



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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DEM ANNOUNCES IT WILL START WORK ON REPLACING MAIN STREET BOAT RAMP IN WESTERLY ON NOVEMBER 1

PROVIDENCE, RI – The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is pleased to announce that it will start work on replacing the Main Street boat ramp in Westerly on Nov. 1. The popular boat ramp, owned and maintained by DEM, provides access to the Pawcatuck River and is used by recreational boaters and paddlers alike.

The project will include removing and disposing of the existing concrete ramp and building a new 20-foot-wide pre-cast concrete ramp in the same footprint. The new ramp will have adjacent floating docks oriented in an L-shape, replacing the deteriorating fixed-dock system currently in place. The new

docks will allow boaters to tie off their vessels, ensuring their launch is safe and convenient, while improving resiliency to rising water levels caused by global warming. The replacement will cost around \$500,000 and is being financed by Rhode Island's share of authorized and appropriated funds from the federal [Sports Fish Recreation Act](#).

“Along with the clear benefit of providing a first-class facility for boaters, anglers, and paddlers to launch onto the Pawcatuck River and points beyond, this replacement project involves the work of a Rhode Island construction firm and local people, which makes it a win-win,” said Governor Dan McKee.

“This project combines and highlights several DEM priorities including clean water, fishery conservation, outdoor recreational opportunities, and ensuring shoreline and fishing access across Rhode Island,” said



The new Main Street boat ramp will have the same footprint as the existing ramp and feature new adjacent floating docks to replace the deteriorating fixed-dock system.

DEM Director Terry Gray. “Boat ramps are an important shared, public resource and anglers, recreational boaters, and paddlers from Westerly and beyond rely on the Main Street boat ramp to connect with nature. We’re pleased to announce the start date of this exciting project.”

DEM estimates the work will take seven months, with the ramp remaining closed throughout and reopening around May 1, 2023. The south half of the parking lot, including access to the existing boat ramp, will be closed during the construction. Access to the shoreline of the north half of the ramp property will remain open providing access to the Pawcatuck River for shoreline fishing and car top boats. For alternative public boat ramps, boaters can access the Barn Island boat launch at the end of Palmer Neck Road in Stonington, CT, or the Quonochontaug boat ramp at the end of West Beach Road in Charlestown.

The project was designed by staff of the DEM Division of Planning and Development and [The Nature Conservancy](#). Commonly known as the Dingell-Johnson Act, the Sport Fish Restoration Program is a user-pay, user-benefit program that is derived from taxes on motorboat fuel, fishing equipment, and the purchase of some boats. Administered at the federal level by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the program invests these taxes into financial assistance for state management agencies to implement boating infrastructure improvements. Through it, similar saltwater boat ramp projects have been completed at DEM properties including the Quonnie Breachway, Galilee boat ramp in Narragansett, and Goddard State Park ramp in Warwick. The Main Street boat ramp improvement project will complement millions of dollars that federal, state, municipal, and nonprofit partners have already invested in state boating and fishing access infrastructure.

Recreational boating and fishing are ingrained in the culture of the Ocean State. They also are important economic drivers: 54,000 boats use Rhode Island waters each year, including more than 40,000 registered to RI owners. As part of a larger network of recreational opportunities in the state, fishing plays an important role in connecting people with nature, promoting health, and attracting tourism. According to the USFWS, there are around 175,000 recreational anglers (age 16+) in Rhode Island. Recreational fishing contributes more than \$130 million to the economy each year.

The engineering design firm on the project is [GZA GeoEnvironmental Inc.](#) GZA’s services include engineering, design, permitting, and construction phase oversight for a total of \$66,300. The construction work will be done by [Atlantic Marine Construction LLC](#) out of Westerly.

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