

**State of Vermont  
Agency of Natural Resources  
Department of Fish and Wildlife**

**RECREATION PLAN**

**ARTHUR DAVIS WILDLIFE  
MANAGEMENT AREA**



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**In consultation with The Springfield District Stewardship Team**

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## Preface

*The Agency of Natural Resources has prepared this Recreation Plan, rather than a typical Long Range Management Plan (LRMP), because the State of Vermont does not own the timber and mineral rights to a majority of the acreage within Arthur Davis WMA. A more comprehensive LRMP will be developed if/when the Fish & Wildlife Department acquires those rights.*

*The Recreation Plan was developed in response to concerns from recreational users and owners of property in and around state land about encroachments by off-road four wheel drive vehicles and ATVs causing extensive damage to existing roads, skid trails, streams, and wetlands within the WMA.*

*In 2000-2001, the District Stewardship Team held a number of meetings with camp owners, recreational user groups, selectboard members, the owner of the timber rights, and state game wardens to discuss all pertinent management issues in need of resolution. The recommendations presented in this plan were developed in collaboration with the public, and the holder of the timber rights. They also conform to the legal constraints of each parcel included in the WMA.*

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## Overview of Wildlife Management Areas Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

On behalf of the State of Vermont and the Agency of Natural Resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife manages state-owned Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) for a variety of purposes, ranging from the protection of important natural resources to public uses of the land in appropriate places.

### Management and Administration of Wildlife Management Areas



The Department of Fish and Wildlife administers and manages Wildlife Management Areas throughout Vermont. The administration and management of WMAs is funded predominantly through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program. This program was initiated in 1937 as the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act in which taxes are paid on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment by the public. Today this excise tax generates over a hundred million dollars each year that is dedicated to state wildlife restoration and management projects across the United States. These excise tax dollars, coupled with state hunting license fees have been the predominate sources of funding for the management of state Wildlife Management Areas.

*Natural Resources* include, but are not limited to: the land, air, and waters of the State of Vermont and those fish, wildlife, plants, other life forms, habitats, natural communities, and ecosystems within biophysical regions of Vermont.

*Public Uses* on Wildlife Management Areas include wildlife dependent activities, not limited to: hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, wildlife viewing, research, and education.

### Outcome of Long Range Management Plans

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources through its departments, manages state lands in a sustainable manner by considering all aspects of the ecosystem and all uses of the natural resources. (Agency Strategic Plan 2001-2005)

The Agency has a mandate to serve as the principal land steward for properties owned or managed by its three departments—Environmental Conservation; Fish and Wildlife; and Forests, Parks, and Recreation.

The development of long-range management plans (LRMP) for state lands represents a key step in providing responsible stewardship of these valued public assets. Each LRMP identifies areas where different uses are to be allowed and describes how these uses will be managed to ensure protection of natural resources. The following management considerations further both Agency and Department missions and are evaluated during the development of long-range management plans for all ANR lands:

**Biological Diversity, Abundance, and Distribution:** Wildlife Management Area lands are managed to maintain, restore, and control the variety (or diversity), number (or abundance), and distribution of plants, fish and wildlife, and other life forms within natural habitats, communities, ecosystems, and biophysical regions.

WMAs are managed to restore, maintain, and control the abundance of certain species of plants, fish and wildlife, and other life forms within bounds that prevent damage or loss of resource value that can result from: high or “over” abundance; low abundance or extirpation of species or genetic stocks; and frequent and/or large fluctuations in abundance through time.

**Ecosystem Health:** Management of Agency lands to control diversity, abundance, and distribution of plants, animals, and other life forms considers ecosystem functions, health, and integrity.

**Legal Constraints:** Agency lands are managed in accordance with the purposes for which they were acquired. Many Agency lands were purchased with federal funds that require management for specific purposes. These legal requirements are followed during planning, management, and public use of Agency lands.

**Principles of Natural Resource Management:** The procedure for making management decisions on Agency lands includes comprehensive survey and assessment of natural resources, and determination of management objectives, evaluation to determine appropriate actions and determination and implementation of various management practices. This procedure is repeated periodically in response to natural resource conditions and uses through time.

**Principles of Wildlife Management:** Wildlife management activities are directed toward managing the diversity, abundance, and distribution of plants, animals, and other life forms. These activities are designed either to sustain or alter physical, chemical, and/or biological conditions to create, protect, or enhance specific habitat types. Species, habitats, and ecosystems where there is special conservation or public concern, are targeted for management.

**Recreational Uses and Needs: Wildlife Management Area** lands are managed to create, maintain, and enhance fish and wildlife dependent activities that are consistent with legal constraints and that do not threaten the overall value and sustainability of the natural resources. Recreational uses that have been conducted on the properties prior to Department ownership, may be allowed to continue if they do not degrade the habitat or natural resources.

**Wildlife Habitat Management:** Management practices are used to ensure that trees, shrubs, and other plants are established, promulgated or controlled to establish and maintain the diversity, abundance, distribution, and seral successional patterns characteristic of a healthy forest ecosystem. Wildlife Management Area lands are managed to provide for various habitat requirements for selected species. To obtain desired wildlife habitat age class and species composition, forested habitat may be managed using commercial timber sales or non commercial management. Revenues generated from any commercial timber sale go back into the management of Wildlife Management Areas. Wetland habitats may be manipulated through a variety of techniques for selected wetland water regimes or for various moist soil management regimes.

**Public Involvement:** State lands are a public resource. The public is involved in a variety of decisions on state lands, including acquisition, policy development, management planning, and the implementation of policies, plans, and regulations. In developing long-range plans, the Agency considers interests outlined in local, regional, and state plans, including town plans, regional plans, watershed plans, and species recovery and management plans. The Agency works to resolve conflicts between plans as may be appropriate or necessary.

**Historical/Cultural and Scenic Values:** Agency lands are managed in a manner that is sensitive to historical, cultural, and scenic values. Archaeological and historical sites are protected under State and Federal Law equal in status to other legal constraints.

**Best Management Practices:** A variety of Best or Acceptable Management Practices are applied to State lands. Agency lands are intended to serve as exemplary stewardship models for the public and private sectors of Vermont. Whenever possible, Best Management Practices are made visible and understandable to educate the public concerning their use and benefits.

**Regional Availability of Resources and Activities:** Department of Fish and Wildlife Wildlife Management Areas are managed for wildlife habitat values and to provide wildlife dependent activities (e.g. regulated hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife viewing). The Agency works to ensure that additional uses and activities the public might desire (e.g. additional recreation, historical or cultural activities) are made available on a regional basis.

## **II. PARCEL DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Location/Size Information with Maps**

Arthur Davis Wildlife Management Area is one of the largest contiguous parcels of state owned land within the region. The property is located in the Towns of Reading and Plymouth in an area which is between VT Route #100 on the west and VT Route #106 on the east. The southern portion of the parcel is bisected by the Reading-Tyson Road; however, the parcel is mostly accessed by old town roads.

Vermont is divided into eight biophysical regions based on areas of similar climate, geology, topography, soils, natural communities and land use history. Arthur Davis WMA is located within the Southern Green Mountain biophysical region which contains a combination of high peaks and high plateau. This region is characterized by cold temperatures, heavy precipitation and metamorphic bedrock that is generally acidic.

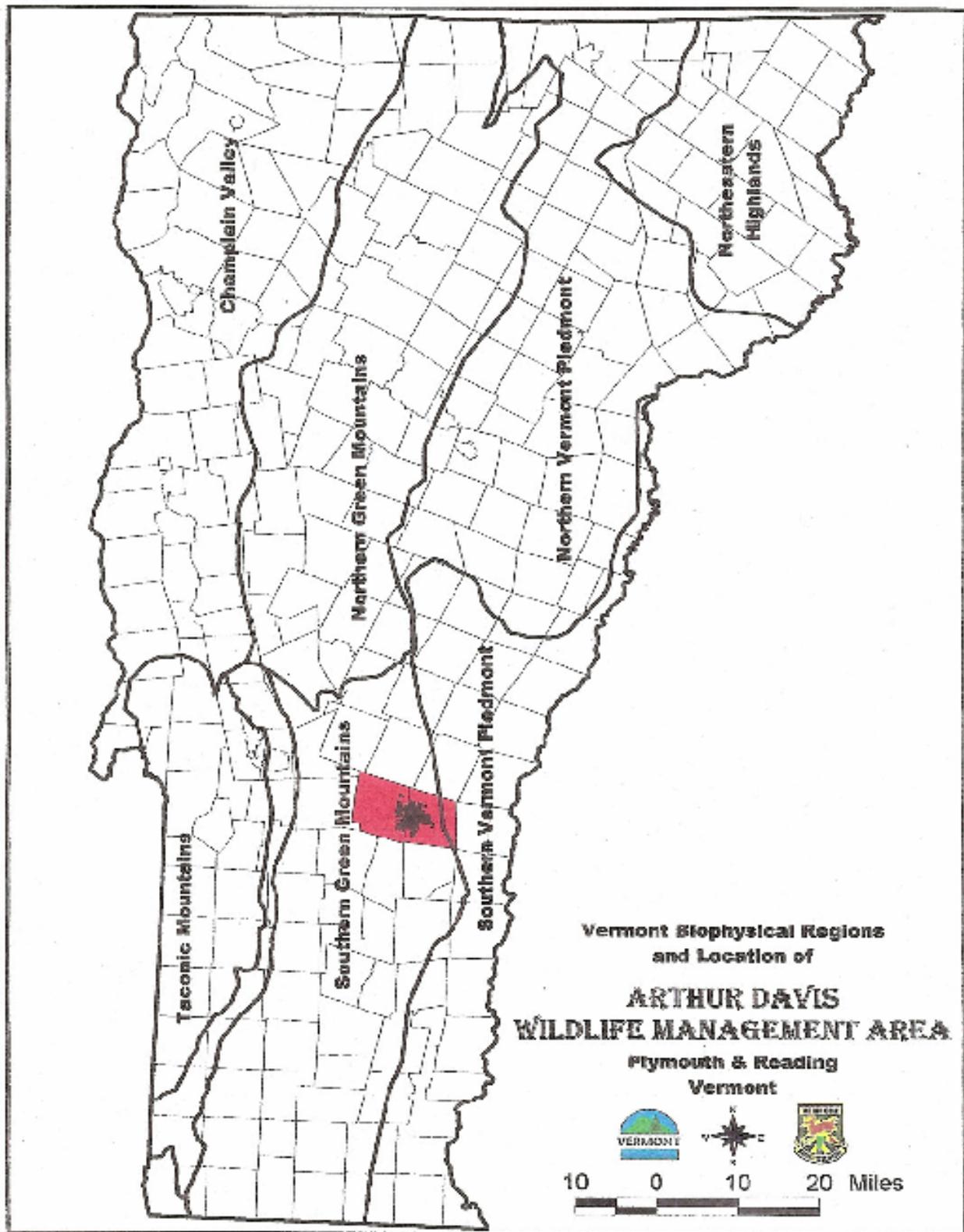
- Locator-Biophysical Region map
- Area Base map

### **B. Natural Resource Highlights**

Arthur Davis WMA borders on both Camp Plymouth State Park and Coolidge State Forest, creating one of the largest blocks of remote public land in southern Vermont. One of the most scenic spots within this area is the secluded 22-acre Reading Pond, located near the center of the WMA. Several streams, beaver ponds, and many wetlands are located on the property.

This WMA is mapped by the F&W Department as ‘Bear Production Habitat’, meaning that it is core range for reproducing female bears and contains important habitat necessary for bear survival. No deer wintering areas or rare, threatened, or endangered species or significant natural communities are known or have been mapped on this area; however intensive surveys have not been conducted to date. A large population of moose live within this WMA because of the area’s remoteness, numerous wetlands, and history of even-aged timber harvesting with frequent stand entries. Several locations along the Tyson-Reading Road are popular moose viewing sites. Other wildlife found on this property include: bobcat, fisher, white-tailed deer, coyote, and snowshoe hare.

This WMA consists primarily of forest land with few permanent openings except for several beaver meadows and log landings. Northern hardwoods dominate the landscape with sugar maple, beech, red maple, and yellow birch the most common trees. Balsam fir and red spruce are found growing on the wet and shallow to bedrock sites.



### **C. Land Use History/Historic Highlights**

Much of what is now part of Arthur Davis WMA was cleared for tilled land and pasture during the mid 1800s. Old stonewalls, cellar holes, and remnants of apple orchards are found scattered throughout the WMA. The site of the former village of Plymouth Five Corners borders the north side of this WMA. Five Corners was a viable community for approximately 100 years, from the early 1800s until the 1920s, when it was abandoned. In 1869, there were two schoolhouses located within the boundaries of what is now the WMA.

On November 16, 2000, Doug Frink of *Archaeology Consulting Team Inc. (ACT)*, met with F&W and Forests, Parks, and Recreation (FP&R) representatives to inspect three of the so-called exception lots purchased in 1993, to develop a cultural resource management plan (see attachments). Four European-American historic properties were identified during the inspection. These sites were situated along Reading Pond Road heading north from Colby Pond and consisted of cellar holes, stonewalls, and landscape plantings. ACT determined that the overall integrity of the three southernmost locations was good and that they may contain significant archaeological information. The overall condition of the northernmost location was poor due to vandalism, damage from past logging activities, and frequent use of the site by off-road vehicles. ACT recommended that preservation efforts should focus on the three southernmost sites and also rated these three sites as having a high potential for educational use because they are adjacent to a town road. Potential threats to these sites include the removal of stones from cellar holes by private individuals and damage from off-road vehicles.

On November 7, 2003, an Archaeological Resource Assessment was conducted by Dr. Charles Knight of the University of Vermont Consulting Archaeology Program (UVM-CAP) on the sites of two proposed recreation projects within Arthur Davis WMA (see attachments). No sensitive archaeological areas were identified within the proposed moose viewing parking lot planned for construction within the right-of-way along the Tyson-South Reading Road. However, one area sensitive for prehistoric Native American sites was identified within the proposed VAST corridor trail #5 relocation planned along the Brown Schoolhouse Road. This project had a high sensitivity score because it is located within 90 meters of a permanent stream and includes a major, ancient alluvial terrace. A Phase I site identification survey is recommended for the sensitive portion of this proposed trail.

During the winter of 2004, an archeologist from UVM-CAP conducted a computer-driven assessment of the likelihood of use by Native Americans before the arrival of Europeans (app.). This model examines the landscape rating the potential for Native American encampments based on key features such as landform, nearness to water resources, and local geological features. Considering the size of the parcel, the model found a relatively small number of sites with a moderately high likelihood of use by Native Americans. None of these areas are scheduled for activity by the Fish & Wildlife Department except one possible snowmobile trail location. Mitigation and protocol for that project is in the preceding paragraph.

An extensive network of old town roads and trails exists within Arthur Davis WMA. The majority of these roads are class #4 town roads where the town provides no maintenance except as required by necessity, such as maintaining existing bridges and culverts. These roads are the

primary access for logging purposes, but they also receive intensive use from a number of recreational users, including snowmobilers, hunters, horseback riders, mountain bikers, cross-country skiers, hikers, and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) riders. The F&W Department has limited control over the activities that occur on these roads.

#### **D. Recreation Resource Highlights**

A wide range of recreational activities currently occur within Arthur Davis WMA. Hunting is one of the most popular activities. One of the primary reasons that the State acquired this property in 1959 was to provide hunting opportunities for the public. White-tailed deer, moose, bear, snowshoe hare, wild turkey, bobcat, and grouse are all popular game species hunted on this property. Occasionally during the fall hunting seasons, hunters will park their camping trailers in log landings or pull-offs along the town road system and set up a temporary hunting camp.

Fishing opportunities are found at Reading Pond and in several brooks located on the WMA. Buffalo Brook, Broad Brook, and Reading Pond Brook support wild brook trout.

Snowmobiling has been a very popular winter activity within Arthur Davis WMA since the mid 1960s. Approximately 12 miles of snowmobile trails cross the property with many more found on the surrounding Coolidge State Forest. The Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) maintains the trail system with the help of their local snowmobile clubs. Three high use corridor trails traverse this property, primarily on the class #4 town roads. However, there are several trail sections which cross F&W land. Maintenance work such as brushing, grading, ditching, and waterbarring is periodically conducted on the trails by VAST.

With the permission of the town selectboard, VAST has erected approximately 10 gates on old town roads leading through Arthur Davis WMA in an attempt to control damage by off-road vehicles during mud season. These gates are closed from the end of winter until June 1<sup>st</sup>. However, one road, known locally as the “ball buster” trail, was recently confirmed by Reading Town officials to not be a legal town road or trail. Portions of this road are severely eroded and are adversely affecting water quality along the small brook and wetlands that border the trail.

Killington Snowmobile Tours, based out of Plymouth, Vermont, uses the VAST trails located on town roads within this WMA as part of their commercial tour operation. In addition to commercial snowmobiling in winter, the road system within this WMA also accommodates horseback riding in summer. A commercial tour group based out of South Woodstock conducts frequent rides on portions of the road system.

Primitive camping is allowed within designated areas of Arthur Davis WMA subject to the rules and regulations governing this activity. No camping is allowed within 1,000 feet of Reading Pond or any traveled road (see map in attachments). A large wetland area located along the Reading-Tyson Road within the WMA has become a popular viewing area for people hoping to see moose. People park their vehicles along the side of the road to watch for moose in the early evening hours throughout the summer.

## **E. Timber Resource Highlights**

One Hundred-ten acres are held in fee (State owns land and timber rights) by the Fish and Wildlife Department. These include northern hardwood and mixed hardwood-spruce stands around Reading Pond and young hardwood stands intermixed with remnant apple trees near the old homestead foundations along the town roads.

The timber resources on the remaining 7,678 acres of the WMA are held by Donald Clifford. The timber and mineral rights were retained by the Atkinson-Davis Corporation at the time the remaining rights to the land were deeded to the Fish and Wildlife Department. They were eventually deeded to Mr. Clifford. The Department of Fish and Wildlife has no legal right to control the frequency and method of harvesting that occurs on the property with the exception of insuring that the owners comply with existing state regulations including: AMPs, Heavy Cutting, and wetlands regulations.

Under the Clifford's ownership of the timber and mineral rights, timber harvesting for enhancement of wildlife habitat has been secondary to management for timber production. The Springfield District Stewardship Team considers acquisition of the timber and mineral rights to be critical for meeting the stated purposes of WMA ownership by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and has determined that acquisition of these rights is a high priority for management of the parcel.

## **F. Acquisition History**

Arthur Davis WMA was established in 1959 when the State of Vermont, Department of F&W, purchased 7,678 acres of land from the Atkinson-Davis Corporation, a lumber company based out of Claremont, New Hampshire. Atkinson-Davis Corporation retained the timber and mineral rights in perpetuity on this property and subsequently transferred them to Donald Clifford.

In 1992, an "inholding" parcel consisting of 55 acres surrounding Reading Pond within Arthur Davis WMA was purchased in fee by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) from the Atkinson-Davis Corporation. The TNC conveyed "the development rights and perpetual conservation easement and restrictions" on this property to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), and simultaneously conveyed fee ownership (including the timber and mineral rights) to the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife (F&W). Total purchase price for this parcel was \$150,833. VHCB provided \$120,000 of funding. An additional \$18,000 came from the Vermont Waterfowl Fund (state duck stamp) with TNC paying the remainder. TNC did not retain any rights on the land.

In 1993, the Vermont Department of F&W purchased an additional five parcels of land along existing town roads, all "inholdings" within Arthur Davis WMA, (the so-called exception lots), totaling 55 acres with VHCB funds. The Department of Fish & Wildlife executed a Conservation Agreement with the VHCB that applies perpetual restrictions to these parcels. The Department of F&W owns these parcels in fee (including timber and mineral rights).

Arthur Davis Wildlife Management Area (WMA) currently totals 7,788 acres. Of this total acreage, 5,226 acres are located within the town of Reading, VT, and 2,564 acres are located within Plymouth, VT.

**G. Legal Constraints, Funding Issues**

The following legal constraints apply to Arthur Davis Wildlife Management Area:

- 1) Reading Pond Property - 55 Acres – Acquired 1994
  - A Grant of development Rights and Conservation Restrictions is held in perpetuity by the VHCB on this property. In addition, the State is required to install a plaque recognizing the assistance of TNC and VHCB in acquiring this property.
  - A Schedule of Encumbrances from the warranty deed includes:
    - 1) The right of the State of Vermont to the land under Reading Pond, the right to impound additional waters through the repair and improvement of the existing dam and the right to raise and lower the level of Reading Pond.
    - 2) The possibility that a portion of the subject lands and premises may be “lease land” held under perpetual lease.
    - 3) A Building Restriction with respect to the construction of any dwelling on the lands with a Grand List value of less than \$1,000.
- 2) Five "Exception Lots" - 55 Acres – Acquired 1993
  - A Conservation Agreement is held by the VHCB in perpetuity on this property.
- 3) Original Purchase - 7,678 Acres – Acquired 1959
  - Deed restrictions include:
    - 1) Timber and mineral rights are privately owned.
    - 2) Conditions regarding the repair and improvement of the dam on Reading Pond.
    - 3) Restrictions on new dams within the area.
    - 4) Building restriction with respect to the construction of any dwelling on the lands with a Grand List of less than \$1,000.

- 5) Possibility that a portion of subject lands and premises may be “lease lands” held under perpetual lease.
- 6) Right to maintain existing apple trees for wildlife consumption.
- 7) Rights to use existing roads and use of road building materials to construct and maintain roads, parking areas, etc

#### **H. Purpose of Ownership**

The primary purpose of ownership is the protection of natural resources and wildlife-based public recreation. The District Stewardship Team manages this property for recreational activities, primarily for public hunting and fishing until such time as the timber and mineral rights can be acquired.

#### **I. Relationship to the Region**

This interim recreation plan for Arthur Davis WMA, in the Town of Plymouth, is consistent with the policies within the Regional Plan adopted by the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Planning Commission on May 26, 1999.

This interim recreation plan for Arthur Davis WMA, in the Town of Reading, is consistent with the policies within the Regional Plan adopted by the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission on July 15, 1997.

The plan also meets the requirements of the town plans for the Towns of Plymouth and Reading which are to protect environmentally sensitive areas such as lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, marshes, flood plains, slopes, and forests.

#### **J. Future Acquisition/Disposition**

In the late 1990s the Fish and Wildlife Department worked with the Vermont Chapter of the Nature Conservancy on a process to assess the value of and acquire the timber and mineral rights to the 7,678 acres owned by Donald Clifford of Claremont N.H. This acquisition was not completed due to circumstances beyond control of the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Nature Conservancy.

Future acquisition of these rights is a priority of the Fish and Wildlife Department. Until the State owns the timber and mineral rights, this Interim Recreational Plan shall be in effect.

### III. PUBLIC INPUT

During the last ten years there has been a dramatic increase in recreational access and use/misuse of the Arthur Davis Wildlife Management Area by the public. There has never been an approved long range management plan for this property, because the timber and mineral rights for most of the acreage are reserved by a private company in perpetuity. However, when several new parcels including the land around Reading Pond were added to the WMA in the mid 1990s, the Springfield District Stewardship Team decided that a Recreation Plan should be developed to address short-term stewardship of the new parcels and the increase in recreational use on the entire WMA.

In 1999, the Springfield District Stewardship Team was contacted by several property owners within Arthur Davis WMA who were concerned about encroachments by “mud-boggers” (off-road four wheel drive vehicles) and ATVs on to state land causing environmental damage. Between 1999 and 2000, members of the Springfield District Stewardship Team conducted several meetings with camp owners, recreational user groups, the owners of the timber rights, selectboard members, and State Game Wardens to discuss all pertinent management issues in need of resolution.

Everyone agreed that immediate steps needed to be taken to repair damage within the WMA caused by off-road vehicles and ATVs and then to prevent future damage to the land. Until the State can acquire the timber and mineral rights to the property, short-term stewardship of Arthur Davis Wildlife Management Area will focus on managing recreational use to comply with the overall F&W mission for managing WMAs and the conditions of the conservation easements that exist on specific parcels.

The following specific recommendations for short-term stewardship were developed in collaboration with the public, the holders of the timber rights and by the consensus of the Springfield District Stewardship Team:

- Repair damage to existing state-owned resources.
- Clearly designate all state property boundary lines.
- Educate the public about the regulations and the land by erecting property signs and informational kiosks.
- Collaborate with the Towns of Reading and Plymouth to determine the extent of class #4 roads within Arthur Davis WMA.
- Work with towns and recreational user groups to stabilize all existing class # 4 roads within the WMA to minimize erosion and sedimentation.
- Block or gate roads leading from existing town roads onto F&W land to prevent additional damage from off-road vehicles.

- Encourage VAST to continue to practice erosion control on approved trails, maintain gates, and communicate more often with F&W and the holders of the timber rights over trail usage/gating issues.
- Encourage the holders of the timber rights to barricade skid roads upon completion of logging operations to prevent further encroachments onto F&W land by off-road vehicles.
- Plan all future trail usage within the WMA to insure compliance with land management policies/procedures for F&W lands and conservation restrictions.
- Increase enforcement of state regulations pertaining to off-road vehicle use and recreational use within the WMA.
- Minimize impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitats from recreational use and insure that wildlife populations and habitats take precedence over recreational activities.
- Clarify legal status of a parcel of land in Plymouth that has been identified as part of ADWMA.

#### **IV. RECREATIONAL PLAN**

**A. Recreation Management Activities** – Additional activities which would correct existing environmental conditions or improve safety and enjoyment of the recreational opportunities provided by the Arthur Davis WMA are as follows:

Moose Viewing Parking Lot – Partner with the Town of Reading to construct a two-car gravel surface parking lot in Arthur Davis WMA within the right-of-way along the north side of the Tyson-South Reading Road. The parking lot will be located adjacent to a large wetland that is frequently used by moose especially during the early evening hours. This area has become a popular spot for people to stop and look for moose resulting in traffic problems. The goal is to create a safe place for people to park their vehicles and watch for moose.

Ball Buster Trail – Ball Buster Trail is the local name given to an old dug-way road that cuts through Arthur Davis WMA roughly between the Reading Pond and the Weld Cemetery Roads. This road receives extensive ATV and 4-wheel drive vehicle use during the summer and is used as a VAST secondary snowmobile trail during the winter. One section crosses through a large beaver pond–wetland area adjacent to Reading Pond. The road also bisects one of the more remote sections of the WMA.

Portions of the road are severely eroded and are adversely impacting water quality. Town of Reading officials have confirmed that the Ball Buster Trail is not classified as a legal town road or trail.

Discontinue all motorized use of this trail and rehabilitate it through soil stabilization and revegetation.

Roadside Camping – Investigate the possibility of designating roadside campsites for use by hunters during the fall deer hunting season. Need to meet with the local State Game Warden to establish guidelines for use of these sites. Potential camping sites will be identified during site visits in 2005.

VAST Corridor Trail #5 Relocation – Relocate approximately 3,400 feet of VAST corridor trail #5 to remove it from the Brown Schoolhouse Road, a plowed town road. Approximately 2,700 feet of this trail was constructed in 1996 on Arthur Davis WMA without permission. Approximately 700 feet of additional trail needs to be constructed to link this previously constructed trail to the town road. Also includes the construction of two gates to block access to off-road vehicles. Construction work to be done by VAST. Project requires a driveway permit from the Town of Reading; an Act 250 Permit from the state; and a phase I archeological survey before trail can be completed and officially opened.

## **V. INTERIM STEWARDSHIP PLAN**

### **A. Interim Management Objectives**

Two sets of Management Objectives have been established for this property. The first set is for the 110 acres where the F&W Department owns the land including the timber and mineral rights and VHCBC holds a conservation easement. The second set is for the 7,678 acres of the WMA where the timber and mineral rights are privately owned.

#### 1) The Reading Pond and 5 Inholding Properties:

Special objectives for insuring conservation of the Reading Pond and 5 exception lots (110 acres total) by the State of Vermont during the interim plan will include:

- conservation of critical wildlife habitat
- conservation of ecological values and biodiversity
- conservation of unique natural and scenic resources
- conservation of non-commercial public recreational opportunities
- protection of property from encroachments
- conservation of forestry values
- conservation of historic resources

#### 2) The Original Arthur Davis Property:

Special objectives for insuring conservation of the 7,678 acres of the WMA with privately owned timber rights during the interim plan will include:

- conservation of non-commercial public recreational opportunities
- conservation of streams, ponds, and wetlands from disturbance
- protection of the property from encroachments
- acquisition of timber and mineral rights
- monitor terms of the deed restrictions/state laws regarding soil erosion/sedimentation

## **B. Interim Management Activities**

In addition to recreation, this plan will serve as an interim guide for all other activities that the Fish and Wildlife Department carries out on Arthur Davis WMA until the timber rights for the bulk of the property are obtained and a more comprehensive long-range management plan is developed.

A list of activities that will not occur until after a more comprehensive long-range management plan adoption are also included below. Certain activities are restricted on lands without long-range management plans for both internal ANR policy reasons and legal conservation restrictions.

### 1) Activities **allowed** during the interim period:

- Surveying and boundary maintenance
- Erecting and maintaining appropriate public educational and property identification signs
- Maintenance of existing apple trees for wildlife
- Erecting and maintaining gates or barriers as maybe necessary or appropriate
- Gathering information necessary for preparation of revised long-range management plan
- Snowmobiling on and maintenance of established VAST trails (trail maintenance work to be conducted by VAST)
- Relocation of VAST Corridor Trail #5
- Non-motorized use by the public for walking, skiing, hunting, hiking, bird watching, etc.
- Salvaging timber resulting from fire, insect, disease, or weather damage including the layout and establishment of needed skid roads using existing log landings on the 110 acres owned in fee. (Refer to the cultural management plan prepared by ACT)
- Repairing damage to state resources caused by off-road vehicles

- Primitive camping in designated areas
  - Development of a “Watchable Wildlife” viewing area (moose viewing parking lot)
  - Roadside camping in designated areas by hunters during deer season
- 2) Activities that will **not occur** during the interim period:
- Vegetative management including timber harvesting on the 110 acres owned in fee, other than salvage as identified above
  - Construction of new roads on the 110 acres owned in fee, other than for salvage as identified above
  - Recreational development or erecting of new structures
  - Granting new rights-of-way for trails or utility lines with the exception of the VAST Corridor # 5 trail.

### C. **Development of a Long-Term Management Plan**

It is not appropriate to develop a long-range management plan for the Arthur Davis WMA until after the State acquires the timber and mineral rights on the original 1959 purchase.

The long-range management plan will consist of at least the following components:

- 1) **General Information:** pertinent maps, general description of property, brief history of land use, summary of legal constraints, cultural resources, available wildlife and fisheries inventories, natural communities, forest resources, soils, and geology.
- 2) **Summary of Management Activities and Appropriate Uses:** Will include a narrative along with composite maps that overlay ecological, recreational, cultural, and sustainable harvest data layers.
- 3) **Background Information:** Existing conditions and implementation plans for data layers mentioned above. Other supporting data will be listed in the appendix.

### **List of Attachments**

- 1) Arthur Davis WMA Boundary Map (*page 16*).
- 2) Arthur Davis WMA Recreation Map (*page 17*).
- 3) Copy of section of Cultural Resource Management Studies Report pertaining to Arthur Davis WMA prepared by Archaeology Consulting Team, Inc. (*pages 18-24*).

- 4) Copy of Archaeological Resources Assessment for the Reading Snowmobile Trail and South Reading Road Moose Viewing Area in the Arthur Davis WMA prepared by UVM Consulting Archaeology Program (*pages 25-34*).
- 5) Copies of Grant of Development Rights and Conservation Restrictions, Conservation Agreement and Warranty Deeds (*pages 35-67*).
- 6) Photos of trail damage on Ball Buster Trail (*page 68*).
- 7) Location map of trails to be closed (*page 69*).
- 8) Preliminary Archeological Pre-contacts Site Sensitivity Analysis for Arthur Davis WMA (*pages 70-78*).

## **Glossary**

F&W - Department of Fish & Wildlife  
 FP&R - Department of Forests, Parks and  
 Recreation  
 ISP - Interim Stewardship Plan  
 LRMP - Long Range Management Plan

VHCB - Vermont Housing and Conservation Board  
 VAST - Vermont Association of Snow Travelers  
 ATV – All-terrain vehicle  
 WMA - Wildlife Management Area  
 ACT - Archaeology Consulting Team, Inc.