

Maquam Wildlife Management Area

General Description

Maquam Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is located in the town of Swanton in northwestern Vermont. It consists of 872 acres, some of which is south of Route 36 west of town. The remainder is along the lakeshore northwest of Route 36. The land is owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department.

History

The word “maquam” means beaver in the Algonquian language. The area around Swanton is perhaps the most well known place in Vermont that supported permanent Native American settlements. The Missisquoi band of the Abenaki tribe has long called this area home. An Abenaki woman named Martha Lampman (“Grandma”) lived for many years on land that is now part of the WMA. There is a plaque commemorating the site of her home on a small road about 200 feet south of Route 36.

European settlers also found the area attractive, with flat land and fertile soils. During the War of 1812, the British staged an attack on a munitions depot in Swanton. They landed in Maquam Bay. In the 19th century the Scott family farmed part of the present WMA. Farming is still an important activity in the area.

Recreation along Lake Champlain is another popular land use. Years ago a railroad operated an excursion line and the Hotel Champlain near Maquam Bay. President McKinley spent a summer at the hotel before it burned down in the 1920's. Maquam WMA includes part of the railroad bed and the site of the hotel.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department began acquiring property in 1953. The most recent purchase was made in 2002. Recent acquisitions were made with State Duck Stamp, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and private funds. The Vermont Department of Agriculture, and the Vermont Land Trust also assisted with acquisitions.

Habitat Features

Maquam WMA is located in the Champlain Valley and has both upland and wetland environments. First Creek and Maquam Creek are slow moving streams at lake level. The WMA is adjacent to the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), which includes an extensive delta. Together, the WMA and NWR conserve the largest wetland complex on Lake Champlain. The Lampman parcel acts as an important travel corridor for wildlife moving to and from Missisquoi NWR.

The wetland portions of the WMA have several different components. Besides open water, there are deep broad-leaf, wild rice and cattail marshes. There are some shrub swamps, including a rather unusual sweet gale shoreline swamp. There are buttonbush swamp and red or silver maple-green ash swamp. Some ancient sand dune ridges rise above the surrounding wetlands and support

black gum at the northern edge of its range. Winterberry, leatherleaf and red-osier dogwood also grow on the dune ridges. The upland habitats include a lakeside floodplain forest and maple-ash-hickory-oak forest. Because part of the WMA used to be farm fields, some of the forest is early successional, growing such trees as eastern cottonwood and aspen and willow species.

There are several rare and endangered species present on Maquam WMA. Small beggar's tick, yellow water-crowfoot, small bidens and Virginia chair-fern are herbaceous plant species that occur. Endangered ospreys, bald eagles and black terns all occur in nearby Missisquoi NWR, and are sometimes seen in the WMA. It is against the law to disturb any threatened or endangered species, either plant or animal. Please use binoculars and keep your distance.

Common Fish and Wildlife

Mammals Wetland mammals may be found in the WMA, including beaver, muskrat, mink, river otter, water shrew and star-nosed mole. Fox, raccoon and other medium-sized mammals are also present. White-tailed deer occur on the upland portions.

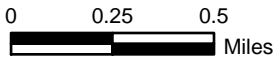
Birds There is excellent birding in the WMA. Look especially for marsh and wading birds, shorebirds and waterfowl. Missisquoi NWR has one of the largest great blue heron rookeries in Vermont; consequently one may commonly see these herons in Maquam. The WMA is a popular waterfowl hunting area. Upland game birds include ruffed grouse, American woodcock and common snipe. There are several raptors on the WMA, including northern harriers, Cooper's and sharp shinned hawks, great horned, barred and screech owls. Ospreys nest and bald eagles are present at Missisquoi NWR, and may be seen at Maquam. There is also good birding for songbirds including eastern kingbirds, great crested flycatchers, alder flycatchers, cedar waxwings, wood thrushes, veerys, scarlet tanagers, Baltimore orioles and several warbler species.

Reptiles and Amphibians Since the WMA is a wetland, it supports many types of herptiles. Look for blue-spotted and red-backed salamanders and newts. Also present are green, bull, pickerel, northern leopard and wood frogs, and possibly the rare western chorus frog. Snapping, painted and northern map turtles may also be found. The endangered spiny softshell turtle is commonly seen in the Missisquoi River, and may be found sunning in First or Maquam Creeks. Garter and northern water snakes may also be encountered.

Fish There is fishing along the shore of Lake Champlain and in First and Maquam Creeks for warmwater species such as bass, pike, perch and bullhead.

Maquam Wildlife Management Area

872 Acres
1:30,000



To Alburg
10.8 Miles

To Swanton
5.1 Miles

Missisquoi National
Wildlife Refuge

Maquam WMA
Maquam Bay

Maquam WMA
Lampman

Lake Champlain



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