

**VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE  
DEPARTMENT**

**FISHING ACCESS AREA PROGRAM  
2017 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 2017, the Fishing Access Area Program maintained 190 developed fishing access areas. Targeted user groups are anglers, recreational boaters, waterfowl hunters, and trappers. In 2016, there were approximately 259,100 licensed hunters, anglers, and trappers and 29,400 registered Vermont motorboats that potentially used Department Fishing Access Areas, along with an unknown number of 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 Sportfish Restoration funds. The Department received \$399,755 in FY17 from Vermont motorboat registration fees as 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 FY 2017, the Federal Sportfish Restoration apportionment for Vermont fishing access areas was \$524,164. 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 Sportfish Restoration funds.

Over the past 10 years both state and federal funding for fishing access areas has been following a general downward trend. Motorboat registration funds hit an all-time high in 2011 at \$482,500, but have dropped over 20% since then. Similarly, federal aid funds hit a high in 2009 at \$606,700 and have dropped nearly 16% since that time. On a more positive note, this past fiscal year both the state and federal funding were within 1% of the 5-year average, which might be a sign of funding beginning to stabilize.

The Fishing Access Area Program received a \$100,000 capital appropriation in FY17. This allocation, in conjunction with other recent capital appropriations, has helped to buffer the erratic fluctuations from year to year and the steady drop in dedicated revenue. 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.

## MAINTENANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

In calendar year 2017, the Fishing Access Area Program spent \$949,600 on basic maintenance, capital improvements, and major infrastructure projects (Table 1). Expenditures ranged from \$1,000 for leases and access payments to over \$267,100 for new and upgraded docks. As usual, the bulk of the program's expenditures were for basic facility operation and maintenance (\$365,000).

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Total expenditures for the Fishing Access Area Program increased by nearly \$300,000 over the previous year. This increase was primarily due to the 11 completed infrastructure projects, 10 of which were funded in-part with capital funds. From 2012 to 2017 the program received \$950,000 in capital funding and the Department completed 67 infrastructure projects across the state totaling over \$2,870,000 (Table 2). The Department utilizes 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 funds or state motorboat registration fees. These projects have 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.

#### LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

The 2017 legislative session saw Act 67 (An act relating to aquatic nuisance species control) pass, which prohibits the possession and transport of a number of invasive species. The law requires boaters to drain water from their vessels, trailers, and other equipment prior to leaving state waters. It also allows for boat inspection stations certified by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to require mandatory inspections. Boaters who refuse inspections or are found transporting prohibited species will be in violation of the law and can now be ticketed for such violations. The Department has worked with DEC to ensure the new law is adequately publicized; signage has been updated at fishing access areas and the Department's law digest highlights the new changes.

#### NEW ACCESS AREAS

The Fishing Access Area Program did not acquire any new land this past year, but did add four new fishing access areas, all of which are accessible for fishing and non-motorized vessels. Two sites on the Lamoille River (Dog Head Falls and Upper Lamoille River) were upgraded from informal fishing access areas to sites with parking and improved access routes to the river. Similarly, an acquisition from 2014 on Lewis Creek was improved and publicized for fishing and non-motorized access. A new 20-year lease was executed with the town of Newbury for the Bugbee Landing Fishing Access Area. This boat ramp on the Waits River has been in existence for some time, but the Department had not been involved in management until this past year. Finally, the much-publicized Berlin Pond Fishing Access Area was partially constructed this past fall, but won't be completed and open to the public until the summer of 2018.

#### 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, 2017. There were 11 major infrastructure projects this past year, with the majority of them being dock projects (Table 2). Nine dock projects were completed, which included 7 new docks and 2 relocations. The Dillenbeck Bay and Shelburne Pond Fishing Access Area ramps also received upgrades from gravel to concrete ramps making launching and retrieving significantly better at these popular sites.

<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Capital Funded Infrastructure Improvements & Construction	
- Ramp Improvements	\$ 97,459.19
- Dock Improvements & Purchases	\$267,121.61
Site Work Maintenance (i.e. gravel, grading, excavation)	\$ 86,735.31
Dock Maintenance	\$ 18,040.25
Department of Corrections Community Restitution Crews	\$ 65,662.50
Miscellaneous Lawn and Maintenance Services	\$ 9,862.05
Portable Toilet Rentals	\$ 63,182.50
Snow Removal	\$ 55,607.00
Purchase of building materials, supplies, equipment rentals, etc.	\$ 3,919.75
Payments for Public Access to Private Lands (i.e. leases)	\$ 1,000.00
PILOT (payments in lieu of taxes)*	\$ 46,780.22
Staff & Engineering Costs – admin, permitting, design,& construction	
- Access program staff time & general engineering consultation	\$206,068.60
- Engineering & construction oversight for Capital Projects	\$ 3,462.46
Permitting	\$ 5,550.01
Utilities	\$ 5,512.57
Land Acquisition	\$ 0.00
Surveying	\$ 0.00
Traffic Control (Colchester PD)	\$ 3,904.33
Trash Disposal	\$ 2,501.45
Professional Memberships & Meetings	\$ 4,958.36
Administrative Expenses (vehicle gas, IT, office supplies)	\$ 1,052.99
Signage	\$ 1,234.44
<b>TOTAL FISHING ACCESS AREA EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 949,615.59</b>

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, 2016 to December 15, 2017.

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Table 2. List of all minor (<\$15,000) and major (>\$15,000) infrastructure projects for fishing access areas from 2012 through 2017. 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
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
	<b>2012 TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 209,803.84</b>
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 replaced & 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
	Colton Pond	ADA walkway to water for shore fishing	\$ 11,994.74
	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

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	SITE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COST
2013	St. Albans	New ADA accessible dock	\$ 59,155.00
cont.	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
		<b>2013 TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 880,484.59</b>
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
		<b>2014 TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 939,238.29</b>
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
	Dillenbeck Bay	New dock	\$ 18,590.00
	Stephenson's Point	New dock	\$ 23,500.00
		<b>2015 TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 249,561.01</b>
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
		<b>2016 TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 96,309.91</b>

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SITE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COST
2017 Dillenbeck Bay	Constructed new concrete boat ramp where gravel ramp previously existed	\$ 45,959.19
Shelburne Pond	Constructed new concrete boat ramp where gravel ramp previously existed	\$ 51,500.00
Benson Landing	New 60 ft floating dock	\$ 47,184.85
Crystal Lake	Relocated 50 ft dock from 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
<b>2017 TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 364,580.80</b>
<b>5 YEAR TOTAL</b>		<b>\$2,870,187.92</b>

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Figure 1. New dock and fishing platform at the South Bay Fishing Access Area in Newport, VT



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Figure 2. New 70 ft dock at the Larabee's Point Fishing Access Area in Shoreham, VT. The old Larabee's Point dock was undersized for Lake Champlain, so it was moved to Crystal Lake in Barton to replace the deteriorated dock at that fishing access area.

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Figure 3. Pouring the concrete at the Dillenbeck Bay Fishing Access Area in Alburgh, VT. The ramp was formed and poured December 2016 and the project was completed April 2017. This popular fishing access area used to have a very shallow gravel ramp, which made launching at this site after early July difficult to impossible. Now anglers, boaters, and waterfowl hunters can utilize the ramp into the fall.