

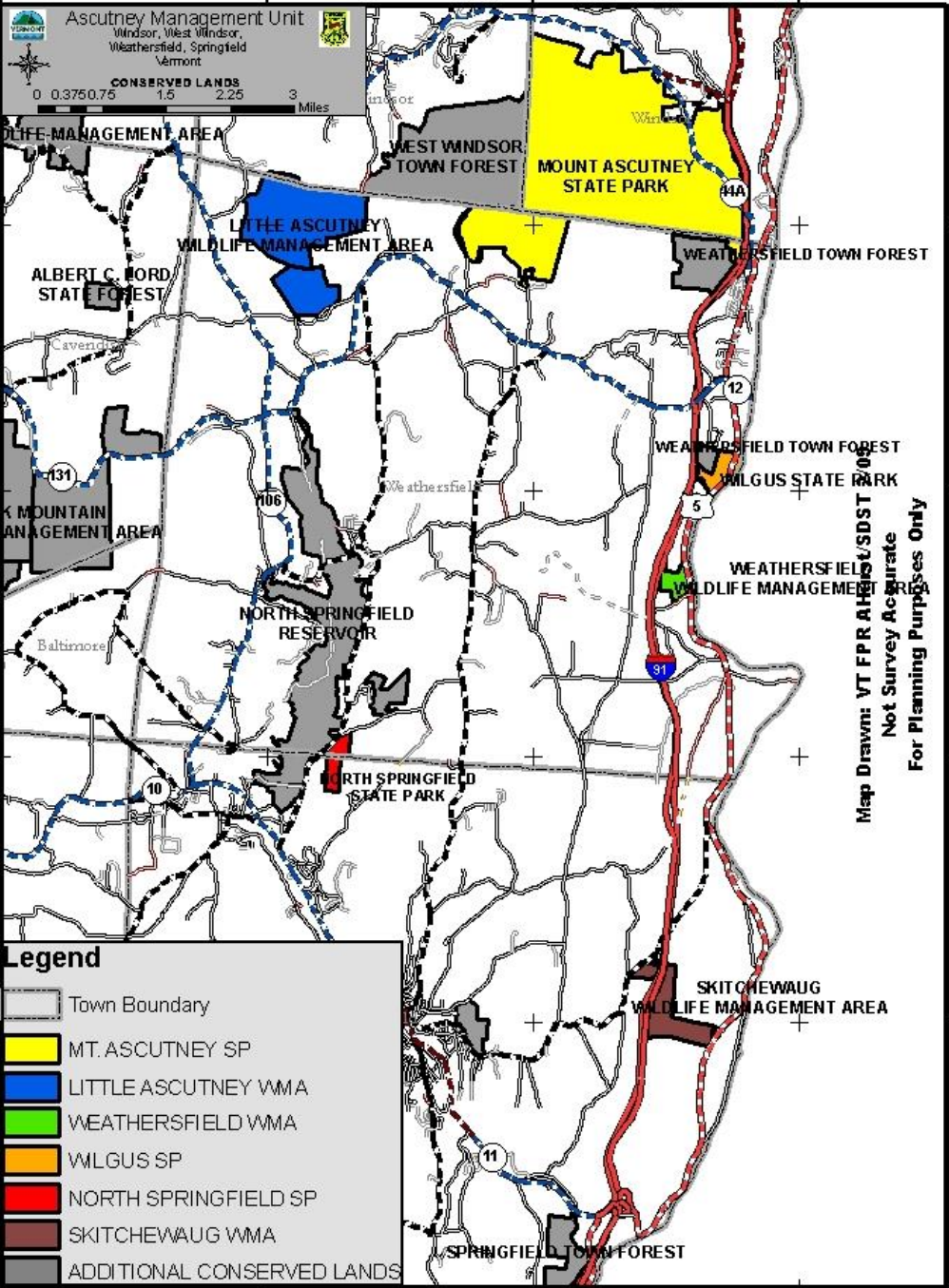
Welcome

ASCUTNEY MANAGEMENT UNIT OPEN HOUSE



Agenda

1. **AMU Resource Highlights** – *FPR, F&W*
2. **Public Comment** (ideas, questions, concerns) – *You*
3. **LRMP Completion Timetable** – *FPR*



Acquisition History

Parcel	Early Days	Recent History
Little Ascutney WMA (Weathersfield WMA)	PR funds	VHCB, PR funds, and working with community groups
Mt. Ascutney State Park	Public Works funds and land donations	VHCB, UVLT and working with community groups
North Springfield State Park	Leased from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	
Skitchewaug WMA	PR funds in the 1950s and 1960s – wildlife focus	
Wilgus State Park	Donation in 1933 for Park and Forest management	

Land Management and Conservation Objectives of F&W and FP&R



“...conservation of all species of fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats...”



“...practice and encourage high quality stewardship of Vermont’s environment...maintaining important species, natural communities and ecological processes; managing forests for sustainable use; providing compatible outdoor recreation...”

Management Summary

1993 to Present

- All accessible scheduled vegetative management projects were completed



Management Summary

1993 to Present (cont.)

- Additional habitat management on Mt. Ascutney State Park and Little Ascutney WMA done when funds became available:
 - apple tree release
 - oak and hickory release
 - creation and mowing of meadows



Management Summary

1993 to Present (cont.)

- Roads maintained/rebuilt
- Boundaries maintained
- Inventory and resource assessments on all parcels
- Important acquisitions at Little Ascutney WMA and Mt. Ascutney State Park



Management Summary

1993 to Present (cont.)

- Recreational improvements(MASP)
 - Permanent protection of 3 main hiking trails and parking lots
 - New Hang Glider Launch site at South Peak
 - 22 weeks of VYCC trail maintenance
 - Improvement work to Windsor Trail log shelter by ATA
 - Rehabilitation of historic CCC buildings
 - Constructed new park office/contact station
 - Replaced underground electric service to ½ of park

LRMP Development

First steps:

- ⦿ Natural Community and Rare, Threatened & Endangered mapping
- ⦿ Resource assessments and inventories (evaluate completed projects)
 - Wildlife and Habitat
 - Fisheries
 - Recreational Use and Facilities
 - Forest Management Suitability
 - Legal Constraints
 - Historical and Archeological

Natural Communities

— a planning tool for inventory, mapping and assessment

“An assemblage of organisms, their environment, and the interactions between them”

Examples:

- Cattail Marsh
- Hemlock Forest
- Northern Hardwood Talus Woodland



Coarse-filter/Fine-filter approach

◎ Coarse Filter: Natural Communities

- Manage communities at their natural scale to protect diversity and practice sustainability
- Broad and common: general management
 - *Northern Hardwood Forest*
- Uncommon and high-quality: sensitive management
 - *Dry Oak Forest, Vernal Pool, Calcareous Cliff*

Coarse-filter/Fine-filter approach

◎ Fine Filter

- Rare Species
- Critical Habitats
- Invasive Plants



Natural Communities are ranked for overall ecological quality

- Size, condition, and landscape context
- Rare or high quality = 'State Significant'



Of 89 Natural Community Types found in Vermont, 33 on AMU

- 3 *Rare* Natural Communities
- 13 *Uncommon* Natural Communities
- 17 examples are *State Significant*

Dominant Types

Natural Community Type	Acres
Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest	950
Hemlock Forest*	885
Northern Hardwood Forest	738
Mesic Red Oak-Northern Hardwood Forest*	623
Montane Yellow Birch-Red Spruce Forest*	420
Mesic Maple-Ash-Hickory-Oak Forest*	344

**state significant example*

State-Significant Natural Communities: *Wetlands*

Natural Community	Vermont Distribution	Unit
Hemlock-Balsam Fir-Black Ash Seepage Swamp	Uncommon	SK
Hemlock-Sphagnum Acidic Basin Swamp	Rare	SK
Red Maple-Black Gum Swamp	Rare	SK

State-Significant Natural Communities: *Uplands*

Natural Community	Vermont Distribution	Unit
Boreal Talus Woodland	Uncommon	MA
Dry Oak-Hickory-Hophornbeam Forest	Uncommon	MA, LA
Dry Oak Forest	Uncommon	MA, SK
Dry Oak Woodland	Rare	MA
Montane Spruce-Fir Forest	Uncommon	MA
Temperate Acidic Cliff	Common	LA
Temperate Acidic Outcrop	Common	MA, LA
Temperate Calcareous Cliff	Uncommon	SK
Transition Hardwood Talus Woodland	Uncommon	LA, SK

Montane Spruce-Fir Forest



Red Maple-Black Gum Swamp



Temperate Calcareous Cliff



Red Spruce-Red Oak Forest



Rare, Threatened & Endangered Plant Species



- 6 *rare* or *very rare* species
- 2 *state-endangered*
- 3 *uncommon* species

- Hay Sedge*
- Sharp Manna-grass*
- Black Gum

**legally protected species*

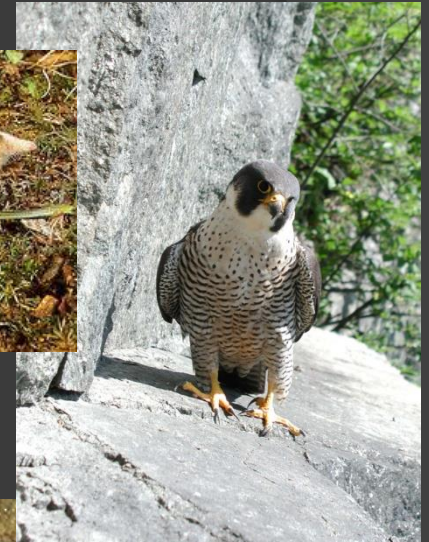
Rare, Threatened & Endangered Animal Species

◎ 4 Species Known

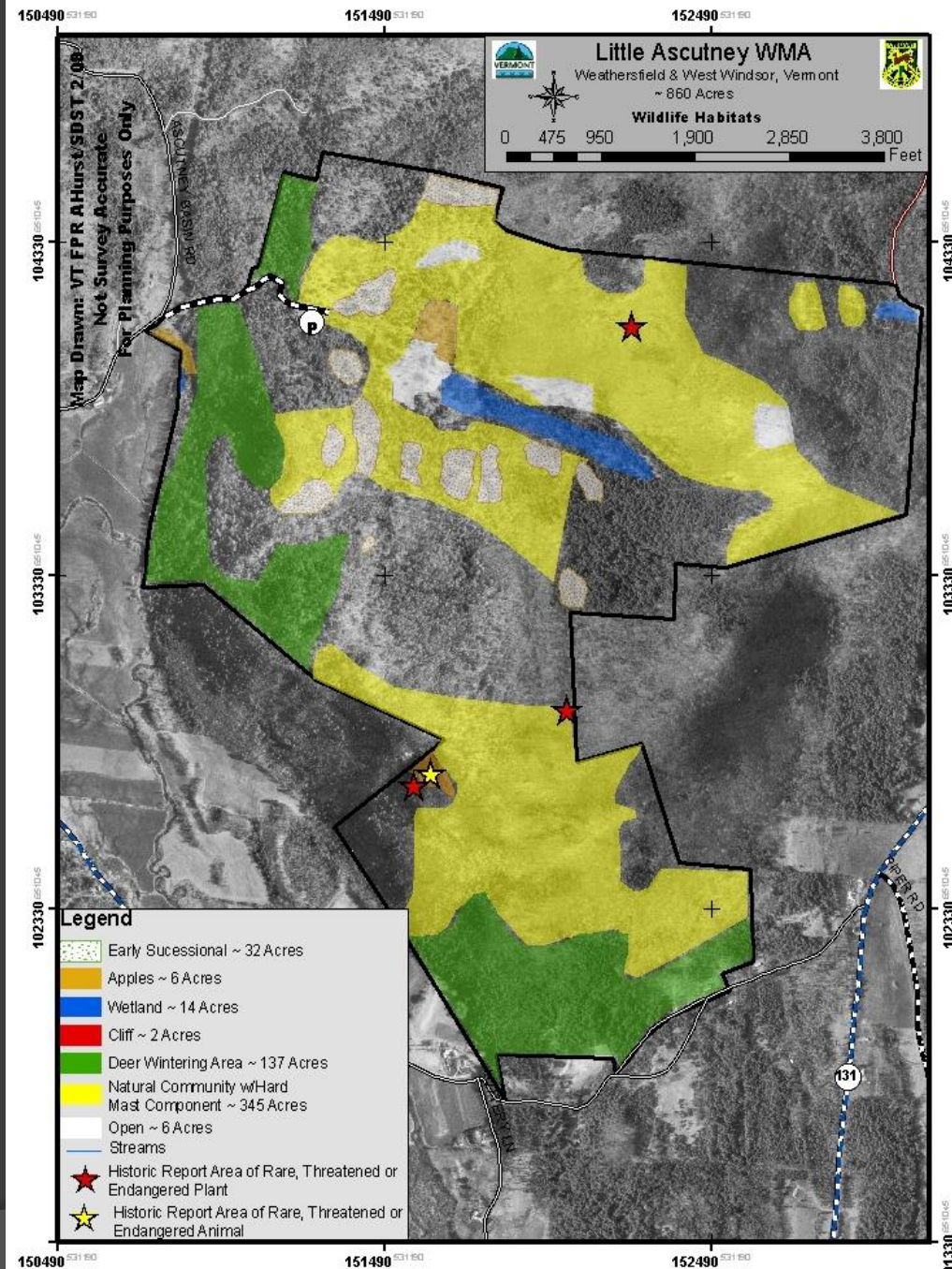
- Dwarf Wedge Mussel
- Peregrine Falcon
- Pine Vole
- Hairy-tailed Mole

◎ Potentially Present

- Long-tailed Shrew
- Rock Vole
- Puritan Tiger Beetle



Resource Highlights by Parcel Little Ascutney WMA



Resource Highlights by Parcel

Mt. Ascutney State Park

Mt. Ascutney State Park
Westfield & Windsor, Vermont
~ 3132 Acres

Base Map

0 0.15 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Miles

Map Drawn: VT FPR AHEAD SRST 2009
Legend:
● Not Surveyed
○ For Planning Purposes Only

- Developed recreational facilities
- Regionally significant Deer Wintering Area
- Potential bobcat denning sites
- Popular area for hiking, hunting, and winter recreation
- Mountain bike trail proposal
- Two hang gliding sites
- Two electronic communication sites
- Limited manageable ground (500-600 acres)
- Part of 7,000 acre block of 'core forest'* and wildlife travel corridor
- Regionally significant oak and hickory stands and state significant natural communities (2500 acres)

*Core Forest: Any forested area >100 meters from a non-forested opening.

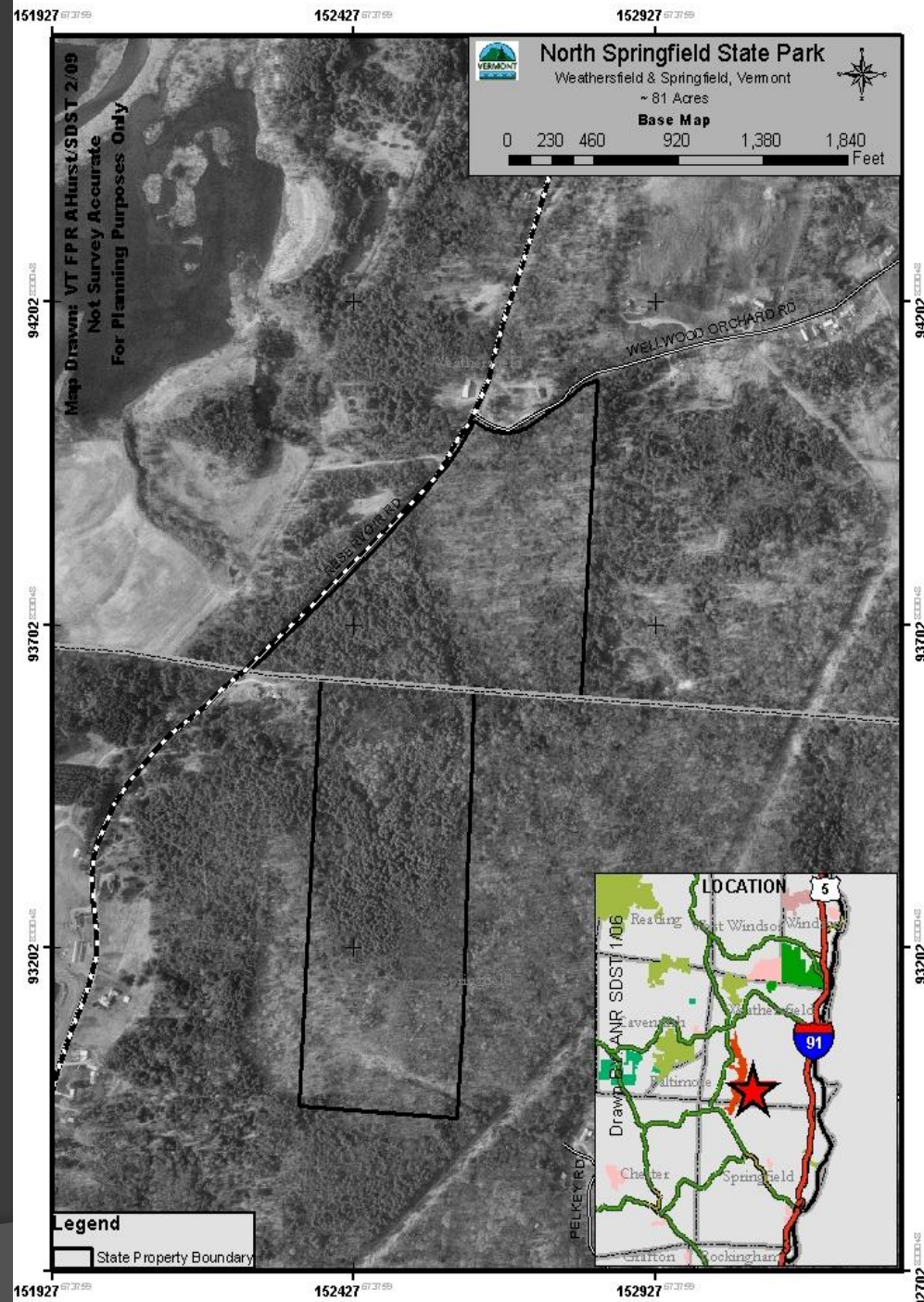
Legend

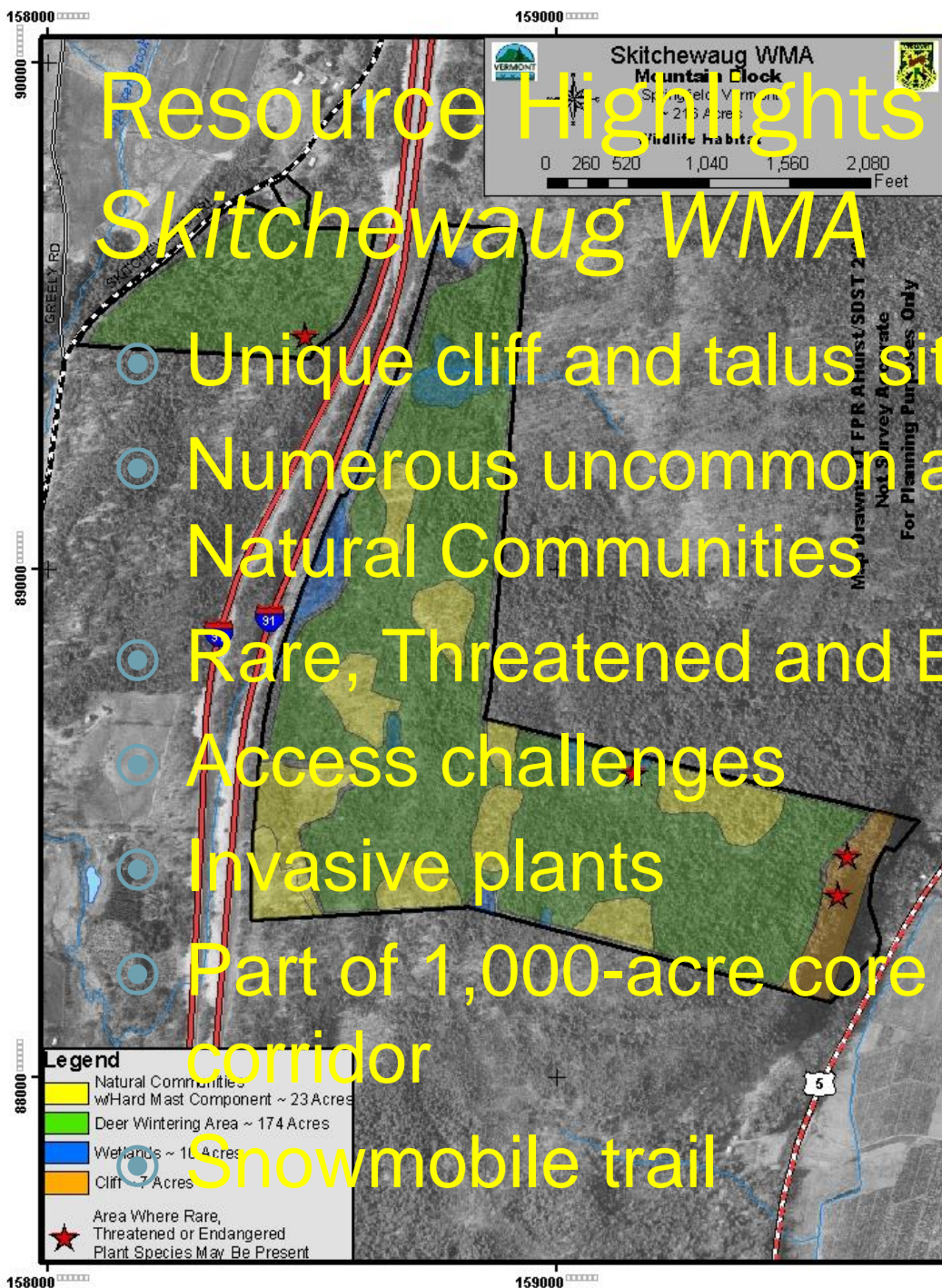
- State Property Boundary



Resource Highlights by Parcel *North Springfield State Park*

- Locally important snowmobile trail
- Early successional habitat abundant on nearby lands
- Productive soils and operable ground





Resource Highlights by Parcel Skitchewaug WMA

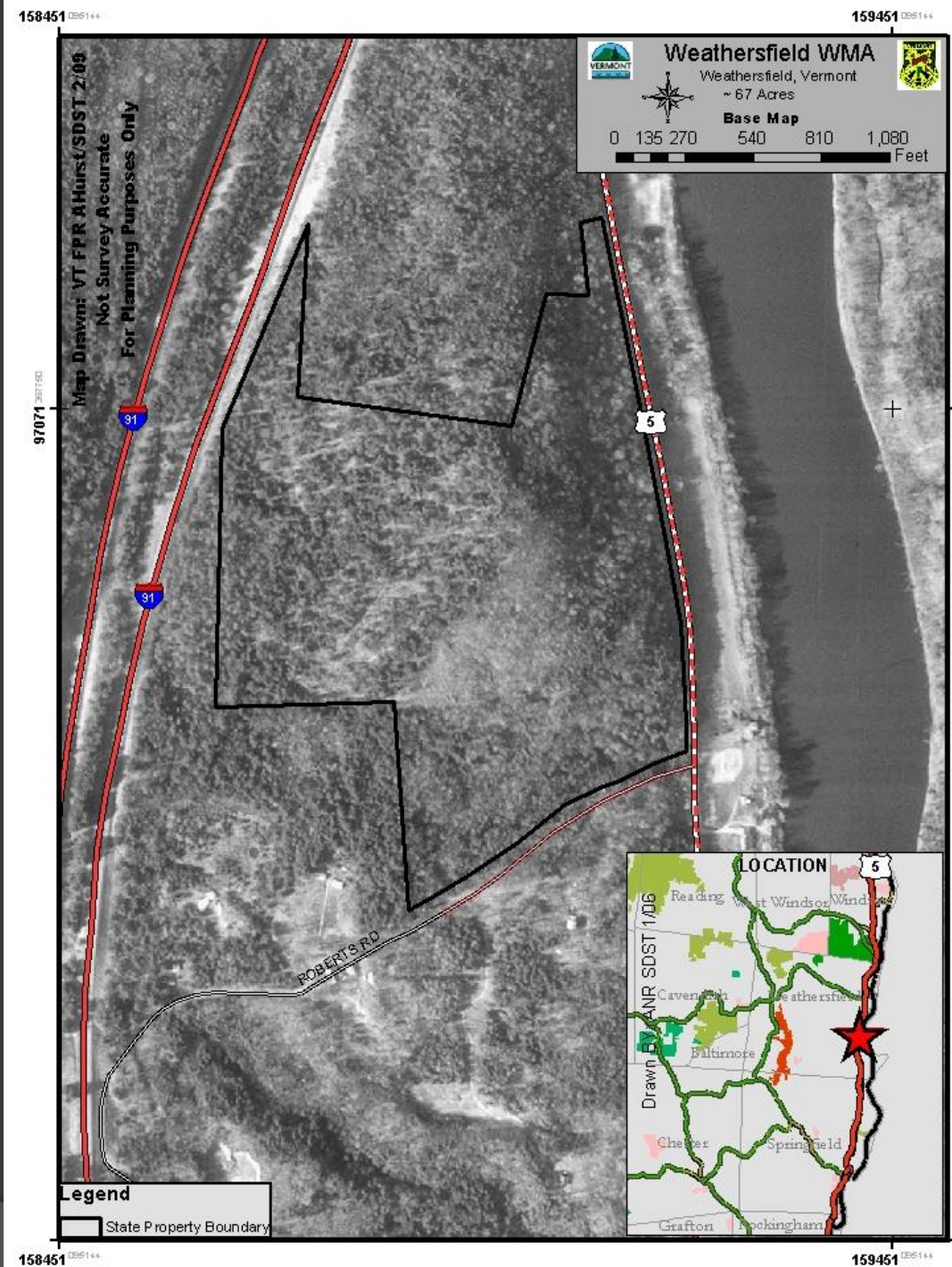
- Unique cliff and talus sites and wetlands
- Numerous uncommon and significant Natural Communities
- Rare, Threatened and Endangered species
- Access challenges
- Invasive plants
- Part of 1,000-acre core forest and travel corridor
- Snowmobile trail



Resource Highlights by Parcel

Weathersfield WMA

- Red Maple-Black Ash Swamp
- Mast tree stands
- Timber rights reserved
- Small area for hunting
- Limited parking



Legal Constraints Summary

- **Conservation Easements**
- **Pittman-Robertson Funding**
- **Deed Restrictions**
- **Timber Rights Reserved**
- **Hunting Rights**

Historical and Archeological

- CCC built structures and features at Mt. Ascutney
- Trails date back to 1825 at Mt. Ascutney
- Logging camp site and steam donkey at Mt. Ascutney
- Norcross Quarry
- Farmstead foundations at most
- Archeological sensitivity



Mt. Ascutney South Peak Communications Site

- 3.3 acres leased to Vermont Public Television
- Tower also hosts broadcast, cellular, and microwave antennae
- Accessed by spur road from upper parking lot
- CVPS powerline



Mt. Ascutney North Peak Communications Site

- .45 acres on the north summit
- One electronic building, a cable raceway, and two towers
- Electronic Communications Association manages site
- CVPS powerline

Developed Recreational Facilities

Mt. Ascutney State Park

- 39 tent/trailer sites, 10 lean-to shelters
- Modern restrooms with showers; RV sanitary station
- Mid-mountain day use area with picnic shelter and restrooms
- 3.7 mile auto parkway
- 4 primary base-to summit hiking trails with parking access, 3 maintained year-round
- More than 15 total miles of hiking trails
- 2 hang glider launch sites
- Summit observation tower



Developed Recreational Facilities

Wilgus State Park

- 15 tent/trailer sites, 6 lean-to shelters and 4 cabins
- Group camping area
- Modern restrooms with showers; RV Sanitary Station
- Picnic area
- Car-top paddlers launch to Connecticut River
- Wildlife viewing platform at river's edge
- 1-mile Pinnacle loop hiking trail



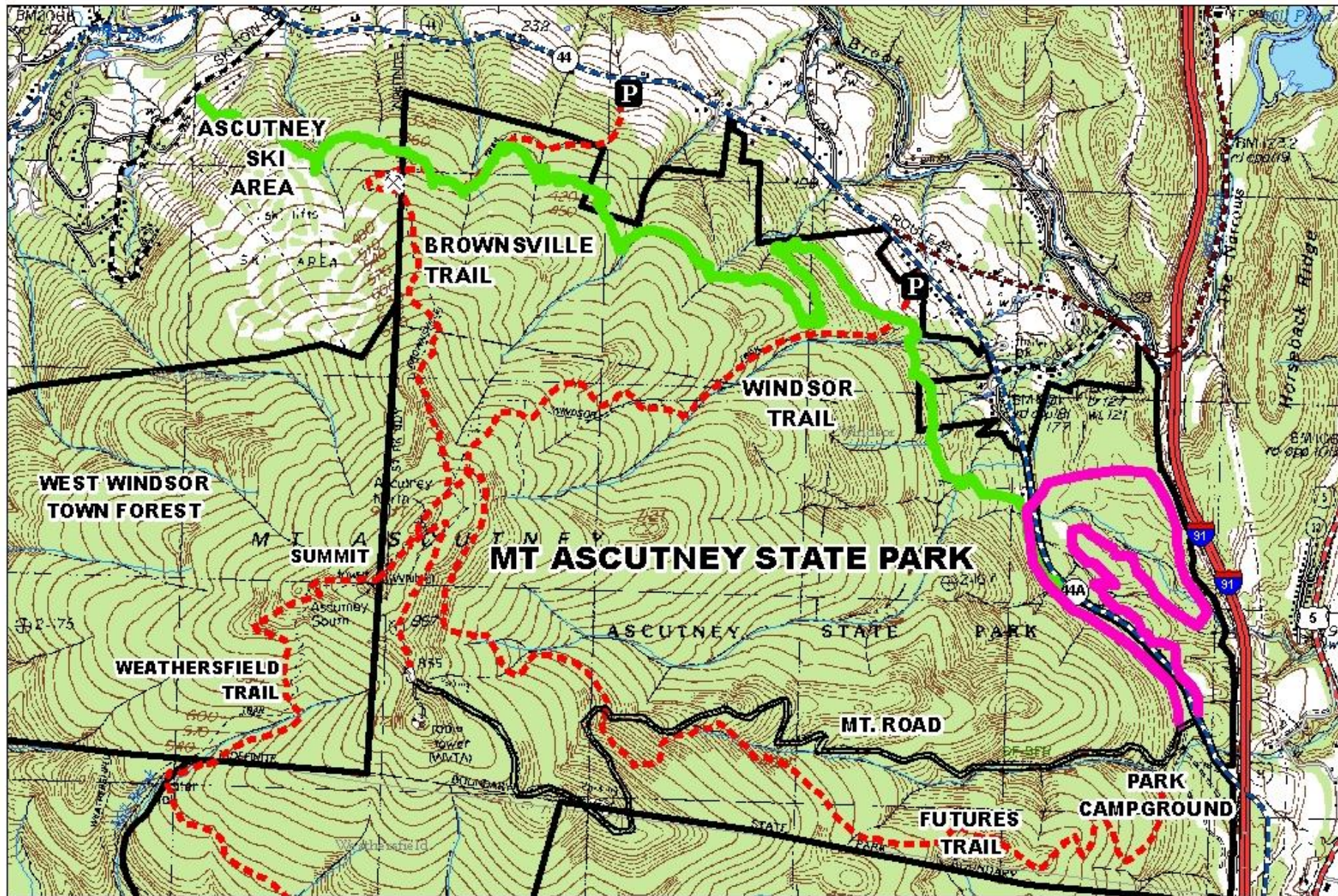
Projects Planned for Developed Recreational Facilities

◎ **Mt. Ascutney State Park**

- Reconfigure campground to remove some sites at base area and add camping in few key areas along parkway
- Add cabins to camping sites along parkway
- Upgrades to water and wastewater systems
- Continue major surface improvements to parkway

◎ **Wilgus State Park**

- Construct two new cabins (contract awarded, complete by June 30)
- Upgrades to drinking water system



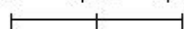
PROPOSED BIKE TRAIL - PHASE #1



PROPOSED BIKE TRAIL - PHASE #2



0 1,000 2,000 Feet



**PROPOSED MT BIKE TRAIL
MT. ASCUTNEY STATE PARK
WINDSOR, VERMONT**

RRW 4/29/11

Feedback

- ⦿ What do we need specific feedback on?
 - Mountain bike trail proposal(s)
 - FPR proposals
 - Other proposals?
- ⦿ What could we do better or differently?
- ⦿ What do you think the critical resources or sites on the Ascutney Management Unit are?



Thank you!

- **Ascutney Trails Association**
- **VYCC**
- **Towns of Springfield, Weathersfield, West Windsor & Windsor**
- **Weathersfield Conservation Commission**
- **Vermont Hang Gliders Association**
- **Ruffed Grouse Society**
- **Upper Valley Land Trust**
- **Vermont Housing & Conservation Board**
- **The Nature Conservancy**
- **VAST**
- **Penguin Cycles**
- **Vermont Public Television**
- **Electronic Communications Association**
- **US Army Corps of Engineers**

Public Comment Period

Written comments will be accepted for 30 days after tonight's meeting (7/1/11). Send comments to:

Tim Morton

VT Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation

100 Mineral Street, Suite 304

Springfield, VT 05156-3168

tim.morton@state.vt.us

Resource assessments for the Ascutney Management Unit can be found after June 1st at:

<http://www.vtfpr.org/lands/ascutneymu.cfm>

