



DEPARTMENT OF
**GAME & INLAND
FISHERIES**
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 6, 2019

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POPULAR PUBLIC FISHING ACCESS BELOW LEESVILLE DAM HAS BEEN CLOSED

RICHMOND, VA- the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) and Appalachian Power have closed the Leesville Dam Tailrace Fishing Access along the Staunton River in Campbell County. The Leesville Fishing Area is located on the north side of the river below the dam and provided access for bank fishing only within the tailwater of the Dam. Leesville Dam is the lower dam of the two-reservoir Smith Mountain pumped storage hydroelectric project operated by Appalachian Power in southwestern Virginia.

Due to age and water undercutting the platforms, structural damage has occurred resulting in a public safety concern. It was originally closed but partially reopened in July. However, after further assessment, it has been determined it is no longer safe for public access.

The Leesville tailrace fishing area is very popular with anglers and provides much-needed bank access to the Staunton River. Anglers routinely catch Walleye, Saugeye and Striped Bass during the spring spawning runs and some remain in the pool year-round. Smallmouth Bass, Roanoke/Rock Bass, Bluegill, Redear Sunfish, Redbreast Sunfish, Flathead Catfish, and Channel Catfish are also routinely caught at this site.

Anglers will still be able to launch canoes and kayaks from the launch area located downstream of the catwalk. The parking lot and restrooms will also remain open.

Pictures available upon request.

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