Brandon Swamp Wildlife Management Area

Last edited: 9/30/22

General Description

Brandon Swamp Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 466-acre parcel owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. It is located in the towns of Brandon and Leicester, with the majority of the land being in Brandon. The WMA is bordered by Otter Creek to the east and the Brandon-Sudbury, Brandon-Whiting town lines to the west. It is south of Leicester/Whiting Road and east of Bald Hill. There is a small parking area at the northern end of the WMA that can be accessed by turning south off Leicester Jct. Road just west of Leicester Junction. Access across the WMA is difficult, and by foot or boat only.

History

The WMA land was used historically for farming, particularly haying. The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is now trying to restore the former agricultural lands to forest. The original parcels that make up the WMA were sold to the Department in 1967 and 1969 by H. B. Huntley & Sons, Inc. Barbara Cox donated the 8.3-acre Emily Cox Muto lot (on the Brandon-Leicester town line) to the Department in 2001. Between 2002 and 2021, another twelve smaller parcels were added to the WMA through donations and purchases with Duck stamp funds.

Habitat Features

Brandon Swamp WMA is a large floodplain swamp with cedar ringed by red maple-black ash hardwoods. It is one of the State's larger wetland complexes. The red maple-northern white cedar swamp is mossy and hummocky, with hidden pools. Cedar is dense in the center. In the riparian areas, there are silver maple, willow, elm, basswood and cottonwood. The former agricultural fields lay alongside Otter Creek. Approximately 1.5 miles of the Otter Creek streambank is included in this WMA. Mosquitoes are dense in season.

Common Fish and Wildlife

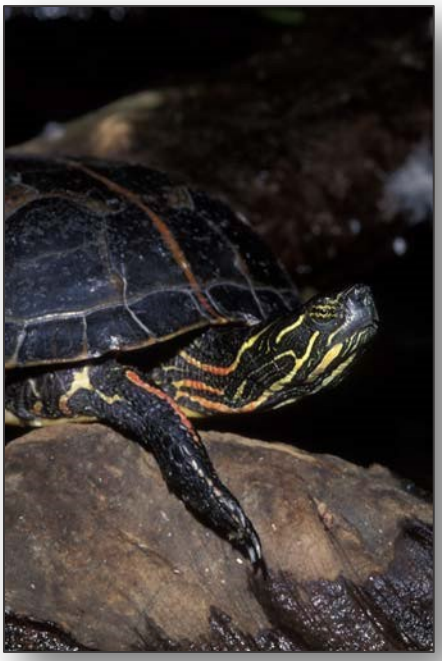
Mammals White-tailed deer, raccoons, cottontail rabbits, gray squirrels, red foxes and coyotes can be found in the swamp and woodlands. Wetland mammals that occur on this WMA include weasels, minks, otters and beavers. Otter Creek provides excellent foraging habitat for little brown bats, and possibly endangered Indiana bats.

Birds The mixture of seasonally flooded woodlands and old fields provide excellent feeding habitat for waterfowl and wading birds when inundated. Breeding ducks include mallards, black ducks, hooded mergansers, blue-winged teals and wood ducks. Willow flycatchers, eastern kingbirds and northern waterthrushes forage by the water's edge, while belted kingfishers patrol the river for fish.
Many beautiful songbird songs may be heard such as the veery, hermit thrush, wood thrush, Baltimore oriole and warbling vireo. Upland game birds are ruffed grouse, turkey and woodcock. Several types of owls and woodland hawks inhabit the swamp.

Reptiles and Amphibians Brandon Swamp WMA contains many of the reptile and amphibian species found in Vermont. Northern two-lined and four-toed salamanders prefer the floodplain and swamp, while the Jefferson hybrids, spotted, blue spotted, and eastern red-backed salamanders are more likely to be found under the cover of a rock or log in the moist wooded areas. Northern dusky salamanders are found in rocky streams and seeps. The eastern newt can be found in the water during its larval and adult stage, or on land in its brightly colored eft stage.

Along Otter Creek and throughout the swamp, the calls of the various frog species can be heard. Near more open water, bullfrogs, green frogs, spring peepers and gray treefrogs are likely to be found. Pickerel and wood frogs are more commonly found in the swamp and moist woodlands.

Snapping and painted turtles may be seen basking in and along Otter Creek. Northern water and smooth green snakes prefer being near water or moist areas. Brown, milk, garter and eastern rat snakes can be found throughout the WMA.



A painted turtle basking.
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Fish Otter Creek supports a warmwater fishery of large and smallmouth bass, yellow perch, chain pickerel, northern pike and brown bullhead.

Brandon Swamp WMA is open to regulated hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking and wildlife viewing.

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

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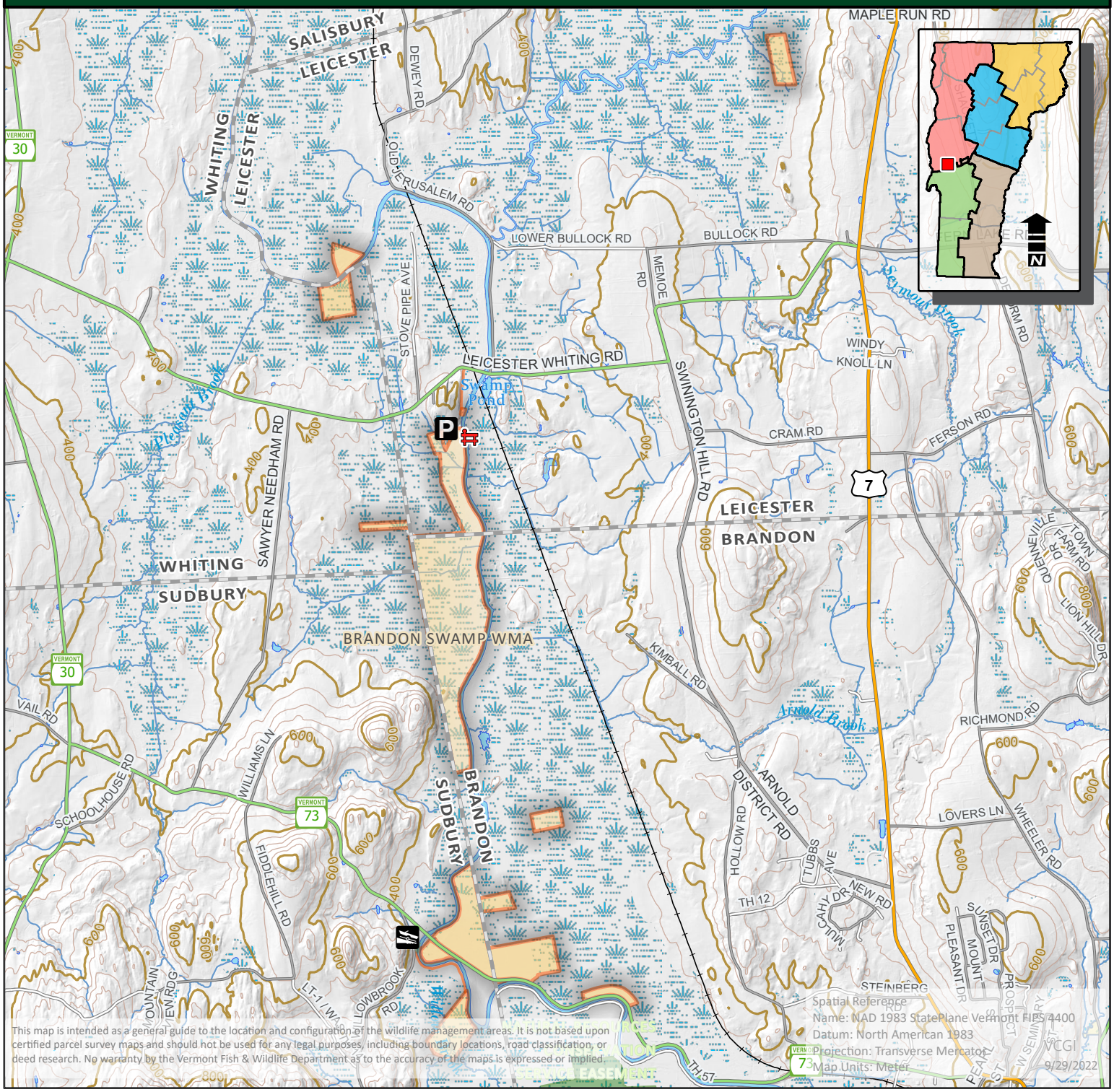

43°53'N
43°52'N
43°51'N
43°50'N
43°49'N
43°48'N

73°12'W
73°11'W
73°10'W
73°09'W
73°08'W
73°07'W
73°06'W
73°05'W

0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

Brandon Swamp WMA

Map Number: 79

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