

# Arthur Davis Wildlife Management Area

## General Description

Arthur Davis Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 7,788-acre parcel owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. It is located in south central Vermont, in the towns of Reading and Plymouth. Southern access is via the Tyson Road, the Reading Pond Road, or the North Puckerbrush Road. From the east, it is accessible off the Brown Schoolhouse Road, from the west by the Lynds Hill Road, and from the north by the Hale Hollow Road.

This WMA has common boundaries with Coolidge State Forest and Camp Plymouth State Park. Coolidge State Forest also shares a boundary with the Plymbsbury WMA. In combination, these four parcels create one of the largest blocks of undeveloped state-owned land in southern Vermont.

Timber rights on the WMA are privately owned and the area is actively logged. Persons using Arthur Davis WMA should be prepared to encounter current and recently logged sites, log truck traffic, and seasonally muddy roads.

## History

Throughout the 1800's many families inhabited the area encompassed by Arthur Davis WMA. In 1779 the first settlers of Plymouth followed the historic Crown Point Military Road to what is known as Plymouth Kingdom, located along the present day Tyson Reading Road. The population peaked in 1850 when the Kingdom was a busy agricultural community. Only a handful of families remained by 1900. Today the Kingdom has only a few homes and the man-made Colby Pond. The surrounding lands, once farms and associated fields, are now primarily wooded. The former schoolhouse is now a private home.

From the early 1800s to the 1920s, another bustling village existed at the "Five Corners" site with as many as 60 children attending the school at that intersection. For a few years the township hosted a small gold rush that stimulated the economy of the area. It also fostered new industries. Asbestos was mined and soapstone was quarried for a short time. Old foundations can be found along many of the old town roads. Exploration of these old sites is welcome; however, removal of rocks or artifacts is illegal.

In 1959 the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department acquired development and hunting rights on 7,678 acres of the WMA. The purchase was funded by revenues generated from the sale of hunting licenses. Timber rights were retained by the Atkinson-Davis Corporation. In 1993, through grants from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, the Nature Conservancy and money from hunting licenses, the Department was able to purchase 110 acres of inholdings within the WMA, including Reading Pond. This was done to preserve the historic value of the area as well as protect it from development.

## Habitat Features

Arthur Davis WMA is located within the Southern Green Mountains biophysical region. Elevations range from approximately 1,280 feet along Broad Brook at the northwest corner, to 2,602 feet on Mt. Moses in the northeast corner. Mt. Tom reaches a height of 2,478 feet in the eastern portion of the WMA.

Arthur Davis WMA is completely forested. Primary tree species include sugar and red maple, yellow birch, and beech. Red spruce and white pine are lightly mixed throughout the property. Stands of beech provide hard mast for black bears, which are present throughout the year. Past timber harvesting operations have provided optimum habitat for snowshoe hare and white-tailed deer.

Several small streams, ponds, vernal pools, the 22-acre Reading Pond, and a number of beaver-created wetlands are part of the WMA. State-owned Colby Pond, a 25-acre impoundment, nearly abuts the southern portion of the WMA. Both ponds and several of the beaver flowages are stopover sites for migrating waterfowl. Numerous apple trees are scattered around the old abandoned homesteads. Department personnel, in cooperation with volunteers, have been maintaining some of these old orchards for the benefit of wildlife.

A rare plant, Nuttall's Waterweed, (*Elodea nuttallii*), has been found in Colby Pond.

## Common Fish and Wildlife

**Mammals** Mammal species typical of large tracts of northern hardwoods and wetlands occur in the WMA. These include black bear, moose, white-tailed deer, fisher, otter, beaver, mink, coyote, bobcat, porcupine, red squirrel and chipmunk. Several other small mammal species of bats, mice and voles occur, but are difficult to observe.

**Birds** Ruffed grouse and woodcock occur on the WMA and may be hunted in season. In the wetlands Canada geese and a variety of ducks may be seen and also hunted in season. Visitors may observe forest-dwelling birds such as pileated woodpeckers, accipiters, barred owls, red-eyed vireos, ovenbirds, and a variety of warblers.

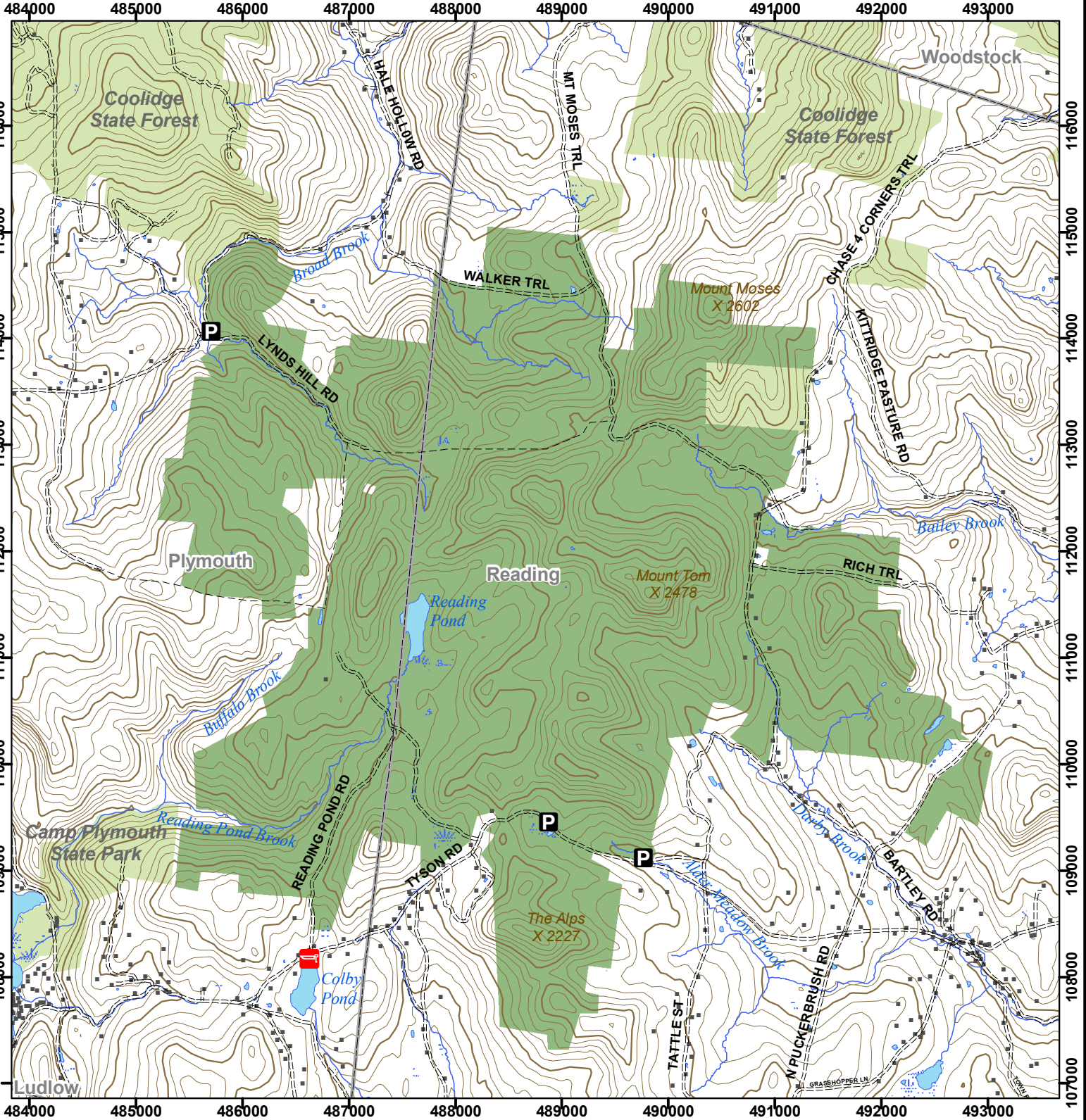
**Reptiles and Amphibians** Spring peepers, wood frogs and gray tree frogs occur and send up their choruses in the spring. Red-backed salamanders may be found under damp logs and rocks. Snapping and painted turtles occur in the waters of the WMA.

**Fish** Wild brook trout can be found in the streams. Colby Pond is stocked with brook trout for put-and-take fishing.



# Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

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**Arthur Davis WMA: 7,788 acres**



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