

Steam Mill Brook Wildlife Management Area

Last edited: 9/30/22



General Description

Steam Mill Brook Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 11,109-acre tract of land owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. The land lies in Caledonia County in the towns of Walden, Stannard, Wheelock and Danville. The WMA can be accessed from several places including Stannard Mountain Road, Coles Pond Road in Walden and Danville, and Rock Road.

History

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department purchased most of the property in 1971. Smaller parcels were added in later years, and Wheelock Mountain was added in 1996. Much of the WMA was previously owned by the Fairbanks Scales Company and was an important timber source for their large factory in nearby St. Johnsbury. Through donations and using wildlife Restoration Program Grant funds, another 300 acres were added to the WMA in 2018.

Steam Mill Brook bisects the WMA, and in the late 19th century it supplied power to at least six sawmills along its banks and tributaries. Many old mill, barn, house and school foundations, along with stone walls, remnant fields and apple trees are testimony to what was once a bustling community tucked away in the remote hills of Walden.



Agricultural lease at Steam Mill Brook WMA.
Cedric Alexander, VTFWD photo.

Habitat Features

Typical of the southern region of Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, the terrain has rolling mountains, hills and plateaus. Elevations range from 1,600 feet along the southern boundary to 2,783 feet on Wheelock Mountain. The WMA is dominated by forestland, a mixture of northern hardwoods (beech, yellow birch and sugar maple) and red spruce- balsam fir forests.

Intermingled with the forests are 288 acres of wetland habitats, comprised of alder swales, streams, beaver flowages and several ponds, including Coles Pond. Steam

Mill Brook originates from Stannard Pond and runs south through the length of the WMA.

Many management practices are used to promote habitat diversity. These include mowing fields and openings, maintaining apple trees, regenerating and thinning timber stands, retaining mast stands and snags, and wetland buffer protection.



Logging operation on Wheelock Mountain.
Cedric Alexander, VTFWD photo.

Common Fish and Wildlife

Mammals Beavers build their dams and lodges along the many brooks and streams, creating productive ponds and wetland habitats for other wildlife.

White-tailed deer are common spring through fall, but most deer seek winter habitat off the WMA. Snowshoe hare inhabit the young conifer stands near the Goslant's Mill and Rock Farm areas. Other common residents include moose, red fox, coyote, bobcat, black bear, fisher, otter, mink, raccoon and weasel.

Birds Ruffed grouse may be found near regenerating forests, remnant clearings and apple trees. Many species of upland songbirds can be found in various cover types, including hayfields, wetlands, regenerating forest and mature timber. Ambitious birders may observe black-backed woodpeckers and blackpoll warblers, which are uncommon to the region.

Reptiles and Amphibians The tremendous diversity of uplands and wetlands may provide habitats for many species including northern spring, red-backed, spotted and dusky salamanders and eastern newt. Snapping and painted turtles may be found in or near open water. Snakes may include ring-necked, red-bellied and garter snakes. Mink, green, pickerel, wood, leopard, gray tree and bull frogs, spring peeper and American toad may be found

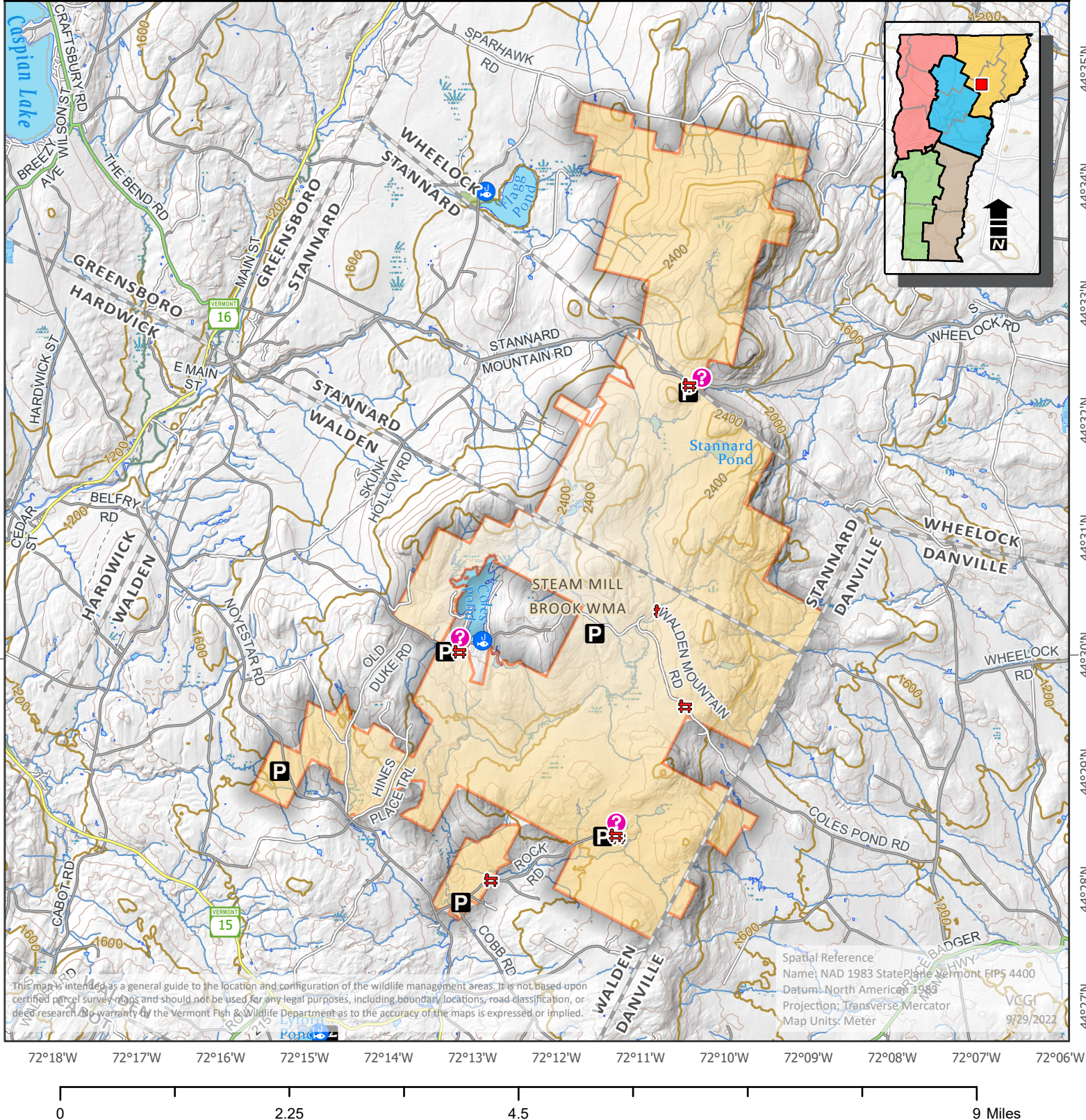
Fish Peaceful, backcountry angling for brook trout is available on Stannard Pond and Steam Mill Brook and its tributaries. Warmwater species such as smallmouth bass, yellow perch and chain pickerel are present in the relatively shallow waters of Coles Pond.

Steam Mill Brook WMA is open to regulated hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking and wildlife viewing.



Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

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Map Number: 26

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	