

STAYING CONNECTED



What do you love about Vermont?

Time and again, people point to forests and wildlife when sharing what they love and value in our communities. Young and old, woodchucks and flatlanders, well-to-do and just scraping by, everyone seems to share this passion. Indeed, our natural resources define our quality of life. Clear air and clean water keep our families healthy, forests provide countless recreation opportunities (including hiking, hunting, fishing, photography, and snowmobiling), and the forest products, agriculture and tourism industries anchor our local economy. In Vermont, wildlife associated recreation alone generates more than \$400 million in revenues annually.

The Staying Connected Initiative is a partnership of local, state and national organizations and agencies working with communities to ensure the stewardship of these precious resources.

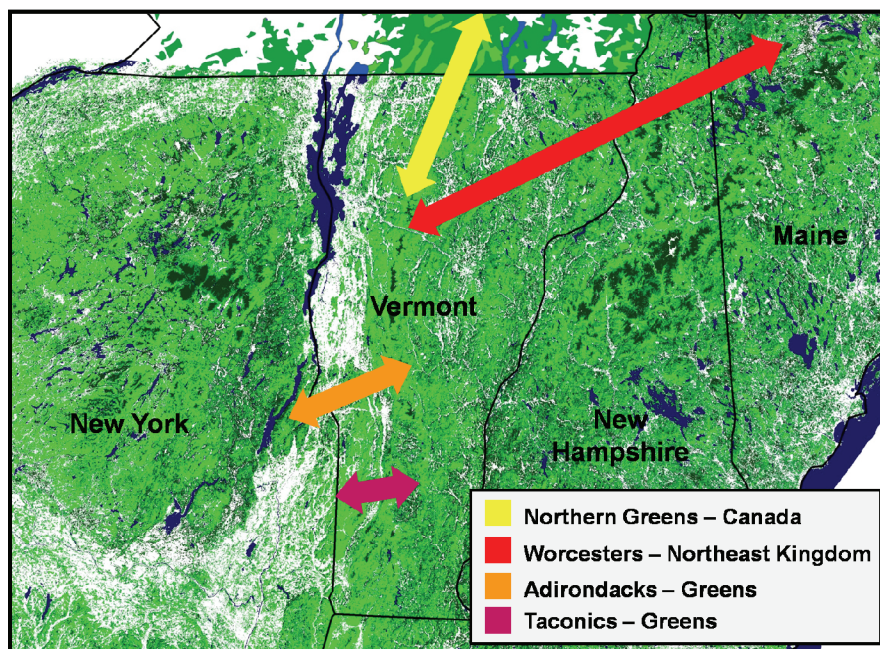
At the crossroads...

Healthy local wildlife populations require healthy regional populations. We see wildlife outside our doors because of the high quality habitat locally *and* regionally.

The Northern Green Mountains are at the crossroads of an extensive wildlife habitat network spanning the Northern Forest—from New York to Canada and Maine.

What's a wildlife network? It's a combination of large, intact blocks of forest and connecting lands. The forest blocks provide prime wildlife habitat while the connecting lands—often small forest and woodland patches, wetlands and river corridors—provide just enough cover and few obstacles to allow necessary wildlife movement and safe road crossings.

The Northern Greens are an important link across the Northeast, connecting wildlife habitat in the Southern Greens with that in the Sutton Range in Quebec and with that in the Northeast Kingdom in Vermont.



Vermont is at the crossroads of four critical wildlife connections

What happens in the Northern Green Mountains will influence the health of wildlife populations across the entire Northern Forest

A changing landscape

While our forests have mostly re-grown from intensive clearing in the 1800s, modern development trends threaten their continued health and value for humans and wildlife. Today's relatively intact Northern Greens risk being reduced to "forest islands," increasingly separated by roads and scattered development.

Wildlife and the changing landscape

While squirrels, blue jays and raccoons thrive in our backyards, many wildlife species, including black bear, moose, bobcat and fisher, will not survive over the long term in small forest patches. These species and many more need to move freely across the landscape to survive—between summer and winter food sources, to find mates, and in response to environmental changes. For this reason, in the face of increasing habitat fragmentation, the connections between larger patches of forest and between different habitats are critical for healthy wildlife populations.



People and the changing landscape

Because our communities were built on a strong connection to the land, we can see the effects of increasing forest fragmentation. Fewer jobs tie us to the land and we have fewer opportunities to connect with nature and our region's history – we are losing farms and farmers, logging is more difficult with decreasing lot sizes, and hikers, hunters and snowmobilers encounter challenges gaining access to land.



The Staying Connected Initiative—linking it all together

Staying Connected seeks to connect landscapes for communities of wildlife *and* people. We are working with local municipalities, citizens and partner organizations to maintain, enhance and restore landscape connections across the Northern Greens. While wildlife habitat is our primary focus, we seek to collaborate with those interested in maintaining a healthy landscape for related purposes as well. By tailoring our efforts to each community's needs, interests, and values, we offer an variety of tools and support. These may include:

- Raising awareness about local natural history, wildlife needs and movement patterns, and community land-based concerns through community events
- Identifying local wildlife movement areas and improving key wildlife road crossings
- Assisting landowners interested in protecting or managing their land for the benefit of wildlife and other natural resources
- Providing technical assistance to municipalities interested in maintaining landscape connections



In Bakersfield, Belvidere, Enosburgh, Fletcher, Montgomery, Richford, or Waterville, feel free to contact Corrie Miller:
HOME OFFICE: (802)654-7808 EMAIL: corrie.e.miller@gmail.com

In Eden, Jay, Lowell, Troy, and Westfield, please contact Bob Hawk:
HOME OFFICE: (802)533-9803 EMAIL: robert.l.hawk@gmail.com