



Connectivity Areas & Habitat Blocks

A Regional Perspective

Legend

- Existing Habitat Connectivity Areas
 - Mostly Intact Forest Cover
 - Moderately Fragmented Forest Cover
- Potential Habitat Connectivity Areas
 - Potential for Improved Forest Cover
 - Conserved or Municipal Land

Habitat Connectivity Areas –

In 2011, the Staying Connected Initiative used GIS modeling to identify important Habitat Connectivity Areas in the Northern Green Mountains. These areas are important “connecting habitat” that link large blocks of habitat within a landscape, allowing the movement, migration, and dispersal of wide-ranging mammals. Their integrity supports a healthy and resilient network of habitat in the region.

Existing Habitat Connectivity Areas have either mostly intact forest cover or moderately fragmented forest cover (with supporting landscape features like riparian habitat along streams and rivers, strips of forest cover between developed areas, or even hedgerows and fencerows) and thereby currently provide a landscape that is permeable for wide-ranging mammals.

Potential Habitat Connectivity Areas are those areas that connect large habitat blocks but currently lack the forest cover and/or

Potential Habitat Connectivity Areas are those areas that connect large habitat blocks but currently lack the forest cover and/or supporting landscape features necessary for wide-ranging mammal permeability. If agricultural fields re-grow to forest or are punctuated by hedgerows or riparian buffer, these places may begin to play important roles in regional habitat connectivity. On the other hand, if further human development occurs in these areas, it will further fragment the landscape.

Habitat Connectivity Area boundaries have been established 500 meters from fragmenting features. For example, if a road is the only fragmenting feature in an important connecting habitat, the polygon’s boundary has been demarcated 500 meters to either side of the road. If the fragmenting features are more pervasive, the boundary has been demarcated 500 meters into the habitat block from open land.



Map created by The Staying Connected Initiative in August 2011. Boundaries are approximate. Habitat Block data courtesy of Vermont Fish and Wildlife and Vermont Land Trust. All other base data from VCGI.