

Rock River Wildlife Management Area

Last edited: 9/30/22



General Description

Rock River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 416-acre parcel located in Highgate in northwestern Vermont. Primary access is from a small parking lot and boat put-in on the east side of Route 7 by the Rock River Bridge. Canoes can also be launched where St. Armand Road crosses the River. One may walk into the WMA from St. Armand Road. The land is owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department.

History

Like nearby Swanton and Alburg, Highgate was a center of Abenaki activity. European settlers came from both the south and north. The settlers from the north were of French origin, and modern place names (such as St Armand Road) reflect this French-Canadian influence. Like their Native American predecessors, European settlers grew crops in the rich soils of the Champlain Valley; unlike the Abenakis, they almost completely deforested it. Farming is still the most common land use in the area.

The first land parcel for the WMA was acquired in 1997. It was donated by the Fernand-Gagne family. subsequent purchases of the land were acquired with funds from the Vermont Duck Stamp Program. In 2020, about 119 acres were added to the WMA with monies from EPA Wetlands Funds and US Fish and Wildlife Service Sport Fishing Restoration Grants.

Habitat Features

This WMA is a mix of emergent wetland and floodplain forest bisected by the Rock River. The Rock River is a slow-moving stream which arises in Canada and flows south to Lake Champlain. Soils are mostly heavy, poorly drained Champlain Valley clays. The natural community lining the riverbanks is a silver maple-sensitive fern riverine forest, which is adapted to wet conditions. There is also some cattail marsh, water willow shrub swamp, buttonbush shrub swamp and sedge meadows. Some rare plants that occur in the WMA are small bedstraw, cursed crowfoot, yellow water-crowfoot and Gray's sedge.

Common Fish and Wildlife

Mammals In the swamp, one may find white-tailed deer, red fox, raccoon and gray squirrel. The riverine wetlands support beaver, otter and mink.

Birds The floodplain forest along the river provides habitat for cavity-nesting ducks like wood ducks, common goldeneyes and hooded mergansers. Black ducks, mallards, and blue-winged teals also breed here. Belted kingfishers and eastern kingbirds forage along the river. Forest-dwelling songbirds, raptors and woodpeckers live in the silver maple swamp. There are woodcock in the swamps and uplands.

Reptiles and Amphibians One might find newts, spotted, blue-spotted and red-backed salamanders, and green, wood, gray tree, bull, pickerel and northern leopard frogs. Turtle species that use the WMA include snapping, painted, and northern map turtles. Besides the more common garter and northern water snakes, one may possibly find a rare and beautiful ring-necked snake.

Fish Northern pike, yellow perch, bullhead and crappie may be caught in Rock River. The sedge meadows along the river provide spawning grounds for these and other warmwater fish.

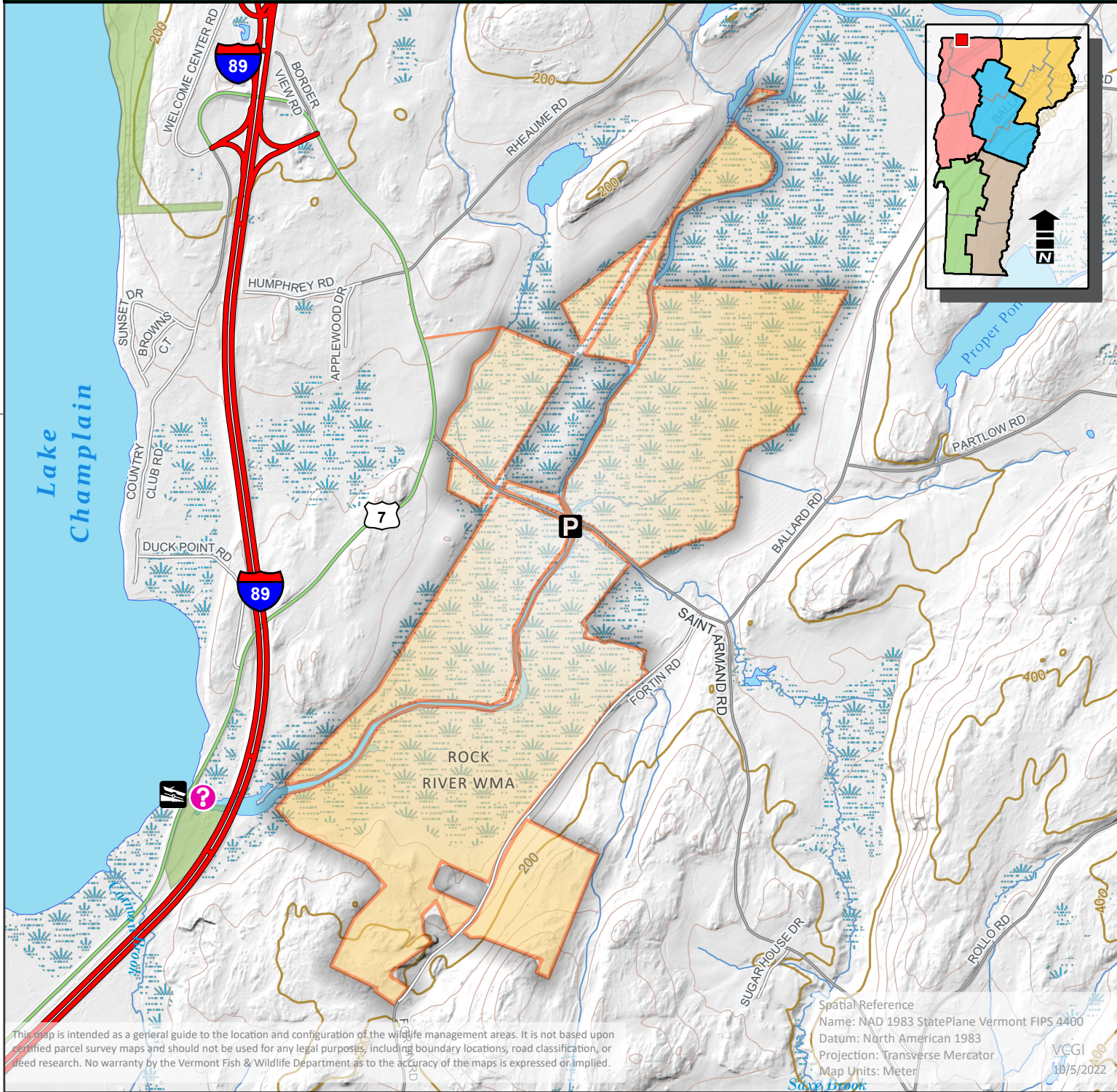


A quiet stretch of the Rock River.
Bill Crenshaw, VFWD photo.



Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

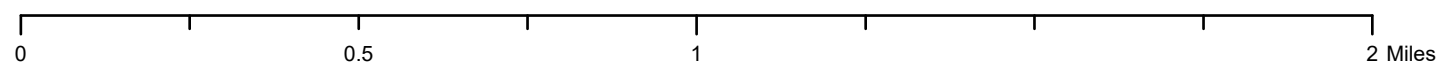
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This map is intended as a general guide to the location and configuration of the wildlife management areas. It is not based upon certified parcel survey maps and should not be used for any legal purposes, including boundary locations, road classification, 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 10/5/2022

44°59'N 73°05'W 73°04'W 73°03'W 45°00'N 44°59'N



Rock River WMA		Map Number: 54	
Parking	Shooting Range	Fishing Access	Refuge (no public access)
Boat Ramp	Wildlife Viewing Area	Visitor Information	Special hunting/trapping restrictions
Cartop Access	Campground	Gate	Streambank Management Area
Park Office	Vista	Rail Lines	Controlled Hunting Area
	Trails	Town Boundary	Federal Land
	Wildlife Management Area	WMA Hunting Rights Only	State Land
			Town Land