

**Petition to Agency of Natural Resources
to Prohibit Wake Boats and Wake Sports
on Echo Lake, Charleston**



Petitioners: The Echo Lake Protective Association

I. General Information

Petitioner's Name: Echo Lake Protective Association

Address: P.O. Box 41, E. Charleston, VT 05833

Contact Person: Holly B. Bull

Email of Contact Person: Wallbull3@gmail.com

Phone Number of Contact Person: 317-372-3761

Waterbody Name: Echo Lake

Town: Charleston, VT

Petition Type: This petition seeks to have the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) adopt an amendment to the Vermont Use of Public Water Rules (UPW) to prohibit wake boats and wake sports on Echo Lake in Charleston to protect its outstanding water quality, conserve its unique fish population, and support its success of remaining free of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Additionally, to preserve the normal uses of Echo Lake by providing a safe environment for various lake users and ensuring the safeguarding of the nesting loons that reside on the lake.

In accordance with the recently adopted Rule 3.8 of the UPW, wake boats are defined as any motorboat designed, configured, or altered to increase the boat's wake. Wake sports are defined as any activity requiring the assistance of enhanced wakes to engage in that activity.

Purpose and Need for Rule: The Agency of Natural Resources' newly established rules governing wake sports establish various limitations on this activity, including that they take place at least 500 feet from shore and in depths of at least 20 feet. Although this rule makes many of Vermont's inland lakes and ponds ineligible for wake sports, Echo Lake remains on the list of eligible lakes. Many

distinct and unique aspects of Echo Lake require that wake boats and wake sports be prohibited.

Echo Lake is eligible for A(1) reclassification and allowing wake boats and wake sports on this waterbody could negatively affect its A(1) criteria, both in excellent aesthetic quality and recreational fishing. Currently, Echo Lake is free of AIS, both plant and animal, and the introduction of wake boats will increase the likelihood of an infestation. In addition, wake boats and wake sports are not a traditional and historical use of Echo Lake and could endanger the safety of lake users and the success of the nesting loons.

II. Reason for Establishing Use-of-Water Rule

The predominant use of Echo Lake does not include wake boats. Echo Lake is an out of the way, quiet, serene body of water that hosts anglers, kayakers, sailors, paddle enthusiasts, swimmers, and conventional motorboaters. Echo Lake's regular, frequent, and consistent users must be allowed to enjoy their activities in a fair, sensible, and safe manner. Currently, there is no conflict with Echo Lake's normal uses. The normal recreational uses are fishing, swimming, paddle sports, boating, waterskiing, wildlife observation, the enjoyment of aesthetic values, and the quiet solitude of being on the water. To ensure Echo Lake remains conflict free, the prohibition of wake boats and wake boat sport activities is necessary.

Current Situation: There are no property owners that own or operate wake boats on Echo Lake. Access Greeter logs have no record of a wake boat being launched on Echo Lake. Therefore, a prohibition of wake boats and wake sports does not impact any current lake user. See appendix A for a breakdown of access users.

An A(1) reclassification will afford Echo Lake a higher level of protection that should extend to the prohibition of wake boats and wake sports. Echo Lake has an administratively and technically

completed petition to reclassify to an A(1) status based on high water quality (aesthetics) and recreational fishing filed with ANR. Echo Lake's reclassification petition is posted on the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's website.

Proposed Rule: Petitioner requests that ANR amend Appendix A of the UPW to add under Echo Lake, Town of Charleston (550):

“a. Wake boats and wake sports are prohibited.”

The prohibition of wake sports on Echo Lake is needed to protect its outstanding water quality, recreational fishing, and standing as an AIS free lake. As well as to preserve its normal uses and values, and to ensure the safety of lake users and nesting loons.

Need for Establishment of Rule: The reasons for this request are as follows:

1.) Risk to our eligibility of reclassification to an A(1) status for high aesthetic quality and recreational fishing and the possible infestation of AIS:

While Echo Lake is an oligotrophic lake, it has rising phosphorus levels. See appendix B for Echo Lake's scorecard. The added stress of wake boats will only aggravate and promote the disturbance of legacy phosphorus. Late in the summer of 2023, Echo Lake reported to the Vermont Department of Health the occurrence of Gloeotrichia; a form of blue-green algae. This alga is benthic and could be the result of legacy phosphorus. Wake boats will increase the chances of legacy phosphorus being stirred up in the lake, which increases the chance of even larger and more frequent blooms, with the possibility of these blooms becoming toxic.

Echo Lake is one of eight lakes in the state that naturally supports deep, cold-water wild native lake trout. See appendix C for Vermont Fish & Wildlife press release and kiosk sign. Any added negative impact, such as wake boats and wake sports, could

jeopardize the clean, clear water these fish need to survive and thrive. If a wake boat were to inadvertently operate in the littoral zone or riparian areas, the impact from the powerful downward thrust of the propwash would damage these fragile and critical habitats. These shallower regions are the nursery of all that lives in our lake — home to juvenile fish, mayflies, dragonflies, and other macroinvertebrates critical to the aquatic food chain. This risk is too great to be taken lightly.

Echo Lake is free of AIS. Wake boats cannot be fully drained; therefore, they are a “transport vessel” for aquatic invasive plants and animals. To allow wake boats on Echo Lake would increase the likelihood that an infestation would occur. The amount of time, money, and effort to eradicate the invasive would be a burden carried by the Echo Lake Protective Association and the Town of Charleston. Echo Lake’s greeter program at the state-owned public access has operated consistently for 18 summers and makes over 500 inspections a year. While partially supported through a grant from the Department of Environmental Conservation’s Watershed Management Division, the Echo Lake Protective Association contributes resources, both through funding and volunteers, for the program to run 12 hours a day for 7 days a week from Memorial Day to several weeks after Labor Day. This has been an effective measure in keeping AIS out of Echo Lake as each year more lakes become infected by AIS. As the Vermont Center for EcoStudies states: “Mitigating wake boats’ potential spread of aquatic invasive species is complicated by the prevalence of ballast tanks that can neither be inspected visually nor completely drained and are not rated to withstand temperatures needed to successfully decontaminate their contents. Therefore, wake boats represent a greater risk of spreading invasive species than other forms of recreational watercraft on Vermont water bodies.” The proposed “home lake rule” is helpful but it does not adequately address the

risk of spreading invasive species for any lake. The “home lake rule” does not eliminate the risk of spreading invasives, it merely reduces it.

2.) Not a Normal or Historical Use of Our Lake:

The Use of Public Water Act requires ANR to maintain normal uses for each specific body of public water. Vermont’s Water Quality Standards similarly require maintaining the designated and existing uses of each body of water. The predominate uses, and they have remained the same for generations of lake users, are fishing, kayaking, canoeing, sailing, wind surfing, swimming, wildlife observation, and the enjoyment of Echo Lake’s aesthetic values. Therefore, prohibiting wake boats and wake sports on Echo Lake is the only way to maintain these high-quality uses. In addition, the proposed rules overlook the possible risk of causing harm to current lake users and the environment, therefore protective and cautionary actions must be implemented. The Use of Public Waters Rules has established several general management rules that should protect normal uses of Echo Lake. For example, under the regulation of vessels: When regulation is determined to be necessary to resolve conflicts involving the operation of vessels, priority will be given to managing the manner in which vessels are used or operated, such by separating conflicting uses by the places where various uses are allowed. Prohibiting wake boats and wake sport activities on Echo Lake would be the proper regulation so that the various uses may be enjoyed in a reasonable manner, considering the best interests of both current and future generations of the citizens of the State, and ensuring that natural resource values of the public waters are fully protected.

3.) Fairness, Safety Concerns, and Lack of Enforcement:

To allow wake boats to be introduced into this environment would disturb the normal uses and routine of the lake. Wake boats would be allowed to operate on almost 58% of the entire lake, which would relegate other users to the edges near shore. This is unacceptable and unfair. See appendix D for the designated wake boat operating area.

With even a single wake boat operating on Echo Lake, it would put each one of these users in peril. For safety reasons these current users would be forced to remain along the shore or abandon being on the lake altogether. The normal routine of the lake would be disrupted. Large wakes pose a safety threat to small watercraft like kayaks, canoes, rowboats, paddle boards, and small fishing boats. Under operation, the bow on these boats is at such a high angle it is impossible for the driver to see a person or another watercraft in the water. Currently, our Game Wardens and the Marine Division of the Vermont State Police are too understaffed and underfunded to be able to patrol Echo Lake on a routine basis. Game Wardens and the State Police do respond when called, but due to the remoteness of this lake, the response times can be lengthy.

4.) Protection For Our Nesting Loons:

Echo Lake has had a successful pair of nesting loons on its waters producing a least one chick 5 times in the last 6 years. It is the highlight of the summer when the baby loon arrives. It would be emotionally devastating to hear the nest failed due to a threat that could have been managed and prevented. A letter from Eric Hanson, a renowned loon expert, has been included and is specific to Echo Lake. See appendix E for Mr. Hanson's letter to the Echo Lake Protective Association.

Economic Impact: Having wake boats operate on Echo Lake would have a negative economic impact by increasing social tensions, creating safety challenges, and causing degradation and

depletion of a natural resource. Allowing wake boats and wake sports on Echo Lake would create an imbalance of equity for lake users and would not directly and tangibly contribute to improving the community and its common wellbeing. In addition, there are no positive economic advantages generated by allowing wake boats to operate on the lake because it will not bring in dollars, jobs, and income to the economy. Per Charleston's 2018 Town Plan, "Charleston's lakes and streams are highly valued for their scenic and recreational qualities, and parcels with frontage on Echo Lake have one of the highest per acre values in the Town. The Echo Lake Protective Association and other conservation-minded individuals and group are active in various ways to mitigate these threats and educate landowners about ways to limit the impacts of development."

The one business that operates on Echo Lake, The White Birch Lodge, is a family run cottage rental establishment. Its website promotes the rentals for "People seeking an opportunity to enjoy a peaceful environment have enjoyed their time in our farming community". There are property owners who rent out their camps and describe the experience to potential guests this way: "Enjoy Vermont's pristine Northeast Kingdom on one of the state's cleanest lakes." and "Lake is very quiet and a wonderful place to listen to the loons." as well as "Echo Lake is regarded as one of the cleanest lakes in VT. The crystal-clear lake waters are excellent for swimming, boating, fishing, bird watching and relaxing. Preservation of our home and lake quality is most important."

Emotional Impact: This petition includes 4 emotional impact statements from 4th generational families that own property on Echo Lake. This kind of impact centers on ideas that aren't easily quantifiable, such as the property owners' experiences and feelings, but these are necessary and rational arguments because the

emotion backs up the data. See appendix F for statements of support.

Additional Considerations: *Does the Echo Lake Protective Association have support from their members and Town?* Yes, the membership of the Echo Lake Protective Association voted unanimously at their annual meeting to support a petition to opt out of wake boats and wake sports. The Charleston Selectboard voted to support the Echo Lake Protective Association's petition to the State to opt out of being eligible for wake boats and wake sports. See appendix G for minutes from both meetings.

Would prohibiting wake boats and wake sports cause a severe impact on wake boat enthusiasts? Echo Lake is not home to any wake boat, nor has a wake boat ever operated on Echo Lake. However, there are three large lakes within 28 miles of Echo Lake that can support wake boats and wake sport activities. Seymour Lake – 5 miles from Echo Lake, Lake Willoughby – 12 miles from Echo Lake, and Lake Memphremagog – 28 miles from Echo Lake.

Who would be operating a wake boat on Echo Lake? The reality is that wake boats, which cost from \$100,000 and up, are out of reach for the majority of those that live in Charleston, which has a median household income of \$51,700.

What kind of work has the Echo Lake Protective Association done to ensure the protection of Echo Lake? For 50 years, the Echo Lake Protective Association has been a good lake steward and participates in numerous programs that facilitate this mission. These programs are supported, organized, and administered by volunteers of the Echo Lake Protective Association. See appendix H for a list of programs.

Support for the Proposed Rule: This petition is supported by the Town of Charleston, the citizens of Charleston, the Echo Lake Protective Association, its board of directors and members. Per the

2018 Town Plan for Charleston, “Charleston’s natural environment is a uniquely valuable and important resource of unspoiled natural beauty within the Northeast Kingdom. The purity of the air and water, the abundance of wildlife, and the integrity of our natural resources are critical contributors to Charleston’s strength and character as well as to the health and welfare of all our citizens.”

Conclusion: As trustee of Vermont’s inland lakes, the Agency of Natural Resources **must** promote public health, safety, convenience, and the general welfare of Vermont’s waters for the best interests of all Vermonters. To fulfill this mandate, the Agency **must** manage public waters to ensure that current and future generations of Vermonters may reasonably and safely enjoy an appropriate mix of water-based recreational opportunities. When there is a conflict among uses, under Vermont’s Water Quality Standards, the Agency **must** “protect the quality, character, and usefulness of Vermont’s surface waters, by supporting their designated and existing uses.

Echo Lake is a quiet, peaceful, and tranquil lake, which draws lake users to Echo Lake for fishing, kayaking, sailing, canoeing, windsurfing, paddleboarding, waterskiing, and swimming and they need protection. Echo Lake has outstanding water quality. There are only twelve lakes in Vermont that are eligible to reclassify based on water quality and that should be protected. Echo Lake is host to a sustainable population of wild lake trout; a species of fish that is disappearing on a national level. Lake trout need high-quality water to survive, so any possible degradation of water quality risks their survival. Echo Lake is AIS free (both plant and animal) and this status should be protected against wake boats that can carry AIS in their ballast tanks. Echo Lake is home to a successful pair of nesting loons, which need protection against the destructive waves created by wake boats. **Protection** of Echo Lake requires prohibiting wake boats and wake sport activities on Echo Lake.

Appendix A – Echo Lake Public Access Boat Logs

Echo Lake Watercraft Data Obtained from the
DEC Access Greeter Dashboard

2023 – 504 watercraft inspections: **54.0%** Fishing (statewide 32.7%)
36.3% Paddle sports (statewide 34.0%)
= 90.3% Fishing/Paddle sports

2022 – 532 watercraft inspections: **49.2%** Fishing (statewide 24.2%)
35.0% Paddle sports (statewide 49.2%)
= 84.2% Fishing/Paddle sports

Data Obtained from Echo Lake Access Greeter Data Sheets

5/28/2021 – 8/8/2021

575 watercrafts launched: **247** with the purpose of fishing = **42.9%**

5/22/2020 – 9/20/2020

1,298 watercrafts launched: **583** with the purpose of fishing = **44.9%**

5/24/2019 – 9/8/2019

Purpose of visits were not collected on Access Greeter forms.

5/26/2018 – 9/3/2018

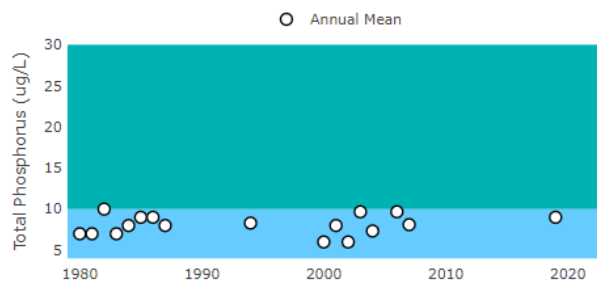
1,052 watercrafts launched: **518** with the purpose of fishing = **49.2%**

Appendix B – Echo Lake Scorecard

Summer Phosphorus chart shows the trend as “Highly Significantly Increasing” and many trends are moving from Oligotrophic to Mesotrophic.

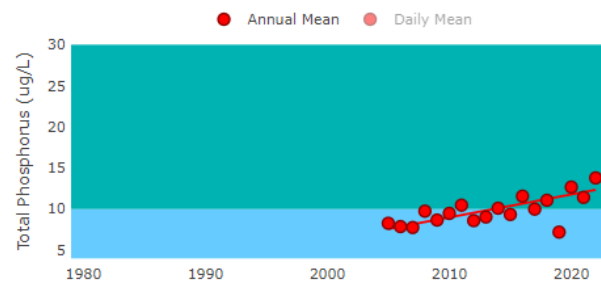
Spring Phosphorus

Trend: Stable (p-value = 0.3599)



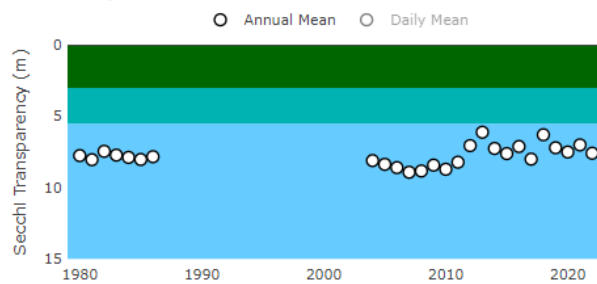
Summer Phosphorus

Trend: Highly Significantly Increasing (p-value = 9e-04)



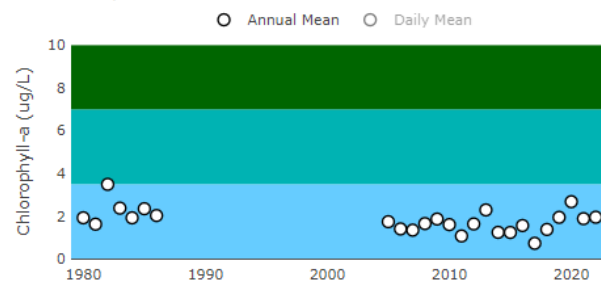
Summer Secchi

Trend: Stable (p-value = 0.2512)



Summer Chlorophyll-a

Trend: Stable (p-value = 0.3636)



APPENDIX C – Trout Press Release and Kiosk Sign for Echo Lake

Press Release from Vermont Fish & Wildlife: Thu, 04/13/2023 - 12:00

A sign project at Vermont's state fishing access areas featuring wild native lake trout got underway this month thanks to a joint effort by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department and the Native Fish Coalition.

"Lake trout have thrived in Vermont's cold, clean lakes for thousands of years. This sign project reminds the public about important habitat features that will continue the legacy of lake trout." said Eric Palmer, Fish and Wildlife's director of fisheries.

Native lake trout live in Vermont's deepest and cleanest lakes. Only a handful of Vermont waterbodies retain wild populations of the species. Lakes featured in this sign project include Caspian, Crystal, Echo, Maidstone, Seymour, and Willoughby.

Lake trout thrive in deep, cold oligotrophic lakes. They are native in northern latitudes and often survive for decades. They forage for baitfish and spawn on rocky lake shoals and shorelines in autumn. Though lake trout are often raised in hatcheries and stocked for recreational fishing, the lakes designated in this education project retain wild, naturally reproducing populations of the species.

"Native fish in Vermont are under pressure from invasive species and changing habitat conditions. These signs note the importance of healthy habitat for lake trout," said Paul Bugeja, chair of Native Fish Coalition's Vermont chapter.

ATTENTION ANGLERS

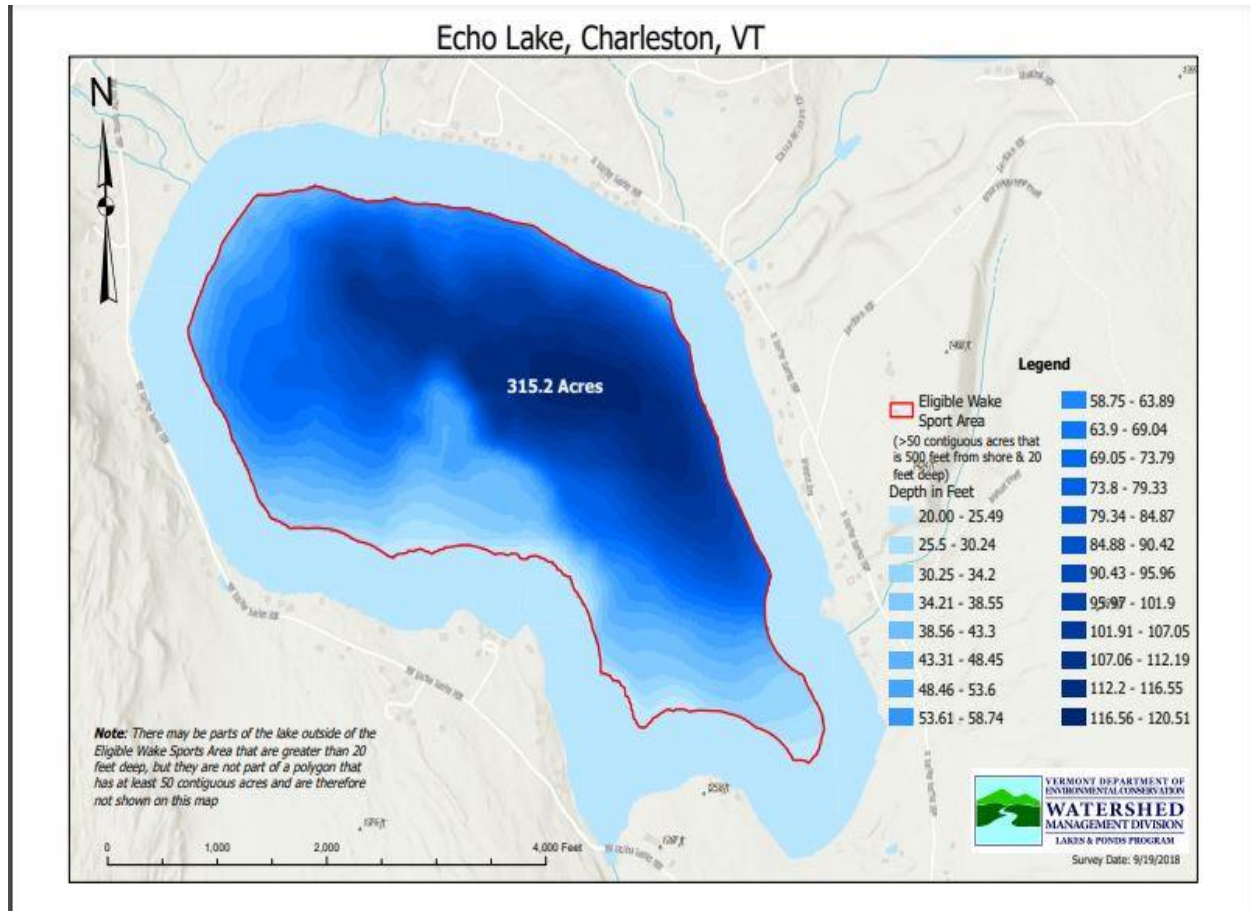


This waterbody is home to wild native lake trout. These fish need cold clean water and simple fish communities to prosper. Ongoing conservation efforts focused on forested shores and limiting nonnative species introductions will help to ensure these fish endure for generations to come. **Please help us protect our unique wild native fish.**



Appendix D – Proposed Wake Boat Operating Area for Echo Lake

Echo Lake's Wake Boat Operating Area



Of Echo Lake's **545** acres of surface waters, **315.2** acres will be available for wake sports and wake sport activities.

57.8% will be available for wake boats and wake sport activities.

Other lake users would be relegated to the remaining **42.2%**.

APPENDIX E - Letter to the Echo Lake Protective Association from Eric Hanson of the Vermont Center for EcoStudies

Wake boats and Loons on Echo Lake (Charleston)

July 10, 2023

Loons started nesting on Echo Lake in 2005 using a beach-shoreline nest on a peninsula along the south shore. The pair has chosen several other shoreline locations over the next 12 years, almost all of them located 2-4 inches vertically from the waterline because of the gradual slope of the shoreline. Several of these shoreline nests were predated, so in 2017, a nesting raft was placed adjacent to the 2016 nest site in the SW corner of the lake. Loons have used this raft in 5 of the past 6 years. This site is highly exposed to the center of Echo Lake. Prevailing winds only occasionally cause larger wave action where the raft is located but a boat could easily create wakes larger than most wind-driven waves. As the Vermont Center for Ecostudies noted in previous testimony, loon nests are usually located from 2-8 inches vertically from the water; raft nests are similar heights. Even at 500 feet, a wakeboat could produce a wave that is 5-6 inches tall. Again, many nests are 2-5 inches vertically from the water. The 15 or so current loon nests in Vermont that are directly exposed to where wakeboats will operate could be at risk. The Echo Lake raft is more exposed than most. If the current loon pair or future second loon pair use the gradual sloping shoreline for a nest site in the future, it would definitely be prone to flooding from a 4-5 inches wave.

There are many effects from wave action that we do not know because of the newness of wakeboats. We do not know the effects of continued excessive rocking of a raft nest on incubating loons. How will larger wakes affect small loon chicks who do not have the waterproofing that adult loons do? And as I said in my verbal statements at the hearing in February at the Highland Center for the Arts, I am very concerned about the intentional or unintentional wakeboater that ends up 300 feet from shore with an occupied loon nest nearby. It only takes one boat to flood out a nest. My long-term concerns about wakeboats operating less than 1000 feet from shore will be the degradation of lake shorelines and riparian areas and the resulting decline in water quality, especially in sections of lakes that are not naturally conditioned for larger wave action. Healthy riparian areas are critical for the base of a lakes' foodweb, which plants, aquatic insects, fish, and loons all depend on.

The Vermont Center for Ecostudies supports the petition by the Echo Lake Association to ban wakeboats from operating on Echo Lake.

Sincerely,

Eric Hanson
Vermont Loon Conservation Project Biologist
Vermont Center for Ecostudies

Appendix F – Emotional Impact Statements from ELPA Members

To Whom It May Concern,

I am penning this letter to advocate for the preservation of Echo Lake, a place I hold close to my heart. Throughout my childhood, I was fortunate enough to experience the tranquil beauty of Echo Lake during both summer and winter. These cherished memories shaped not only my worldview but also my life's direction.

Driven by the values instilled in me during those visits, I am now passionate about constructing sustainable, low-impact homes and mentoring others to do the same. My inspiration is deeply rooted in the profound connection I felt with nature in Vermont and, more specifically, at Echo Lake.

Vermont has always been a beacon of environmental consciousness for me. As a child, I was deeply impressed upon learning about the state's decision to ban billboards. This bold step underscored a commitment to preserving the tranquility of nature over commercial gains.

While I may not be well-versed in the specific ecological impacts of wake boats, I believe in preserving the natural ambiance of places like Echo Lake. The serene setting encourages introspection and creativity, and I can't imagine finding inspiration amidst the roar of massive wake boats or the four-foot waves they produce.

I hope this letter offers a glimpse into the aspirations and concerns of my generation, the fourth generation since 1929 of continual ownership of my family's property on Echo Lake. We deeply care about the legacy we inherit and hope to ensure that Echo Lake remains an unspoiled sanctuary for future generations.

Warm regards,
David Mills

To whom it may concern:

Nearly a hundred years ago my great grandfather was drawn to the captivating beauty of Echo Lake and purchased property there which has remained in our family to this day. I am the younger generation of those who have grown a deep affection for the wonder of its tranquility and charm.

I have recently been informed of the growing potential for wake boats to find their way to Echo Lake and my concern over this possibility has prompted me to try to

communicate my sentiments on the subject in hopes of supporting any effort to protect Echo Lake.

Writing this letter required that I spend time reflecting on the impression Echo Lake has had on me over the years and what it would have been like had things like wake boats been commonplace before, especially during my adolescence... It caused me to recognize things about Echo Lake that I now realize I took for granted growing up, things I didn't know I should have a particular appreciation for, things that made it so special, and things that, if taken away, would entirely alter and spoil its best qualities.

I remember learning how to swim as a child in Echo Lake. My dad would walk alongside me as I attempted to make it farther and farther from the dock, closer and closer to the float. I recall how anxious it made me but how I perceived that the lake posed no threat with the waters being so still. Now I wonder what it would have been like if recreational boats more suitable for the seas and oceans were to have interrupted those formative moments in the safe haven of our small-town lake.

I remember the first time I ever went fishing, the first time I ever rode a kayak or a sail boat or canoe, where I learned one of my very favorite pastimes: skipping rocks... the backdrop of Echo Lake's quiet serenity served to mark and define all of these experiences. So many of my fondest memories from our summer visits to Echo Lake, so many milestones and firsts would have surely been tainted or not even possible had the peaceful and pristine nature of Echo Lake not been free from excessive noise or disturbance. Had it not been hidden from the loud and fast pace of the outside world and its pollutants, Echo Lake would not have always been the reliable sanctuary to which we could retreat year after year. Now that I have children of my own with whom I long to recreate the cherished memories I have had there, I very much hope they aren't prevented from it by irreverent recreation better suited for other settings, places which would not suffer from such a cost.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Mock

To those considering the allowance of wake boats on Echo Lake:

Four generations of my family have enjoyed Echo Lake, since my great-grandfather purchased a plat during the original division of former farmland surrounding the lake. While many things have certainly changed about the lake in that timespan, I write out of concern that wake boats and similar craft will be a uniquely destructive force on the kind of experiences my family has had there. Echo Lake was an extremely formative place for me growing up. From ages eight to twenty, I made annual summer trips to the lake, staying for months at a time even before we had a permanent structure built. I learned to canoe, kayak, and sail on Echo. I learned the textures and flow of the water itself with daily adventures. That includes naturally choppy days when low clouds crept over Bald Mountain and clear-skied sunsets when the water so still it looked like glass. Any natural body of water isn't totally safe, but the important thing was that I learned to enjoy the lake safely under reasonable conditions. It was a safe place to swim and to kayak in groups or alone.

Being able to go out on my own as a kid was so important to gaining a sense of independence and confidence. I would be so heartbroken if I ever heard that that wasn't possible anymore at Echo because the water was no longer predictable, because just one boat was making it, by its design and purpose, unpredictable for everyone else. Particularly relevant to this issue at hand was how, over those years, I learned to respect the space and enjoyment of others on the lake, and how my family and I received that respect in kind. I was taught to steer well clear of the slow-going fishing boats, to understand how far out their lines were and that they were following an outer ring, a shelf where fish were more likely to be. That swimmers stuck to the shallow water and to watch out for them no matter what boat I was in. Kayakers and canoes a little farther out than the swimmers usually. Often at night the pontoon boats would cruise at a moderate distance from shore at low speed. And on weekend afternoons there would be speedboats with water-skiers or tubers zigzagging across the center of the lake. We always watched out for those. Relying on this order of things was

essential to my safety as a kid navigating the lake, and I took it very seriously. Wake boats by their very design disrupt the water, and by their use would irreparably disrupt the order that keeps everyone safe to enjoy the lake.

I sincerely hope that those of you about to decide on this issue make the right choice and protect Echo Lake. I count myself extremely fortunate to have had all these positive experiences there. Young people now deserve the safety to have them now too.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,
Zachary Wall

To Whom it May Concern:

My family has owned property on Echo Lake since 1929. Since my grandparents bought the property, my father and his siblings, my own siblings, my cousins, and all our children and grandchildren have grown up on this lake. Countless floats and docks have resided on our shores, generations of row boats, sail boats, canoes, and now kayaks have plied its crystal clear, peaceful waters. The joyful yelps of generations of cavorting children echo across the lake and across time. Originally about 150 acres, our property at that time included about 1/4 of the total frontage on the lake. Today, close to half of that lakefront remains largely undeveloped. Over the course of the last century, our family, and our Echo Lake neighbors, have committed vast amounts of time, money, and very conscious care to stewarding our precious lake. In more recent decades, countless grant dollars and hours of volunteer time have been spent safeguarding its cleanliness and purity, especially through an ongoing struggle against invasives and toxins in its waters.

This priceless legacy of care is now at risk of being wasted, as our lake comes under threat from the multiple damaging impacts of wake boats. No one who has spent time on this lake or contributed to its pristine quality wants these behemoths of modern-day “sport” to be permitted here. Their massive waves—which constitute their entire reason for being—may be suited for vastly larger lakes, but they do not belong in small lakes like Echo. They threaten the lake and all who use it by stirring up sediment, damaging fish and marine life, and allowing in invasive

plants and toxic algae. They will also damage the lake front, which so many owners have invested time and money to protect through the “Lake Wise” program. And they will simply relegate current and future swimmers and boaters to second-class lake citizenship. We will all have to scramble to the shore for protection every time some wake boat owner decides to go for a joyride at the expense of the myriad others who use the lake. We are in your hands. Please allow us to continue stewarding this precious place we call Echo Lake and, even more importantly, to leave its priceless legacy unspoiled for generations of children to come.

Susan Warner-Mills

Appendix G – Minutes

Excerpts from the Echo Lake Protective Association’s Annual Meeting on July 22, 2023

Discussion was on Wake Boats and Wake Sport Activities on Echo Lake.

ELPA Board stance: Since ELPA feels these proposed rules are inadequate and ineffective, we would like to petition to ban the operation of wake boats and wake boat sport activities on our lake.

Discussion: Can also affect property values if AIS introduced, etc. No one on Echo Lake currently has a wake boat. No observations of wake boats on this lake have been noted to this date. We are working with other lakes on this issue: the Averills, Caspian, Willoughby, etc. The “Home rule” is not enforceable. AIS includes cyanobacteria, which is easily transportable due to the ballast tanks, which cannot be fully drained. Safety concerns were discussed.

Vote on Wake Boat petition: Does the ELPA membership feel that ELPA should petition the state to prohibit wake boats and wake boat activities from operating on Echo Lake?

Motion was made to support ELPA board to petition to ban wake boats on Echo Lake: Petition will include arguments that are specific to Echo Lake. Motion was made to amend (introduced by Emily Borden): Should ELPA petition the State to prohibit wake boats and wake boat activities from operating on Echo Lake, in addition with the petition as written through solicited comments as approved by the ELPA board? Seconded. Vote on the amended motion: Should ELPA petition the State to prohibit wake boats and wake boat activities from operating on Echo Lake, in addition with the petition as written through solicited comments as approved by the ELPA board?

Yes: All in favor. No: There were no dissenting votes. Motion passed.

Excerpt of the Charleston Selectboard Meeting held on September 14, 2023.

With no objection, the Chair allowed residents and Echo Lake property owners to offer comments regarding the ELPA request for selectboard support for a petition to the state to prohibit wake boats on Echo Lake. Holly Bull presented data on lake water quality and inhabitant species and the potential negative impacts of wake boats. Carol Westinghouse and David Bradshaw also offered concerns about lake degradation due to wake boats, spread of invasives, as well as disruptive effects Selectboard Minutes 9/14/2023 on other lake users, like swimmers, anglers and drift boats. Tom Wagner cited a town plan priority to protect natural areas and said a ban would be in keeping with the plan. Peter Moskovites offered a motion to support the Echo Lake Protective Association request that the Town of Charleston Selectboard support its petition to the State of Vermont to opt out of being eligible for wake boats and wake sport activities, and the motion was seconded by Tim Jenness. Discussion: Peter Moskovites said it was unfair to allow one boat to disrupt everyone else in a public space and favors being proactive to prevent this. Pat Austin was not convinced that a prohibition would prevent impacts like the spread of invasive species and prefers to let the state make a ruling on wake boats first. Tim Jenness said he was concerned about the spread of invasives to Echo Lake.

The Chair called the question, and the motion passed by a vote of 2:1.

Appendix H

State sponsored lake protection programs that the Echo Lake Protection Association participates in:

Access Greeter Program since 2006

Lake Monitoring Program since 1974

Lake Wise Program – Echo Lake is the first Gold Star Award recipient.

LaRosa Tributary Testing since 2021

Vermont Invasive Species Patrollers since 2006 Invasive Species Patrollers – Animals since 2022

Lake Champlain Committee Cyanobacteria Monitoring since 2022

Lake Watershed Action Plan – Will be completed in 2025.