

West Mountain Wildlife Management Area

Last edited: 9/30/22



General Description

West Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 22,736-acre parcel of land owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. Located in the towns of Maidstone, Ferdinand and Brunswick, the WMA ranges north from Maidstone Lake to Route 105, and east from South America Pond to the Connecticut River.

Access is available along miles of dirt roads. Main entry points are South America Pond Road off Route 105, and Maidstone Lake and Paul Stream Roads off Route 102.

History

Long ago, the St. Francis Indians traveled from Canada to the upper Connecticut River to grow corn on the river's intervals and to hunt moose, deer, beaver and bear in the surrounding uplands. In 1785, European colonists entering the region relied on the forest for food and shelter.

Timber harvesting on the WMA land began in 1800, and by 1900, the Connecticut Valley Lumber Company (CVL) moved its headquarters from Pittsburg, NH to Bloomfield, VT. This was the result of the discovery that the old-growth spruce south of the Nulhegan was dying due to an infestation of spruce bark beetle. Logging camps and "driving" dams were built throughout the Paul Stream Valley. CVL woodsmen at Bull's Throat camp and dam spent the winter of 1914-15 cutting spruce and hauling it by horse and sled to the banks of Paul Stream to await the spring drive. In the spring, CVL loggers brought 65 million board feet of timber, harvested throughout the Connecticut River Valley, down the Connecticut River to Mt. Tom, MA.

Private timber companies owned the land throughout the 20th century. In 1985 the land was purchased by Champion International, who continued to allow public access for traditional uses. During the past century, camps originally built for logging have been used as bases for hunting, fishing and trapping. Many are still located in this section of Vermont and "camp culture" still thrives across northern New England and New York.

In 1999, the land was purchased from Champion International with funds from the Richard King Mellon Foundation as part of a large-scale land conservation partnership of state, federal and private organizations. The Vermont General Assembly appropriated \$4.5 million for the purchase of a public-access easement on 86,000-acres of land surrounding the West Mountain WMA.

Habitat Features

Elevations on the WMA range from 2,733 feet on West Mountain to 1,100 feet along the lower stretches of Paul Stream. The terrain varies from high-elevation spruce-fir

to lowland bogs. The Department has identified 14 species of plants listed as rare or endangered and eight sites of ecological significance on the WMA. The property encompasses nine major ponds, over 75 miles of streams, and many diverse wetland complexes.

Common Fish and Wildlife

Mammals Black bears are present throughout the year. The WMA lands have been core habitat for moose production in Vermont and contain some of the State's highest densities of moose due to intensive timber management over the past 20 years. Timber harvests have created ideal habitat for snowshoe hare and white-tailed deer as well. Signs of fisher, coyote, fox, bobcat and porcupine are commonly seen on the WMA. Beavers inhabit many of the streams and maintain habitat for many other species including mink, weasel, raccoon and river otter.

Birds The variety of forests and wetlands provides habitat for neotropical migratory birds. Extensive tracts of both hardwood and softwood forest offer nesting habitat for many species that are experiencing population declines due to habitat fragmentation and loss throughout their range.

The many ponds, streams and beaver impoundments provide habitat for nesting and migrating waterfowl, including goldeneyes, ring-necked, black, wood and mallard ducks, and common and hooded mergansers. Common loons nest on Maidstone Lake and West Mountain Pond and two pairs of ospreys also nest in the vicinity of these two water bodies.

Extensive forested stands of spruce-fir provide critical habitat for boreal species such as the gray jay, black-backed woodpecker, boreal chickadee and bay-breasted warbler.

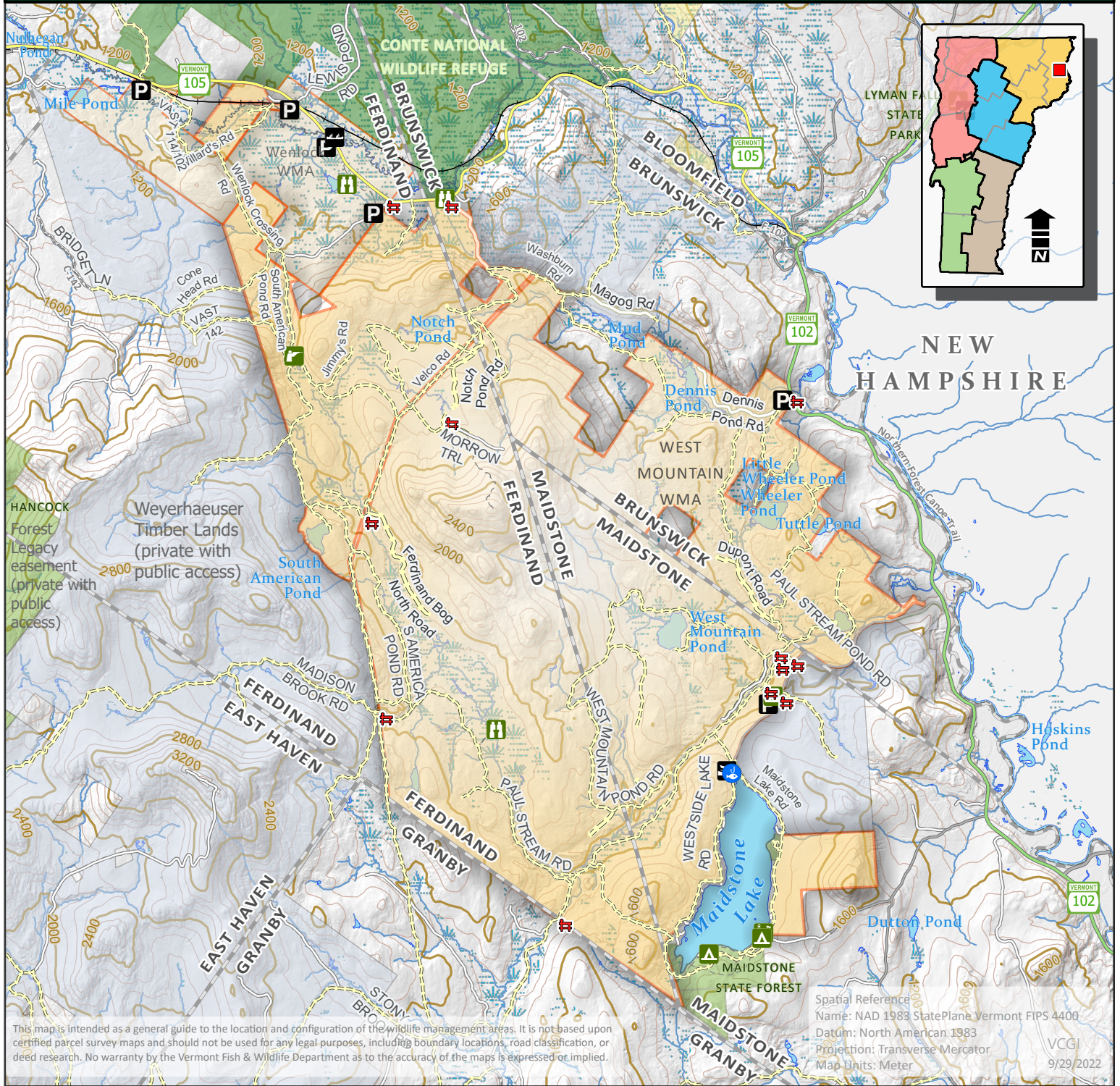
Reptiles and Amphibians Chorus frogs, such as the spring peeper, can be heard singing from vernal pools in early spring. Woodland salamanders, such as the red-backed salamander, can be found hiding under damp logs and rocks. Mink frogs, and painted and snapping turtles may be found in the larger ponds across the WMA.

Fish The WMA's shallow ponds contain warmwater species such as brown bullhead, chain pickerel and yellow perch; while deeper ponds such as South America, Notch, West Mountain, Unknown and Wheeler Ponds, contain brook trout. Paul, Granby and Wheeler Streams support populations of wild brook trout, slimy sculpin, burbot, longnose and blacknose dace, and creek chubs. Paul Stream was historically a spawning and nursery stream for Atlantic salmon, which were extirpated from the Connecticut River two centuries ago by dam building, pollution and habitat destruction. It now plays a role in the Connecticut Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program. Eventually, adults returning from the North Atlantic will re-enter Paul Stream to spawn.



Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

West Mountain Wildlife Management Area



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

West Mountain WMA

Map Number: 29

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	