



MassWildlife Lands User Guide

Muddy Brook Wildlife Management Area

Town: Hardwick

Acreage: 1,937

Wildlife Management Zone: 6

Description of property:

Muddy Brook is an extensive property made up of two parcels. The smaller, northern tract is a mix of abandoned pastures and orchards, marsh, swamp, and upland forest. The larger southern tract, bisected by Patrill Hollow Road, contains mixed upland oak-hickory and white pine forest, remnant sandplain communities, and acidic shrub marshes. Muddy Brook is an exceptionally unique area given the glacial lake delta that supports a fire-adapted sandplain ecosystem containing pitch pine, scrub oak, dwarf chestnut oak, American hazelnut, lowbush blueberry, huckleberry and interspersed patches of little bluestem.

Location/Access/Parking:

Parking areas are located off Patrill Hollow Road and Muddy Brook Road with parking available at each location for about 6 vehicles.

Habitat Management:

In 2015, several acres of mature forest were cut to create an open area of young forest regeneration to benefit wildlife. During the same year, a prescribed burn was conducted on a portion of the WMA to maintain the fire-adapted natural community and encourage the many plant and animal species that depend upon it. In 2016, meadows on the WMA were reclaimed. Applied forestry practices are ongoing at this unique property.

Hunting Opportunities:

The recent forest cut creating early successional habitat has greatly enhanced wildlife habitat. Particularly, food sources for white-tailed deer and black bear in this area are now abundant. Muddy Brook and its associated marshes and swamps provide excellent habitat for waterfowl and aquatic furbearer species including North American beaver, river otter, mink, and muskrat.

Fishing Opportunities:

Warm water fish species are abundant in Muddy Brook and the numerous beaver impoundments along its length.

Wildlife Viewing and Other Features:

This fire-adapted sandplain ecosystem contains glacial outwashes, eskers, and frost bottoms that may be of interest to geology, botany, and moth/butterfly enthusiasts. Patches of young forest and wetland complexes provide good opportunities for viewing moose.

Special WMA Regulations:

None.

Useful Links

[WMA Regulations](#)

[Habitat Program](#)

[Hunting & Fishing](#)

Fishing/Hunting Licenses

[Mass.gov/MassFishHunt](https://www.mass.gov/MassFishHunt)

Learn more

[Mass.gov/MassWildlife](https://www.mass.gov/MassWildlife)

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Get Your Orange On!

All outdoor users are encouraged to wear blaze orange during hunting seasons.

Your local

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