New Hampshire
Fish and Game Department

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Glenn Normandeau
Executive Director

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Rick Callaghan
Ad-Hoc Willand Pond Committee
Dover, NH

Mr. Callaghan:

Thank you for inviting me to attend the Ad-Hoc Committee meeting on January 24 and listening to concerns relative to the impacts to the NH Fish and Game controlled boat launch on Willand Pond. During the meeting there were concerns raised about the potential impacts to fisheries and habitat associated with a five foot water elevation change. I discussed this project with staff from the Inland Fisheries Division.

The following is an excerpt from an email summarizing Fisheries Biologist Ben Nugent's concerns:

"In general, I would not expect a five foot water level fluctuation to have a detrimental impact on the fish community at Willand Pond. There may be an issue in the small cove near the launch (western side of pond) if the reduction causes the cove to become isolated. If it becomes disconnected fish may become stranded and killed as water temperature increases (during the summer) and dissolved oxygen decreases (summer or winter). Given the location of launch, I would suspect the ability for anglers to access the main lake would be an issue here as well. If enough water remained for canoe/row boat passage, I would assume fish would be able to navigate out of the cove.

The NHDES trophic survey (1987) suggests at it's traditional level, Willand Pond provides marginal, at best, habitat for cool water species (we stock 750 rainbow trout every spring). During the summer, cool water species are likely concentrated in the bowl near the eastern side of the pond. In 1988, stratification was found to occur during the summer at a depth of 4.5m. Dissolved oxygen levels were essentially nonexistent below this point. A five foot reduction would likely present the same situation with a slight reduction of volume in the hypolimnion. A five foot reduction during late spring may compromise some recruitment from spring spawners (largemouth bass, black crappie) but I get the sense that as a whole, these species have more sporadic spawning periods and not all eggs will be impacted.

In 2011, aquatic herbicides were introduced into Willand Pond in an effort to control variable milfoil. Given the oxygen consumption associated with aquatic vegetation decomposition, I would recommend restricting this practice to only occur at "full pool" levels."

From the perspective of the boat launch, we would have similar concerns as the fisheries biologists, namely the isolation of the small cove area. Should this happen, the boat launch would essentially be cut off from the main pond. Without having more detailed bathymetry at the

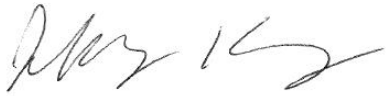
constriction of the cove it is difficult to determine what the water depth would be in that area during the proposed low water level of 184 feet.

Under the proposed water level fluctuation the ramp will most likely be dry during times that the water level is below about 188 feet. This does not necessarily render the access point unusable. Individuals will just be launching beyond the end of the ramp. Also, given that the ramp is in need of repair, the department will investigate the possibility of alternative designs based on the adopted water elevation range. Any improvements would not likely occur for a few years.

In summary the NH Fish and Game Department would recommend that the water level be kept at a level that ensures there is no isolation of the smaller cove such that fish and boats are allowed to pass from the cove to the main pond. Also, any efforts to control aquatic weeds be restricted to times of "full pool" levels.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have further questions or concerns. I could also attend the next Ad-Hoc Committee meeting if that would be helpful.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey King
Statewide Public Boat Access Program Coordinator

Cc: Sally Soule, DES