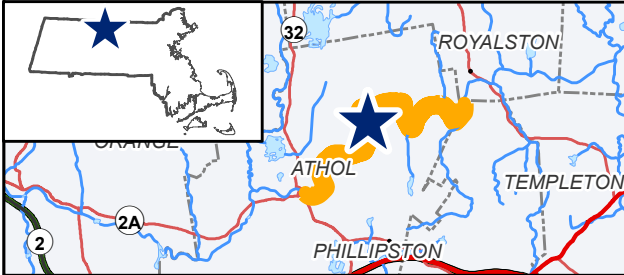




Millers River

Catch-and-Release Area (Upper Section)

Royalston/Athol, MA
Millers Watershed
USGS Quad: Athol



Legend

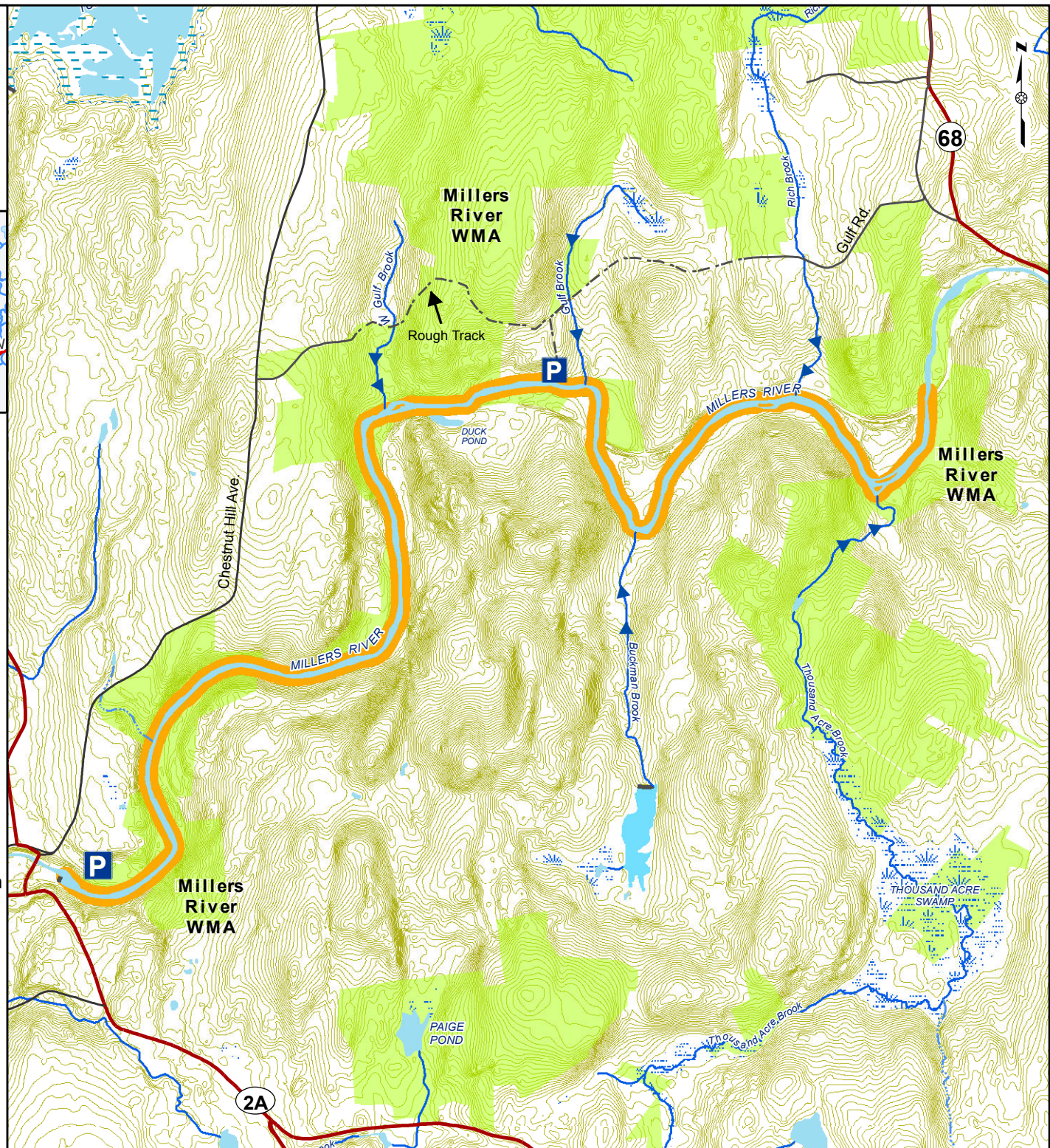
- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|-------------|
| | Catch and Release Area | | Interstate |
| | Stream-Flow Direction | | Major Road |
| | Wetland | | Road |
| | Wildlife Management Area | | Track |
| | | | Buildings |
| | | | Parking |
| | | | Access Path |

The Millers River Catch and Release area consists of two separate reaches. The upper section extends from the Templeton/Athol railroad bridge in South Royalston to the first dam in Athol.

0 1/2 1 Miles

Map updated July, 2018

Elevation contours: 3 Meters





Millers River Catch and Release Area

Athol/Templeton (upper section) and Orange/Wendell/Erving (lower section)

General Information

The Millers River flows generally east to west from headwaters in Ashburnham to the Connecticut River. The upper section of the Millers River Catch-and-Release Area, also known as the Bearsden, extends from a railroad bridge in the towns of Athol and Templeton downstream 6½ miles to the first dam in the town of Athol. The lower section of the Area extends 1 ½ miles downstream from the Wendell Depot Road Bridge in the towns of Orange and Wendell to a breached dam near the paper mill in the towns of Erving and Wendell.

The upper section is almost entirely undeveloped and runs through the heavily-forested Millers River Wildlife Management Area; whereas the lower section flows through a more developed landscape. The river in the upper section has a steeper gradient and is dominated by riffles and swift runs, filled with large boulders, and several long deep pools. The lower section is slower and deeper with much more low-gradient pool habitat.

Fish Populations

Water temperatures in the Millers River are cool enough in spring and fall to support trout in both sections of the Catch-and-Release Area. In the summer months, the main stem of the river becomes more suitable for warmwater fish while trout often take refuge in cooler tributaries. Surveys conducted by MassWildlife have found Brown, Rainbow, and Brook Trout, along with Smallmouth Bass, Rock Bass, Bluegill, Pumpkinseed, Redbreast Sunfish, Fallfish, and Common Shiner.

Recreational Access

The upper section can be accessed via Gulf Road. Turn left onto Bearsden Road after about 1 ½ miles on Gulf Road. This section of the river near the pull-off is known as the “Rezendez Pool”. From this location, downstream to Athol must be accessed by foot. Note that while Gulf Road is shown as passable on some maps, the track is challenging, even with all-wheel drive vehicles. There is good access from a gate on Crescent Street in Athol.

Access to the lower section is located near the Rt. 2 overpass in Wendell Depot. There is a large unpaved parking area that can accommodate about 10 vehicles. Continuing on Wendell Depot Road, there is access from 2 turn-offs, followed by a short hike along Osgood Brook to the River. The lower section of the Millers River Catch-and-Release Area ends just below the paper mill in Erving. Access near the mill is not allowed.

Fishing

Fishing is allowed with artificial lures only and all fish must be released. The use of natural or artificial baits such as worms, shiners or other live bait, cheese, corn, or fish eggs is prohibited. MassWildlife stocks the Millers River with catchable-size Rainbow, Brook, and Brown Trout every spring and rainbows again in the fall. Trout will seek out thermal refuges in deep bend pools or coldwater tributaries during periods of high water temperature or drought. Therefore, during the summer much of the Millers River, especially the lower section tends to be dominated by warmwater species like Smallmouth Bass, which can provide an alternative to anglers.