

Wetland ID

Wetland Functions and Values

Wetland Regulation

- Trails in Wetlands
 - Purpose
 - Types of Trails
 - Trail Structures
 - Location Challenges
 - Design Considerations
 - Allowed Uses/Permitting





Wetland Identification: Three (3) Parameters



Hydrology: presence of water



Hydrophytic Vegetation (water-loving)



Hydric Soils: soils showing evidence of water presence-low oxygen

Wetland Hydrology

Criteria: Inundation or saturation to within soil surface for at least 5% of growing season in most years

~2 weeks in VT

Primary indicator examples: actual observation of surface water, soil saturation, high ground water table, algal mat, oxidized root channels, hydrogen sulfide odor, or inundation visible on aerial imagery.

Secondary indicator examples: waterstained leaves, **stunted or stressed plants**, geomorphic position, **drainage patterns**





Wetland Soil



Hydric mineral soils have gray colors with orange/red mottling



Hydric organic soils are very dark, almost black





Wetlands Types

- Forested swamps
- Scrub/Shrub wetlands
- Emergent marshes
- Bogs & Fens
- Seeps
- Vernal pools
- Wet meadows



Wetlands Program

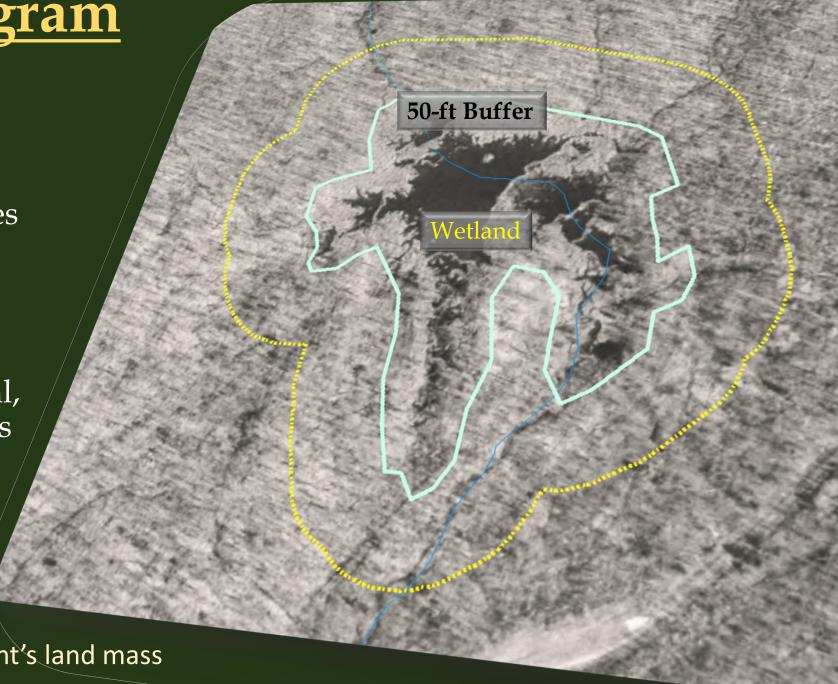
Mission

No Net Loss

Protect Function and Values

 Meet State Water Quality Standards

• If a wetland is jurisdictional, the State of VT also protects and regulates an upland buffer surrounding the wetland; typically, 50 ft.



Wetlands compose ~5% of Vermont's land mass



Jurisdictional Wetlands





Vermont's Wetlands Provide



10 Wetland Functions & Values





Wetland Classification

Class I Wetland: Exceptional or irreplaceable (All are mapped)

cs Class II Wetland: Merits
protection (many mapped
but not all are-categorical
and presumptive wetlands)

Class III Wetland: (currently not regulated by the State)

Categorical Class II Wetlands

- Any wetland on the VSWI map is Jurisdictional
- Any wetland contiguous or connected to the VSWI mapped wetland
- Any wetland that is the same type and size as what is on the VSWI maps (1/2 acre or larger)





- adjacent to a stream, lake, pond, or river
- headwaters above 2,500 feet elevation
- ය vernal pools
- special and unique wetlands like bogs or fens



Map Layers ■ Wetland Map ■ ₩etland Inquiry Wetland Inquiry (Status) Fish and Wildlife Fish and Wildlife ■ Watershed Protection ✓ Wernal Pools Confirmed – AE/VCE ▼ III Vernal Pools Unconfirmed – AE/VCE ✓ \(\begin{align*} \text{VT List of Priority Rivers and Streams} \) ▼ ≡ VT List of Priority Lakes and Ponds ✓ Wetlands - VSWI ✓ ✓ DFIRM Floodways ✓ ✓ DFIRM Preliminary Floodways ✓ Special Flood Hazard Areas (All Available) ✓ Special Flood Hazard Areas (Preliminary) ◆ ✓ Drinking and Groundwater Protection

Disclaimer: NOT accurate and 39-46 % of VT wetlands are not mapped but may be jurisdictional.

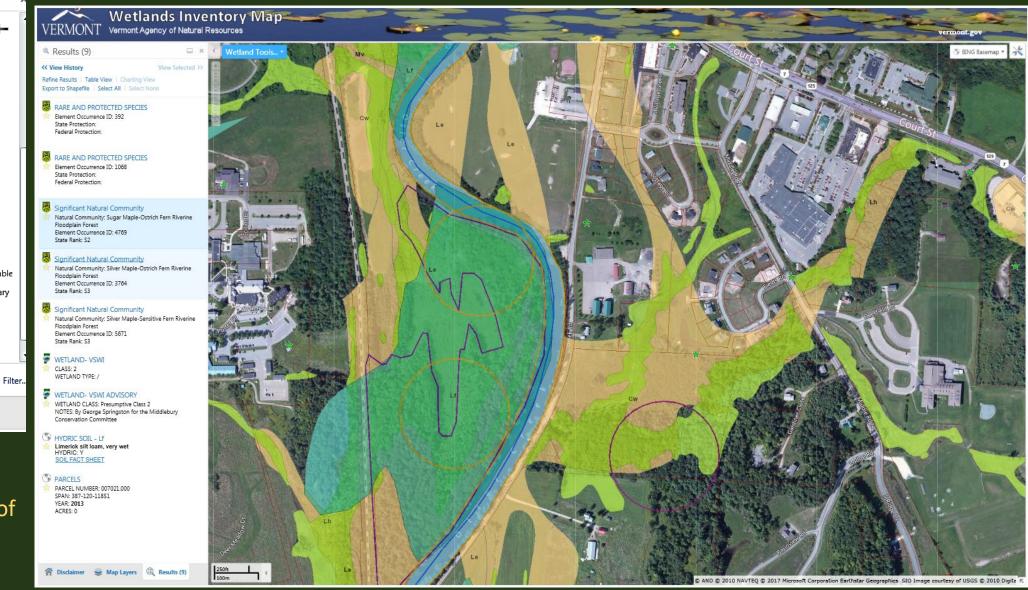
Map Layers

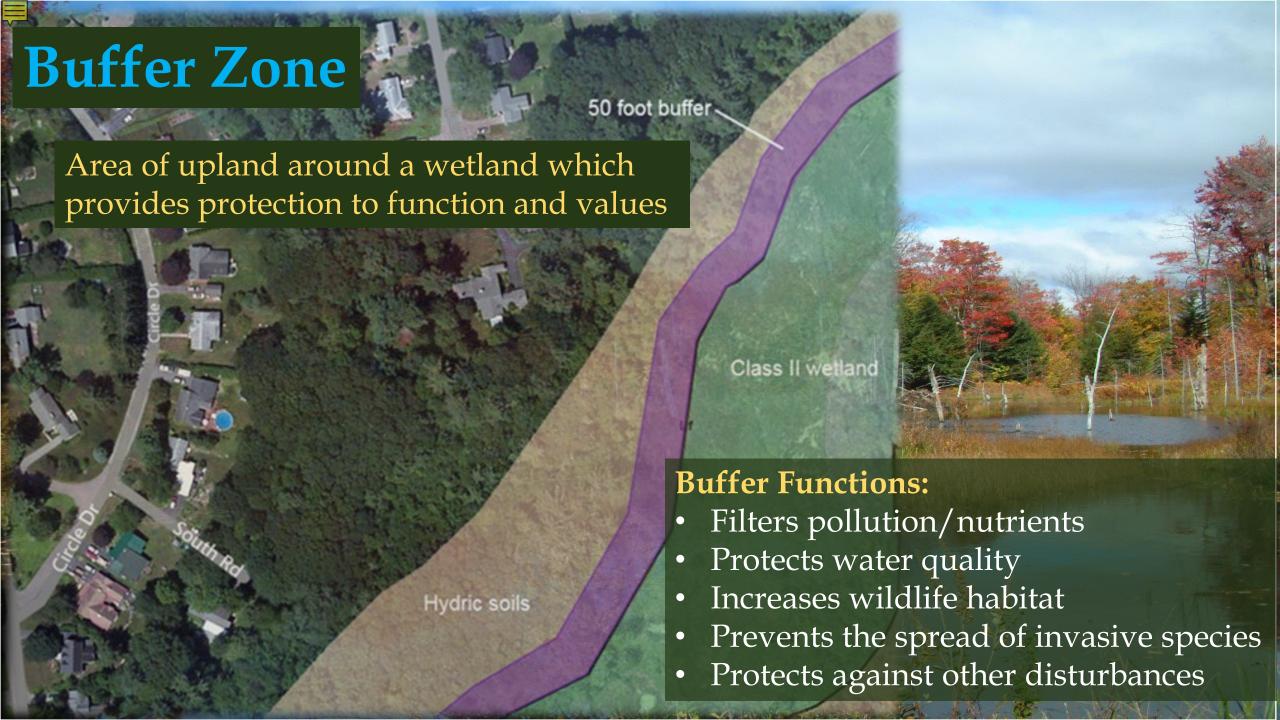
◆ ANR Basemap Data

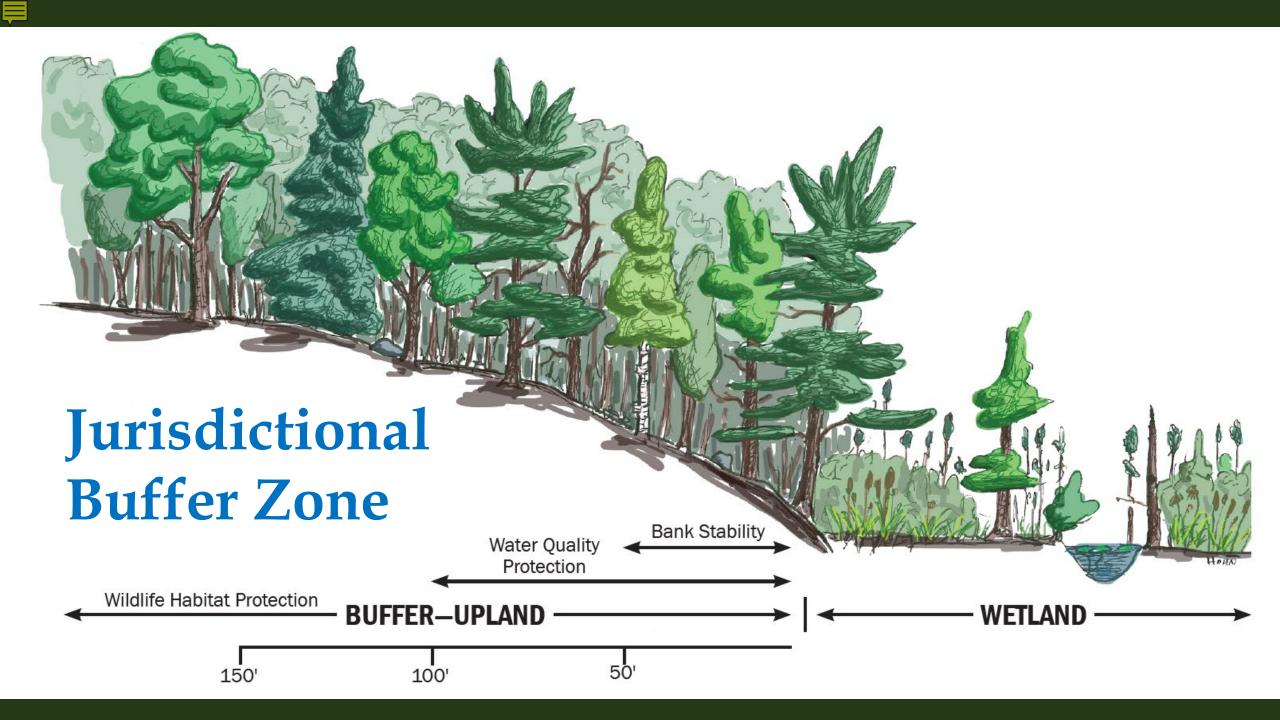
Show Legend

Disclaimer

Wetland Inventory Maps













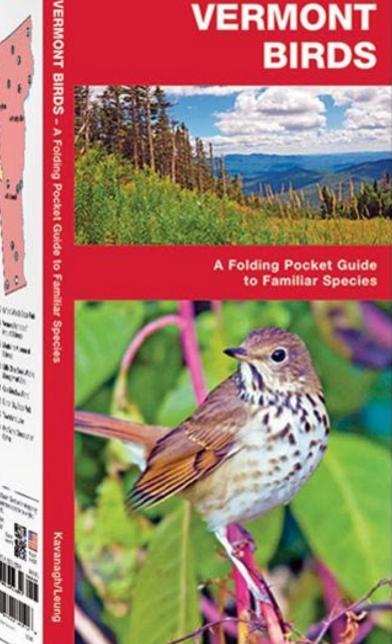






Wetlands provide nursery areas, feeding and refuge areas, and even for the brook trout, wetlands provide cold water recharge and overhanging wetland vegetation along streams help to keep water temps cooler.





A POCKET NATURALIST® GUIDE















More than 1/3 of North American bird species use wetlands for breeding, nesting, as a source of drinking water and for shelter, social interactions and rearing their young.

80% of US threatened or endangered bird species rely on wetlands.















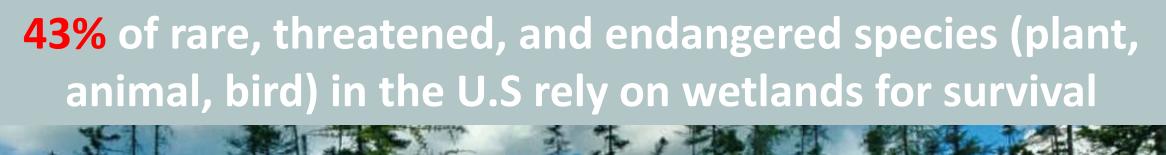






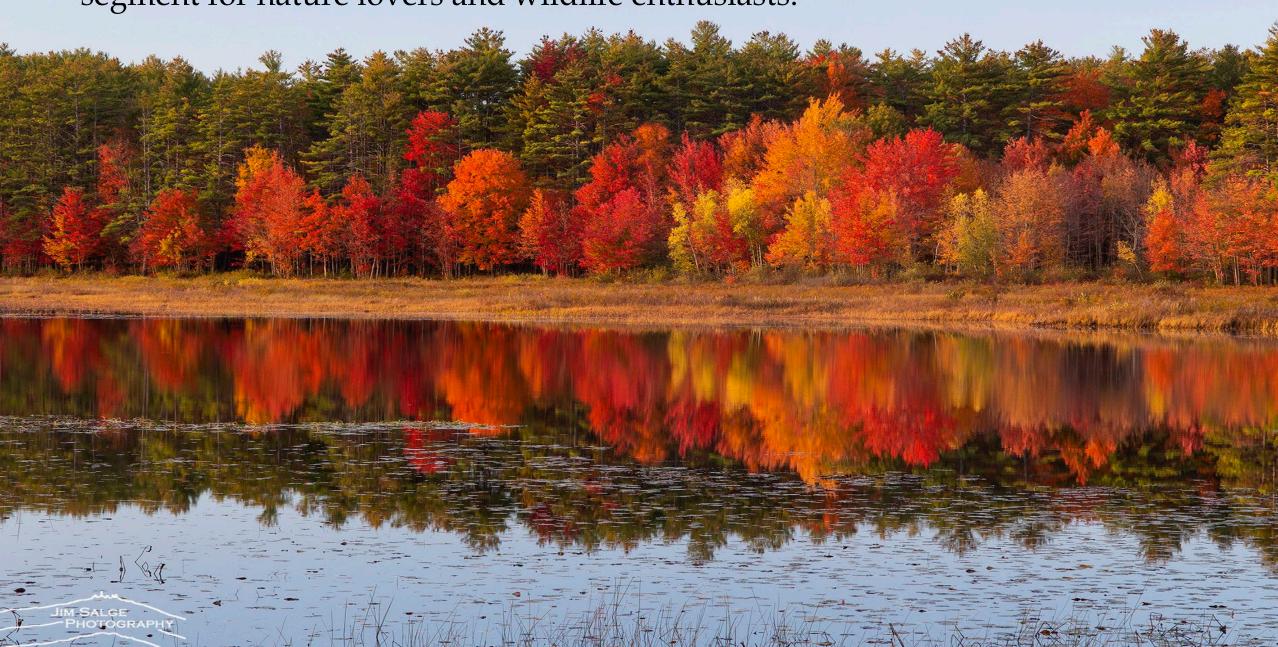




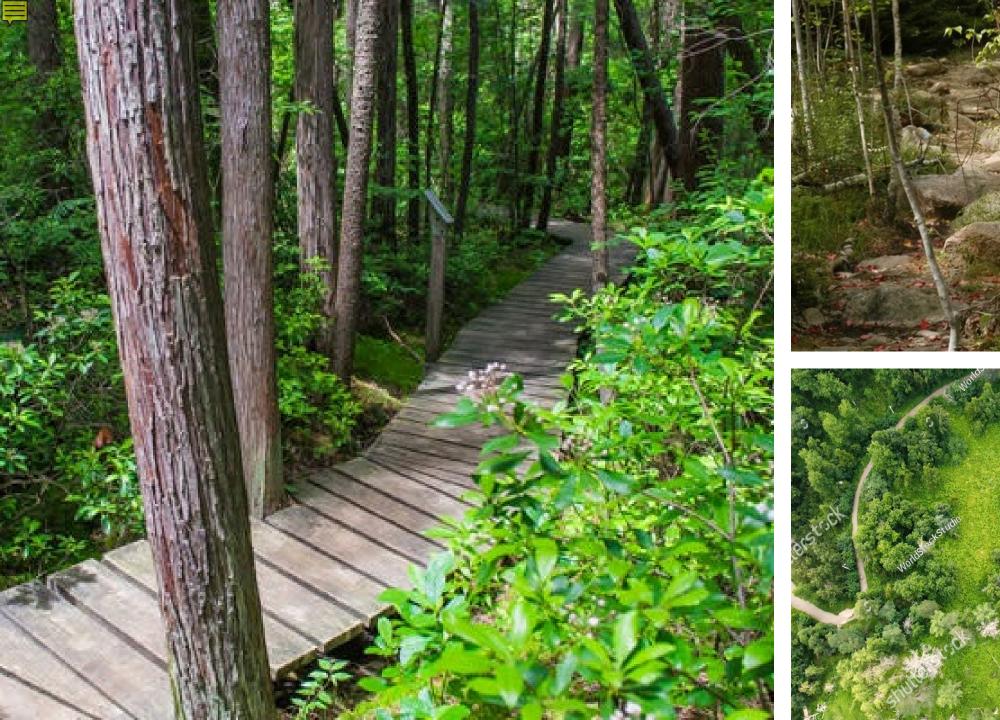




Trails that offer a glimpse into these unique ecosystems can be an exciting segment for nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts.













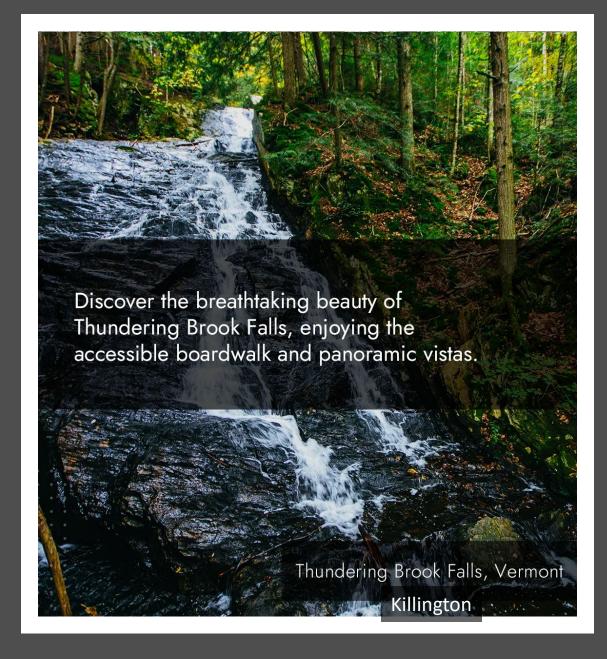
ADA compliant trails with boardwalks through wetlands

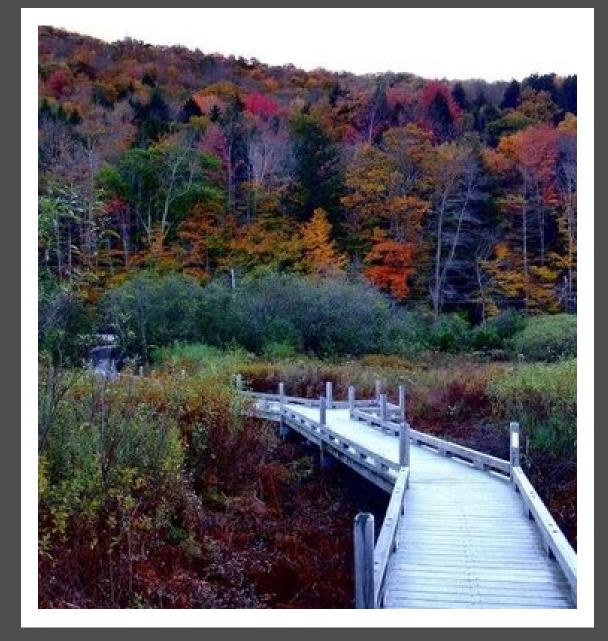
https://www.greenmountainclub.org/hiking/accessible-trails/

Smuggler's Notch Boardwalk, Barnes Camp Visitor Center on Route 108

Colchester Bog, Colchester
Raven Ridge, Monkton
Robert Frost Interpretive Trail, Ripton
Rutland Marsh, West Rutland
Mollie Beattie Bog, Brighton
Eshqua Bog Preserve, Hartland
Thundering Falls Boardwalk, Killington
Otter View Park, Middlebury
Hildene Homestead, Manchester









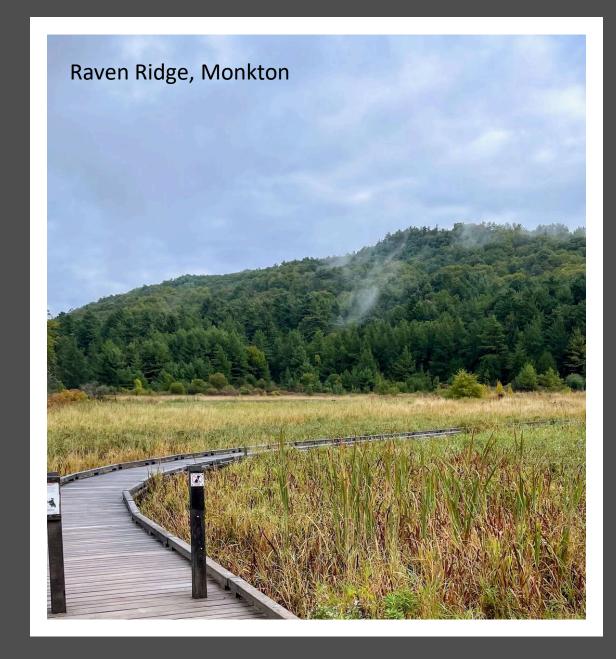


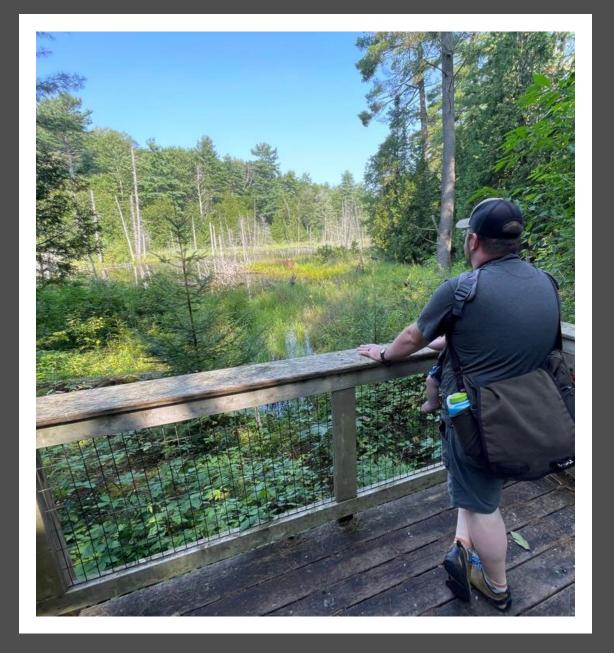


The West Rutland Marsh is more than a boardwalk, it is more than the birds that find sanctuary in the marsh, it is more than the marsh itself, it is an interdependent community of plants, animals and soils, and the waters that sustain them and we the people with our awesome potential to affect change.

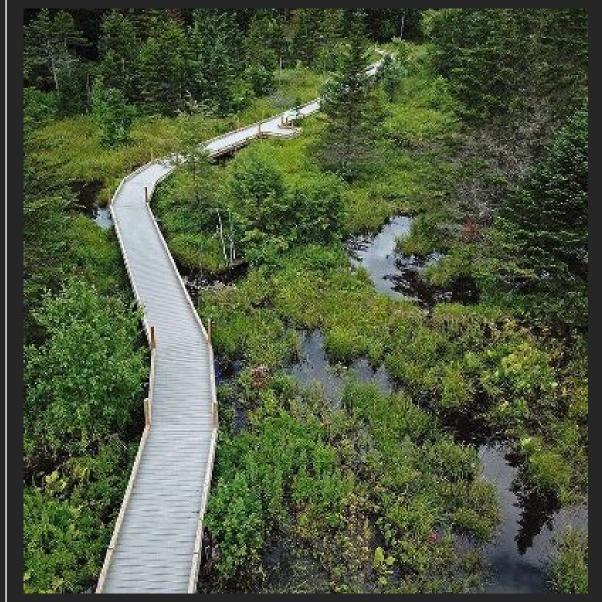


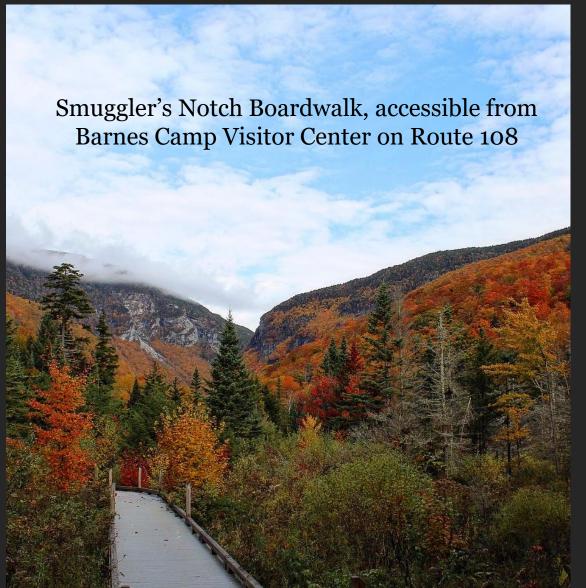




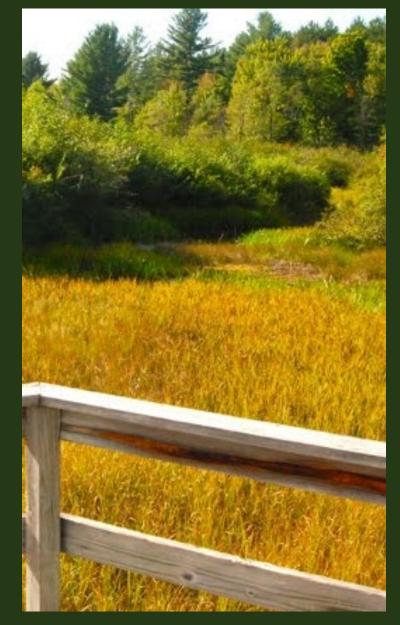


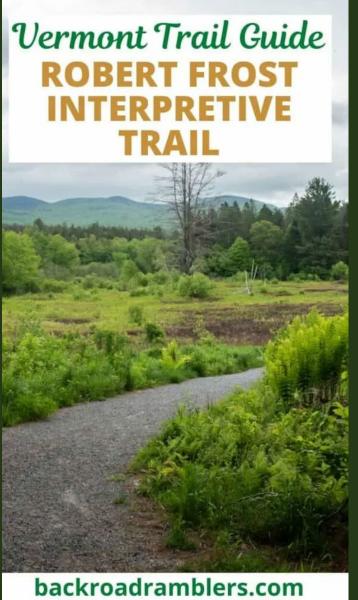














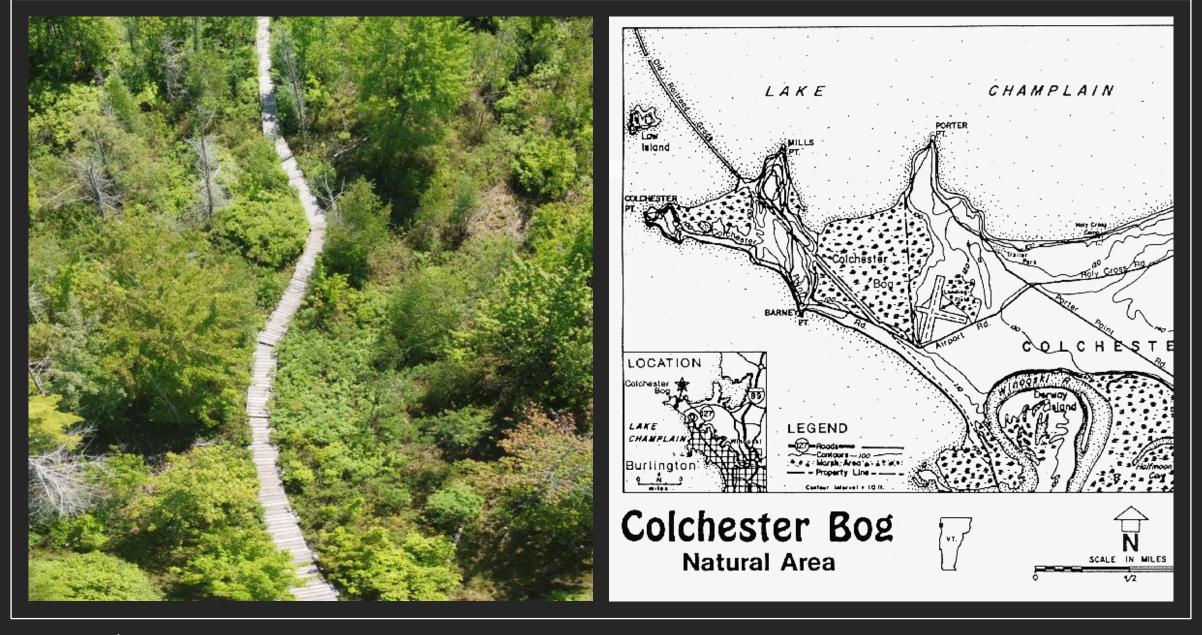
Robert Frost Interpretive Trail, Ripton



Experience the unusual and rare natural history of this plant community first-hand, without impacting its fragile ecology.

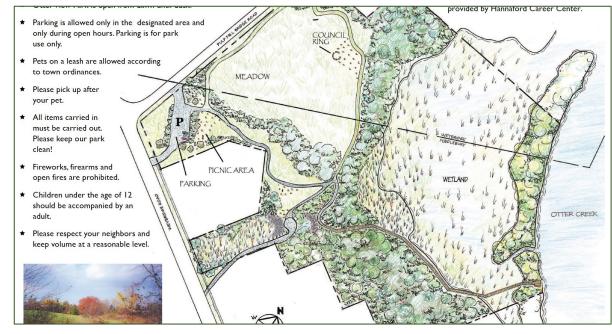




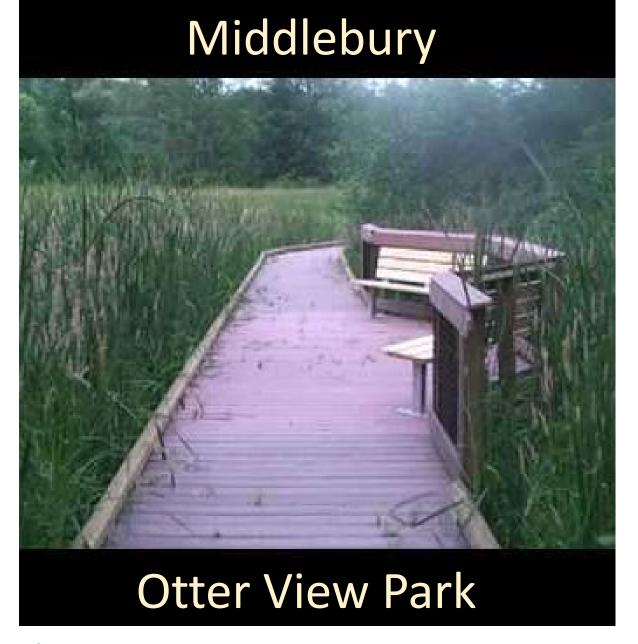


A boardwalk/floating deck lets visitors explore the bog without getting soaked or damaging the fragile wetland moss & sedge.



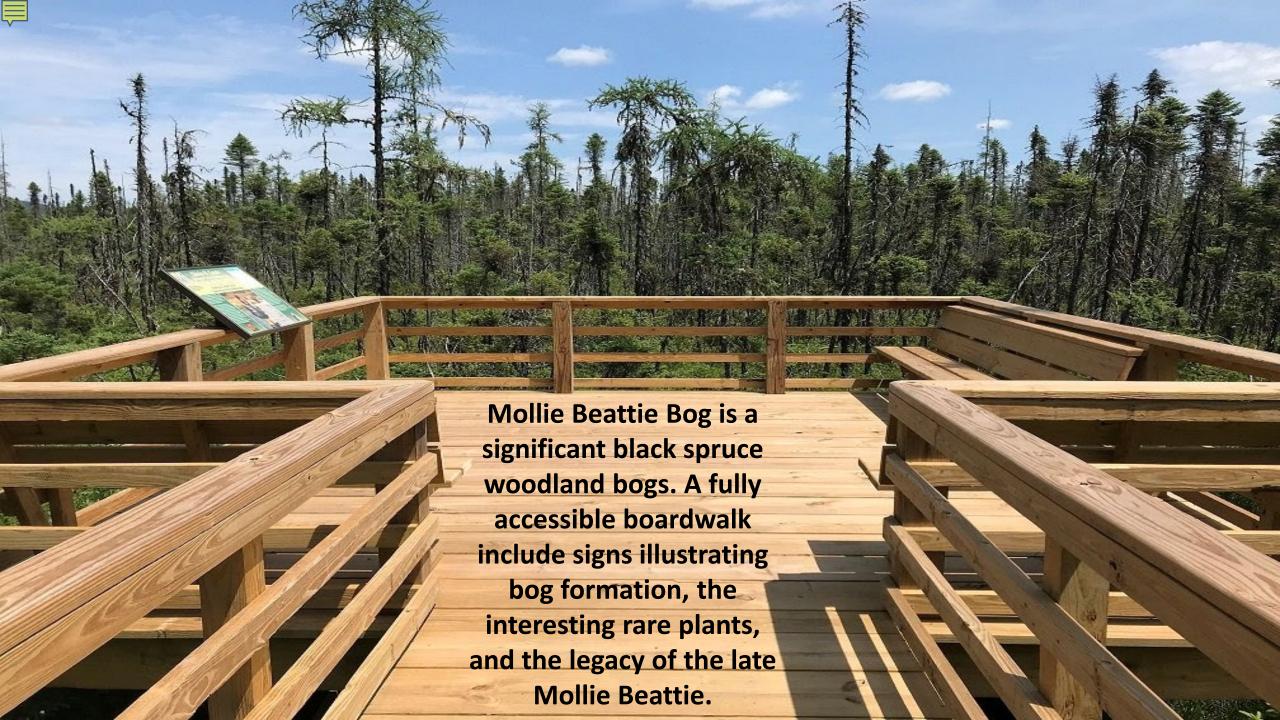






https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yB9m51vQ2Ks





































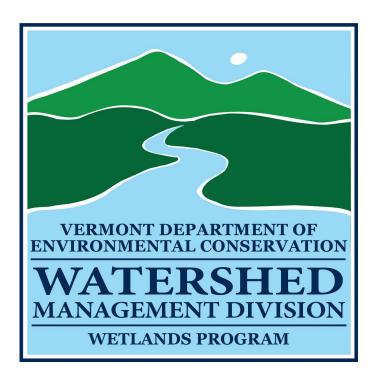












https://dec.vermont.gov /sites/dec/files/wsm/we tlands/docs/WTLD Trail Guidance.pdf















Best Practices for The Development of Snowmobile Trails



https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites /fpr/files/doc_library/VAST-Best-Practices-for-thedevelopment-ofsnowmobile-trails.pdf

The Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, Inc Revised 7/2017

Landscape Considerations

One of the most unique and beautiful aspects of Vermont is its diverse landscape. When laying out a trail, there are many factors to consider.

Avoid Steep Slopes

Steep slopes require more and deeper waterbars to prevent erosion.

The need for waterbars can be minimized (but not elimated) with good trail planning. Gain or lose elevation gradually rather than traveling straight up and down a slope.



Look for Drainage Opportunities

Proper drainage will mean longer riding seasons and save your club money in maintenance. Follow the contours of the land as they will provide natural drainage opportunities. Decrease the need of deep waterbars. Avoid putting a trail through gullies, seeps, or any other places that hold water.

Avoid Wetlands

Wetlands are heavily protected by State and Federal agencies. In some cases, snowmobiles are permitted to cross these areas in winter conditions, but it is best to avoid them all together whenever possible.





Avoid Deer Wintering Areas

Stands of conifers could be critical deer wintering habitat and possibly protected. Check with agencies like FPR and F&W to see where these areas are and plan your trail around them.



High elevations hold snow longer and can be desirable places for trails. However, any development over 2,500' elevation requires an Act 250 permit and should be avoided.





Do Not Alter Historic Sites

While cellar holes, stone walls, and cemeteries can be interesting features to highlight, it is important to stay away from the footprint and edges of visible historic sites. Do not to disturb these sites by moving them, removing them, or altering them in anyway.







Control points can be features that you want to highlight or features that you want to avoid.

Identify ways to connect to positive control points while avoiding the negative ones. This will give you a basic route to start with.





Negative

- Open bodies of water
- Wetlands
- Steep or rocky terrain
- Incompatible landowners
- Areas that won't hold snow









VERMONT MUD SEASON BEGINS

- ► Trails Are Wet & Muddy Due To Snow Melt, Thawing Ground & Seasonal Rain
- ► Avoid Muddy, Soft Trails
- ► Follow FPR Guidelines Like Check Trail Status, Seek Durable Surfaces, Check Weather Report, Etc.

















The Vermont Significant Wetland Inventory (VSWI) Mapping: VSWI, advisory mapping, and hydric soils.

Look at the site in the wet seasons – early spring or late fall. Use the Landowners' Guide to Wetlands to help find these areas. Remember that both the wetland and the 50-foot buffer require protection.

Avoids wet areas and minimize stream crossings

Plan it right the first time and build a trail that suits your needs and takes the resources into account.

Use existing well placed upland old woods roads or skidder trails to minimize clearing of new trails. A change in use or improvement from a logging road or skid trails to a recreational trail may require a wetland permit.







Burlington Free Press

https://www.burlingtonfreepress.com > 2023/09/13 > f...

Flooding leaves Vermont hiking trails vulnerable to erosion ...

Sep 13, 2023 — One of the simplest ways to help **Vermont's trail** system recover from **flood** damage is to **hike** responsibly, Tierney said. That means not stepping ...



WCAX

https://www.wcax.com > 2023/07/19 > vermont-hiking-t...

Vermont hiking trails disrupted by flooding, heavy rain

Jul 19, 2023 — Recent flooding and ...



WCAX

https://www.wcax.com > 2023/07/28 > bike-trails-recove...

Bike trails recover from flooding, attract visitors to Vt.

Jul 28, 2023 — Bennette says most ...



Backpacker

https://www.backpacker.com > News and Events > News

Hikers Urged to Stay Off Appalachian and Long Trails ...

Jul 13, 2023 — "Flood waters brought catastrophic destruction to areas of New York and **Vermont**, and the condition of the Appalachian **Trail** in **Vermont** is ...



Living peacefully with our beaver friends — Mad River Path

Visit





Co-thriving With Beavers | Vermont Family Forests

Visit

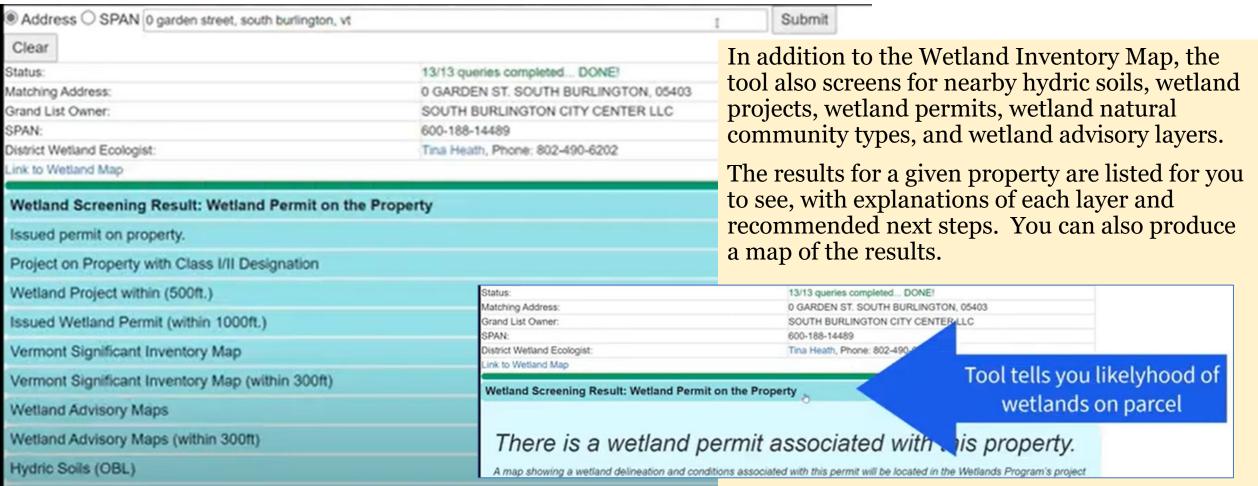
You can find the wetland screening tool at: https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/wetlands/maps

To get started, all you need is the 911 address or the SPAN number for an undeveloped property.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lv5en0AB1o

Hydric Soils





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ADA Accessible and Multi-Use Trails - Because of their wider width, minor slope and firm and stable substrate requirements, these types of trails frequently require wetland permits when they intersect with Class II wetlands and their buffers.

CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING

- If a trail must go through a wetland, use a boardwalk.
- Trails are not required to be paved.
- Narrow trails to the minimal width of 3 feet and keep straight to avoid turn clearances.
- Build passing spaces or observation areas outside of the wetland and buffer.

 *Creating a one-lane boardwalk with intermittent passing spaces to a width of 5 feet meets the allowed use standards without requiring a wetlands permit.

"Modern Trail Design Helped Save Vermont Singletrack From Flood Damage"



Vermont saw historic flooding a month ago. Most of their trails are still in good shape, thanks to sustainable trail design.

By Cris Cadiz

August 14, 2023

- "The vast majority of the 900 miles of trails that VMBA stewards in the state made out pretty well, mainly due to modern trail building techniques and water management,"
- "Our trail network was largely spared when it came to catastrophic flooding because most of our trails are at a decent elevation,"



Wetlands Providing Wildlife Habitat

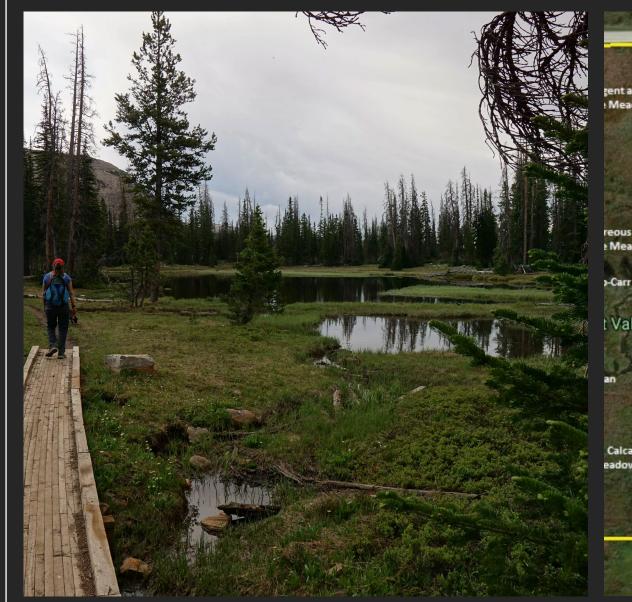
Of the many factors that influence wildlife response to trail recreation, the following variables were consistently represented as important across the literature. These are not specific to wetlands, but the considerations are the same across habitat types.

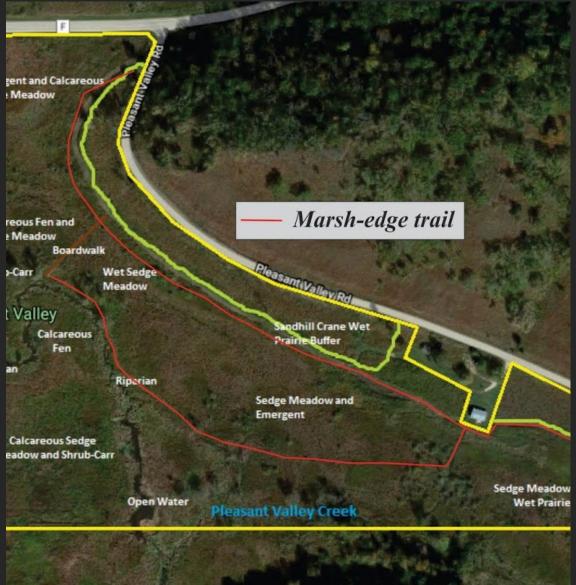
- Consolidation of trails
- Zone of influence
- Breeding seasons
- Trail use volume
- Recreation activity type
- Animal Species





















If crossings are unavoidable, plan to minimize potential impacts by:

- Crossing in a very narrow location
- Using bridges, boardwalks and catwalks that follow Best Management Practices
- Choose the right trail surface and the right width of trail
- Consider water bars to direct water across the trail instead of extensive ditching and culverts
- Altering location of trail, minimize clearing, avoid sensitive areas or cumulative impacts



Trail Information

Cold Brook PATH

Cold Brook Path is a double track style multi-use trail that winds through the old town sand pit, then along an open meadow and across a scenic brook before climbing to the former route of the Montpelier -Wells River Railroad (which is now private property.)

This is an easy to moderate trail. Generally gradual, with a few short climbs. Some spots may be soft, rough or uneven.





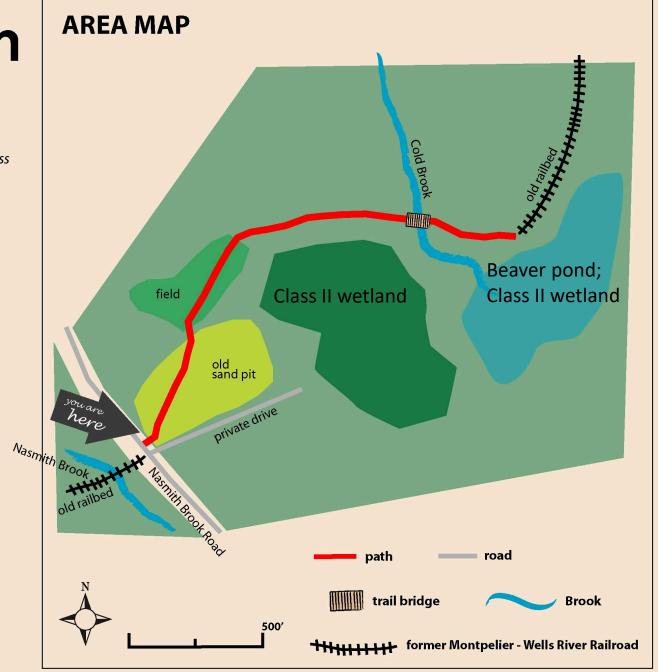




Four season, non-motorized use by the general public is welcome. Walking, bicycling, skiing and other non-motorized recreational travel is allowed on this trail year round. Trail is made possible through the generosity of private landowners and the Town of Marshfield. To learn more or to report trail maintenance needs, contact Cross Vermont Trail Association at 802-498-0079 or www.crossvermont.org.

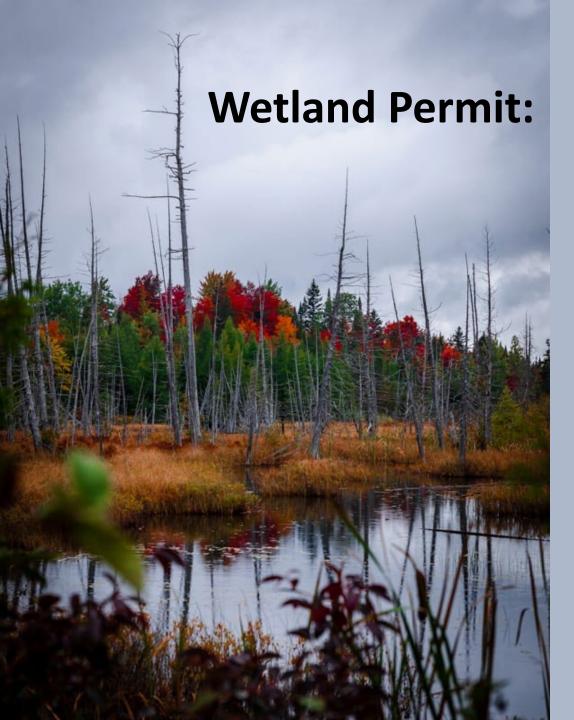


This trail is open to snowmobile travel as a part of the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers trail network. For more information contact VAST at 802-229-0005 or www.vtvast.org.





- Use of boardwalks, bridges or catwalks that are in compliance with the Wetland Allowed Use BMP Section 6.16
- Repairing <u>existing</u> structures such as culverts or bridges when remaining in the existing footprint
- Raking away duff for trails
- Placing reinforcing stepping stones where work in wet area/waterway does not exceed 250 square feet for the wetland/buffer in question for <u>existing</u> trails
- Trimming branches within the trail
- Placing trail markers



Any type of machine or hand- graded trail

- Filling for existing trails
 - o Fill through wet areas
 - o Fill to place culverts in any type of stream located within a wetland/buffer
 - o Cumulative fill totaling over 250 sq. ft for areas off and on bridges for the trail system
 - o Stones for forded crossings through streams or wet areas that exceed 250 sq. ft. for the trail system
- Cutting woody vegetation for new trails (clearing paths through trees and shrubs) or mowing a new path
- Placing any type of pavement, gravel or sure-mat, woodchips, and recycled materials in new areas where that type of treatment has not been used before
- Widening trail footprints by ditching or doing other "drainage work"
- Improving existing logging roads to include in a trail network.







