

Riley Bostwick Wildlife Management Area

General Description

The 350-acre Riley Bostwick Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. It is located 1.5 miles east of the town of Rochester in Windsor County. The property consists of two parcels, one of which is bisected by the Bethel Mountain Road; the other, often referred to as “the mountain lot”, is adjacent to the south side of Mt. Cushman Road. Various other town roads and legal trails provide access throughout the two parcels.

Logging roads and skid trails on the property offer numerous opportunities for the hiker, cross-country skier or bird watcher. The designated “legal trail” on the mountain lot provides a trail for snowmobilers.

History

The WMA has an interesting and colorful history. Riley Bostwick, the former landowner for almost 40 years, was locally recognized as a prominent woodland manager. He was a charter member of the Vermont-New Hampshire Christmas Tree Association, and donated both the 1923 and 1964 National Christmas Trees featured at the White House. The production of wood, Christmas trees and Christmas wreath bows were Bostwick’s primary forest management practices. After his property became certified with the American Tree Farm System, Bostwick’s commitment to woodland management was honored in 1967 when his land was recognized as containing the one-millionth acre of Tree Farm property in the nation. In 1970, the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department acquired the property as a gift from the One Millionth Acre Tree Farm Foundation.

The most recent recognition Riley Bostwick WMA received was in 1982 when the National Christmas Tree was harvested from the parcel. The tree was a 35 year-old balsam fir, and was 50 feet tall with a branch spread of 21 feet.

Habitat Features

The terrain of Riley Bostwick WMA is typical of the eastern foothills of the Green Mountains, ranging from relatively flat fields to extremely steep, rough, stony land. The Bethel Mountain Road parcel is 250 acres in size, with 205 acres of forestland and 45 acres of herbaceous openings. Much of this parcel contains mature spruce-fir that provides some winter shelter to deer. The “mountain lot” is a separate second parcel of 100 acres; 89 acres are forested and 11 acres are open or semi-open. The lower portions of this parcel are managed for edge and aspen habitat for early-successional species such as ruffed grouse and woodcock. Nasmith Brook is the only major watercourse that flows through the property.

Almost all of the WMA is forested with a mix of red and sugar maple, yellow and paper birch, beech, white ash, aspen, white pine, red spruce, balsam fir and hemlock. There are active hay fields, old fields and scattered apple trees as well.

Common Fish and Wildlife

Mammals In the spring and early summer, deer can often be seen grazing in the agricultural fields of the parcel. The deer wintering areas of Riley Bostwick WMA are critical to their welfare. Limited numbers of snowshoe hare can be found in young softwood stands on the property. Fishers, red foxes, coyotes, mink, gray squirrels and raccoons can be found throughout the WMA. Black bears occasionally traverse the more remote portions of the parcel. Moose sightings are increasingly common in the area.

Birds The diversity of hardwood and softwood forest types interspersed with herbaceous open areas provide habitat for numerous species of songbirds and raptors, such as Blackburnian warblers and goshawks. This WMA provides a good opportunity for outdoor enthusiasts and bird watchers alike. Turkey and woodcock occur; and ruffed grouse are present particularly where the land is managed for early-successional habitat.

Reptiles and Amphibians Green and pickerel frogs can be seen in Nasmith Brook and its associated wetland areas in the southern part of the WMA. Spring salamanders may also occur in the brook. Salamanders such as the two-lined and eastern red-backed salamander can be found hiding under damp logs or in moist areas. The American toad has a high trilling call that can be heard in moist areas, along the brook, and near vernal pools. Gray tree frogs inhabit similar habitat, but are arboreal. Vernal pools can be found in spring and summer and are a good place to spot amphibians.

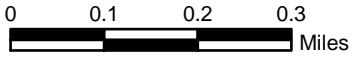
Fish Brook, rainbow and occasionally brown trout are found in Nasmith Brook. The brook also contains white suckers, creek chub, longnose and blacknose dace, and shiny sculpins.



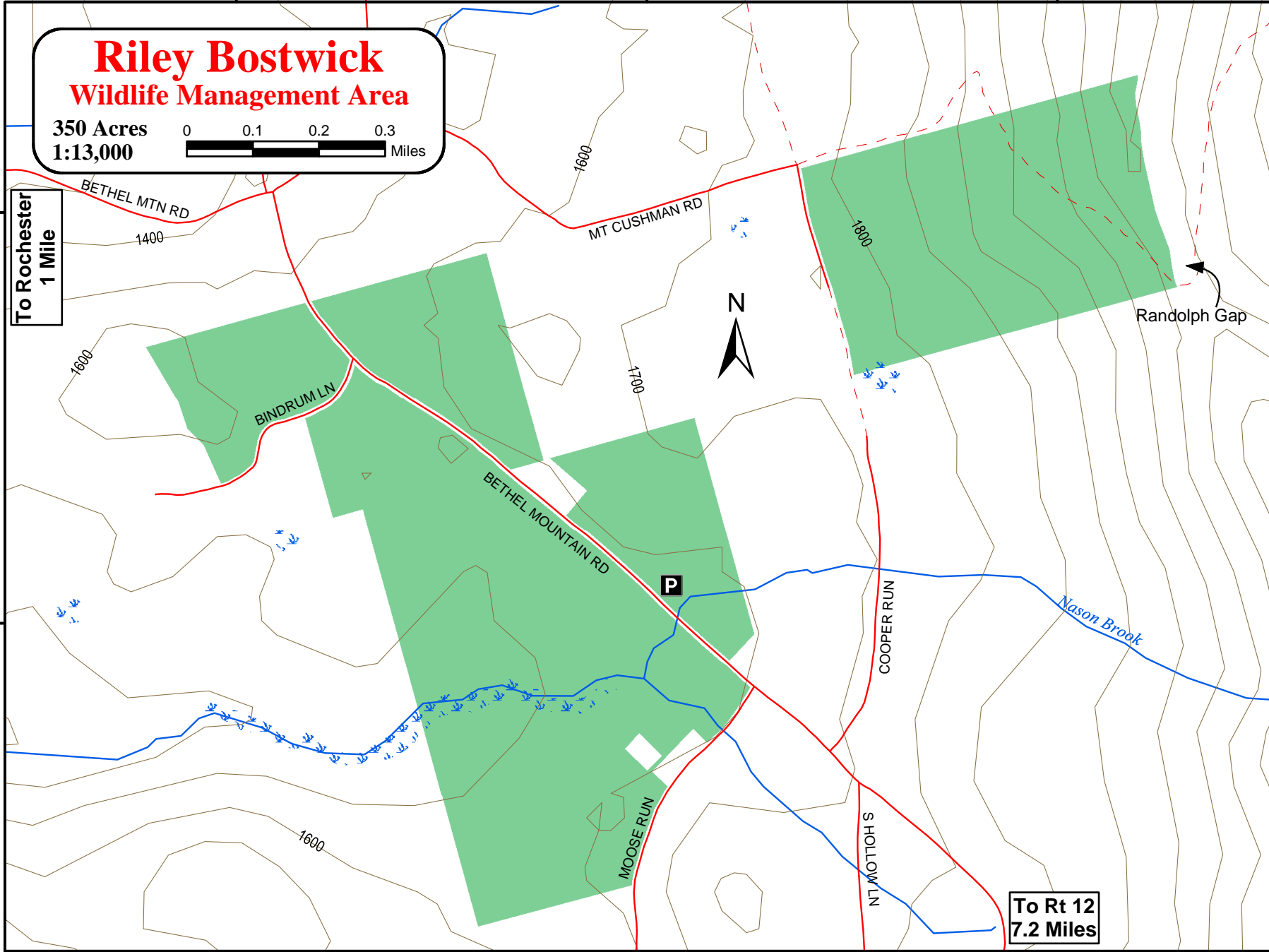
Looking upslope at Riley Bostwick WMA.
Kim Hall, VFWD photo.

Riley Bostwick Wildlife Management Area

350 Acres
1:13,000



To Rochester
1 Mile



Randolph Gap

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To Rt 12
7.2 Miles

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