

Hi Katie

I am following up on your request to flag sections of the Forest Action Plan that address fragmentation. In addition to the section I sent you before ("Conversion of forests to other uses is the greatest threat to sustainability and the overarching goal of this Plan is no net loss of forest cover."), please see:

Page 7 outlines the Vision Statement for Vermont's Forests: The forests of Vermont will consist of healthy and sustainable ecosystems, a prosperous and sustainable forest products industry, abundant recreational opportunities and **a combination of ownership patterns supporting a working forest landscape and large unbroken forest tracts**. Citizens, government and businesses understand their proper roles, responsibilities and rights, and work together to support the values of forests for this and future generations.

Pages 20-21 provides a good overview. Take a look at the second paragraph on page 20 - "The Breaking up of habitats into smaller, non-contiguous patches as a result of habitat conversion can render important habitat inaccessible, ... The result of habitat fragmentation is often increased predation, increased mortality, reduced mobility and changes in habitat micro-climates."

Under that paragraph, Base Indicators of Forest Sustainability include:

Number and distribution of large forest blocks;
Area of contiguous forest land lost to fragmentation.

Page 21 under Issues and Threats: "Perhaps the single biggest threat to biological diversity is conversion of forests to other uses. Conversion may stem from parcelization, changing landowner objectives and development. Results of conversion include fragmentation of wildlife habitats, impact to the natural processes, increases in exotic invasive species and the loss of the integrity natural communities."

On pages 66-67 is a section on fragmentation. Take a look at the first full paragraph on page 67. In particular, the end of this section says "[r]oads, impervious surfaces and scattered developments are further fragmenting forests and creating smaller forest patches. The combination of parcelization and fragmentation poses a serious threat to the overall ecological integrity of Vermont's native landscape."

On pages 92-93 there is a discussion on parcelization and towards the bottom of the page it says a "constantly changing and aging landowner population and increasing subdivision of forested lands are current issues that affect wood availability. As woodlot parcels get subdivided, the resulting smaller parcels make it more difficult to profitable harvest timber on a parcel by parcel basis."

In addition, Vermont's Wildlife Action Plan (see http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/swg_cwcs_report.cfm) also identifies fragmentation as a primary threat to wildlife. See pages 9-10 of the attached chapter of the Vermont Wildlife Action Plan.

I hope this helps.

Best,

Jamey