

Bill Sladyk Wildlife Management Area

General Description

Bill Sladyk Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 10,175-acre parcel of land owned and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. The WMA is located eight miles north of Island Pond on Route 114. It ranges from Norton Pond northwest to the Canadian Border just north of Holland Pond.

Access the western side of the WMA from Holland Pond Road. There is a boat access on the pond and also parking at the northern end of the pond. The WMA can be accessed from the southeast from Hurricane Brook Road where there are parking areas and a wildlife viewing area.

History

In 1983 the WMA was renamed from Hurricane Brook WMA to Bill Sladyk WMA in memory of State Wildlife Forester William F. Sladyk. The present day landholdings were acquired from 1959 to 1998 using several different funding mechanisms. The Department purchased the largest tracts in 1959 using monies from the sale of State hunting and fishing licenses. In 1970 the Department was able to purchase the timber rights to the property from the Fillemore Lumber Company of Stanstead, Quebec.

The Department purchased 115 acres surrounding the southern end of Holland Pond in 1998. This latest addition to the WMA allows for the protection of 10,000 feet of uninterrupted shoreline. The purchase was made using funds from the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. This program is funded by an 11% excise tax on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment.

Habitat Features

Elevations on the WMA range from 1,400 feet along Hurricane Brook to 2,000 feet on Beechnut Ridge. The terrain varies from flat cedar swamps to rolling hardwood hills. The property is nearly 100% forest, which is comprised of red and sugar maple, American beech, yellow and paper birch, black cherry, red and black spruce, balsam fir and white cedar.

Since acquiring the property, the Department has undertaken many different projects to enhance the value of the land for wildlife. Several older log landings were planted and are periodically brush-hogged to provide openings in the heavily forested landscape. An 85-acre unit located in the vicinity of the Ben Cole Clearing has been managed with the primary goal of creating optimum grouse habitat. The Department has also been actively restoring an historical deeryard along Coaticock and Hurricane Brooks.

A diversity of excellent wetland habitats can be found throughout the WMA. Two wetlands of ecological significance include Cranberry Bog and Halfway Pond. Cranberry Bog is a 26-acre peatland bog with stunted tamaracks, black spruce, and the carnivorous pitcher plant. Halfway Pond is one of the most pristine spruce-lined ponds in Essex County. The WMA also contains many scattered

beaver impoundments and small brooks, the 334-acre Holland Pond, and the smaller Beaver, Duck, Round, Line and Turtle Ponds.

Common Fish and Wildlife

Mammals Black bears are present throughout the year. Suitable winter denning sites are available in softwood thickets, the many wetlands provide succulent vegetation in early spring, soft mast is abundant in the summer, and stands of beech trees provide hard mast in the fall.

Moose densities are fairly high in this part of Essex and Orleans County. The WMA has many resident moose due to its large size, many wetland complexes, and abundant browse available after logging operations. The wetlands scattered across the WMA provide the best opportunity to view moose during spring and summer months.

Past cutting has created optimum habitat for snowshoe hare and white-tailed deer. Patches of young softwood interspersed with hardwoods provides the needed cover and browse for these two species.

Signs of fisher, coyote, fox, bobcat and porcupine are commonly seen on the WMA. Beavers inhabit many of the streams and maintain wetland habitat for many other species. Mink, muskrat, weasel, raccoon and river otter may be found in these beaver-created wetlands.

Birds The many ponds, streams and beaver impoundments on the WMA provide suitable habitat for nesting and migrating waterfowl. The most commonly seen species include mallards, black ducks, goldeneyes, ring-neck ducks, wood ducks, and both common and hooded mergansers.

There is favorable ruffed grouse habitat in the vicinity of Ben Cole Clearing where the Department has created grouse units. These consist of a checkerboard pattern of small, varied age-class clearcuts that provide habitat.

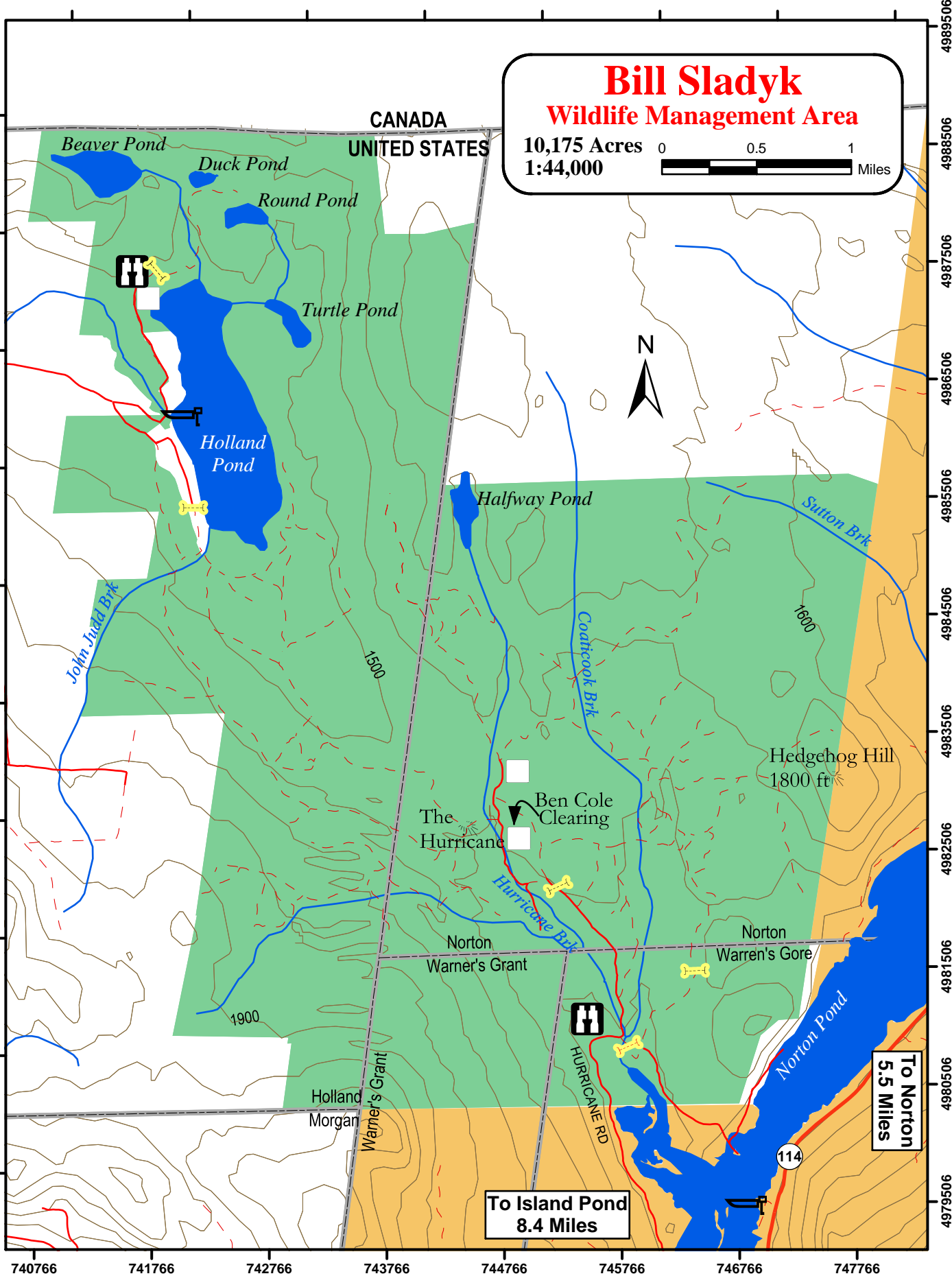
The great variety of forest and wetland habitats provides excellent bird watching, including some uncommon species. Boreal chickadees may be seen in the large tracts of spruce-fir forest. State-endangered common loons can be found nesting on Holland Pond in the summer.

Reptiles and Amphibians Chorus frogs such as the spring peeper can be heard in early spring singing from vernal pools in the woodlands. Woodland salamanders such as the red-backed salamander can easily be found hiding under damp logs and rocks during the summer.

Painted and snapping turtles may be found in the larger ponds and beaver flowages across the WMA.

Fish Bill Sladyk WMA contains seven major ponds. Holland Pond is the largest and contains good populations of brook and rainbow trout. The smaller ponds are all undeveloped, walk-in ponds. Beaver and Round Ponds contain brook trout, while Halfway, Duck, Turtle and Line Ponds contain warmwater species such as chain pickerel.

Bill Sladyk
Wildlife Management Area
 10,175 Acres
 1:44,000



To Island Pond
8.4 Miles

To Norton
5.5 Miles

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