

Bald Hill Wildlife Management Area

Last edited: 9/30/22



General Description

Bald Hill Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 1,143 acre tract of land surrounding the Bald Hill Fish Culture Station. It is owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. The area is located in the middle of Vermont's Northeast Kingdom region, in the towns of Newark (Caledonia County) and Westmore (Orleans County) between the villages of West Burke and Island Pond.

Access the southern end of the WMA by parking at the Fish Culture Station. Bald Hill Pond Fishing Access is at the end of Bald Hill Pond Road

History

During the early spring and summer of 1940, the Vermont "Fish & Game Service" started development of the Bald Hill "Rearing Station" by acquiring land and water supplies in the towns of Newark and Westmore. World War II interrupted the project, causing shortages of building supplies and labor. In 1946 construction of the fish culture station began, and in 1951 it produced its first lot of 200,000 young salmon.

Additional land was purchased in 1954 in order to control the outlet of Bald Hill Pond. These purchases included land from the Willoughby Lumber Company, which logged the area and operated a sawmill at Sawdust Pond prior to state acquisition. Signs of this timber operation are still evident at the site today.

Habitat Features

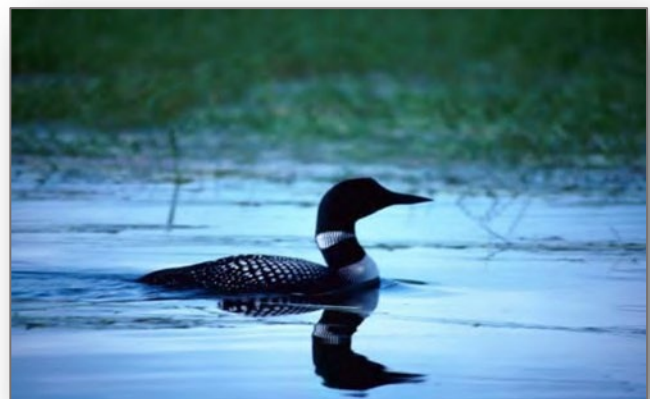
The WMA is situated in a high basin, with elevations ranging from 2,400 feet on the steep sides of McSherry Mountain to 1,500 feet in the southeast corner along Bean Brook. Forest cover on the hillsides is primarily sugar maple, beech, black cherry, yellow and paper birch. A dominant feature is Bald Hill Pond, a 105-acre pond that lies almost entirely within the WMA. Sawdust Pond and Brown's Pond are much smaller ponds located in and adjacent to the WMA. These ponds are the result of poor drainage caused by thick glacial deposits. Bean Brook drains these ponds southeast (towards the hatchery) through beaver ponds and gently sloping wetlands forested by red spruce, balsam fir, white cedar and alder swales.

Approximately 30 acres of brushy old-field habitat lies north of the fish culture station. This habitat is maintained by periodic mowing to maintain berry and nut-producing shrubs. Other habitat improvements include maintenance of an herbaceous opening, pruning and release of wild apple trees, and periodic timber management to regenerate softwood forest for snowshoe hare habitat.

Common Fish and Wildlife

Mammals Large expanses of spruce-fir and cedar forests make this area prime snowshoe hare habitat. They are likely to be found in the younger softwood stands between the hatchery and Bald Hill Pond. Bobcat, coyote, fox and fisher inhabit this area, attracted by the prey base of snowshoe hare. Signs of mink, raccoon, otter, beaver and weasel may be seen along the banks of streams and ponds. Wild apple trees maintained on the WMA attract white-tailed deer, black bear and ruffed grouse. Moose frequent the area in relatively low numbers, found mainly using wetlands during the summer.

Birds Common loons occasionally nest and are frequently observed fishing on Bald Hill Pond. Great blue herons, black ducks, common and hooded mergansers use the wetlands. The black-backed woodpecker, which is uncommon in the region, has been observed in the conifers.



Common loons have made a dramatic comeback in Vermont.
©Jupiter Images 2004.

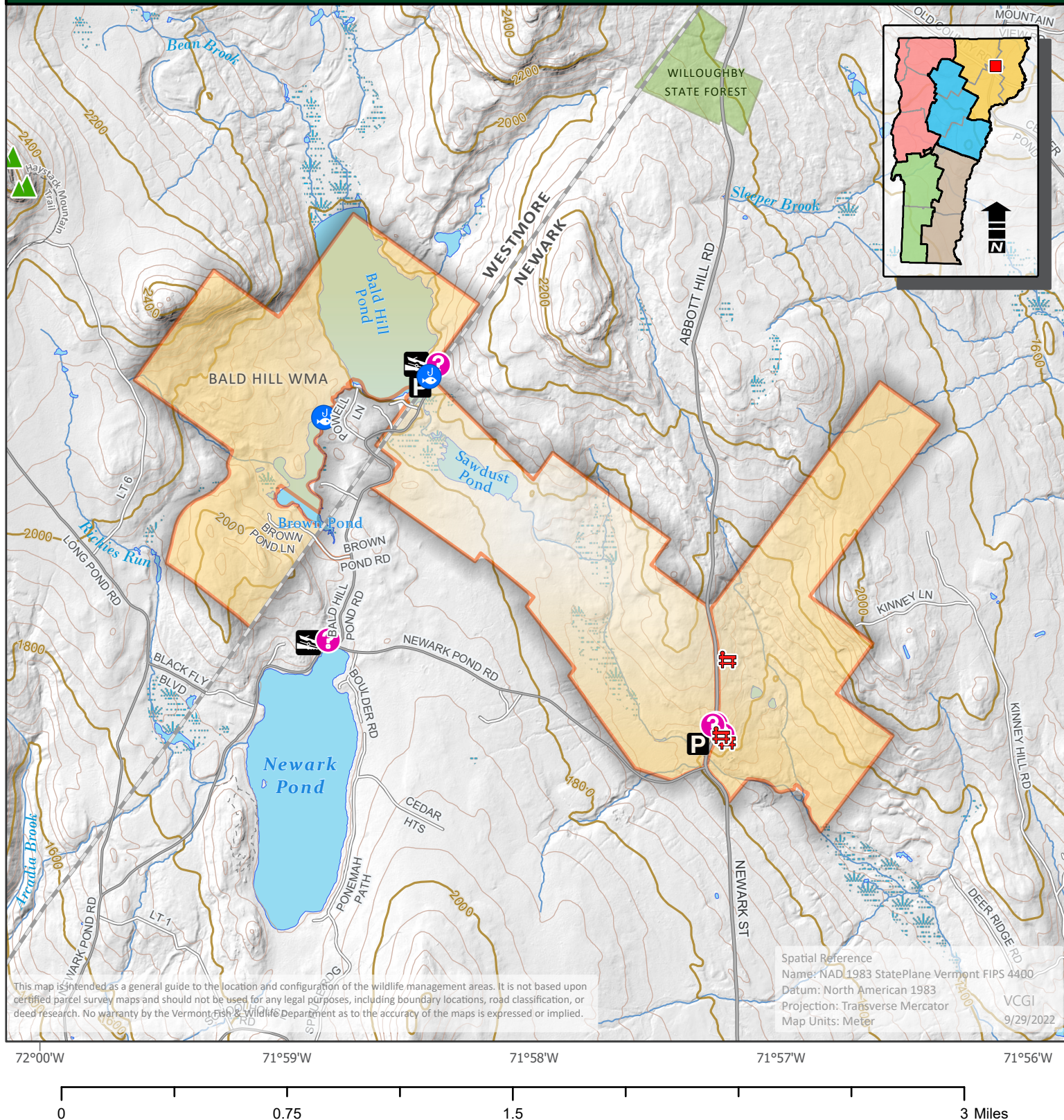
Reptiles and Amphibians Painted and snapping turtles likely inhabit the larger ponds and old beaver flowages. Woodland salamanders such as the red-backed are found under logs. Red spotted newts also occur on the ground and in ponds in their aquatic stage. Chorus frogs, such as the spring peeper and pickerel and wood frogs, inhabit wetlands. Northern red-bellied and northern ring-necked snakes likely inhabit the area.

Fish Bald Hill Pond, Brown Pond and Bean Brook offer opportunity for brook trout fishing.



Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

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Bald Hill WMA

Map Number: 16

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|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Parking | Shooting Range | Fishing Access | Trails | Refuge (no public access) | Federal Land |
| Boat Ramp | Wildlife Viewing Area | Visitor Information | Town Boundary | Special hunting/trapping restrictions | State Land |
| Cartop Access | Campground | Gate | Wildlife Management Area | Streambank Management Area | Town Land |
| Park Office | Vista | Rail Lines | WMA Hunting Rights Only | Controlled Hunting Area | |