

## A NEW, SMALL BOAT LAUNCH FOR THE RIVER

Thanks to a grant from the Lake Champlain Citizens Advisory Committee, advice from NYSDEC's Burt Morehouse, and in-kind personnel and machine time from the Town of Willsboro, boaters and paddlers have an improved access to the Boquet River downstream of Willsboro Falls.

The former launching area for boats was a steep, narrow, cut bank between "black ash" deposits. (Black ash is the waste residue from the former pulp mill that operated for 100 years near Willsboro Falls.) Anglers and recreationists had problems backing boat trailers to the river, and the area was not especially attractive to Lake Champlain paddlers. Since Willsboro would like to attract paddler-tourists to the Town, and since the whole black ash area had been studied by BRASS to turn a "wasteland" into parkland and an asset to the Town, it made sense to try to improve the boat launch. Burt Morehouse showed BRASS plans for a concrete launch pad to be poured on dry land and later pushed into the water, which would save enormous expense and elaborate procedures for de-watering and pouring on-site.

Although the design was for a much larger boat launch, the basic elements were the same: an initial 9"-deep concrete pour for a slab that would be moved later; form boards and concrete resting on a smooth gravel bed topped by sand and plastic; a sonotube lining to the front form board (the end that goes into the river) so there would be no sharp edges to rip legs, clothing, or canoes; thick timber(s) 8-inches thick for the back form board (with "L"-shaped anchor bolts counter-sunk) so a machine could push the heavy concrete pad, once cured, into the water without damaging it; a "V"-groove detail finish on the slab to give vehicles better traction; and, a later 6"-deep concrete slab, poured on-site to connect with the first slab once pushed into the water.



*Boquet River Association*

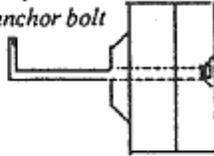
**Form design for later move of concrete pad for a boat launch.**

*10" diameter sonotube cut in half & nailed to 2x10*

*6" gravel bed topped w/sand & 6 mil plastic*

*inside the form, grade 60 steel rebar on 12" o.c. grid tied with tie wire and elevated 3" from plastic with bolsters.*

*profile detail of 4x10 timbers with 1.5"x3.5" keyway and 12" L-shaped 5/8" diameter anchor bolt*



BRASS took the design that looked like it was meant for launching the Queen Mary and made up a Willsboro site plan and material list. Once Peter Jacques - Willsboro's Highway Superintendent - approved, materials were ordered, Peter had a "V"-groove tool made out of welded angle, and the plan was reviewed by the international volunteers who would make the form for the first pour. It was painful and funny. BRASS had expected English words like "bolster," "tie wire," "screed," and "jitterbug" would be new terms; what we didn't foresee was even the size measurements (feet and inches) and how to read a U.S. tape measure would be a new experience for persons

with a metric system background. So, not only were we all new at forming and pouring concrete, we struggled with language, tools, directions, each other, the fear the form wouldn't hold, and the knowledge that a sitting and idle concrete truck would cost even more money. Or in hind-sight, maybe the language barrier helped. Perhaps only the BRASS director perspired before the first pull of stiff concrete.

