

LAKE CHAMPLAIN WALLEYE ASSOCIATION
Fy2018 and Fy2019 Capital Bill Appropriation Request

Requested Amount: 25,000 each year = \$50,000 Total

History of Program:

The Lake Champlain Walleye Association (LCWA) is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to restore the once thriving Walleye fish populations to Lake Champlain and inland water bodies in a long-term partnership with the Vermont Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. This partnership has been widely acclaimed as an innovative means of undertaking the formidable long-term challenge of successfully re-establishing Vermont as a Walleye fishing destination. The Walleye fish is renowned for being a large, hard fighting fish that makes outstanding table fare. LCWA contributes over 4,000 volunteer man hours per year to the acclaimed partnership, plus annual funds that LCWA raises throughout the course of each year. The Walleye restoration effort would not be affordable without LCWA's funding and volunteer man hours and without the resources, manpower and expertise of the department. The partnership between the two entities makes an otherwise unaffordable Walleye restoration program possible. LCWA and department resources have covered manpower and operation expenses. Almost every year since 2003, the Legislature has appropriated small capital appropriations to help build capital infrastructure, such as LCWA's Walleye rearing ponds and intensive culturing facilities at the Grand Isle Fish Hatchery and Walleye rearing infrastructure at the Bald Hill Fish Hatchery.

Results from 2016 LCWA – Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Walleye Fingerling Rearing

LCWA's four Walleye rearing ponds successfully raised another record 138,500 fingerlings for release into Lake Champlain in 2016. The 2016 total exceeded the 2015 record by 6200 fish.

The other component of the LCWA- Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Walleye fingerling rearing program is known as intensive Walleye culturing. This is still in the experimental stage. The intensive culture program is now into its fourth year and according to Kevin Kelsey, Manager Grand Isle Fish Hatchery has had remarkable success. LCWA has purchased automatic feeders for the rearing tanks and fish counters for Grand Isle and Bald Hill Hatcheries. This give us accurate numbers of fish raised and fish stocked into Lake Champlain. The LCWA strongly support the intensive culture program and want to see it continue and expand.

LCWA's goal is an optimum Walleye stocking level of 250,000 or above. Significant increases in stocking numbers can be realized through some of the goals and expenditures discussed in this document. However, the 250,000 goal is not expected to be reached for another five or six years. That being said, anglers report that the Walleye fishing in Lake Champlain is greatly improved. Catch rates are increasing and many fishermen are beginning to target Walleye with good results. All of our fingerlings from our ponds are marked with a water-soluble dye called OTC which produces a color marking on their check bone. During the spring collection of eggs from mature fish when samples are taken we are happy to conclude that our fingerlings are showing up in great numbers as mature fish.

Lawrence Pyne of the Vermont Outdoor Journal produced a video on the advances of the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife- LCWA stocking program. LCWA recommends watching this video as it illustrates the dedication and commitment that the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and the LCWA has in its Walleye Restoration in Lake Champlain.