

**VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE
DEPARTMENT**

**ACCESS AREA PROGRAM
2012 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
January 15, 2014



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BACKGROUND

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (Department) maintained over 170 developed fishing access areas in 2013. These sites provide public access to waters in Vermont for shore fishing opportunities and launching of watercraft. The Department manages 139 access areas with concrete or gravel ramps for launching and retrieving of boats. Additionally, there are another 24 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 and boaters interested in fishing Vermont waters. Fishing license and motorboat registration sales have experienced some fluctuation, but there is a general increasing trend. This growing interest highlights the need for the Department Access Area Program as anglers and boaters are always in search of access opportunities.

The Department received approximately \$234,240 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 2012, the amount of these federal funds available for Vermont access areas was \$524,070. Additionally, the Department received capital funding in the amount of \$450,000 over the past three fiscal years, which has also been used to match with federal funds where appropriate.

MAINTENANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

This past year the Access Area Program spent over \$1,294,000 on basic maintenance, major infrastructure projects, and acquisitions of new access areas (Table 1). Expenditures ranged from \$1,223.13 for trash disposal to nearly \$341,900 for purchasing key parcels of land for access areas.

The capital appropriations the Department received were spent on improving existing access areas. A plan was developed two years ago to upgrade a select portion of the 39 concrete plank ramps the Department maintains, many of which had never received any significant improvements over their 30+ year life. Twenty-five ramps were identified for minor improvements by creating a generic design that could be applied to all sites. This plan included working with Department of Environmental Conservation engineers to design the improvements and obtain required permits, then work with pre-established contractors to complete most of the work during the late summer months. Generally, if the site had any usable planks they were reused, new planks were added to the bottom of the ramp to protect against propeller wash scour, and new crushed stone was placed along the ramp edges to protect it from ice and wave action. Fourteen projects were completed during the 2012 construction season (Table 2). The total cost was \$302,273, of which \$146,502 was capital funding.

Two major ramp improvements were completed as well as designs initiated for number of others. The Marshfield Reservoir ramp and approach were removed and replaced with a new bituminous concrete approach and a double lane concrete ramp that extends deeper into the

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water to accommodate boats during times of extremely low water and to protect against propeller wash scour. The Department has also been working cooperatively with Vermont's Agency of Transportation, Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, and the Division for Historic Preservation to expand the launching facilities 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, which is to be used by all recreational users of the historic area. The concrete ramp and dock approach were completed this December. The parking area improvements will be completed next spring and the new dock will be installed following ice out.

Two new universal shore fishing platforms were completed 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 town property 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.

In addition to the infrastructure improvements, the Department continues to make a conscious effort to improve the condition of all of its parking areas and access roads. This year the Department spent \$165,540 on site work of all of its access areas. Grounds maintenance, primarily provided by Department of Corrections Probation and Parole crews, provided weekly maintenance by cutting grass and picking up trash at a cost of \$128,500.

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Table 1. Summary of expenditures for Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's Access Area Program, 2012.

Category	Amount
Major Infrastructure Improvements (Appendix A)	\$ 294,041.99
Site Work Maintenance (i.e. gravel, grading, excavation)	\$ 165,540.79
Dock Maintenance	\$ 12,917.58
Department of Corrections Community Restitution Crews	\$ 121,311.04
Miscellaneous Lawn and Maintenance Services	\$ 4,348.25
Portable Toilet Rentals	\$ 59,157.97
Snow Removal	\$ 12,794.00
Purchase of building materials, supplies, equipment rentals, etc.	\$ 8,365.25
Land Acquisition	\$ 341,886.78
Payments for Public Access to Private Lands (i.e. leases)	\$ 3,822.87
PILOT (taxes)	\$ 54,105.00
Engineering – permitting, design, and construction oversight	\$ 28,520.37
Utilities	\$ 8,039.35
Surveys and Appraisals	\$ 26,359.89
Trash Disposal	\$ 1,411.50
Signage	\$ 1,223.13
Professional Memberships & Meetings	\$ 2,305.19
GRAND TOTAL	\$1,225,782.05

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Table 2. List of completed or nearly completed capital funded Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department ramp improvements projects.

Access Area Name	Town	Accomplishments	Cost
Amherst Lake	Plymouth	Ramp replaced and extended	\$ 11,308.72
Colton Pond	Killington	Concrete ramp planks reset	\$ 742.00*
Echo Lake	Plymouth	Materials acquired, construction to be completed summer 2013	\$ 3,750.00**
Great Averill Pond	Averill	Approach to ramp replaced	\$ 2,750.00
Greenwood Lake	Woodbury	Ramp replaced, extended, & dredged accumulated silt	\$ 18,232.00
Lake Morey	Fairlee	Ramp extended and shoreline stabilized	\$ 27,590.69
Lake St. Catherine	Wells	2011 ramp extension project completed	\$ 19,860.43
Lower Symes Pond	Ryegate	Improved the parking lot and shoreline access	\$ 2,076.00
Marshfield Dam	Cabot	Old ramp removed and new 2 lane ramp constructed; dock to be put in place spring 2013	\$ 46,243.00
Martins Pond	Peacham	Ramp replaced, extended, & dredged accumulated silt	\$ 23,771.00
May Pond	Barton	Ramp replaced, extended, & dredged accumulated silt	\$ 11,691.20
Monkton Pond	Monkton	Ramp replaced, extended, & dredged accumulated silt	\$ 16,249.45
Norton Pond	Norton	Ramp replaced, extended, & dredged accumulated silt	\$ 15,285.38
Rood Pond	Williamstown	Extended ramp and dredged accumulated silt	\$ 23,859.32
Sadawga Pond	Whitingham	Removed old concrete planks and replaced with a gravel ramp	\$ 2,882.43
Wolcott Pond	Wolcott	Materials acquired, construction to be completed summer 2013	\$ 7,200.00**
Statewide	Statewide	Engineering, permitting, and construction oversight	\$ 68,782.01
TOTAL			\$303, 273.63

*Low cost due to combining work with Irene repairs.

**Materials only.

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LAND ACQUISITION

This past March, the Department completed two acquisitions, which will ensure continued public access in perpetuity. One acquisition included the second of two parcels acquired as part of the John Guilmette Access Area, in South Hero. This site had been used for decades as a private launch facility and allowed only limited winter access for ice fishing. The Department is now working on the final details for a complete site re-design, which will include two new ramps, a dock, ADA facilities, and a new parking area; all of which will provide free year round access. The second acquisition was a donation of the Maidstone Lake Access Area, dam, and Loon Island. The Department had been leasing the access for the previous 10 years and fee ownership now guarantees public access.

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 to improve two existing, but seriously degraded drift boat accesses on the Connecticut River in Lemington and Canaan. VRC completed the upgrade in Lemington in 2011 and 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.

2011 STORM DAMAGE

The erratic weather of 2011 impacted numerous access areas around the state causing hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage. The spring storm damages to access areas are nearly completed. A final contract for the restoration of the Allen Point Access Area in South Hero was just awarded. Work is scheduled to occur this winter, weather permitting, which will complete all spring storm damage to access areas. Damage costs are not yet finalized, however it appears that the total damages to access areas were \$169,862 and the Department will pay for \$50,290 (29.6% of restoration costs).

Tropical Storm Irene did not impact nearly as many access areas, but the magnitude of the damage was much more significant. 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, Knapp Pond, owned and operated by the Department in Cavendish was severely damaged. Knapp Pond is the only remaining access area project to be completed following Irene. Damage estimates are as follows; total damages to access areas are approximately \$452,481 and the Department is currently responsible for \$135,554 (30% of restoration costs).

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CONTACTS

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

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APPENDIX A

Major Infrastructure Improvements

Access Area Name	Town	Activity	Amount
Statewide	Statewide	Minor ramp improvements funded by capital appropriations	\$230,609.19
Marshfield Reservoir	Chittenden	Reconstruction and widening of ramp	\$ 36,001.00
Eagle Point Park (Town of Bristol)	Bristol	Site preparation of shore fishing platform	\$ 27,431.80
TOTAL			\$294,041.99

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APPENDIX B

List of capital funded Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department ramp improvements projects, 2010-12.

Access Area Name	Town	Accomplishments	Cost
Amherst Lake	Plymouth	Ramp replaced, extended, & made deeper	\$11,308.72
Benson Landing	Benson	Project design completed, construction to be completed summer 2013	\$0
Colton Pond	Killington	Concrete ramp planks reset	\$ 742.00
Echo Lake	Plymouth	Permits acquired, construction to be completed summer 2013	\$3,750.00*
Fosters Pond	Peacham	Preliminary surveying completed; permitting and construction scheduled for 2013	\$0
Great Averill Pond	Averill	Approach to ramp replaced	\$ 2,750.00
Greenwood Lake	Woodbury	Ramp replaced, extended, & made deeper	\$18,232.00
Island Pond	Brighton	Project design completed, construction to be completed summer 2013	\$0
Keiser Pond	Peacham	Preliminary surveying completed; permitting and construction scheduled for 2013	\$0
Lake Morey	Fairlee	Ramp extended and shoreline stabilized	\$27,590.69
Lake St. Catherine	Wells	2011 ramp extension project completed	\$19,860.43
Lower Symes Pond	Ryegate	Improved the parking lot and shoreline access	\$ 2,076.00
Marshfield Dam	Cabot	Old ramp removed and new 2 lane ramp constructed; dock to be put in place spring 2013	\$46,243.00
Martins Pond	Peacham	Ramp replaced, extended, & made deeper	\$23,771.00
May Pond	Barton	Ramp replaced, extended, & made deeper	\$11,691.20
Miller Pond	Strafford	Preliminary surveying completed; permitting and construction scheduled for 2013	\$0
Monkton Pond	Monkton	Ramp replaced, extended, & made deeper	\$16,249.45
Norton Pond	Norton	Ramp replaced, extended, & made deeper	\$15,285.38
Rood Pond	Williamstown	Silt removed and ramp extended	\$23,859.32
Weatherhead	Guilford	Preliminary surveying completed;	\$0

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Hollow Pond		permitting and construction scheduled for 2013	
Wolcott Pond	Wolcott	Permits acquired, construction summer 2013	\$7,200.00*

*Materials only.