



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

# Community Spotlight: Ice Fishing on Perch Lake

Senator Patty Ritchie

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

This time of year, as temperatures drop well below freezing, you cannot drive by a body of frozen water without seeing anglers set up on the ice, trying to reel in their next big catch. One of the most popular places in our region for doing just that is Perch Lake, located just over ten miles North of Watertown.

Perch Lake is a shallow body of water and is the source of the Perch River, which flows southwest, 13 miles to Lake Ontario. It is home to nesting waterfowl, while also serving as a refuge for migrating waterfowl and as a protection area for other nearby wildlife.

In 1950, the 545-acre Perch Lake became part of the Perch River Wildlife Management Area, but due to an agreement with its previous owner, the area was closed off to the public. However, in 1995, New York State was able to, with the wildlife in mind, safely open the lake for a short time during winter—December 1<sup>st</sup> to March 1<sup>st</sup>—specifically for ice fishing. It has since become one of the most popular places for people to ice fish for northern pike, yellow perch and other species.

As a State Senator, I have worked in recent years to enhance angling opportunities on waterways across Oswego, St. Lawrence and Jefferson Counties, including Perch Lake. Part of my efforts include securing funding to help promote local and major fishing tournaments in our region.

As winter continues, I encourage you to head to Perch Lake or any of the other amazing bodies of water we have in our region to enjoy a day out on the ice and to hopefully, land your next big catch.