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**FISHING SEASON BEGINS EARLY
Trout Park Opens at McGovern Pond at Spicebush Swamp Park**

WEST HARTFORD, CT – APRIL 6, 2020 – Get your rods ready and head to Spicebush Swamp. Fishing season has begun early this year. In addition, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has designated the pond at Spicebush Swamp on Mountain Road as a Trout Park. DEEP recently stocked McGovern Pond with trout, and they will replenish the trout supply regularly through the spring. All applicable licensing and possession limits for trout parks apply.

“Fishing is a wonderful way to get outside and enjoy time alone or with your family,” said Doug Jackson, Park Naturalist at Westmoor Park, who oversees West Hartford’s fishing activities. “McGovern Pond is a lovely spot for new anglers to try to catch their first fish,” he said. While West Hartford parks remain open, restrictions on gatherings of five or more are in place. Fishing is permitted with immediate family members or alone.

Governor Ned Lamont opened fishing season early this year to provide a healthy recreational opportunity to state residents and to reduce the likelihood of crowds that typically accompany the official opening day of Trout season. The season usually opens on the second Saturday of April. On their website, DEEP encourages fishing as a solitary experience or with members of an immediate household, not as a group activity. Signs at Spicebush Swamp and other favorite fishing destinations around West Hartford will encourage all anglers to follow social distancing practices.

The DEEP website outlines licensing and regulations, and provides a list of fishing spots around the state: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Fishing/CT-Fishing>. DEEP also provides an Interactive Trout stocking map: <https://ctdeep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=70d13bc033854b89a87c04b1d11b1a43>. Jackson says this resource “shows many great places to fish around the state, and you may discover new places to fish right here in West Hartford.”

“We’re excited that DEEP designated McGovern Pond at Spicebush Swamp to be a Trout Park,” said Helen Rubino-Turco, Director of Leisure Services & Social Services. “Fishing is a great way for residents to engage with their local parks in a safe and meaningful manner. Spicebush Swamp is a smaller ‘pocket park’ that is sometimes overlooked, but it has a lot to offer.”

Stream fishing provides other ways and locations to try to catch the sometimes-elusive trout. “Stocked trout in McGovern Pond may swim downstream, so if you follow this branch of Trout Brook you may find additional fishing spots,” said Jackson. “The stream leads from Spicebush Swamp Park into Moody’s Woods, and then into Fernridge Park.” From there, it flows behind the American School for the Deaf campus and eventually joins another branch of the Trout Brook next to Trout Brook Drive. “But you need to be mindful of where you are and who owns the property you are on,” Jackson warned. “Following a stream to fish, does not give you permission to trespass on private property.”

Other locations in West Hartford that provide public fishing opportunities include ponds in the following areas: Fernridge Park; the Buena Vista recreation complex next to Cornerstone Aquatic Center; Wolcott Park; and Beachland Park. “In any of these ponds during most of the year, one can expect to find sunfish, Bass, catfish and other warm water species of fish,” said Jackson. “Fishing is fun,” he said, “and it can also provide you with a delicious meal.” He cautioned all fishing enthusiasts to fish alone or with immediate family members only.

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