

## STILES POND, BOXFORD, MA



Stiles Pond is a 60-acre natural great pond located three miles west of Boxford center. Maximum depth of the Pond is 26 feet located at its midpoint, with an average depth of 14 feet. Public access, including a boat ramp, can be found at the southwestern end of the Pond just off of Main Street. State Fish & Wildlife stock the Pond with rainbow and occasionally brown trout each spring. While the Pond is not deep or cold enough to enable trout to hold over year-to-year, it becomes a prime target for trout fishermen starting each May through the spring and early summer. Trolling jointed Rapallas or streamers from a boat is a preferred method of catching trout here. For the fly-fisherman the most productive patterns seem to be an Adams or Griffith's Gnat #12-16 fished near the shoreline. Other warm water fish species can be found including largemouth bass, black crappie, bullhead, pickerel, bluegill, golden shiners and an overabundance of pumpkinseeds.

Stiles Pond wasn't always a 60-acre pond. Prior to 1878, this area was the upper reach of Fish Brook with a considerably smaller ponded area. In 1878 the Diamond Match Company built a dam at what is now the Pond outlet at Stiles Pond Road. The Company had an existing water wheel at its mill on Lawrence Road but found that in July and August of each year the water level in Fish Brook became too low to turn the wheel. The solution was to create water storage that could be released in a controlled manner. The Company paid for land damage to abutters when the water rose over their original property lines. The dam was repaired and rebuilt on three subsequent occasions, the last occurring in 1994. In a significant departure from prior designs, the 1994 construction excluded a low water release function, which had been served by an outlet pipe embedded some eight feet beneath the top of the dam. That pipe was deemed unnecessary by the design engineer as a safeguard against high water conditions. The engineer, however, did not consider the ecological impact to eliminating a low water release function at the dam, which some believe has contributed to poor or no water conditions in the upper reaches of Fish Brook in July, August and September. Detractors also suggest that this design error

contributed to Fish Brook being delisted as a “cold water fishery” by the state of Massachusetts and the sharp decline of cold water species, such as brook trout, in Fish Brook.

*Kevin Koster Park* located just off of Main Street on the southwestern shore of Stiles Pond, is a popular summer recreational facility for Boxford residents and their guests. Re-named in 2006 after a long time Boxford resident and former lifeguard, this Park features sandy beaches, docks, floats and free use of watercraft as well as a summer concession stand that offers hamburgers, hot dogs, pizza and soft drinks during prime time hours. Lifeguards are on duty during the summer months and swimming lessons are offered by certified Red Cross instructors. Picnic tables are also readily available together with a children’s playground. Adjacent to the beach area is a finely manicured and frequently used Little League field. As many as 400 Boxford residents pay (\$155 per family/\$65 for individuals) for annual memberships to the Park.

Stiles Pond has a long history of youth recreational camps. *Camp Rotary*, located at 372 Ipswich Road in Boxford, has been in operation since 1921. It continues to offer a co-ed overnight camp experience for children ages 7-15 including swimming, fishing and other sports and crafts activities. Located at 4A Stiles Pond Road, the *Stiles Pond Day Camp* sponsored by the Danvers YMCA has been in operation for 66 years. This camp provides transportation from Danvers, Boxford, Topsfield and Middleton for day campers aged 6 to 14. Recreational activities include boating, fishing, multiple sports, nature, and arts and crafts. New buildings, two new basketball courts, new parking lots and trails were added for the 2015 season. *Camp Steppingstone*, also called Camp Sacagawea, occupies a 35 acre property at 1 Stiles Pond Road, which is owned by the Town of Boxford and leased to the Greater Lawrence Cooperative. Steppingstone has a six week educational day program for students aged 5-22 who have moderate to intensive developmental delays or multiple disabilities. Finally, *Camp Wakenda* at 99 Chandler Road is a Greater Boston YMCA sponsored co-ed day camp for children ages 5-17. A multitude of programs are available at Wakenda including relationship building, a sports camp, a Teen Adventure camp, leadership and employment skills as well as a CIT program for ages 16-17.



Winter on Stiles Pond

