ecosystem. We also survey and record the variety of crayfish and mussels inhabiting Echo Lake. This summer, we plan to search the lake and nearby streams for the endangered wood turtle in hopes of documenting its existence in our watershed. All this data and information are collected and analyzed to determine the preventive actions we can take to protect and enhance our water quality and to improve our understanding of our lake's ecosystem.

Green Up Day May 3, 2025: Ann Hunsicker

Green Up day is almost upon us! This year it will be held Saturday May 3, 2025. 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 LWAP (Lake Watershed Action Plan): Peggy Stevens

The Echo Lake LWAP committee has formed and begun planning for this year's effort to restore and protect water quality in our lake. Water quality is affected by property management practices, for better or worse! Many of you are already "Lake Wise", having participated in the State of Vermont Department of Conservation Lake Wise process - assessing your properties strengths and needs, and executing plans that will stabilize shorelines; prevent erosion; and beautify your lakefront property as well.

The Echo Lake LWAP Committee, led by Tom Wagner, (802-299-6954; email echolwap@gmail.com) and aided by committee members Susan Czerepak, Steve Gratton, Peggy Stevens, and Deborah Zuaro, will be working with Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District Lake Watershed Program Specialist, Will Marlier, to encourage 100% participation so that Echo Lake will remain the pristine jewel we know and love.

We welcome Will Marlier to our Echo Lake Community and want to give him this opportunity to introduce himself to you.

**Greetings from Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District's
Lake Watershed Program Specialist**

**Will Marlier
Spring 2025**



For many, Spring is a time of new beginnings. The snow melts, the ice recedes, crocuses bloom, and peepers fill the air with their cacophonous song. Lakes across the state shake the lethargy from their shores as both natural and human systems prepare for the hustle and bustle of summer. For me, this spring brought new employment and an opportunity to connect more deeply with the thawing lakes of the Northeast Kingdom.

The Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District had been advertising for a Lake Watershed Program Specialist over the course of the winter. For a young local man looking to dedicate his life to the stewardship of Vermont's natural resources, it felt like the perfect opportunity. I was happy to apply, and even happier to be offered the position. I bring with me to this work an undergraduate degree from Temple University, a session working in the State House with the House Environment & Energy Committee, and several years of volunteerism with the Greensboro Conservation Commission and Greensboro Land Trust.

In the Lake Watershed Program Specialist role I will support lakeshore communities across Orleans County in managing their watersheds to improve water quality and restore natural ecosystems. The bulk of my work will be focused on collaborating with lake associations (like ELPA), landowners, and other partners to implement recently completed Lake Watershed Action Plans (or LWAP's). I will accomplish this by interfacing with landowners to develop projects, secure grant funding for project implementation, and coordinating community outreach efforts. I will serve as a resource for landowners with questions about Best Management Practices, and will make myself available to conduct Lake Wise Assessments for those that are interested.

My efforts in community outreach will sometimes manifest as written articles (like this one) and other times manifest as in-person educational workshops. This spring I supported our partner organizations, the Memphremagog Watershed Association and Northwoods Stewardship Center, in hosting demonstrations on the shore of Lake Seymour. The workshop was designed to **showcase practical and manageable projects that lake association members and lakeshore landowners could implement independently**. The day was split between three stations, each exploring a different type of water quality improvement. These included:

1: Culvert Installation and Driveway Drainage: This station showcased how properly sized and placed culverts can minimize erosion due to high-flow events.

2: Riparian Buffer Planting: This station demonstrated how native plant species can be planted to establish vegetative buffers along waterways. Healthy plant populations hold soil in place and enable the slow filtration of water into the ground.

3: Lakeshore Stabilization: This station considered challenges in lakeshore property management, including issues such as lawn-to-lake mowing, ice push, and gully erosion. Workshop facilitators stressed the importance of knowing the difference between small stabilization projects (like plantings) and large ones that would require permitting (like excavation).

Overall, the workshop was a huge success. It was a pleasure to engage with local lakeshore advocates and community members, and I am hopeful that many attendees walked away with useful information that they will be able to put into action on their own lakes, including Echo Lake. I am inspired by the hard work of ELPA members, your LWAP committee, and your lakeshore landowners.

As we look to the summer ahead of us, I hope to work closely with all of you to further protect Echo Lake, its shores, and the water and life that it holds. I am currently working on several potential workshops and projects for this summer, so make sure you are subscribed to the OCNRCD newsletter for updates!

Please feel free to reach out to me by email (will.marlier@orleanscountynrcd.org) or phone (802-595-4538) if you have any questions or ideas regarding this work.

Lakebed Survey Team: Peggy Stevens

Once again, it is time to get our Lakebed Survey Project up and running! As you know, we have been surveying the lakebed for many years now, looking for signs of AIS that may have escaped capture by our fabulous Access Greeters. The Lakebed Survey team is the second front in our ELPA effort to keep invasive species from taking up a permanent home in our lake.

This year we are happy to report that our survey team has four new volunteer members, so important since three of our veterans have moved away. As you may recall, our aim is to survey once mid-end of June and again mid-end of September. Many volunteers patrol mid-way through the summer as well. And remember, I invite every lakeshore property owner to become familiar with the lakebed in their "front yard" and contact me at 723-5951 if you see anything out of the ordinary. Best practice is to leave any suspicious vegetation untouched until confirmed that it is not invasive.

I have been in touch with Kim Jensen, our contact from the Lakes and Ponds Division, to find out about VIP training, which all of our new volunteers will need to participate in, as well as any veterans who would like a refresher, or for that matter any Echo Lake community member who would like to learn more about native and invasive vegetation in our lake. Looks like the nearest in-person VIP training will be at Joe's Pond, so the zoom option Kim offers will probably work best for us. I have participated virtually previously, and it worked fine.

This is a link for the VIP website:

<https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/aquatic-invasives/spread-prevention/vermont-invasive-patrollers>

which includes links to all VIP resources. Every ELPA member is welcome to familiarize and refresh your understanding of the VIP issues and concerns and practices.

Thanks again to everyone for your interest in and support for all of our initiatives to protect and maintain the water quality on Echo Lake. Because of our many efforts, including our Lakebed Survey Project, we have been successful in keeping Echo free of invasive aquatic species, no small feat!

Be in touch with any questions or comments,
Peggy Stevens, Lakebed Survey Coordinator
723-5951

Access Greeter Report: Karl Koenigsbauer

Aquatic invasive species are spread by overland transport of watercraft, trailers, and fishing and recreational equipment. Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species is far more effective and economically sensible than trying to eliminate invasive species once they have been introduced to a waterbody. We are indeed fortunate that Echo Lake has yet to discover any evidence of aquatic invasive species. Complacency and a lack of volunteer support for Echo Lake's Greeter program could jeopardize the success that we have experienced over the years. Taking on an attitude that safeguarding the lake from the introduction of invasive species is someone else's responsibility will invite a severe challenge to the quality of life that we all seek on Echo Lake. Our Greeter Program is impressive as it provides an important service that helps in maintaining the lake from the introduction of invasive species. We are fortunate to have four dedicated and extremely committed paid greeters along with several volunteers that provide coverage of the access area for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. Of the 34 lakes in Vermont that have an active Greeter Program it is safe to assume that the Echo Lake program may lead the way in effective coverage on a daily basis for the summer season. While our coverage is impressive there is still a need for volunteers to provide consistent coverage if and when a paid greeter is unable to cover their specific shift. Volunteering to assist in covering the access area will go a long way in maintaining our goal to cover the access area on a daily basis. Boat access greeter duties include: approaching and interacting with boaters, inspecting watercraft, collecting and reporting data. Training will be provided along with support from experienced greeters. We ask that you give serious thought to helping out this summer with the Echo Lake Greeter Program. If interested in joining a dedicated team of greeters for a few hours a week please contact Karl Koenigsbauer by email: karlk1950@gmail.com or by phone 413-522-1166

"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail"

~Benjamin Franklin

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



ELPA Merchandise Spring 2025: Dawn Bechtold

Greetings! Another summer season on the lake awaits! As you plan for your summer visits to Echo Lake, there may be a need for a cozy sweatshirt on a cool evening after a swim, or a wicking polo shirt that will make your hikes, bikes or walks more comfortable. Please consider checking out the ELPA merchandise on the home page under the tab "Activities". We have a variety of merchandise, and we are sure you'll find something fresh to show community support.

Order due dates for summer 2025 are: June 15, July 15, August 15.

Please allow approximately 3 weeks for delivery.

ELPA Merchandise



Heavy cotton long sleeved T shirt available.

Please check the colors, sizes and specs under the ELPA merchandise tab.

Merch and Motivations Photo Contest Winner 2025!



Congratulations! The 2025 photo contest winner is Al Brouillette and family! He will receive 50% off one item on his next ELPA purchase.

Please submit your photographed ELPA merchandise by April 1, 2026 to elpamerchandise@gmail.com

for your chance to win! Have fun, be creative and adventurous!

The most important thing to remember when purchasing any ELPA merchandise is that 100% of the proceeds on every item sold goes to the lake protection fund to ensure we can keep Echo Lake clean, clear and cool for future generations.

Thank you for your support!

Color Challenge: Sunday July 6, 2025



Photo credit to Jean Wilson and Cindy Smith

CALLING ALL RUNNERS!!

This year's Echo Lake Color Challenge takes place on Sunday July 6th, 2025 at 10am. The 5K race, traverses an out-and-back course alongside beautiful Echo Lake where participants are met by eager volunteers and a rainbow of colors, adding to the day's festivities. All levels of walkers and runners are encouraged to sign up for this family-fun event which supports the Echo Lake Protective Association and its mission to maintain and protect the pristine beauty and superior quality of our shared natural resource.

Registration includes a white t-shirt, sunglasses, snacks and drinks, as well as raffle tickets. The raffle takes place after the race and runners must be present to participate.

Registration forms and more information can be found on our website:

<https://www.echolakeassociation.net>

Treasurer's Report: Ann Hunsicker and Susan McKenna

Despite these uncertain fiscal times, ELPA's finances continue to remain stable thanks to sound stewardship and master grant writing. On April 15th we learned that we had received the maximum award for our Aquatic Nuisance Control Grant, a grand total of \$24,847. These monies are used for the sole purpose of our Greeter Program. A big thank you goes out to Laurie Gee for her steadfast and successful grant writing over the years! In addition, our CDs continue to grow, the newest of which has earned \$250 in interest since it was first opened. Another big thank you is owed to Peter Bestenbostel and the investment committee for their meticulous administration of the CD's.

In other good news, we were able to meet the association's initial goal of \$100,000 for our contingency fund this year by transferring \$15,000 from our fund-raising into our account at CNB. The Board will determine a new goal for the fund this spring.

Investment Committee: Peter Bestenbostel

Protecting Echo Lake has been and continues to be a bedrock goal of the Association. To that end the Board established a fund to collect any extra money at years end. Over the years the fund has grown largely through the efforts of events like the color challenge and donations in excess of dues from members and individuals. The board will be making decisions about additions to the fund annually depending on the overall health of the association and any anticipated changes in funding and expenses.

When the ELPA board established a contingency fund it did so with an initial target of \$100,000. The fund's 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 three institutions. A CD which comes due in August 2025 and is valued at \$59,000, and in an effort to ladder our investment in the fund the board also established a second CD which matures in May 2025 valued at \$26,862. In addition the association retains a mutual fund in the amount of \$647. These investments bring the approximate value of the fund to \$86,509 as of 12/31/2024.

In January 2025 the board elected to supplement the fund with \$15,000 which will go into the CD ladder this spring bringing the contingency fund total to \$101,509! Everybody say YAY! Now the Board needs to decide what the new goal for the fund should be and how we will go about reaching it. Great work EVERYONE!!

Know Your Community: Matt Breton

Aldo Leopold, father of wildlife ecology and modern conservation, wrote in *A Sand County Almanac*, “All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts...The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land.” (If you haven’t read his book, I highly encourage you to do so – if you need a copy, I’ll happily loan one to you.)

For some reason, the spring makes me think of Leopold’s quote. Maybe it is that the broad community he refers to is more visible. Some, because of a welcome return from other places. Others, because they’re out moving around, no longer hemmed in by winter. On a recent April stroll, I happened to notice a hive of some sort hanging on the wires next to East Echo Lake Road. The next day I was cruising along the edge of a beaver pond and spotted eggs floating while I heard frogs calling. On a recent sunrise morning run I heard loons calling from the lake and a barred owl hooting in the woods above me. I’ve even spied moose tracks in several places close by, including one that sauntered up the road near the house, headed west.



Hive located on wire – Photo credit Matt Breton

We live amidst a wild ecosystem that is thrilling to be part of. And part of it we are. Our lawns and walls, our driveways and roads, don’t remove us from this biotic community and its natural processes. I think that knowing who my neighbors are helps me make better decisions. Trimming tree branches? Watch out for bird nests. Fertilizer and pesticides? Nope – no good for the lake or those wood frogs I now know and care about.



Wood Frog Eggs – Photo credit Matt Breton

I'm also driving a little slower lately, especially since there's a cocky little Ruffed Grouse that has been running at my truck to defend his approximately 10-acre territory over this last month (his picture is at the start of the newsletter). Some of you have probably heard him, or one of his brethren, drumming lately. Sounds like someone who can't quite get their tractor started. Part of the male grouse breeding ritual is to climb onto a downed log, usually in dense woods, and rapidly flap his wings against his chest to make a drumming noise. This sound alerts the females to his presence and calls them in. These guys also drum to establish territory in the fall of the year.

After breeding, the male and female grouse go their separate ways. The female will lay between 9-14 eggs over the course of a couple weeks in a nest that is usually on the ground where she can watch for predators, somewhere within her 30-acre home range. She'll incubate the eggs for about 23 days and the new chicks are precocial, which means they will be ready to roam quickly after they hatch, which usually happens around here in late May or early June. The whole clutch leaves the nest about 24 hours after hatching. Momma grouse can be as aggressive about protecting their chicks as the male is about protecting his territory. I've been attacked in June on more than one occasion. The young grouse will be ready to start flying in about 10-12 days.

Our neighbors, the Ruffed Grouse, do best in young, regenerating mixed forests with dense understories— the kind that seem messy and disorganized to us. They eat a lot of insects early in life (don't forget about No Mow May for the pollinators!), then they switch to nuts and fruits, as well as ferns and buds. They are hearty critters who live here year-round, growing feathers on their feet for the winter so they have snowshoes to walk around on. If you find a nesting hen this time of year, leave her alone, and if you have a dog, keep it away until nesting season is over. They are plentiful locally, but facing habitat loss in areas due to changes in forestry practices. As we all start to get out and about this spring, I hope we all get to appreciate the sound of drumming nearby, and maybe experience the thunderous departure these amazing birds are known for!

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
April 20, 2025

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

As you read this newsletter, I hope you are dreaming of the lake and the summer ahead. Becoming a member of the Echo Lake Protective Association is one way to show your care and concern for the lake and the surrounding area. Many of you have already renewed your membership for this year and we have even welcomed new members.

Membership in the Echo Lake Protective Association provides funding for our ongoing work. We will continue to work on ensuring water quality, staffing the greeter program at the boat access, planning for and coordinating the Color Challenge in July, ensuring that the educational program at the Charleston Elementary School continues as well as coordinating with our partners in the greater water shed community.

You may use the attached membership form to contribute electronically or by mail. ELPA is a 501(c)(3) organization so your dues and are fully tax deductible. Many of you give additional dollars as a donation towards our work and we are so grateful.

Thank you to those of you who have renewed your membership and those who became new members this year.

Elaine Carpenter, ELPA Membership

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.

REMINDER: DON'T FORGET TO PAY YOUR 2025 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 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 karlj1950@gmail.com

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

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



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 9, 2025!

Echo Lake Shore Trail

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!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT DATES FOR 2025:

Green Up Day – Saturday May 3, 2025

Color Challenge – Sunday July 6, 2025

Annual ELPA Meeting – Saturday July 19, 2025 at 9:00 am at NorthWoods Stewardship Center

Annual ELPA Picnic – Saturday August 9, 2025 at 4:30 pm at the property of Peter & Nancy Engels

ELPA Board Meetings – Thursday May 15, 2025 and Thursday September 18, 2025

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 3, 2025 by Lori Kempton, ELPA Secretary