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**LAKENET TEAMS WITH LAKE CHAMPLAIN PARTNERS
ON NEW EXHIBIT AT ECHO**

BURLINGTON, VT (October 19, 2004) – Using a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) New England Office, LakeNet teamed up with ECHO at the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, the Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) and other partners to create “Wide World of Lakes,” an interactive, hands-on exhibit at Lake Champlain’s science center and lake aquarium in Burlington, Vermont.

The results of the cooperative project are a unique collection of educational activities that explore the physical, cultural, and ecological diversity of lakes around the world and demonstrate the critical importance of clean water to life on our planet.

“The new exhibit is specifically designed to introduce world lake issues to visitors at ECHO,” said Lisa Borre, director of LakeNet, a global non-profit lake protection organization based in Annapolis, Maryland. “The exhibit supports our goal of increasing awareness of the critical importance of managing and protecting the health of lakes worldwide,” said Borre.

The centerpiece of the new exhibit is a user-friendly workbench designed by Stu McGowan and Paul Henning of Burlington, Vermont. The prototype includes a video of interviews with people from many nations discussing the economic and sociological importance of lakes in their part of the world. The exhibit highlights the diversity of lakes around the world – including ancient lakes, glacial lakes, salt lakes and alpine lakes.

“This is an exciting addition to our facility,” said Phelan Fretz, executive director at ECHO. “We teamed up with LakeNet to produce an exhibit that educates and entertains visitors to ECHO, and we are proud of the final results,” said Fretz.

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LakeNet worked with LCBP staff to enhance the information available about the world's lakes in the Lake Champlain Resource Room at ECHO. "We have found that many visitors in the Resource Room are interested in global water issues," said William Howland, manager of the LCBP. "Now we have more books, maps and informational materials as a result of our cooperation with LakeNet."

"The project builds upon existing partnerships to add an important international element to the public education and awareness efforts on Lake Champlain," said Erik Beck, Lake Champlain coordinator at US EPA's New England Office.

LakeNet is a global network of people and organizations working to protect the health of lakes in more than 100 countries. ECHO contains more than 60 species of live animals, surrounded by more than 100 hands-on exhibits. The nearly 30,000 square-foot facility, situated on the shores of Lake Champlain, has drawn more than 160,000 visitors in its first year of operation. The LCBP is a federal, state and local initiative to restore and protect Lake Champlain and its surrounding watershed for future generations. LakeNet has worked in partnership with the LCBP since 1997 and signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with ECHO in 2003.

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