

2026_02_17 Proposed Changes to S224

Changes to Draft No. 2.1, 2/2/26 – the version before VTF&W language was added

Additional Definitions for Sec 2 – §1422 Definitions (pg. 3)

“Aquatic Nuisance Species Inspection Stations,” also called Public Access Greeter Programs, means a station that consists of volunteers with minimal equipment and a negligible impact on available space at vessel access areas that educate boaters about aquatic invasive species (AIS), inspect boats to remove any AIS that are found, and collect data about boating use of that waterbody.

“Boat Washing Units” means portable vessel washing units with equipment, such as pressurized water from hoses, that decontaminate the exterior of a vessel entering or exiting the waterbody.

“Decontamination Stations” means stations with equipment that fully decontaminates a vessel entering or exiting the water body, including all interior components and ballast tanks, using hot water or other methods.

Proposed Changes to Sec 6 – 10 V.S.A. §4145 Fish and Wildlife Access Areas (pg. 10)

(e)(1) Fishing access areas ~~may be used by~~ shall accommodate approved aquatic nuisance species inspection stations ~~in order to allow for inspection of all vessels, trailers, and equipment entering or exiting lakes~~ decontamination of wakeboats under section 1424b of this title or inspection of vessels entering lakes as required under section 1454 of this title.

(2) Any use of an access area by an aquatic nuisance species inspection station shall comply with the requirements of 50 C.F.R. Part 80. Consistent with the federal regulation, if the aquatic nuisance species inspection station conflicts with a use of higher priority, ~~the aquatic nuisance inspection station shall modify its activities until the conflict is remediated,~~ the Fish & Wildlife Department shall work with the entity managing the aquatic nuisance inspection station to resolve any conflict or issue such that other authorized uses can be reasonably accommodated and prevention of the introduction of aquatic invasive species into waters of the state is enhanced.

(3) This section and any rules adopted under it shall not be construed to mean that a conflict exists between an aquatic nuisance inspection station and a higher priority use when an operator of an aquatic inspection station informs the user of a vessel of the requirement to:

(A) decontaminate a wakeboat under section 1424b of this title; or

(B) inspect a vessel for aquatic nuisance species and drain a vessel under section 1454 of this title.

(f) The Dept. of Fish & Wildlife and the Dept. of Environmental Conservation Lakes & Ponds Program will develop guidance including criteria, conditions, and under what circumstances fishing access areas may include boat washing units or decontamination stations when proposed by any entity, as defined under §1453(b)(2) of this title. This guidance will be reported back to

the Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Energy and the House Committee on the Environment on January 15, 2027. At a minimum, the guidance will acknowledge that:

(1) After the requirements of 50 C.F.R. Part 80, preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species is a priority at fishing access areas.

(2) If deemed necessary by the Lakes & Ponds Program, a reasonable effort will be made to accommodate boat washing units or decontamination stations at a specific fishing access area even if these higher priorities of hunting and fishing access are minimally impacted as long as this does not significantly impede these higher priority uses.

(3) If it is determined that a boat washing unit or decontamination station is needed at a specific fishing access area but would significantly impede the use of the higher priorities of hunting and fishing access, a reasonable effort will be made to find an alternative location for the boat washing unit or decontamination station as close to the fishing access area as possible.

(4) Boat washing units and decontamination stations must be used in such a manner and location as to not impact the water quality of the adjacent surface waters or any adjacent wetlands.

Proposed Change to Sec 7

pg. 12 line 19 through pg. 13 line 11:

The following are authorized activities in order of priority:

4.1 Angling, ice fishing and the launching of any vessel to be used for fishing and parking of vehicles and trailers necessary for and contemporaneous with these purposes.

~~4.3~~ 4.2 Trapping, hunting and parking of vehicles and boat trailers necessary for and contemporaneous with that purpose.

~~4.3~~ Approved aquatic nuisance species inspection stations for ~~boat washing or to decontaminate wakeboats pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 1424b or inspection of all~~ vessels, trailers, and equipment entering or exiting lakes pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 1454.

~~4.2~~ 4.4 The launching of inboard and outboard motorboats engaging in any activity and parking of vehicles and trailers necessary for and contemporaneous with that purpose.

4.4 ~~4.5~~ Launching of all non-motorized vessels not used for commercial purposes and parking of vehicles and boat trailers necessary for and contemporaneous with that purpose. Users shall launch from the designated non-motorized launch site, when such a site is identified. Authorized nonmotorized vessels include canoes, kayaks, row boats, and standup paddleboards.

Etc.