

**VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE
DEPARTMENT**

**ACCESS AREA PROGRAM
2011 MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION REPORT**

Submitted to:
Vermont Legislature
House Fish, Wildlife, and Water Resource Committee

Submitted by:
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Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department
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BACKGROUND

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (Department) maintains 172 developed fishing access areas. These sites provide public access to waters in Vermont for shore fishing opportunities and launching of watercraft. The Department manages 136 access areas with concrete or gravel ramps for launching and retrieving of boats. Additionally, there are another 15 Department access areas where non-motorized vessels can easily be launched without a ramp.

In the past few years there has been a gradual rise in anglers interested in fishing Vermont waters. Fishing license sales have been seen some fluctuation, but there is a general increasing trend. This interest in fishing in Vermont highlights the need for the Department Access Area Program as anglers are always in search of access for fishing and boating opportunities.

The Department received approximately \$482,500 in motorboat registration fees this past year, which are dedicated to the 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 fiscal year 2011 the amount of these federal funds available for Vermont access areas was \$547,042.

MAINTENANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

This past year the Access Area Program spent over \$1,000,000 on basic maintenance, major infrastructure projects, and acquisitions of new access areas (Table 1). Expenditures ranged from \$1,829 for trash disposal to nearly \$556,000 for general maintenance statewide. Four infrastructure projects were completed during the 2011 construction season totaling \$113,850.

This past year the Department made a concerted effort to increase the existing condition of all of its parking areas. Areas such as Converse Bay in Charlotte were significantly expanded in an attempt to accommodate the high user demand. However, the majority of areas received additional gravel and grading services that had been lacking in previous years.

One major ramp improvement was completed as well as a design for number of others, many associated with capital funding. The Chittenden Reservoir ramp and approach were removed and replaced by a new bituminous concrete approach and concrete ramp that extends deeper into the water to accommodate boats during times of low water. There was also a small carry-on ramp created to relieve pressure on the main ramp, which was designed primarily for motorboats. The Department has been working cooperatively with Vermont's Agency of Transportation, Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, and the Division for Historic Preservation on designs to enlarge the launching and parking capacity at the Chimney Point Access Area. The design calls for a double lane ramp and at least a 50 ft, ADA accessible dock, with additional overflow parking located near Route 17 to be used by all recreational users of the historic area.

The access program received two capital appropriations of \$250,000 and \$100,000 over the

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past two years to be spent on existing access areas. The plan is to upgrade a select portion of the 39 concrete plank ramps. Currently, 25 ramps have been identified for possible upgrades (Table 2). Most of these ramps were constructed over 20 years ago and have received limited maintenance over that time. The capital funding allows the Department to create a generic design for most sites, obtain required permits, and work with pre-established contractors to complete most of the work during the summer of 2012. Generally, all sites will have the planks reset, one to three planks may be added to extend the ramp, and protective stone placed along the ramp edges to protect it from ice and wave action.

Two universal shore fishing platforms received work this past year. The Gale Meadows access fishing platform was approximately 85% complete last winter, but the final work was put on hold due to cold weather. The last concrete pour and minor ramp repairs were completed in June. The Department and Town of Bristol entered into an agreement in 2010 to design and construct a shore fishing platform on the New Haven River. Construction began in August, but Tropical Storm Irene impacted the partially completed work and delayed further progress until the summer of 2012. This project will provide excellent access for spring trout fishing in an area that was historically difficult and sometimes dangerous to access.

Table 1. Summary of expenditures for Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's Access Area Program, 2011.

Category	Amount
Major Infrastructure Improvements (Appendix A)	\$ 130,209.48
Itemized Site Work Projects (Appendix B)	\$ 299,145.19
Dock Maintenance	\$ 40,213.53
Department of Corrections Community Restitution Crews	\$ 89,247.08
Miscellaneous Lawn and Maintenance Services	\$ 7,045.90
Portable Toilet Rentals	\$ 53,454.63
Snow Removal	\$ 48,359.00
Purchase of building materials, supplies, equipment rentals, etc.	\$ 6,742.76
Land Acquisition	\$208,166.46
Payments for Public Access to Private Lands (i.e. leases)	\$ 9,452.87
Engineering – permitting, design, and construction oversight	\$ 75,174.31
Utilities	\$ 8,296.76
Surveys and Appraisals	\$ 24,265.43
Trash Disposal	\$ 1,829.03
Signage	\$ 1,508.20
Town of Colchester – Harbor Master	\$ 2,500.00
Professional Memberships & Meetings	\$ 1,139.50
GRAND TOTAL	\$1,006,750.13

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Table 2. Proposed list of capital funded Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department ramp improvements.

Access Area Name	Town	County
Amherst Lake	Plymouth	Windsor
Benson Landing	Benson	Rutland
Brownington Pond	Brownington	Orleans
Burr Pond	Sudbury	Rutland
Colton Pond	Killington	Rutland
Echo Lake	Plymouth	Windsor
Ewell Pond	Peacham	Caledonia
Fosters Pond	Peacham	Caledonia
Great Averill Pond	Averill	Essex
Greenwood Lake	Woodbury	Washington
Island Pond	Brighton	Essex
Keiser Pond	Peacham	Caledonia
Lake Elmore	Elmore	Lamoille
Lake Morey	Fairlee	Orange
Marshfield Dam	Cabot	Washington
Martins Pond	Peacham	Caledonia
May Pond	Barton	Orleans
Miller Pond	Strafford	Orange
Mirror Lake	Calais	Washington
Monkton Pond	Monkton	Addison
Norton Pond	Norton	Essex
Rood Pond	Williamstown	Orange
South Pond	Marlboro	Windham
Weatherhead Hollow Pond	Guilford	Windham
Wolcott Pond	Wolcott	Lamoille

LAND ACQUISITION

This past December, the Department completed two acquisitions, which will provide additional recreational access to the water. One acquisition includes two parcels of land along the Batten Kill, which will help protect riparian habitat and provide angler access. Both parcels were donated to the Department by the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance. The Department acquired a 3.1 acre field in South Hero that will serve as the parking lot for an access area on Lake Champlain. A second parcel in this project should be acquired early in 2012, which contains an existing boat ramp. Together the two properties will provide much anticipated year-round protected, deep water access to the Inland Sea of Lake Champlain.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Department was able to fund one non-motorized access project made possible by House Bill H.832, passed in March 2000. The Vermont River Conservancy (VRC) obtained a grant

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to improve two existing, but seriously degraded drift boat accesses on the Connecticut River in Lemington and Canaan. VRC completed the upgrade in Lemington and will complete work in Canaan in 2012. The Department will continue to work with municipalities, river commissions, and interested groups to add to the list of non-motorized access sites.

The Department continues to develop web-based resources allowing the public to find opportunities for fishing and boating throughout Vermont. An online survey was sent out this spring to owners, operators, and managers of both public and private fishing and boating sites. The goal was to collect as much information as possible on fishing and boating areas in the entire state. The Department will then provide these recreational resources to the public on its website. The user end of the website is still being developed. The goal is to launch this site in time for the 2012 fishing and boating season.

2011 STORM DAMAGE

The erratic weather of 2011 impacted numerous access areas around the state causing hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage. The May storms and flooding left many access areas in the Champlain Valley unusable as late as mid-June. Once lake levels dropped most sites were simply in need of debris removal and grading of the parking lots (Table 3). A few sites in Essex County were impacted by the later rain event on April 29th that also caused flooding in Montpelier. Total damage estimates are still being compiled by FEMA, but have already exceeded \$230,515.

Tropical Storm Irene did not impact nearly as many access areas, but the magnitude of the damage was much more significant (Table 4). The Department owns two ponds, Kent and Colton Ponds, in the town of Killington; both have dams there were left undamaged, but the boat ramps were washed out and the dam's emergency spillways were overtopped. A third emergency spillway owned and operated by the Department in Cavendish was severely damaged. All three ponds had their water levels lowered to protect against any future events overtopping the spillways and causing more damage. Total damage estimates are still being compiled by FEMA, but have already exceeded \$265,175.

CONTACTS

Any questions or comments regarding the access maintenance and construction program should be directed to:

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Table 3. List of all Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department access areas impacted by the spring storms of 2011.

COUNTY	SITE NAME/LOCATION	DAMAGE DESCRIPTION	FEMA PROJECT WORKSHEET COSTS	EXPENSES TO DATE
Grand Isle	Vantines Access Area	Remove flood debris & grade	\$2,457.34	\$2,457.34
Grand Isle	Kelly Bay Access Area	Remove flood debris & grade	\$1,519.00	\$1,519.00
Chittenden	Colchester Point Access Area	Repair railing, remove silt & debris, grade	\$9,531.62	\$9,531.62
Addison	George Davis Access Area	Remove flood debris and grade	\$5,895.30	\$5,895.30
Addison	Fort Cassin Access Area	Remove flood debris and grade road	\$3,988.72	\$3,988.72
Essex	Great Averill Pond Access Area	Replace dock	\$3,183.90	\$3,183.90
Lamoille	Dorothy Smith Access Area	Restore parking lot, washed out from river	\$7,034.37	\$7,034.37
Essex	Wallace Pond Access Area	Repair washed out access road	\$3,710.83	\$3,710.83
Addison	Larrabee's Point Access Area	Dock maintenance, remove debris & grade	\$6,211.04	\$6,211.04
Chittenden	Sand Bar Access Area	Remove trees & debris, grade	\$14,065.00	\$14,065.00
Grand Isle	Keeler Bay Access Area	Remove flood debris & grade	\$1,281.06	\$1,281.06
Grand Isle	Holcomb Bay Access Area	Dock recovery & maintenance	\$2,108.94	\$2,108.94
Grand Isle	Allen Point Access Area	Major causeway damage	\$164,745.00	\$491.00
Grand Isle	Rouses Point Access Area	Repair shoreline & shore fishing platform	\$4,785.39	\$1634.43
Chittenden	Van Everest Access Area	Remove flood debris and grade	TBD	\$6388.54
Franklin	Tabor Point Access Area	Remove flood debris and grade	TBD	\$1245.00
Grand Isle	Horican's Access Area	Remove debris, repair asphalt road and shoreline	TBD	\$12,085.99
Orange	North Thetford Access Area	Not on FEMA's list.	TBD	\$2,607.96
Orange	Rood Pond Access Area	restore road, parking area, and stream - all washed out	TBD	\$20,219.82
			\$230,517.51	\$114,741.57

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Table 4. List of all Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department access areas impacted by Tropical Storm Irene.

COUNTY	SITE NAME/LOCATION	DAMAGE DESCRIPTION	FEMA PROJECT WORKSHEET COSTS	EXPENSES TO DATE
Rutland	Kent Pond Spillway	Spillway severely eroded and undercut; major engineering design work needed	\$232,975.50	\$0.00
Windham	South Pond AA	Access road washed out and erosion near ramp	\$1,477.35	\$0.00
Windsor	Foxstand AA	Sign post gone & major debris blocked stairs to river	\$3,526.41	\$0.00
Rutland	Kent Pond Ramp & Road	Major washout the length of the driveway with all silt deposited over ramp and reaches out 70 ft into the lake; major sandbars all around the ramp area too	\$2,143.50	\$0.00
Rutland	Colton Pond Ramp & Road	Ramp entirely covered with 6" of rock from parking lot washout.	\$1,078.50	\$0.00
Lamoille	Dorothy Smith AA	Damaged a second time; Restore parking lot, washed out from river	\$5,436.28	\$0.00
Rutland	Colton Pond Spillway	Spillway washed out, needs rocks reset.	\$9,749.53	\$0.00
Windham	Dummerston AA	Remove approximately 1 ft of silt off of ramp	\$4,201.91	\$4119.50
Windham	Old Ferry Road AA	Remove approximately 1 ft of silt off of ramp	\$2,881.91	\$3241.00
Windsor	Hoyts Landing AA	Remove a few inches of silt from parking lot & ramp; dock needs to be reset and repaired	\$1,706.37	\$1620.96
Windsor	Knapp Pond 2 AA	Emergency spillway washed out, new filter needed and rock reset	TBD	\$0.00
			\$265,177.66	\$8,981.46

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APPENDIX A

Major Infrastructure Improvements

Access Area Name	Town	Activity	Amount
Lake St. Catherine	Wells	Stabilization of lake bottom and ramp extension – final payment only	\$ 16,587.07
Chittenden Reservoir	Chittenden	Reconstruction and extension of ramp	\$ 57,337.50
Converse Bay	Charlotte	Parking lot expansion	\$ 29,858.97
Gale Meadows	Windhall	Constructed fishing platform (concrete decking installed) and minor ramp improvements	\$ 16,357.74
Eagle Point Park (Town of Bristol)	Bristol	Site preparation of shore fishing platform	\$ 10,068.20
TOTAL			\$130,209.48

*additional information on expenditures by site is available upon request