

**VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE
DEPARTMENT**

**FISHING ACCESS AREA PROGRAM
2016 MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION REPORT**

Submitted to:
Vermont Legislature
House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish & Wildlife
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Energy
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Submitted by:
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Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department
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BACKGROUND

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (Department) maintained 186 developed fishing access areas in 2016. The Department manages these sites to provide access to public waters for recreational boating, fishing, hunting, and trapping. The majority of these sites (140) have gravel or concrete ramps that allow for motorboat access. The remainder provide for carry-on access and/or shore fishing.

The Department received \$423,000 in Vermont motorboat registration fees this past fiscal year, which are dedicated 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 fiscal year 2016, the Federal Aid apportionment for Vermont access areas was \$541,600. The Access Program did not have a capital appropriation for FY16, but had been appropriated \$400,000 in FY 15.

In the past five years both state and federal funding has been somewhat erratic. Motorboat registration revenues hit an all-time high in 2011 at \$482,500, but have fluctuated up and down by as much as \$100,000 from one year to the next. This past year revenues were up \$80,000 after being down \$99,000 the previous year. Federal funding has rebounded the past two years following a 6-year decline to a low point of \$488,600 in FY14. Capital appropriations to the Access Area Program offset these losses and helped to balance the extreme fluctuations in the dedicated funding sources. These state funds have allowed for considerable gains in addressing the backlog of ramp repairs, dock replacements, and improving accessibility for all users.

MAINTENANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

In 2016, the Fishing Access Area Program spent \$661,925 on basic maintenance, capital improvements, and major infrastructure projects (Table 1). Expenditures ranged from \$1,440 for leases and access payments to over \$134,500 for completion of the Converse Bay Access Area improvements. The bulk of this year's expenditures were for basic facility operations. Total expenditures were significantly lower than previous years due to the lack of infrastructure projects, which totaled 6 projects and 4 were less than \$15,000. While spending was down, project planning has continued to move forward with future improvements slated for 3 different Lake Champlain access areas, as well as new docks at 7 existing sites.

There were two major infrastructure projects this past year; Converse Bay on Lake Champlain and Putney Landing on the Connecticut River. At Converse Bay, we extended the ramp and improved accessibility by creating dedicated ADA parking and a path to the dock. This project was nearly completed at the time this report was written last year, but the financial details had not yet been finalized. This extremely popular Lake Champlain access can now accommodate boats of all sizes to launch during low water levels and allows all users to park and gain safe access to boats. At Putney Landing, we rebuilt and extended the concrete ramp, which was crumbling and too short to adequately provide access to all boaters.

From 2011 to 2015 the Access Area Program received \$950,000 in capital funding. During this same time the Department completed 66 projects around the state totaling over \$2,500,000 (Table 2). The Department utilized capital funds to replace aging docks, upgrade rundown boat ramps, and repair eroding shorelines. Some of these projects were fully funded with capital money, while others were cost-shared with Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration funds. These

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projects have been a significant financial investment into the Access Area Program, but were sorely needed to improve accessibility to lakes and ponds across the state and to create a safer recreational experience for boaters and angling public.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

This past legislative session Act 159 (An act relating to transportation funding) was passed, which changed the fees for motorboat registrations and how these funds were dispersed from the Motorboat Registration Fund. Sec. 49. 23 V.S.A. § 3305 increased fees and removed surcharges for all motorboat registrations. Sec. 50. 23 V.S.A. § 3319 was amended to change how the revenue deposited into the Motorboat Registration Fund is dispersed. All recipients of the Motorboat Registration Fund saw a decrease in their percentage of funding, including Fish and Wildlife which was reduced from 50% to 34%. These reductions made room for two new recipients, VT DEC for aquatic nuisance control (20%) and the Transportation Fund (12%).

The Joint Fiscal Office and VT Department of Motor Vehicles projected a 17% increase in funding for the Fish and Wildlife Department. This was based on projected revenues generated from the fee increase and the percentage of funds the Department would receive from the Motorboat Registration Fund.

LAND ACQUISITION

The Access Area program did not acquire any new land or make any PILOT payments this past year. The program did not actively pursue any acquisitions in 2016. PILOT payments are typically made annually towards the end of the calendar year and amount to approximately \$50,000. However, during the past 12 months, which encompasses this report, an invoice was not paid. The 2017 report may show two PILOT payments.

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, 2016.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Major Access Improvements	\$ 167,967.80
Capital Funded Infrastructure Improvements & Construction	
- Ramp Improvements	\$ 29,048.84
- Dock Improvements & Purchases	\$ 0.00
Site Work Maintenance (i.e. gravel, grading, excavation)	\$111,936.35
Dock Maintenance	\$ 29,334.23
Department of Corrections Community Restitution Crews	\$ 64,470.20
Miscellaneous Lawn and Maintenance Services	\$ 6,785.00
Portable Toilet Rentals	\$ 60,876.02
Snow Removal	\$ 13,518.00
Purchase of building materials, supplies, equipment rentals, etc.	\$ 2,871.02
Payments for Public Access to Private Lands (i.e. leases)	\$ 1,440.00
PILOT (payments in lieu of taxes)*	\$ 0.00
Engineering & staff time—admin, permitting, design,& construction	
- Engineering & construction oversight for Capital Projects	\$ 6435.68
- Engineering & construction oversight for large projects	\$ 8,314.04
- General engineering consultation & access program staff time	\$ 133,935.04
Utilities	\$ 5,755.81
Land Acquisition	\$ 0.00
Surveying	\$ 1,827.45
Trash Disposal	\$ 3,699.74
Professional Memberships & Meetings	\$ 4,155.03
Administrative Expenses (vehicle gas, IT, office supplies)	\$ 1,245.75
Signage	\$ 8,309.84
TOTAL ACCESS AREA EXPENDITURES	\$ 661,925.84

*No PILOT payment was paid during the 12 months covered by this report. The program will continue to pay approximately \$50,000 annually.

Note: To complete this report in a timely manner for the legislature, all projects and financial information reported in this document are from December 15, 2015 to December 15, 2016.

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Table 2. List of all minor (<\$15,000) and major (>\$15,000) infrastructure access area projects from 2011 through 2016. Projects were funded with a combination of state motorboat registration and capital funds, and cost shared with Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration funding.

	SITE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COST
2011	Lake St. Catherine	Ramp extension	\$ 16,587.07
	Chittenden Reservoir	Ramp reconstruction & extension	\$ 57,337.50
	Converse Bay	Parking lot expansion	\$ 29,858.97
	Gale Meadows	Minor ramp improvement & constructed fishing platform	\$ 16,357.74
	Eagle Point Park (Town of Bristol)	Fishing platform constructed with cost share from town of Bristol	\$ 10,068.20
		2011 TOTAL	\$ 130,209.48
2012	Amherst Lake	Ramp replaced & extended	\$ 11,308.72
	Colton Pond	Ramp planks reset (materials only); partly funded with Irene (FEMA) funds.	\$ 742.00
	Echo Lake (Plymouth)	Ramp replaced & extended, silt dredged	\$ 3,750.00
	Great Averill Pond	Approach to ramp replaced; dock extension	\$ 6,122.65
	Greenwood Lake	Ramp replaced & extended, silt dredged	\$ 18,232.00
	Lake Morey	Ramp extended & shoreline stabilized	\$ 27,590.69
	Lower Symes Pond	Improved parking lot & shoreline erosion	\$ 2,076.00
	Marshfield Reservoir	Removed old ramp, constructed 2 lane ramp & dock (2012); new ADA dock (2015)	\$ 46,243.00
	Martins Pond	Ramp replaced & extended, silt dredged	\$ 23,771.00
	May Pond	Ramp replaced & extended, silt dredged	\$ 11,691.20
	Monkton Pond	Ramp replaced & extended, silt dredged	\$ 16,249.45
	Norton Pond	Ramp replaced & extended, silt dredged	\$ 15,285.38
	Rood Pond	Ramp extended & silt dredged	\$ 23,859.32
	Lake Sadawga	Removed old ramp; replaced w/ gravel ramp	\$ 2,882.43
		2012 TOTAL	\$ 209,803.84
2013	Wolcott Pond	Ramp replaced & extended, silt dredged	\$ 19,083.02
	Misc Construction Items	Planks, rails, & other ramp materials for statewide ramp projects constructed in 2013	\$ 35,769.20
	Seymour Lake	New ramp & ADA parking	\$ 120,694.10
	Island Pond	Ramp extension	\$ 42,763.50
	Chimney Point	Ramp replacement & new ADA dock (AOT funded)	\$ 0.00
	Echo Lake	Ramp replaced & extended	\$ 14,330.75
	Foster's Pond	Ramp replaced & extended	\$ 20,444.00
	Horicans	Ramp dredging	\$ 15,260.00
	Holland Pond	Reset existing plank ramp	\$ 4,361.96
	Kehoe	Shoreline stabilization & new ADA dock	\$ 62,847.54

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	SITE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COST
2013	Colton Pond	ADA walkway to water for shore fishing	\$ 11,994.74
con't.	Keiser Pond	Ramp replaced & extended	\$ 18,044.00
	Lake Eligo	Shoreline stabilization	\$ 3,277.75
	Lamoille River	Shoreline stabilization & new ADA dock	\$ 80,921.58
	Laphams Bay	Ramp dredging	\$ 49,945.00
	Miles Pond	Reset existing plank ramp	\$ 1,090.00
	Neal Pond	Removal of concrete plank ramp	\$ 855.00
	Weatherhead Hollow Pond	Ramp replaced & extended	\$ 10,738.64
	St. Albans	New ADA accessible dock	\$ 59,155.00
	Larry Greene	New ADA accessible dock	\$ 21,740.00
	Converse Bay	Parking lot expansion & new ADA accessible dock (2013); ramp extension & ADA parking (2016)	\$ 238,761.97
	Shelburne Bay	New ADA accessible dock	\$ 43,445.00
	Burr Pond	Shoreline stabilization	\$ 4,961.84
		2013 TOTAL	\$ 880,484.59
2014	John Guilmette	New access area construction	\$ 820,700.12
	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	\$ 939,238.29
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
	Stephenson's Point	New dock	\$ 23,500.00
		2015 TOTAL	\$ 249,561.01

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	SITE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COST
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
		GRAND TOTAL	\$ 2,505,607.12

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Figure 1. The 10x20 Fisher Bridge fishing platform on the Lamoille River in Wolcott was damaged following heavy February rains and subsequent flooding. Sheets of ice greater than 20 ft. across floated down the river, shearing off the platform's railing. The railing was replaced in June 2016.



Figure 2. The rebuilt Fisher Bridge fishing platform, June 2016, Wolcott, VT.

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Figure 3. Bolting the 4 ft. strips of concrete cloth together prior to setting it in place at the Dog Pond Access Area in Woodbury, VT.



Figure 4. Concrete cloth being dragged into place on the gravel bottom of the Dog Pond Access Area, Woodbury, VT, August 2016.