

# VERMONT CONSERVATION LICENSE PROPOSAL



VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

# FISH & WILDLIFE INFRASTRUCTURE STATS



## Department Lands w/ Developed Infrastructure

- 205 Fishing Access Areas
- 102 Wildlife Management Areas
- 5 Fish Culture Stations
- 2 Conservation Camps
- 2 Shooting Ranges
  - currently required to have a hunting or fishing license

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## WHY?

- These areas are User Funded. Fishing Access Areas are paid for through:
  - Motorboat registrations,
  - Dingle-Johnson excise taxes, and
  - an annual average of \$100K of Capital Funds.
- The public has become more diverse in their outdoor recreational activities, placing increased pressure on Department lands & its infrastructure.
  - Paddling, sailing, bird watching, ice skating, etc.



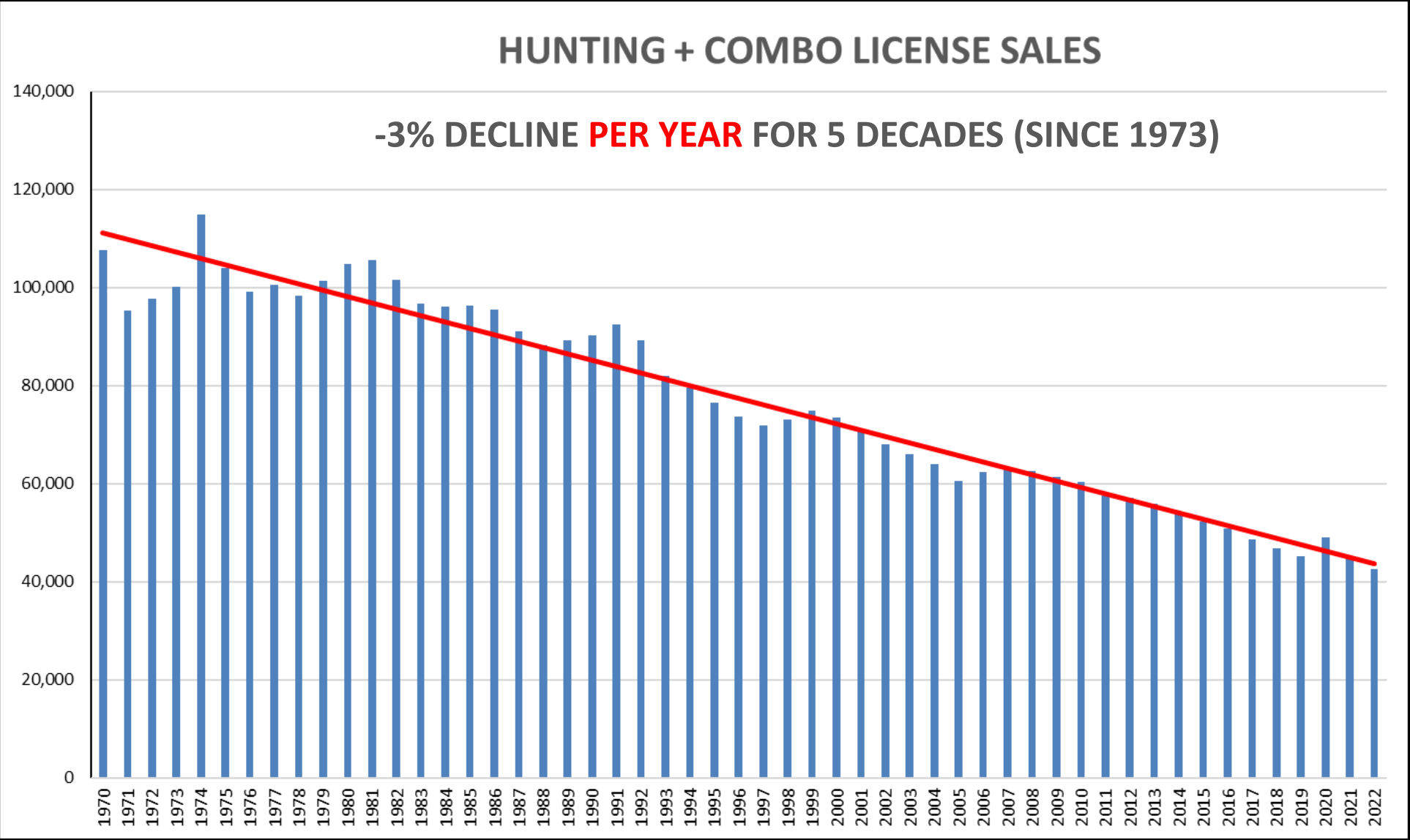
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## WHY?

- There is a tremendous financial burden on the Department when it comes to managing its land. Current funding does not meet the public's demand.
- Historically, hunters, anglers, and trappers were able to provide robust funding for Department land management activities.
- This new license will help maintain the historic “User Pay, Public Benefits” model.
  - Not looking to make a profit off of the license, but asking those who benefit from these areas to invest in the management, administration, and long-term sustainability of these areas



# DECLINING LICENSE BUYERS = DECLINING REVENUE



# OVERVIEW



- This will be another Department license, which gives license holders permission to engage in non-hunting, fishing, or trapping activities on F&W land
- Required for use of Fishing Access Areas for those who don't possess a current hunting, fishing or trapping license or a registered motorboat
- Required for individuals  $\geq 18$  yrs old
- Obtained through an annual purchase using existing POS system
- Cost would be similar to a hunting, fishing, or trapping license (approximately \$20/year or \$5/day)

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## WHO?

This new License will be required by all visitors to FAAs who do not possess a current hunting, fishing, or trapping license or motorboat registration.

- Targets those who use Department lands for currently authorized activities, but do not currently pay into the Department funding stream for land management.
- The License will only be required for those  $\geq 18$  yrs old.
- A motorboat registration will act as a hunting, fishing, or trapping license (they will not be required to purchase a Conservation License).

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## WHAT?

- Conservation License is designed to offset declining revenues and combat future predicted losses by diversifying the Department's funding streams.
- This will NOT replace the Habitat Stamp or compete with the Non-Game Fund. In fact, it is our hope that the Habitat Stamp contributions will grow with this new license.



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## WHEN?

- Implement in 2027 if rule change is approved in 2026.
- This will require 6 months of intensive outreach and education to the public and partner organizations, followed by a year of an additional warden outreach with the public.

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## WHERE?

- Visitors to all Fishing Access Areas will need some form of a license or registered motorboat.
- Shooting Ranges will continue require a hunting or fishing license, unless a rule change allows for this new license.
- Not required at Camps, FCSs, or Streambank Management Areas because these properties are typically open to the general public OR not always properly signed and rarely contain developed infrastructure.

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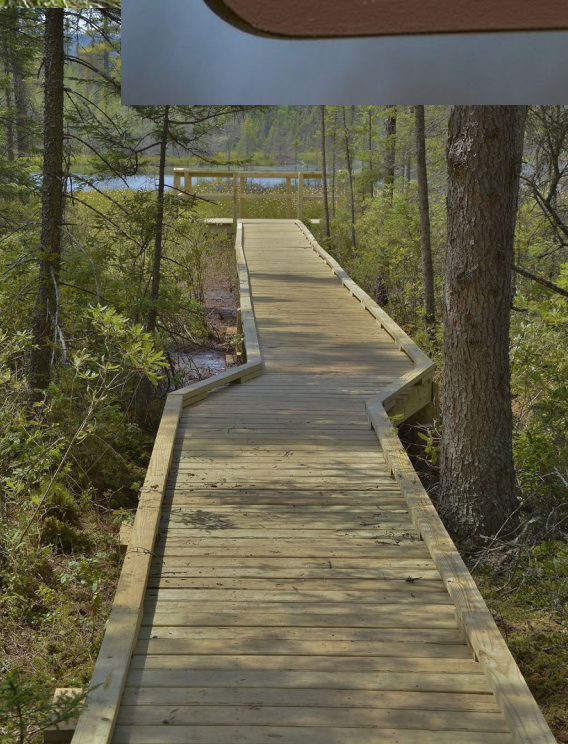


## HOW?

- The Commissioner currently has authority to set fees for use of Department lands by rule, in accordance with 10 V.S.A. § 4132 (e).
  - Fees collected for the use of Department lands and properties shall be deposited in the Fish and Wildlife Fund. This effort will also require some level of legislative approval, yet to be determined.
- The Conservation License will be available for purchase through the existing point-of-sale system that sells hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses.

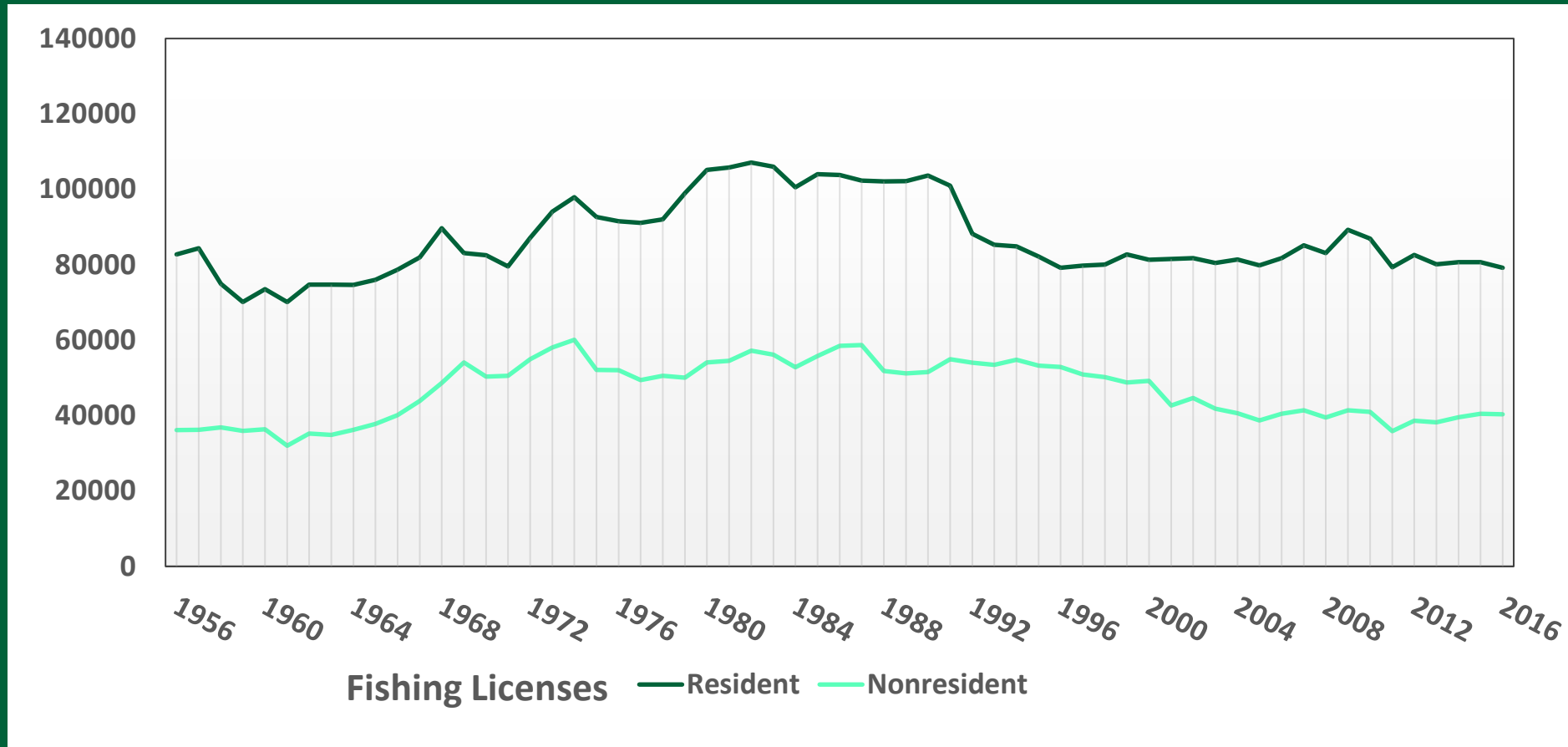


# QUESTIONS

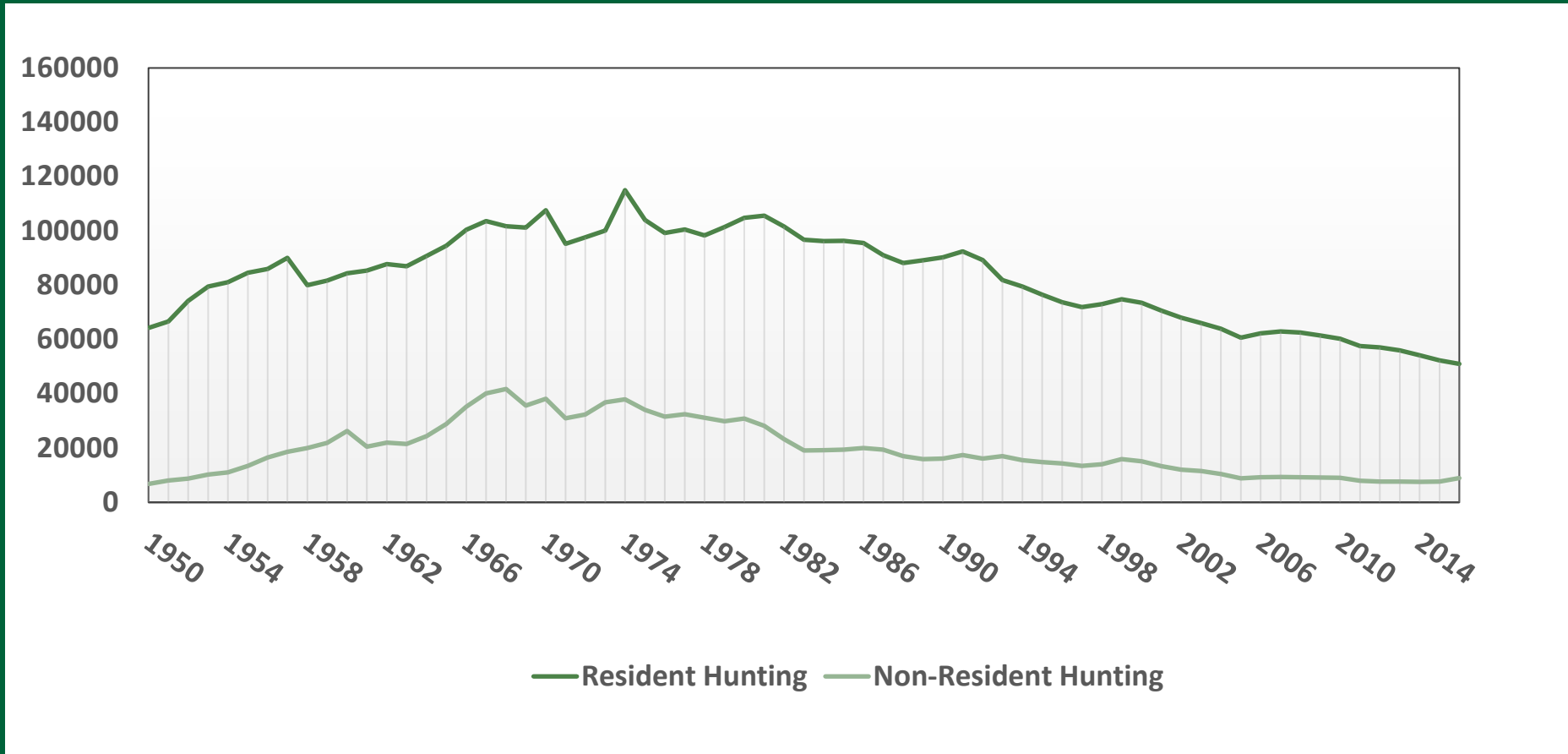




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# EXAMPLES OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR NON-TRADITIONAL USERS



- Wenlock – wildlife viewing platform & hiking trail
- West Mountain – moose viewing platform
- Eagle Point – 2 nature trails & wetland viewing platform
- Snake Mtn – interpretive signage & extremely popular hiking trails
- Winooski River Riparian Land – Cross VT Trail
- Otter Creek Fishing Trail – numerous other paddling access sites around the state
- Victory Basin – ADA birding trail and wetland platform in 2020
- Dead Creek – nature trail, pollinator habitat, wetland overlook