

# THE GEORGIA BOAT LAUNCHING RAMP PROGRAM<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

The fishing and boating potential in many of the lakes and streams of Georgia fails to receive maximum utilization due to insufficient access facilities. Public and private boat launching facilities on these lakes and streams are extremely limited. The increased demand for water-borne recreation has prompted the Georgia Game and Fish Commission to make these areas more accessible to the sportsman by initiation of a public launching ramp construction program. Local participation in the program is required in that the county or city involved must make the land available and participate in construction. Funding for the access program is provided under Bureau of Outdoor Recreation projects 10-000-17 and 10-000-40.

At the initiation of the program, Game and Fish Departmental personnel contacted local sportsmen and county officials in areas where these access sites were most needed. The degree of local interest determined the emphasis placed on specific sites. This project has now been underway for approximately two years and requests from local governments for ramps provides sites as rapidly as they can be constructed. Approximately 50 have been constructed in the past two years.

## SITE ACQUISITION AND PREPARATION

Georgia State laws require that all permanent structures must be built on State-owned land. The exceptions are that these structures can be built on federally-owned land under conditions where an agreement is reached allowing it to be open to the public. When land for the ramp must be acquired, the county or city must make the purchase and transfer the land in fee simple to the Game and Fish Department. The ownership of land refers to the land only immediately under the concrete ramp. The county or city must also own or have a lease for at least 20 years on the access road right-of-way and a two-acre parking area (Appendix A). The county or city must agree to maintain the access road and parking area to the ramp and the Game and Fish Department maintains the ramp. The county or city is also encouraged to grade the ramp site and assist in actual construction. Usually, the counties and cities are extremely cooperative. In situations where this is not possible, the Game and Fish Department rents equipment and operators to prepare the site.

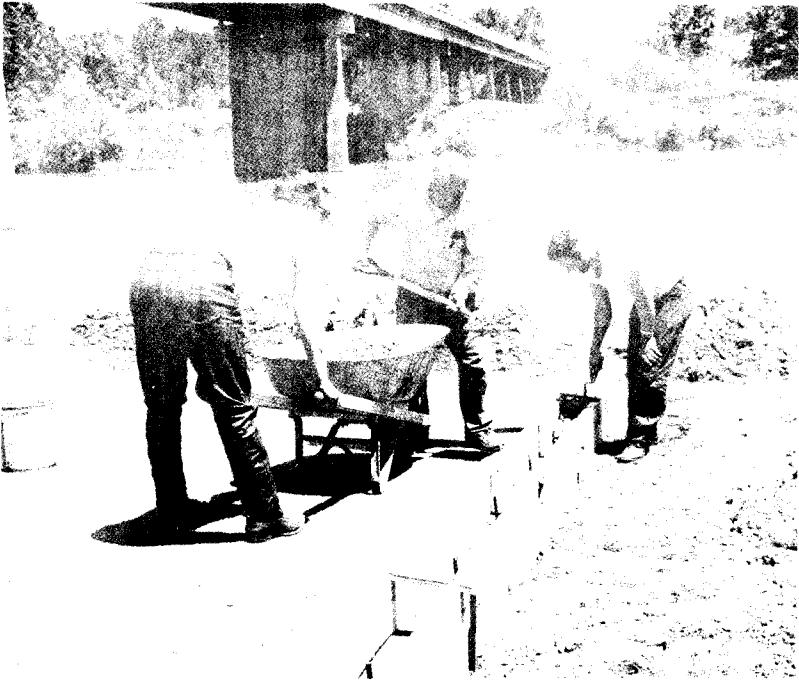
The launching ramps are constructed from a modification of the design by Lane (1960)<sup>2</sup>. The ramp site is graded from five to fifteen per cent slope with an optimum being about ten per cent at a right angle to the water. The grade depends upon the topography of the specific site. Often an approximately five per cent grade is used to a point near the water and then the grade changes to about fifteen per cent. The most desirable grade extends to the river bottom or to at least two feet below the low water level. This is usually best accomplished with a dragline at a low water stage. It is impossible to construct all ramps so that this two-foot minimum depth exists in drought years. During these extreme low-water periods, the grade is extended.

## RAMP CONSTRUCTION

Permanent employees on the ramp project carry out the actual ramp construction, assisted in some instances by county labor forces. The concrete slab for the ramp construction is poured as closed to the water's edge as possible. The length of the slab varies from fifty to 150 feet depending upon the local conditions. The

<sup>1</sup>This program is financed under Bureau of Outdoor Recreation Projects 10-000-17 and 10-000-40.

<sup>2</sup>Land, C. E., 1960. Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Conference, Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners, October 23-26, Biloxi, Mississippi, P. 242.



Curbs being poured using 2 x 6 timber.

standard widths used are in multiples of 10' with 6" x 6" curbs on each side (Figure 1). Concrete slabs or logs which have been prefabricated at the central headquarters and hauled to the site are then attached to the slab to extend out into the water. These logs are 16" x 6" x 10' and designed with loops to fit the loop in the end of the boat ramp (Figure 2). The logs are hooked to the ramp and together with screw pin shackles. A gravel bed is laid under these logs when needed to smooth the grades and prevent the concrete logs from sinking in the mud. Often the logs will be placed in the proper position and the water level will drop. A layer of concrete can often be poured over or in between the logs when they are out of the water for any distance.

During a severe drought in Georgia in 1968, the logs were removed and concrete poured farther out from the original ramp. It often requires several months to complete a boat ramp because of these water level fluctuations.

#### SIGNS

Signs are erected on entrance roads showing directions to the ramp. These signs are prefabricated at the central headquarters and are approximately 4' x 6'. Rounded, Tongue and Groove redwood is used and lettering is painted white with glass crystals being added so that they are visible at night. Signs are mounted on 6" creosote poles.

#### COST

The cost varies depending upon the ramp size. Average cost of the first 25 ramps poured was \$2,500 each. Estimations are that approximately 300 ramps will be built in Georgia on this program with a life expectancy of about 20 years with maintenance.

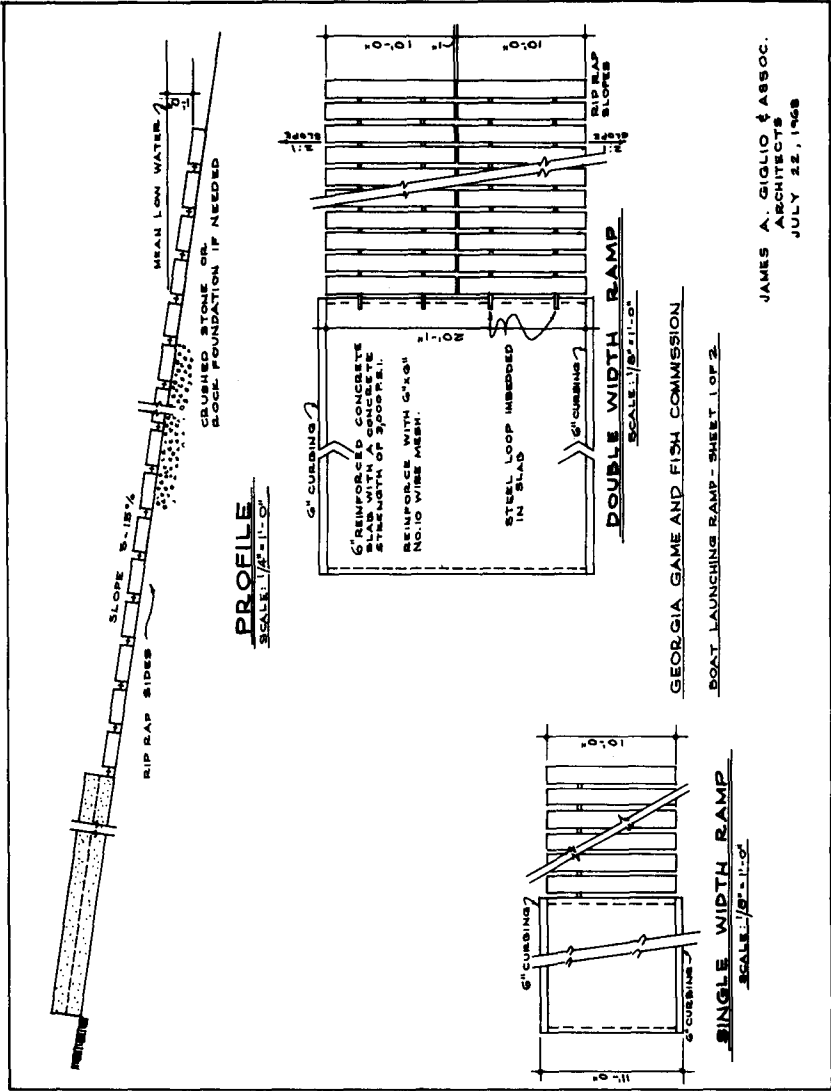


Figure 1. Ramp Design Modified from Lane (1960).



**NOTE.** THE CONCRETE SHOULD BE PLACED IN THIS MOLD IN 30 MINUTES FROM THE TIME THE MIXTURE IS READY TO BE PLACED UP WITHIN THE MOLD. THE MOLD SHOULD BE KEPT FULL OF CONCRETE UNTIL THE CONCRETE HAS SET. THE MOLD SHOULD BE KEPT FULL OF CONCRETE UNTIL THE CONCRETE HAS SET. THE MOLD SHOULD BE KEPT FULL OF CONCRETE UNTIL THE CONCRETE HAS SET. THE MOLD SHOULD BE KEPT FULL OF CONCRETE UNTIL THE CONCRETE HAS SET.

**CASTING OF RAMP LOGS.**  
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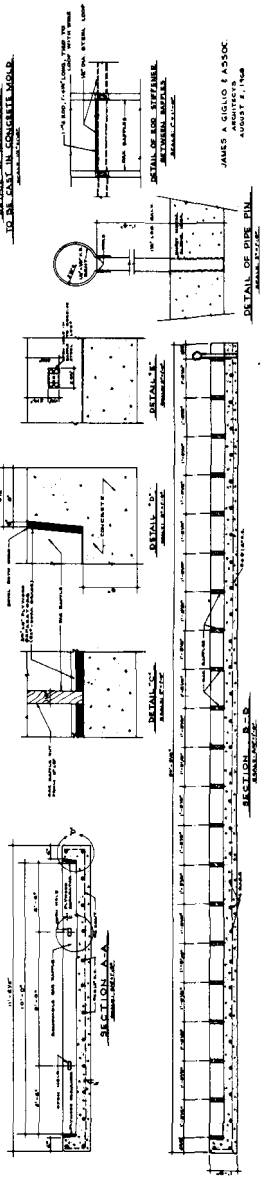
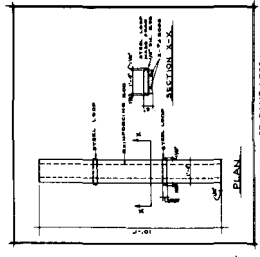
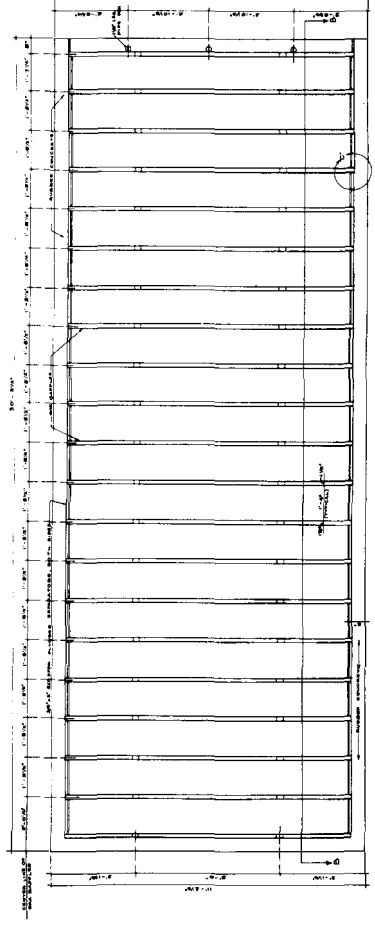


Figure 2. Mold for Pouring Concrete Logs.



Boat ramp constructed through a deep cut in the river bank.

APPENDIX A  
AGREEMENT BETWEEN COUNTY AND CITIES AND GAME AND FISH  
COMMISSION

THIS AGREEMENT made and entered into this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, by and between the STATE OF GEORGIA, by and through the Director of the State Game and Fish Commission, hereinafter called "State" and \_\_\_\_\_ County, by and through the Chairman of its Commissioners, \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter called "County."  
(name of Chairman)

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the State is engaged in a program of developing access to the waterways of Georgia by establishing various boat launching areas in order to encourage the use of said waterways for recreational purposes; and

WHEREAS, the County also has an interest in making those waterways within its boundaries more accessible to the public in order to encourage the increased use of same; and

WHEREAS, public land adjacent to \_\_\_\_\_ is available to be used in \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of waterway)

developing access to this waterway through the establishment of a boat launching area, said public land being described as follows:

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual obligations and affirmations hereinafter contained, IT IS HEREBY AGREED, by and between the parties hereto;

State agrees to construct and maintain a launching ramp on the land in question adjacent to \_\_\_\_\_

(name of waterway)

County agrees to construct and maintain an all-weather road to this boat launching area and to construct and maintain an adjacent parking area of at least two acres.

County affirms that it has title to the right-of-way needed for access to the boat launching area as well as title to the parking area in question, or in the alternative that said County has at least a twenty year lease on this right-of-way and parking area.

State and County both agree that this ramp, right-of-way, and parking area will remain open to the public free of charge.

Executed by the parties hereto this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY

DIRECTOR, STATE GAME AND FISH  
COMMISSION, STATE OF GEORGIA

## EFFECTS OF A 12-INCH SIZE LIMIT ON SMALLMOUTH BASS POPULATIONS AND FISHING PRESSURE IN THE SHENANDOAH RIVER, VIRGINIA<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

In 1964, five sections of the Shenandoah River ranging from 9.0 miles to 15.3 miles in length (average 11.4 miles) were selected for an airplane census of fishermen. The census was conducted on a randomized schedule<sup>2</sup> for both days of the week and time of day for the counts, with weekend days weighted because of heavier fishing pressure on those days. These data for 1964 through 1967 were used to compute the total fishing pressure in these sections.

Creel clerks were employed on a part-time basis in each of the five sections to gather information on the number of smallmouth bass, both undersize and legal size, as well as the number and sizes of channel catfish, sunfish, and other species caught. The number of hours each fisherman fished were also recorded. In three of the sections, mail boxes with measuring boards at hand were supplied at boat landings, or other points of access, so that voluntary reports could also be supplied by anglers.

In 1964, there was no size limit nor closed season on smallmouth bass. Fishermen kept bass as small as six inches in length. The result was a serious depletion of stocks of spawning size and many complaints by fishermen. In 1965, a 12-inch minimum length size was imposed on Shenandoah River bass with an almost immediate improvement in fishing. The number of 9, 10, and 11 inch bass increased substantially, and persons fishing for the sport of it with artificial lures have been very pleased with the results. One interesting feature of the study has been a gradual decline in the total fishing pressure in the five river sections totalling 56.8 miles in length. In 1964 the total fishing pressure was about 140,000; in 1965, 118,000;

<sup>1</sup>Based on Virginia's Dingell-Johnson Project F-14-R, Smallmouth Bass Stream Investigations.

<sup>2</sup>Schedule furnished under contract by the Institute of Statistics, University of North Carolina, Raleigh.