

Mud Creek Wildlife Management Area

General Description

Mud Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is located in the northwestern corner of Vermont in the town of Alburg. It is mostly marshland, with a small upland component. Its 1,151 acres are owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. The property extends from the Canadian border south to Mud Creek's mouth in Ransoms Bay in Lake Champlain. The best access is from Route 78 as it crosses the Creek, where there is an old railroad bed that has been made into a biking and hiking path. There are times when access along the path is restricted. Please read and follow the posted regulations.

Green Woods Road in Alburg cuts through the northern end of the WMA. The heart of the marsh can only be accessed by small boat. Hunting in the Controlled Hunting Area is by permit only.

History

The area around Alburg and Swanton has a long history of occupation by Native Americans, notably by members of the Abenaki Tribe. Both Anglo-Europeans and French Canadians later settled in this part of Vermont. Alburg was chartered to Ira Allen in 1781; the town was named after him. Early settlers were mostly occupied with clearing forest and farming in the rich Champlain Valley soils; the latter is still the main land use in the Mud Creek drainage.

This WMA is a patchwork of many small land purchases. The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department made its first acquisition in 1953, using Pitman Robertson funds. These funds, which are generated by a tax on firearms and ammunition, have been used for many subsequent purchases. State funding generated from the sale of hunting licenses has been used as well. The Nature Conservancy facilitated some of the most recent land acquisitions.

Habitat Features

Mud Creek is a sluggish stream that arises in Canada and flows south to Lake Champlain. There is a water control structure that has raised the water level and created more marshland.

The WMA is a mix of cattail-dominated emergent marsh, deep bulrush marshes and forested swamp. Forest swamp communities include red maple-black ash, spruce-fir-tamarack and red maple-northern white cedar. Right at the mouth of the Creek there is a small section of lake sand beach. A rare plant called Torrey's rush occurs in the marsh, as well as other interesting plants such as matted spike-rush, yellow water-crowfoot, nodding trillium and cattail sedge. The State-endangered spiny softshell turtle is sometimes a summer visitor.

Common Fish and Wildlife

Mammals Some mammals that might be encountered are white-tailed deer, gray squirrel, raccoon, beaver, muskrat, mink and otter.

Birds Excellent birding opportunities exist for wetland species such as pied-billed grebe, least bittern, sora, Virginia rail, American coot and common moorhen. The endangered black tern has nested here. Wetland-dwelling songbirds include eastern kingbird, belted kingfisher, marsh wren, swamp sparrow and northern waterthrush. Upland game species in the WMA are ruffed grouse, turkey and woodcock. Breeding waterfowl include Canada goose, black and wood ducks, mallard, hooded merganser, blue-winged teal and goldeneye, with other species during migration. Hunting and trapping are allowed using a controlled permit process.

Reptiles and Amphibians Many species of herptiles can be found at Mud Creek WMA. Look for blue-spotted, spotted and red-backed salamanders, newts, and green, pickerel, northern leopard and wood frogs. The rare western chorus frog may also be present. Turtle species include snapping, painted and northern map turtles. State-endangered spiny softshell turtles are sometimes found near the mouth of Mud Creek. Northern water and garter snakes are also present.

Fish Fishing is allowed on the Controlled Hunting portion of the WMA through September 1st. Yellow perch, bullhead and northern pike are some species that may be caught.

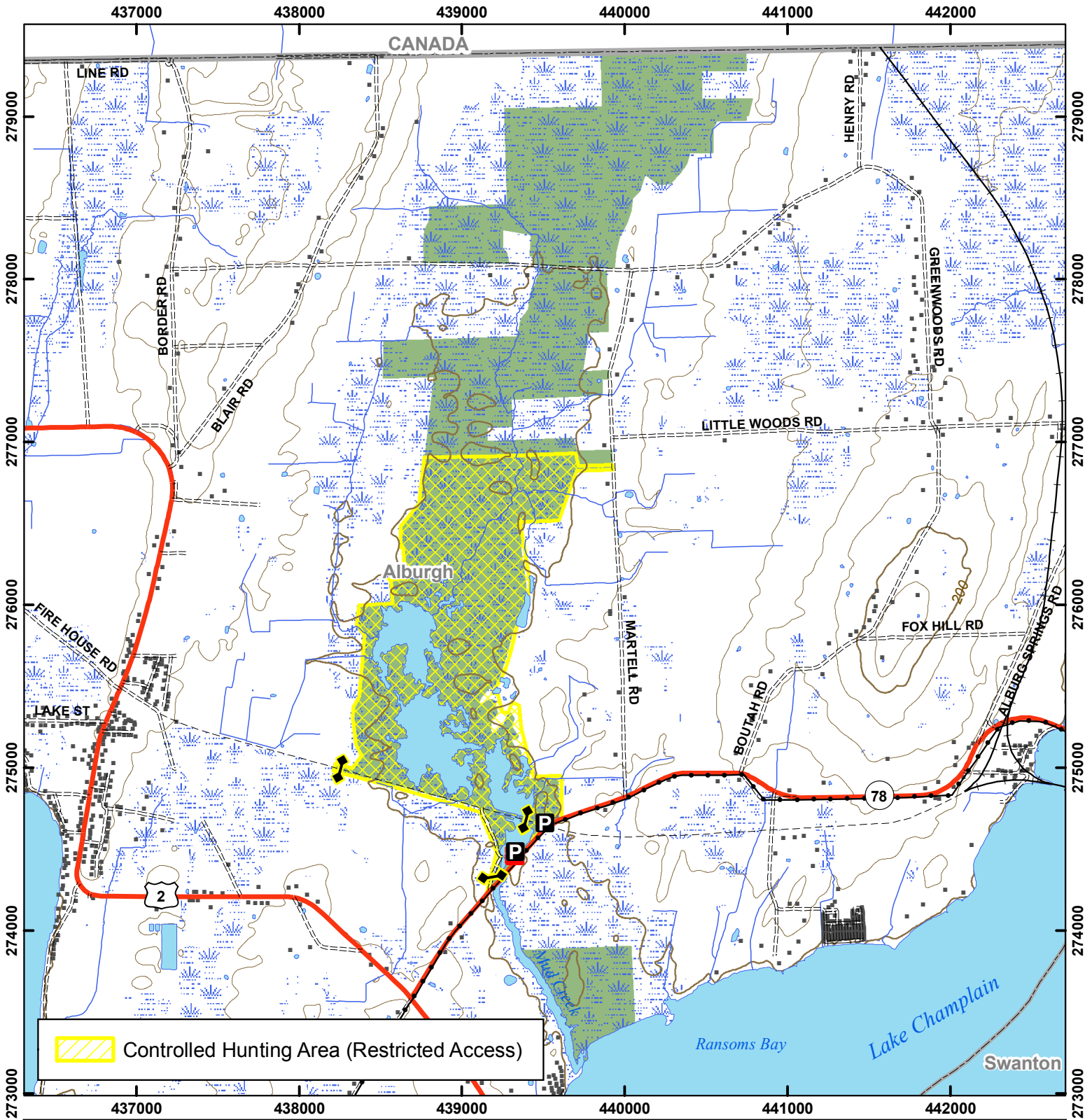


A "cookie cutter" creates openings in cattails to improve habitat for water birds. Bill Crenshaw, VFWD photos.



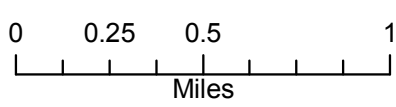


Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Mud Creek Wildlife Management Area



Controlled Hunting Area (Restricted Access)

Mud Creek WMA: 1,151 acres



- Wildlife Management Area
- Other Public Land
- Private w/ Public Access
- Wildlife Viewing Areas
- Car-top Access
- Parking
- Boat Ramp
- Gate
- Designated Camp Site During Big Game Seasons Only

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