

**VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE
DEPARTMENT**

**FISHING ACCESS AREA PROGRAM
2018 MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION REPORT**

Submitted to:
Vermont Legislative Committee
House Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife

Submitted by:
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Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department
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BACKGROUND

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (Department) acquires, maintains and manages a large number of fishing access areas around the state. These areas provide public access to public waters for Vermonters and visitors alike. These fishing access areas are very popular and heavily used, and help to connect people to the outdoors. If the Department did not have this program, most members of the public would have to either pay for access or would have far fewer opportunities to access public waters to fish, boat, hunt, or trap in Vermont.

The Department maintains these areas in order to provide reasonable and safe access to the public waters of Vermont. In calendar year 2018, the Fishing Access Area Program maintained 196 developed fishing access areas. Targeted user groups are anglers, recreational boaters, waterfowl hunters, and trappers. In 2018, there were 123,768 licensed hunters, anglers, and trappers and approximately 29,000 registered Vermont motorboats that potentially used Department Fishing Access Areas, along with the tens of thousands of unregistered non-motorized boats and motorboats registered in other states.

FUNDING

The Fishing Access Area Program is funded primarily by Vermont motorboat registration fees and Federal Sport Fish Restoration funds. The Department received \$448,300 in FY18 from Vermont motorboat registration fees per 23 V.S.A. § 3319, which directs 34% of the fees to the Fishing Access Area Program. These state funds are used to match Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration funds which are generated from a federal excise tax on fishing tackle, boats, motors, and marine fuels. In FY18, the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration apportionment for Vermont fishing access areas was \$481,500, which is a decrease of over \$42,600 from last year. It should be noted that non-resident motorboats still contribute to the funding for the Vermont Fishing Access Area Program through their contributions to the federal Sport Fish Restoration funds.

Over the past 10 years both state and federal funding for fishing access areas has been following a general downward trend. Federal aid funds hit a high in 2009 at \$606,700, but this past year they hit a 10-year low of \$481,500, which is a 26% drop in funding. On a more positive note, motorboat registration funds this past year hit a 5-year high of \$448,000. This was an increase of \$48,600 from last year, which helped erase the reduction of \$42,700 in federal funding.

The Fishing Access Area Program received a \$165,000 capital appropriation in FY19. This allocation has helped to buffer the decline in dedicated fishing access area funding. Capital funds have been used in combination with federal aid and motorboat registration funds to make considerable gains in addressing the backlog of ramp repairs and dock replacements to improve accessibility for all fishing access area users.

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MAINTENANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

In calendar year 2018, the Fishing Access Area Program spent \$895,000 on basic maintenance, capital improvements, and major infrastructure projects (Table 1). Expenditures ranged from \$1,855 for new fees related to clean water funding to over \$141,000 for new and upgraded docks. As usual, the bulk of the program's expenditures were for basic facility operation and maintenance (\$393,700), which includes activities like mowing, trash pick-up, lot and driveway grading, snow removal, and portable toilet services.

Total expenditures for the Fishing Access Area Program decreased by \$54,500 over the previous year. This decrease was primarily due to the reduced number of completed infrastructure projects. Several dock and ADA projects were initiated or completed, but no major boat ramp projects were completed in 2018. From 2014 to 2018 the access program completed 53 infrastructure projects, 35 of which were partially or wholly funded with the \$915,000 of capital funding provided to the Department over that time (Table 2).

Typical capital funded projects include replacing aging docks, upgrading rundown boat ramps, and repair eroding shorelines. While some of these projects were fully funded with capital money, most are cost-shared with federal aid funds or state motorboat registration fees. The capital funding has significantly increased the usability and accessibility of fishing access areas around the state, which has created a safer recreational experience for boaters and the angling public.

NEW ACCESS AREAS

The Fishing Access Area Program did not acquire any new land this past year, but did add three new fishing access areas, all of which are accessible for fishing and non-motorized vessels. The much-publicized Berlin Pond Fishing Access Area was partially constructed in the fall of 2017 and was finally completed and open to the public in July 2018. This summer a short set of steps and canoe slide were added on the Nulhegan River, near the Wenlock Crossing parking area, on the Wenlock Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in the town of Ferdinand. Finally, a small parking area on the White River in Stockbridge that was constructed following tropical storm Irene, but never formally recognized as Department land was improved and signed. The site is part of the river's floodplain and was named Refrigerator Flats for its notoriously cold water. These 3 new access areas increased the total number of fishing access areas to 196.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

This past year a draft ADA Transition Plan was completed, but has yet to go through any Department-wide review or receive public comments. This plan will act as a guide for how the Department determines when and where to improve accessibility for access areas users. The Plan evaluated all 196 Access Areas to determine if a site met accessibility standards set by the US Access Board (2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design). If a site did not meet the standards, the Department documented what features needed to be corrected to become fully compliant with said standards.

There are currently total of 24 sites that fully accessible (12.24%). This includes 11 sites that

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were improved in 2018 with accessible parking and routes to docks. The Department spent \$89,680 on these site improvements. By 2029, the Department plans to increase the number of accessible sites to 75 (38%), which is an average of 5 sites per year for the next 10 years.

CONTACTS

Any questions or comments regarding the Fishing Access Area Program should be directed to:

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Table 1. Summary of all expenditures for Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's Fishing Access Area Program, 2018. *See Table 2 for a more detailed breakdown of Minor Access Improvements and Capital Funded Infrastructure Improvements.*

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
New Access Area Development	\$ 32,690.09
Minor Access Improvements (<i>ADA infrastructure improvements</i>)	\$ 89,681.19
Capital Funded Infrastructure Improvements & Construction (<i>new docks</i>)	\$141,265.13
Site Work Maintenance (i.e. gravel, grading, excavation)	\$ 85,580.17
Dock Maintenance	\$ 50,727.08
Department of Corrections Community Restitution Crews	\$ 53,035.00
Miscellaneous Lawn and Maintenance Services	\$ 6,742.27
Portable Toilet Rentals	\$ 71,386.96
Snow Removal	\$ 63,085.00
Purchase of building materials, supplies, equipment rentals, etc.	\$ 5,138.36
Payments for Public Access to Private Lands (i.e. leases)	\$ 2,550.00
PILOT (payments in lieu of taxes)*	\$ 35,201.53
Staff & Engineering Costs – admin, permitting, design,& construction	
- <i>Access program staff time & administration</i>	\$181,475.31
- <i>Engineering & construction oversight</i>	\$ 47,610.15
Clean Water Fees	\$ 1,854.98
Utilities	\$ 5,325.56
Permitting	\$ 4,269.16
Traffic Control (Colchester PD)	\$ 5,501.75
Trash Disposal	\$ 2,283.12
Professional Memberships & Meetings	\$ 2,821.24
Administrative Expenses (vehicle gas, IT, office supplies)	\$ 2,864.03
Signage	\$ 4,318.97
TOTAL FISHING ACCESS AREA EXPENDITURES	\$ 895,086.05

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Table 2. List of all minor (<\$15,000) and major (>\$15,000) infrastructure projects for fishing access areas from 2014 through 2018. Projects were funded with either state motorboat registration or capital funds, and often cost shared with Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration funding.

	SITE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COST
2014	John Guilmette	New access area construction	\$ 820,700.12
	Burr Pond	Shoreline stabilization	\$ 1,270.43
	Dog Pond	Ramp dredged	\$ 20,817.22
	Derby Pond	Ramp replaced & extended	\$ 12,760.59
	Hortonia Dam	Ramp replaced & extended	\$ 27,296.63
	Lake Carmi	Dock installation	\$ 2,307.50
	Lake Elmore	Shoreline stabilization	\$ 4,365.76
	Lake Rescue	Ramp construction & parking lot upgrade	\$ 37,821.32
	Miller Pond	Ramp replaced & extended	\$ 13,086.32
	South Slang	Ramp replaced & extended, silt dredged	\$ 20,900.05
		2014 TOTAL	\$ 961,325.94
2015	Allen Point	Fishing platform	\$ 8,500.00
	Lake Iroquois	Ramp construction & shoreline restoration	\$ 24,558.72
	Ward Marsh	Gravel ramp construction	\$ 5,250.00
	Lake Hortonia East	Ramp construction & parking lot upgrade	\$ 21,324.06
	Peacham Pond	Ramp construction & parking lot upgrade	\$ 25,621.74
	McIntosh Pond	Ramp construction & parking lot upgrade	\$ 21,881.49
	Evanoika	New dock	\$ 27,660.00
	Colchester Point	New dock	\$ 49,175.00
	Kings Bay	New dock	\$ 23,500.00
	Holcomb Bay	New dock	\$ 18,590.00
	Marshfield Reservoir	New dock	\$ 31,500.00
	Stephenson's Point	New dock	\$ 23,500.00
	2015 TOTAL	\$ 280,061.01	
2016	Dog Pond	Dredged gravel ramp (2014); concrete cloth ramp install	\$ 42,682.50
	Benson Landing	Ramp extension & new ADA dock	\$ 14,143.09
	Fisher Bridge	Built an ADA walkway to fishing platform	\$ 772.72
	Putney Landing	Ramp reconstruction	\$ 33,438.57
	South Bay	Ramp removal & new ADA dock	\$ 5,273.03
	2016 TOTAL	\$ 96,309.91	
2017	Dillenbeck Bay	Constructed new concrete boat ramp where gravel ramp previously existed	\$ 51,500.00
	Shelburne Pond	Constructed new concrete boat ramp where gravel ramp previously existed	\$ 45,959.19

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Benson Landing	New 60 ft floating dock	\$ 47,184.85
Crystal Lake	Relocated 50 ft dock f7rom Larabee's Pt	\$ 16,563.14
Island Pond	Relocated 50 ft dock from Magoon Access (Lake Dunmore)	\$ 2,082.50
Lake St. Catherine	New 50 ft floating dock	\$ 27,559.18
Larabee's Point	New 70 ft floating dock	\$ 50,354.60
Magoon	New 50 ft floating dock	\$ 28,013.43
Seymour Lake	New 50 ft floating dock	\$ 30,079.93
South Bay	New 50 ft floating dock with fishing platform	\$ 35,123.09
Whipple Point	New 60 ft floating dock	\$ 30,160.89
2017 TOTAL		\$ 364,580.80

2018	Chittenden Reservoir*	New 50 ft floating dock	\$ 19,068.53
	Kehoe*	New 50 ft floating dock	\$ 16,575.51
	Lake Fairlee	New 50 ft floating dock	\$ 28,502.26
	Lake Morey*	New 50 ft floating dock	\$ 14,475.71
	Lake Rescue*	New 50 ft floating dock	\$ 15,791.90
	Larry Greene*	New 20 ft dock extension	\$ 8,319.39
	Norton Pond	New 40 ft wheel dock	\$ 26,982.53
	Crystal Lake**	New concrete dock abutment to make fully ADA	\$ 11,549.30
	Evanoika	ADA parking & path to dock	\$ 10,923.95
	Kehoe	ADA parking & path to dock	\$ 7,954.25
	Lake St. Catherine	ADA parking & path to dock	\$ 16,460.55
	Magoon	ADA parking & path to dock	\$ 8,020.00
	Larabee's Point	ADA parking & path to dock	\$ 7,216.00
	Chimney Point	ADA parking & path to dock	\$ 9,610.00
	Marshfield Reservoir	ADA parking & path to dock	\$ 11,500.00
	Whipple Point	ADA parking & path to dock	\$ 6,049.50
	South Bay	ADA parking & path to dock	\$ 5,148.74
	Seymour Lake	ADA parking & path to dock	\$ 2,246.75
	Big Salem Lake	ADA parking & path to dock	\$ 4,551.75
2018 TOTAL			\$ 230,946.62

*Denotes only partial payment in 2018 as the dock has not yet been installed.

**Denotes final payment and installation charges. 2017 also had charges for this dock.

5 YEAR TOTAL **\$ 1,934,224.28**

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Figure 1. New ADA parking space constructed in 2018 and a new dock constructed in 2013 at the Kehoe Access Area, Castleton, VT.

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Figure 2. New ADA parking space constructed in 2018 and a new dock constructed in 2017 at the South Bay Access Area, Newport City, VT.

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Figure 3. Stairs and a canoe slide were added to the Nulhegan River on Rt 105. The access is on the Wenlock WMA and just a few hundred feet west of the Wenlock Crossing parking area in the town of Ferdinand.