



Test Water  
Designation

## Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department

Dewey Building, 1 National Life Drive  
Montpelier, VT 05620, 802-828-1000  
STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 10 V.S.A. SECTION 4142

### Stiles Pond

Pursuant to the provisions of 10 V.S.A. § 4142, Stiles Pond, as described below is hereby designated as Test Waters from January 1, 2019 through Dec 31, 2024.

#### 1. Findings

- A. Stiles Pond in the Town of Waterford is a 135-acre natural pond augmented by a dam. It serves as the drinking water supply for the Town of St. Johnsbury, which operates a water filtration and disinfection facility at the pond's outlet. The Town of St. Johnsbury has for many decades posted signs around the pond, prohibiting various activities. Until 2013, these signs discouraged and limited fishing activity. A 2013 VT Supreme Court decision pertaining to Berlin Pond, the City of Montpelier water supply, confirms the unenforceability of prohibitions at Stiles Pond. The public may access the pond legally along Vermont Route 18, by virtue of Vermont Agency of Transportation roadway ownership. *Vermont Use of Public Waters Rules* (as amended, effective March 1, 2007) prohibits the use of internal-combustion motors, personal watercraft, and aircraft from May through November, and limits motor-powered vessels to 5 miles per hour.
- B. A test waters designation on Stiles Pond from 2013 through 2018 prohibited harvest of smallmouth and largemouth bass and reduced the daily creel limit of yellow perch to ten.
- C. Studies of unexploited fish populations, like those in Stiles Pond prior to 2013, suggest that these populations are often comprised of a high proportion of old, slow growing fish which may be vulnerable to rapid depletion when opened to fishing. An ice fishing creel survey conducted during the winter of 2013/2014 revealed that fishing effort and yellow perch harvest were high on Stiles Pond, despite the test waters designation.
- D. During the previous test waters designation, fisheries staff confirmed that Stiles Pond provides quality fishing opportunities for smallmouth bass, yellow perch, brown bullhead, pumpkinseed, and chain pickerel. The smallmouth bass are abundant, but slow growing with few bass over 17 inches. The yellow perch, pumpkinseed, and brown bullhead populations each have a high proportion of large fish.
- F. To continue to spread the catch of large yellow perch among anglers and maintain yellow perch fishing quality over the next several years, a reduced daily creel limit of 10 yellow perch is proposed. This Test Water designation will provide the Department of Fish and Wildlife time to obtain the necessary information to develop an appropriate long-term regulation proposal.


#### 2. Statutory Determination

- A. Pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 4142, the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Commissioner may, for the purpose of securing data relative to the propagation of fish, designate as test waters streams and ponds within the state.
- B. The Commissioner has determined that the designated Test Water is critical to the conservation and propagation of the species in those waters. (See Findings 1.A.-F.)

#### 3. Conditions of the Test Waters

During the above specified period, fishing in Stiles Pond (Waterford) shall be in accordance with the following:

- A. Year-round: The daily creel limit for yellow perch is 10 fish.

Authorized by:   
Louis Porter, Commissioner

Date: 