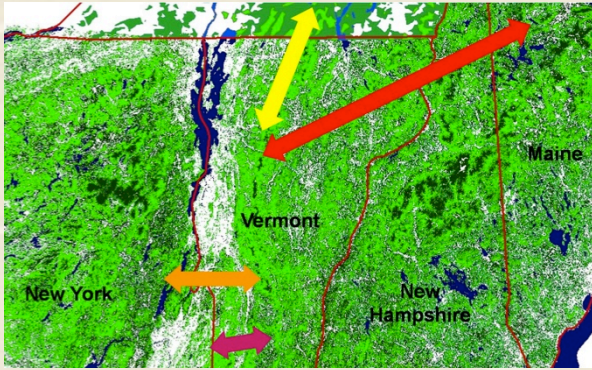


A Local Wildlife Corridor

If you live in Rutland or southern Addison Counties, you live in a wildlife corridor. This corridor connects the Green Mountains to the Adirondacks, and our wildlife depend on this link! In fact, wildlife across the northeast, from New York to Nova Scotia, are currently connected in an elaborate network that allows for genetic diversity and keeps populations strong. The network enables wide-ranging mammals like black bear, moose, bobcat, and fisher to travel as far as they need to find shelter, food, and mates.



Vermont is at the crossroads of an extensive wildlife network. Above, the arrows represent places where the network relies on limited connections that could be easily disrupted. Such a disruption of any one of these places could negatively impact wildlife throughout the entire northeastern network.

The orange arrow represents the land connecting the Green and Adirondack Mountains, one of the few links between the two ranges. Farther north, Lake Champlain is wide, and the extensive agricultural land provides little cover for large mammals. Farther south, development makes wildlife passage difficult.

Photo Credits: Corel (bobcat), The Nature Conservancy (forest and seedling), Amber Barger (moose), and Monica Erhart (landscape)

As a Landowner, What can you do?

If you own forestland:

When managing your land, picture how your land fits into the broader, regional landscape and consider maintaining forested connections between core habitat, stepping stones, and road crossings. A consulting forester, the county forester, or the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife may be able to help you assess next steps or create a forest management plan.

If you own farmland:

Consider maintaining, enhancing, or even widening hedgerows between fields where wildlife can travel while staying under cover. Natural Resources Conservation Service has financial incentives programs to help some landowners to defray costs or pay for crop loss.

If you own land surrounding a lake, stream, or wetland:

Maintaining or planting a vegetated buffer along waterways ensures that wildlife have a place to travel, as well as providing protection against erosion and flooding and keeping the stream shaded for fish and other inhabitants. Natural Resources Conservation Districts may be able to advise you on cost-effective methods of doing this.

Thank you for doing your part!



THE STAYING CONNECTED
INITIATIVE

Greens-Adirondacks Linkage

Monica Erhart: (802)431-5061 (Linkage Coordinator)

<https://stayingconnectedgreensadks.wordpress.com>

STAYING
CONNECTED IN

THIS PLACE IN BETWEEN



A landowner's guide to
maintaining a connected
landscape for wildlife between
the Green Mountains and the
Adirondacks

VERMONT EDITION

WHAT ROLE DOES YOUR LAND PLAY?

As wildlife travel through our human landscape, they rely on a combination of features to ensure safe passage. Where does your land fit in?



Core Habitat

“Core” blocks of habitat are those that wildlife rely on for finding food, denning sites, and mating opportunities. They are generally large areas of contiguous forest land that may include wetlands or shrub cover but no development. Wildlife are *most likely* to be found in these core habitats. However, the genetic diversity required for healthy populations relies on the ability of wildlife to move between these larger blocks of habitat.

Road Crossings

Along busy roads, there may be very few locations where animals attempt to cross. These areas tend to have forest or wetland on both sides of the road, no guardrails, and gentle terrain. When available, many animals choose to go under bridges or through large culverts to avoid traffic. These crossings are often *essential* for wildlife movement.

Stepping Stones

Stepping stones are smaller blocks of quality habitat that provide cover, food, and mating opportunities for some wildlife. These are places where animals can stop or feed as they travel through the landscape between areas of “core” habitat,” and where a few individuals can make their homes.

Hedgerows

Many of our larger wildlife choose not to go through open or agricultural areas if at all possible. Hedgerows between fields provide a pathway where animals can travel safely under cover.

Riparian Areas

Wildlife frequently follow rivers and streams, so long as there is sufficient cover along the banks. These areas can provide important movement pathways across the landscape.

Keeping these features intact not only keeps wildlife healthy; it also enhances air and water quality, provides protection against devastating floods, keeps land available for traditional economic and recreational activities such as forestry, hunting, and hiking, and provides the backdrop that many residents and visitors alike are here to see.