

Otter Creek Wildlife Management Area



The Otter Creek, Vermont's longest river, winds its way for more than 100 miles before emptying into Lake Champlain. Along its course, the river flows through the largest and most biologically diverse swamp complex in New England, as well as the Historic Districts of Wallingford and Middlebury, and the city of Rutland. In partnership with VTFish & Wildlife, we have the opportunity to protect 347 acres surrounding Otter Creek in Wallingford, as an expansion of the Otter Creek Wildlife Management Area, protecting unfragmented forest, floodplain, rare species habitat, and water quality.

Regional Importance

Protected wetlands and floodplains upstream of the town of Middlebury protected it from more than \$1.8 million of flood damage during Tropical Storm Irene in 2011. Now we have the opportunity to protect 100 acres of floodplain along the Otter Creek above Wallingford's Historic Village and the city of Rutland, decreasing the risk of future flood damage.

Permanent protection of this forest, with 107 acres of wetlands, floodplain and river frontage, reduces flood risks and downstream flood damages, while also safeguarding water quality along the Otter Creek and ultimately in Lake Champlain. With the increase in severity and frequency of floods, focusing on climate resiliency is a necessity for all communities.

Recreation

Wildlife viewing, hiking, and snowshoeing are popular on the existing trails that lead to pretty views of the Otter Creek from an oak-covered hill. Hunting for deer, turkey, grouse, and woodcock are common and fishermen appreciate this section of the Otter Creek for good cold water fishing for brook, brown and rainbow trout, and the occasional bass or northern pike.

Conservation of this property will also protect the viewshed and soundscape of the nearby Long Trail and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

Wildlife Habitat

The Otter Creek Wildlife Management Area's location and geography combine to make it a prized biodiversity hotspot. It is adjacent to 271,000 acres of Green Mountain National Forest, state land, and private conservation land—including the soon-to-be conserved White Rocks Gateway addition to the National Forest. The property contains a diverse mosaic of natural habitats, critical to wildlife and rare plant communities as they adapt to a changing climate.

The relatively unfragmented and varied forest provides plentiful hard mast – acorns, beechnuts, and butternuts that much of the wildlife depend on. The property is home to black bear, beaver, moose, grouse, turkey, fox, coyote, river otter, and muskrat, and contains 225 acres of one of the largest deer wintering areas in the state. Waterfowl, raptors, and other birds can be found on the property's significant wetlands, ponds, and Otter Creek; while populations of 16 species of rare plants are found within 8 State-Significant rare natural communities on the property.

The Threat

The property has significant road frontage along busy Route 7 and Hartsboro Road. If a conservation outcome is not successful, the land could be sold on the open market, leading to likely subdivision, loss of public access, and forest fragmentation.

Please join us

Your generous support to the conservation of the Otter Creek Wildlife Management Area by October 1, 2022 will help preserve this special place for generations to come. Thank you!



The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

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