

Podunk Wildlife Management Area

Last edited: 9/30/22



General Description

Podunk Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is located in the east central Vermont town of Strafford, due west of Miller Pond. The WMA is 892 acres in size, is owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department.

Access to the WMA can be gained from the west via Justin Morrill Highway to Old City Falls Road, and then to Pennock Road, which eventually turns into an unmaintained Class 4 town road that bisects the WMA. The same Class 4 road can be accessed from the east via Miller Pond Road and Maple Hill Road. A developed parking lot is located off the Class 4 road on the east end of the WMA. Undeveloped parking exists at the entrance to the Podunk Pond access trail, and further west on the Class 4 road where the road reaches its highest point, adjacent to a maintained field. Podunk Pond, a 4-acre impoundment, is in the middle of the WMA, north of the Class 4 road.

History

No one is sure how the WMA received its name, but Podunk is a Natick Indian word meaning "a boggy place." The WMA, however, is an upland environment. It is thought that the early settlers of what was to become the Town of Strafford first occupied this region of the town. Surveyor General James Whitelow identified the area on paper as West Podunk. Following its purchase by the State of Vermont, the WMA was given its current name by the late William Sladyk, a wildlife forester for the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. McMaster Hill, located in the west end of the WMA, was named after an early settler.

This part of Orange County was once a nationally important region for copper production. In fact, the property is still encumbered by mineral rights held by the Ely Mine Company.

Cellar holes, fields and stone walls on the WMA are the remnants of a once self-sustaining farm economy.

The WMA was purchased by the State of Vermont in 1963 from the Malmquist Wood Products Company, using a combination of Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department funds, generated from the sale of Vermont hunting and fishing licenses, and the U.S. Department of Interior's Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Habitat Features

The WMA lies within the Ompompanoosuc River watershed and is mostly forested with a mix of sugar maple, white birch, beech, some red oak, balsam fir, red spruce, hemlock, and plantations of white and red pines and Norway spruce. The coniferous areas in the mid-eastern portion of the WMA provide wintering habitat for white-tailed deer. There are about 10 acres of field in five separate areas that are maintained by the Department

through brush hogging. The largest field (~5 acres) is located along the Class 4 town road in the middle of the WMA, and it is associated with the remains of an old farmstead. There are good concentrations of apple trees in these fields which are maintained through release cuttings.

Several intermittent streams feed Podunk Pond. The outlet of the pond eventually joins the outlet of Miller Pond and empties into Abbott Brook, which in turn empties into the West Branch of the Ompompanoosuc River. Elevations range from 1,900 feet on McMaster Hill to 1,300 feet at the lowest point in the WMA.



An Immature goshawk on a perch.
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Common Fish and Wildlife

Mammals Game animals include white-tailed deer, black bear, moose, coyote, fox, snowshoe hare, fisher, bobcat, and grey squirrel. Expect to find many smaller non-game species as well.

Birds Ruffed grouse and wild turkey can be found on the WMA, as well as osprey, great-horned owl, and goshawk. A variety of other deciduous and coniferous forest-associated songbirds are certain to be found.

Reptiles and Amphibians Salamanders such as Jefferson's and associated hybrids, spotted, northern dusky, northern two-lined, red-backed, and eastern newt might be found on the WMA. American toad, spring peeper, and American bull, green pickerel, northern leopard, gray tree and wood frogs are known to occur here. Painted turtles and snakes such as the smooth green, DeKay's brown, red-bellied, and garter snakes might be found.

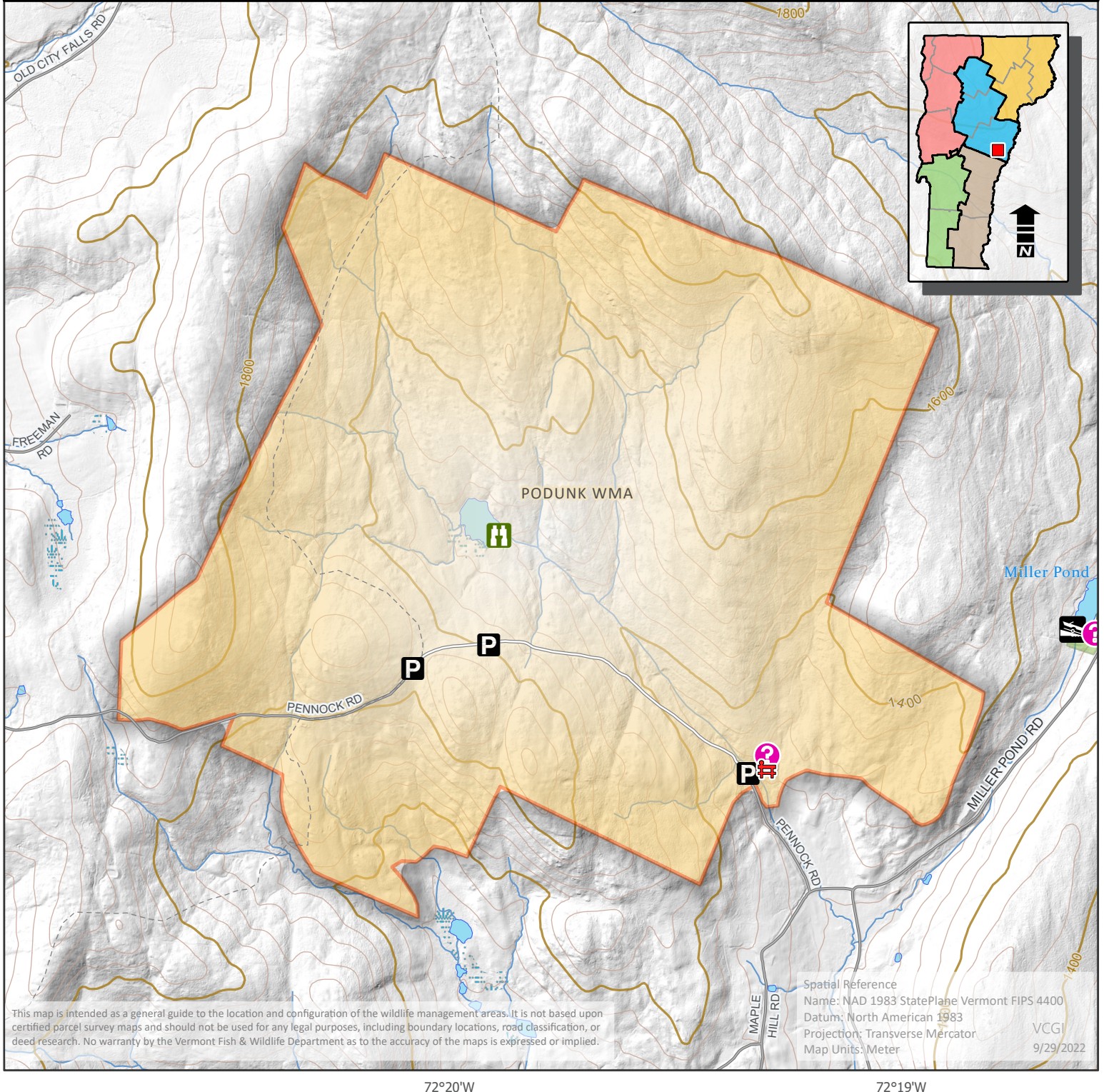
Fish Native brook trout may be found in outlet stream of Podunk Pond. A breach in the man-made dam at Podunk Pond has significantly lowered the water level. Therefore the pond itself does not provide a fishery at the current time due to unsuitable habitat conditions. Native brook trout were documented in Podunk Pond in 1971.

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



Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

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This map is intended as a general guide to the location and configuration of the wildlife management areas. It is not based upon certified parcel survey maps and should not be used for any legal purposes, including boundary locations, road classification, or deed research. No warranty by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department as to the accuracy of the maps is expressed or implied.

Spatial Reference
Name: NAD 1983 StatePlane Vermont FIPS 4400
Datum: North American 1983
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Map Units: Meter
VCGI
9/29/2022

Podunk WMA

Map Number: 10

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	