This globally significant region is the most intact temperate broadleaf forest in the world. It is home to over five million people and uncounted millions of wildlife. The forests are vital to the region’s communities and quality of life, providing economically important natural resources and livelihoods, clean water and air, places to explore for recreation and respite. Thanks to a large network of healthy forest, wetlands, and rivers, Canada lynx, black bear, moose, and other wide-ranging mammals roam freely across much of the landscape.

The long-term well-being of this region depends upon a connected landscape, comprised of large core forest blocks along with forested corridors between them. A connected landscape will safeguard animal and plants from the impacts of climate change while also sustaining the livelihoods, activities, and values dependent upon a thriving forest. In the face of new development and expanding roads, we must work together to provide natural pathways for wildlife while also maintaining the character of our communities.

The Staying Connected Initiative is a visionary international collaboration working to sustain the forested landscape connections across this binational region, for the benefit of nature and people. We work across borders and at many different scales to ensure habitat connectivity along with the many ecological, social, and economic benefits of a healthy, connected landscape.
Our Work

Conservation Science
Sound conservation science informs our strategies to maintain and enhance forested habitat connections. This includes computer-based analyses at regional and linkage-level scales to identify important areas for wildlife movement, such as road crossings. Locally, winter tracking and wildlife cameras are key components of our monitoring and science.

Local Engagement
Engaging local communities helps to build awareness, appreciation, and action at the local level. We work across the entire region, providing wildlife events, guided walks, tracking groups, and supporting the efforts of grassroots organizations. Our work with landowners empowers them to protect the natural resources that benefit us all.

Land Protection
In each linkage, we work to ensure the protection of priority parcels that contribute to habitat connectivity, such as forested pathways and river corridors, and including working forests. We also work to secure key “stepping stones” for wildlife movement in zones where development is more prevalent. Since 2009, land trust and government partners have secured permanent protection of more than 500,000 acres (200,000 hectares) in the nine linkages.

Land Use Planning
Wildlife use public and private lands for habitat. By providing land use planning tools and technical assistance to landowners, municipalities, and other partners, we help achieve and maintain habitat connectivity across different land uses and ensure that development takes wildlife needs into consideration.

Transportation
Our partners, including transportation agencies, work across the region and within each linkage to identify and improve priority road segments where culverts, wildlife crossing signs, fences, and fence breaks can make road crossings safer for wildlife and vehicle traffic safer for people.

Improving Policies
With partners from local, state, provincial, and regional transportation and natural resource agencies, we are uniquely positioned to help develop and promote best practices and policies that will help sustain critical landscape connections across this binational region. We work to incorporate habitat connectivity criteria and objectives into natural resource and transportation plans and policies.

For more information:
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