

Whipple Hollow Wildlife Management Area

General Description

Whipple Hollow Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 451-acre tract owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. Some 266 acres lie within the town of Pittsford, with the remaining 185 acres in the town of West Rutland. Whipple Hollow WMA has limited access. Take Whipple Hollow Road to Bristol Road. A Class 4 road that leads directly into the WMA begins just past the cemetery. The road is public, but there is posted private land on either side of it.

The Vermont Marble Company owns the mineral rights on a 100-acre parcel on this WMA.

History

The present day Whipple Hollow WMA was home to an agricultural community in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The community was formed in 1786 from a group of Whipple Hollow inhabitants and some Pittsford residents. There was a religious order known as the Orange Society, which was based on the members' Irish and Protestant values. The Society formed out of necessity when travel to the West Parish Meeting House in West Rutland proved too difficult. The society's petition to the legislature for the incorporation of the parish was denied in 1788. The legislature also denied two other petitions that the society submitted. Despite this, members continued to hold the religious meetings in each other's houses until a Meeting House was built in 1790. In 1797, their pastor died and the society began to break up. The Meeting House fell into disrepair and was finally removed in 1820.

The land became the Whipple Hollow WMA in 1986 when it was purchased from Leonard and Dorothy Strong with federal Pittman-Robertson funds (generated from an excise tax on firearms and ammunition) and State funds generated from the sale of hunting licenses.



Old-field component at Whipple Hollow WMA.
Kim Hall, VFWD photo.

Habitat Features

The major watercourse on Whipple Hollow WMA is the Castleton River, which drains the entire area and flows to the south. Steep west-facing slopes fall from an elevation of 1,200 feet to 700-800 feet and ultimately to a low of 550 feet along the parcel's southwestern boundary, which is the centerline of the Castleton River.

Hardwoods, mostly oak and oak/hickory forest and northern hardwoods to a lesser degree, cover 323 acres (72%) of the area. The softwoods, which make up 65 acres (14%) of the WMA, are comprised almost exclusively of white pine, except for 6 acres of hemlock. The remaining 63 acres (14%) are open/semi-open lands.

Common Fish and Wildlife

Mammals White-tailed deer are an important game species, and Whipple Hollow WMA includes a deer wintering area. Gray squirrels are abundant in the area due to the plentiful mast species, such as red and white oaks. Coyotes, fishers, red foxes and raccoons can be found throughout the management area, while mink and possibly otters are likely to be found along Castleton River. At dusk or dawn, visitors might be treated to a glimpse of little brown bats foraging for insects near the Castleton River.

Birds The diversity of hardwood and softwood forests interspersed with herbaceous open areas provides habitat for numerous species of songbirds and raptors, such as chestnut-sided warblers, red-eyed vireos and even great horned owls. Ruffed grouse are quite numerous on the parcel, although the early successional habitat most preferred by this species is declining due to maturation of the forests. This area has excellent turkey habitat and these large birds are commonly seen.

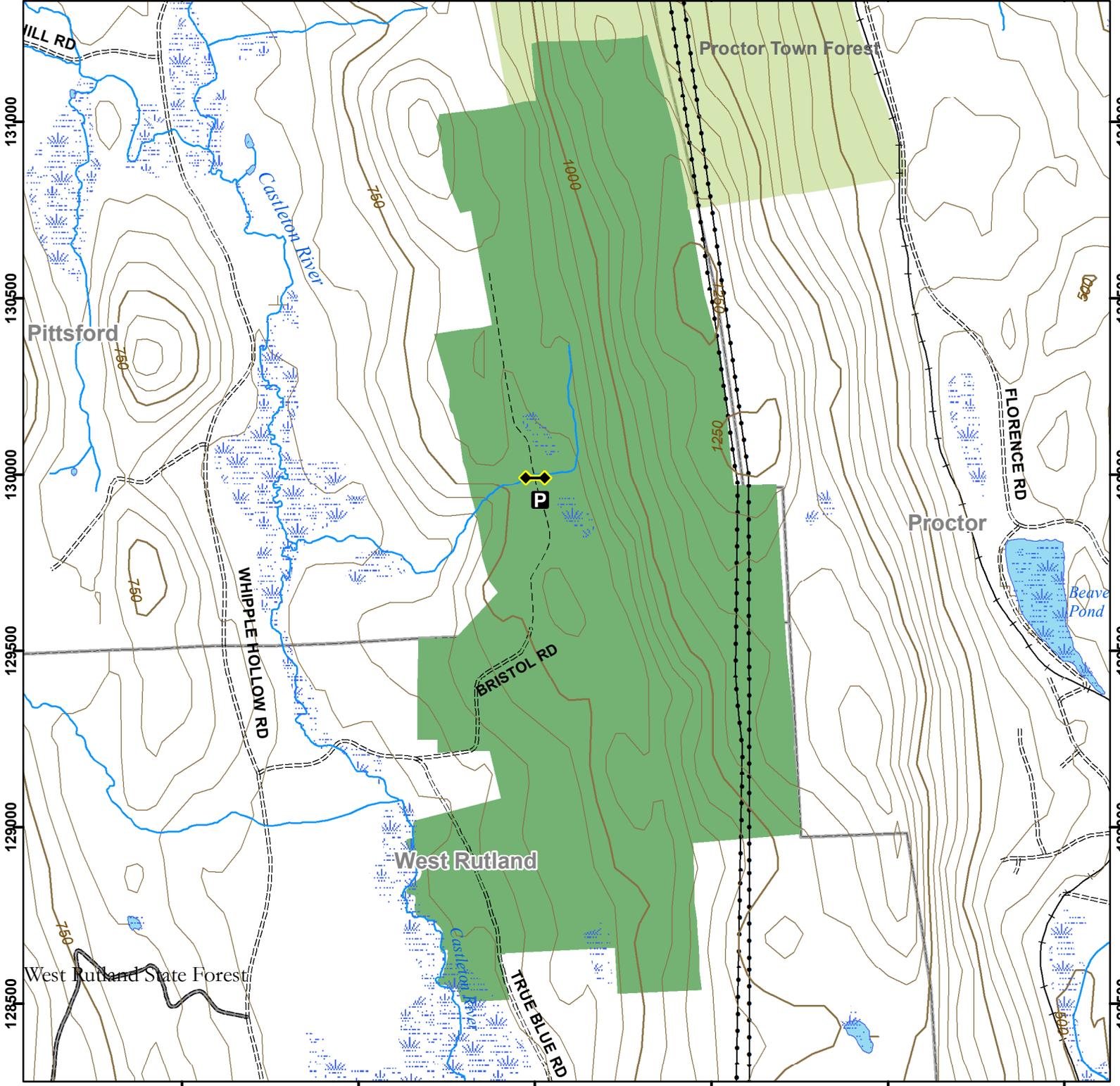
Reptiles and Amphibians Wood frogs and spring peepers can be heard calling in early spring from the vernal pools in the woodlands. Woodland salamanders such as the redback salamander can be found hiding under damp logs and rocks during the summer. Common gartersnakes might be harder to spot but can be found throughout the WMA, especially near old stonewalls.

Fish The southern portion of the WMA includes a significant amount of frontage along the Castleton River. This section is considered excellent for brook and brown trout. There are also several species of smaller fish such as sculpins and longnose and blacknose dace. Creek chubs and common shiner are likely to be found in the calmer pools of the Castleton River.

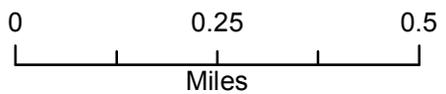


Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Whipple Hollow Wildlife Management Area

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Whipple Hollow WMA: 451 acres



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