



Manchester Urban Ponds Restoration Program

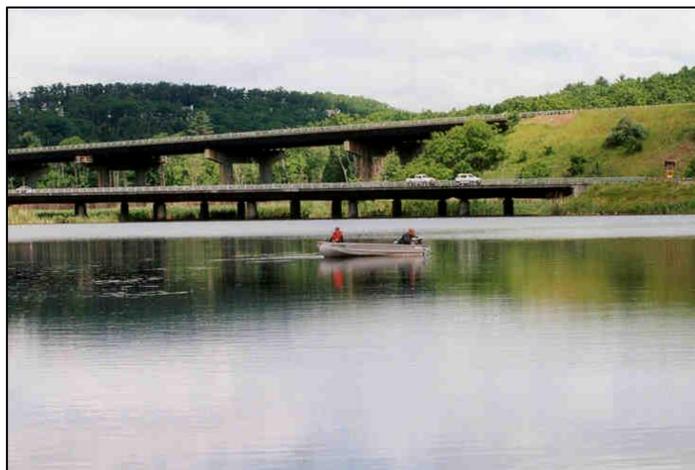
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The History of Stevens Pond

Stevens Pond has been a popular recreation spot with Manchester's young and old for generations. The pond is still heavily used for fishing and skating.

Fishing

According to New Hampshire Fish and Game Department records, Stevens Pond was experimentally reclaimed for small-mouth bass in 1952. This involved the application of emulsified rotenone (a fish toxin) to the pond surface in hopes of killing all fish in the pond. Although a complete kill was not achieved due to the presence of a floating bog along part of the shoreline preventing adequate spraying, over 9,000 small-mouth bass fingerlings and 45,000 small-mouth bass fry were stocked over the course of 1952 and 1953 (NH Fish & Game, 1960). Despite this effort, the dominant fish species in the pond remained brown bullheads and common suckers, as was discovered through fish sampling in 1958. Two species of crayfish were also stocked at Stevens Pond in 1953. After six years, one of the crayfish species had established itself and maintained a substantial population (NH Fish & Game, 1960). The pond was described as "highly productive", with "good populations of desirable game fish" which were in "excellent condition."



Interstate 93

In 1964, Interstate 93 was completed through Manchester. The southbound lanes were built directly over the northeastern edge of Stevens Pond. Since that time, water quality in Stevens Pond has deteriorated. "Analyses from 1981 to 1997 show...a 100% increase in conductivity levels, a 220% increase in sodium levels, and a 182% increase in chloride levels." Clearly, Interstate 93 runoff has had an effect on the pond over the years.

The Pond Today

Stevens Pond's value as a natural resource was noted in a letter from Arthur E. Newell, Supervisor of Fisheries Management and Research for the New Hampshire Department of Fish & Game, to James Hall of Manchester dated November 23, 1960. Mr. Newell states: "...biologists in the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department are interested in preserving certain strategically located ponds, such as Stevens Pond, in their original state." Unfortunately, the water quality of Stevens Pond has declined over the years. Nevertheless, it persists as a popular spot on Manchester's east side for paddling, fishing, bird watching, and ice skating.