

Pine Mountain Wildlife Management Area

General Description

Pine Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is located at the intersection of the east central Vermont towns of Groton, Ryegate, Newbury and Topsham. The WMA is 2,274 acres in size. It is bounded by Route 302 and the Wells River to the north, Powder Spring Road to the west, Melvin and White Hills to the east, and Burnham Mountain to the south. The WMA is owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department.

Access can be gained from several entry points off Powder Spring Road, Galusha Hill Road, and the abandoned Montpelier & Wells River railroad bed that begins on the Little Italy Road in the village of Groton. Developed parking lots are located on the entry road off Galusha Hill Road (a.k.a. Quarry Road) at the gate/powerline intersection, as well further south on Galusha Hill Road adjacent to the open fields. Undeveloped parking exists off the railroad bed at its intersection with the VAST trail, which is gated during non-snow months.

History

Pine Mountain WMA was named after Pine Mountain, which is situated in the middle of the property. The four towns in the vicinity were granted in the mid-1700's, but were not utilized until William Taisley settled along the Wells River near the Ryegate line in Groton in 1795. Since that time, much of the low elevation land around Pine Mountain was cleared to support farms, which produced cheese and wool. Farmland reached its greatest extent in the 1880's with many small, and several large, farms surrounding the core woodland of Pine Mountain. High-elevation land was used to provide wood products such as hemlock bark for tanning, and construction lumber from pine, spruce and hemlock trees.

During the period 1850-1884, Groton Village was a mill center with a local tannery, bobbin factory and distillery. The construction of the Montpelier & Wells River railroad in 1872 allowed access to a larger market for locally-produced wood products. Extensive logging took place during the period between 1885-1910, at which time the village mill was cutting 750 million board feet of lumber per year. Two granite quarries operated at the turn of the century in and near the WMA. The quarries were small in scale but had a large impact on the economy of the area.

The State of Vermont purchased the WMA land in three separate acquisitions in 1969 and 1977. Funding came from a combination of Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department monies generated from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, and federal Pittman-Robertson funds which are generated by an 11% excise tax on hunting equipment.

Habitat Features

The WMA lies within the Wells River watershed. Elevations range from approximately 1,500 feet to 720 feet. The land is now 95% forested, with a mix of hardwood trees including red and sugar maple, yellow birch, beech, white

ash, black cherry, red oak, hophornbeam and basswood. Softwood trees such as balsam fir, red spruce, hemlock, white pine and white cedar are also present. The coniferous areas west of Galusha Hill Road and northwest of Melvin Hill provide wintering habitat for white-tailed deer. About 40 acres of field along Powder Spring and Galusha Hill Roads are kept open, via lease agreements, by brush hogging and haying. Scattered apple trees occur within those fields, which are maintained by release cuttings.

The WMA is home to several examples of local and State-significant natural communities such as: lowland spruce-fir forest; mesic northern hardwood forest; rich northern hardwood forest; white pine-northern hardwood forest; mesic red oak-hardwood forest; hemlock forest; hemlock-yellow birch forest; northern hardwoods talus woodland; dry oak-hickory-hophornbeam forest; poor fen; northern white cedar swamp; and various successional communities. Many rare, threatened and endangered plants are associated with these natural communities.

Five permanent streams flow through the WMA; all drain into the Wells River. These include Keenan, East and Dawes Brooks. An excellent variety of wetland habitats can be found throughout the WMA and are often associated with the stream drainages. Many of these wetlands are influenced by beaver activity. The variety of terrain, wetlands, natural communities, field openings and stream drainages provides habitat for a variety of plants and animals, making Pine Mountain WMA a unique place for the public to enjoy wildlife-related activities.

Common Fish and Wildlife

Mammals Game animals include white-tailed deer, black bear, moose, coyote, snowshoe hare, fisher and bobcat. Expect to find many smaller non-game species as well.

Birds Ruffed grouse and wild turkey can be found on the WMA, as well as a large variety of songbirds, including yellow, black-throated green, blue and chestnut-sided warblers, ovenbird, hermit and wood thrushes, veery, white-throated, chipping and song sparrows, alder, least and great-crested flycatchers, and pileated, downy and hairy woodpeckers and flicker. Raptors include long-eared owl, and red-tailed and broad-winged hawks. Black, wood and mallard ducks occur in the wetlands.

Reptiles and Amphibians Eleven amphibian and five reptile species are known to occur on the WMA. These include: spotted, dusky, northern two-lined and red-backed salamanders and eastern newt; American toad, spring peeper, gray tree, green, pickerel and wood frogs; snapping and painted turtles; and smooth green, red-bellied and garter snakes.

Fish Native brook trout can be found in Keenan and East Brooks.

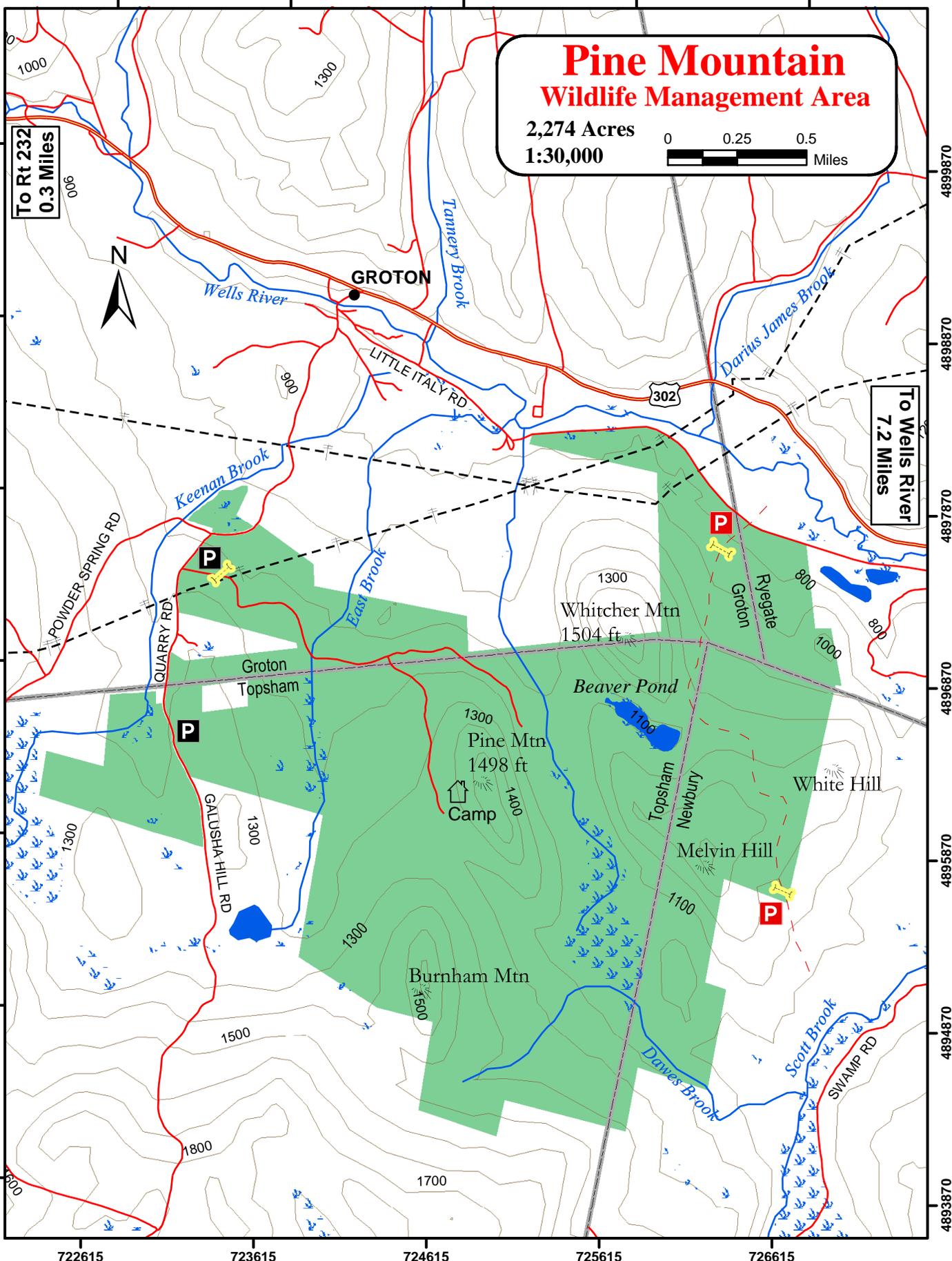
Pine Mountain Wildlife Management Area

2,274 Acres
1:30,000



To Rt 232
0.3 Miles

To Wells River
7.2 Miles



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