

C. Prime Wetland Revisions

The map on the preceding page highlights the findings of the prime wetlands mapping. The table on page 11 summarizes the prime wetland mapping effort wherein six of the seven prime wetlands were mapped in the field to varying degrees of completeness. Landowner access permission was the limiting factor in providing the town with a comprehensive map update of the prime wetlands in Meredith. Dolloff Brook, Hatch Brook, and Stoney Brook Prime Wetlands exceeded 60% coverage with Hatch Brook being almost entirely mapped in the field. The southern part of Blake Brook Prime Wetlands was also mapped in its entirety since landowner permissions exceeded 90% in that area. Less than 20% of the northern part of Blake Brook was surveyed, however, owing to lack of access. The remaining three prime wetlands had coverages of less than 40%, although some additional changes were made on the basis of roadside surveys and updated aerial photography.

The following table summarizes the changes made to the prime wetlands as a result of the 2006-2007 field investigations. It reflects the above limitations in private property access, yet includes additional perambulations from roadside access points. The ID column includes the official name for each prime wetland that was voted on by Meredith residents in 1985. The amount of acres calculated from aerial photography during NRI Phase I is listed in the second column, whereas the adjusted amount as a result of the fieldwork is listed in column 3. The difference in acres is listed in column 4. The “% similar” (column 5) includes both deletions and additions and therefore reflects the total change and not just the net change. Column 6 summarizes approximately how much of the wetland boundary was visited.

ID	Acres - NRI I	Acres - NRI II	Δ Acres	% Similar	% field coverage
Hawkins Brook	127.6	0.0	-127.6	0.0	
Dolloff Brook	171.7	192.2	20.5	87.7	20.0
Blake Brook	171.7	143.2	-28.5	88.3	37.7
Hatch Brook	195.7	213.0	17.3	80.6	99.1
Mill Brook	126.3	132.9	6.6	90.2	4.3
Page Brook	265.5	281.4	15.9	89.0	40.6
Stoney Brook	217.3	207.2	-10.1	97.0	63.1
Total	1275.9	1169.9	-106.0	88.8	44.1

Table 8. Attributes of Prime Wetlands - NRI Phase I and Phase II

As can be seen above, the biggest change was at Hawkins Brook, where it is the recommendation of this author to change the status of this wetland and “uncouple” it from being a prime wetland. The explanation for this recommendation is found on page 8. Second to this was a substantial change to Hatch Brook, which saw the addition of several hemlock-dominated softwood swamps

above the main open marsh system off of Route 104. Dolloff Brook Prime Wetland was expanded in the downstream portion of the wetland since it was clear from field surveys that both wildlife habitat value and floodwater retention value was very high in this area. This includes the riparian wetland complexes that extend .6 miles upstream of Chase Road.

Blake Brook Prime Wetland surveys resulted in the deletion of a few of the isolated wetlands since it appeared that they were not connected to the main wetland by a perennial stream. There were also a few small additions and deletions to the south part as a result of the fieldwork. Page Pond Prime Wetland had the next largest amount of change, which, as described on page 8, was the result of the addition of a significant beaver pond area off of Blueberry Hill Road. This basin includes a high quality fen, a medium-depth emergent marsh, and a nice riparian corridor with vernal pools along a perennial stream above Page Brook just below the old mill site. There was also a forested swamp in the northeast part that was added on account of its hydrologic and wildlife habitat connectivity to the main marsh system.



Figure 18. Hatch Brook Prime Wetland offers one of the best wildlife viewing spots in Meredith along Hatch Corner Road. Otter, beaver, mink, and various waterfowl species can be seen here.

Mill Brook Prime Wetland was expanded by a little over six acres because of the excellent wildlife habitat found in a connecting softwood swamp in the west part. This pine and hemlock-dominated wetland appeared to serve as a potential deer wintering area. The smallest amount of change in the prime wetland mapping effort was at Stoney Brook, where the initial mapping was 97% similar to what was found in the field after a 63% field coverage ratio. One critical mixed hardwood-softwood swamp was added on the basis of 2003 color aerial photography.