



# FISH & WILDLIFE AREA 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

# FISHING ACCESS AREAS

Department manages 205 developed Fishing Access Areas that provide access to 132 unique public waters for recreational boating, fishing, hunting, trapping, and wildlife watching.

Of the 205 sites:

- 143 have concrete or gravel boat ramps for trailered boats
- 42 contain courtesy docks
- 21 have universally accessible shorefishing platforms
- Paddlecraft can use all sites
- Over 36% of the access areas are designated as universally accessible and by the end of 2028, 50% will be fully accessible.
- Associated parking spaces for vehicles and trailers





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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 increasingly more diverse in their outdoor recreational activities, placing increased pressure on Department lands & its infrastructure.
  - Paddling, sailing, bird watching, photography, 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 provided funding for Department land management activities.
- Not looking to make a profit off of the license, but asking those who use and benefit from these areas to invest in the management, administration, and long-term sustainability of these areas

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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 accesses for currently authorized activities, but do not currently pay into the Department funding stream for infrastructure 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 an Area 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.

## COST?

- Cost would be similar to a hunting, fishing, or trapping license (approximately \$20/year or \$5/day)

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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 Area License will be available for purchase through the existing point-of-sale system that sells hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses.
- Compliance through FW Warden Service



# QUESTIONS?

