NORTHEASTERN VERMONT NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

An area of undetermined size in the northeast corner of Vermont is being studied by the National Park Service as a possible national recreation area.

In general, the "Northeast Kingdom"--as Vermonter call this section of their State--will be studied for its recreation potential, but the survey cannot be made until spring as the wilderness heart of the area is snowed in during winter and is relatively inaccessible at all times.

Under consideration is a tract of land about 37 miles long from north to south, averaging about 18 miles wide, and embracing approximately 450,000 acres, most of it in Essex County but with some marginal parts in adjoining Caledonia County. It is bounded on the north by the Canadian line, on the east by the Connecticut River and the State of New Hampshire, on the south by U. S. Highway 2, and by Vermont Highway 114 on the west.

This northeast corner of Vermont lies in the White Mountain section of the Appalachian Highlands and includes the Caledonia Mountains. About 85 percent of the land is between 1000 and 2,500 feet above sea level, with a maximum elevation of 3,420 feet on East Mountain. Five mountains rise to more than 3,000 feet, including the isolated hump of Monadnock Mountain near the New Hampshire border. Altogether, the landscape is pleasing, with placid stream valleys, lakes and marshes, and icy mountains surrounded by glaciers.

In the west central part of the study area are two low mountain ranges virtually surrounding Island Pond basin, which is drained by the Nulhegan...
River and its tributaries. The Moose River drains a second basin to the south. Both rivers are small and of little value other than for fishing. Throughout the whole area are 32 lakes and ponds, but only 6 are more than a mile long, some of which have summer cottages on the shorelines.

This northeastern section of Vermont is practically uninhabited except for some small towns and farming land around the periphery. Nearly all the land is forested and in private ownership, its primary use being logging and the cutting of pulpwood. Some small stands of virgin forest probably remain, however, at places where logging would be difficult.

Various types of evergreens grow in this section, along with maples, birch, beech, ash and other deciduous trees. Deer and black bear roam the forests. Most plentiful are bobcat, raccoon, beaver, muskrat, mink, otter, porcupine and snowshoe hare.

The Darling State Forest Park---3,725 acres---in the southwestern part of the study area includes Burke Mountain and its surrounding countryside. A road leads to a tower on the 3,267-foot summit, and ski trails and slopes are maintained on its sides. In addition, there are picnic and campgrounds, shelters and a recreation building.

The 450-acre Maidstone State Forest, where swimming and picnic facilities are available, is located on Maidstone Lake at the Edge of the wilderness in Essex County and near the Connecticut River.

Within the study area are two sites which have been included in a flood-control and power inventory of the New England-New York Inter-Agency Committee report on the Connecticut River drainage. The Victory Site would occupy the Moose River basin with a reservoir of almost 29,000 acres. The Brown's Mill Dam on Paul Creek, near Maidstone Lake, would be a power project with about 800 acres of reservoir surface. Neither project, however, is designated for recreation use.
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