

## **The Staying Connected Initiative:**

### ***Connecting Wildlife Habitat in the Northern Green Mountains of Vermont***

**The context:** While Vermont is known for its forests and wildlife, many of the state's animal populations are threatened by habitat fragmentation. This is especially true for wide-ranging mammals, such as bear, moose, and bobcat that need not only large forested patches of core habitat but also passageways to travel among different habitats. These connections allow animals to move freely between summer and winter food sources, find mates, and migrate in response to environmental changes. *Two Countries One Forest*, an international science-based organization, has identified twelve towns in the Northern Green Mountains as a critical habitat linkage between the Southern Greens and both the Sutton Mountain Range in Quebec and the Northeast Kingdom in Vermont.

**Our goal:** The goal of the Staying Connected Initiative is to maintain healthy northeastern wildlife populations by ensuring that wildlife can move freely through the Northern Green Mountains. This will be achieved by ensuring sufficient habitat health and connectivity within the twelve towns of the Northern Green Mountains of Vermont.

**What we are doing:** Staying Connected provides technical assistance for individuals and communities who wish to sustain wildlife and other related values like hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. We support landowners, organizations and municipalities in identifying, restoring, maintaining, and enhancing habitat blocks and the connections among them within twelve towns along the spine of the Northern Greens. We facilitate presentations and workshops on habitat connectivity, assist with community values mapping, provide land management technical assistance to landowners, and act as a liaison among individuals, municipalities and professional organizations working towards the common goal.

**For more information:** With inquiries about the Staying Connected Initiative, please feel free to contact the Linkage Coordinator in your region.

#### **Western Northern Greens:**

*Richford, Enosburg, Montgomery, Bakersfield, Belvidere, Waterville, and Fletcher*

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#### **Eastern Northern Greens:**

*Jay, Troy, Westfield, Lowell and Eden*

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