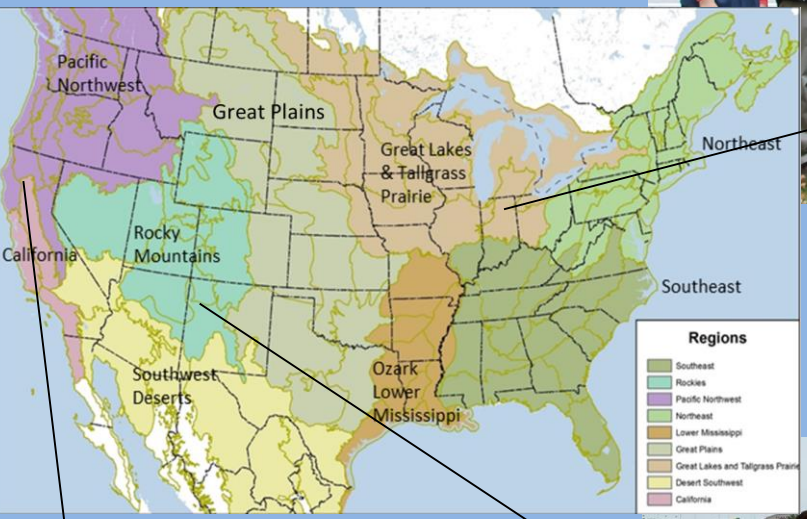
Resilient and Connected Landscapes

for Terrestrial Conservation in Vermont

Mark Anderson PhD. Director of Conservation Science, TNC Eastern US

Transparency and Teamwork

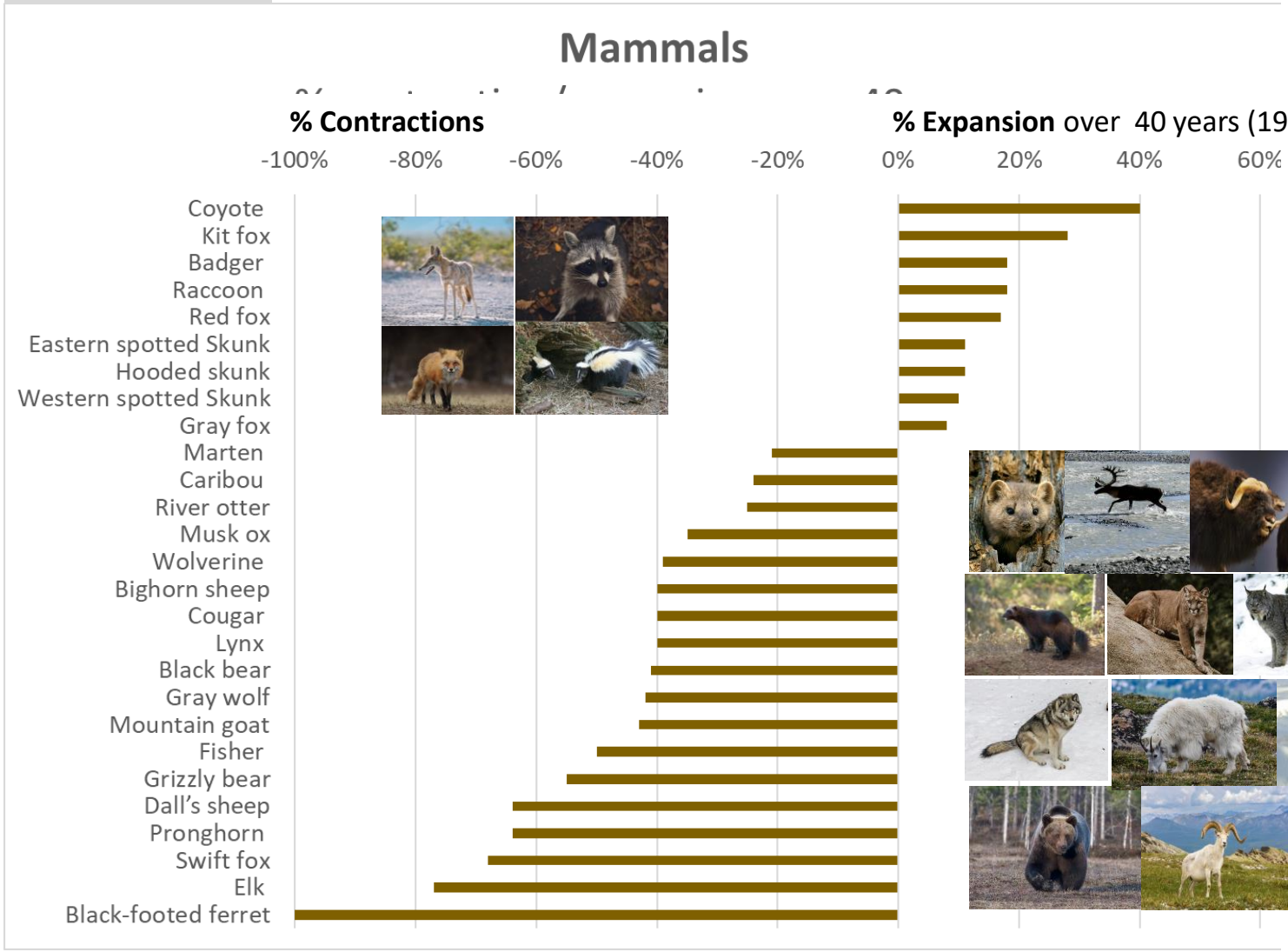
287 Scientists
9 Regions
10 years

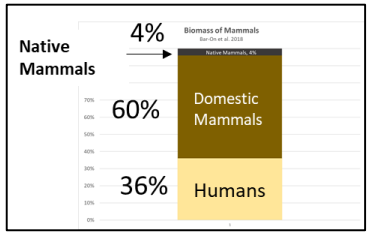


Doris Duke CF
USFW
NOAA
Donnelly Foundation

Abundance Crisis

North American Mammals





Laliberte and Ripple 2004,
Bar-On et al. 2018

Abundance crisis

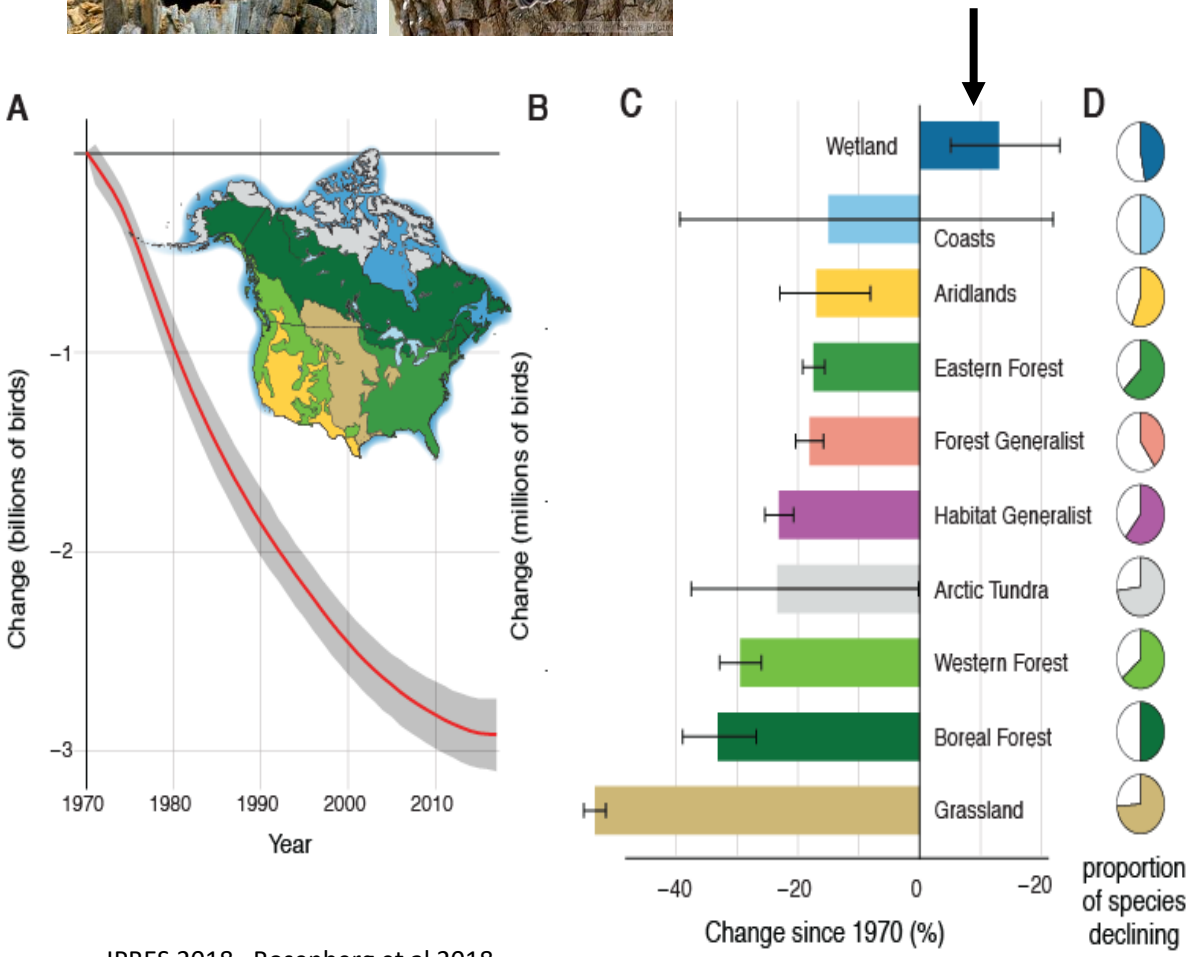
Native Species
Biomass down 20%/1900

Amphibians
30% now T&E

Butterflies
Abundance down 35%/40yr

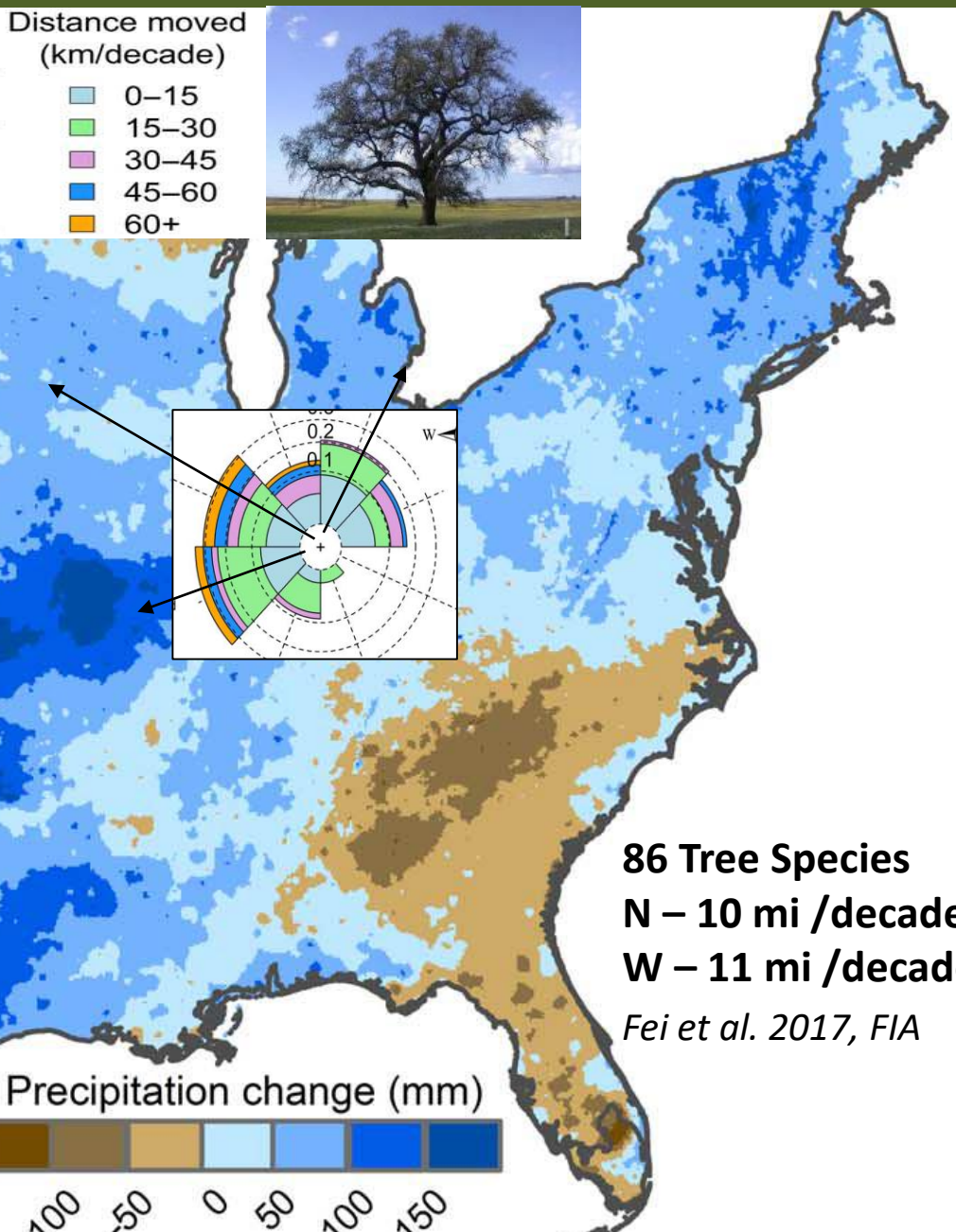
NA Birds
Abundance down 29%
or 3 Billion birds since 1970

Wetland Birds Up
Thanks to Adaptive Harvest Management and billions $ on wetland protection and restoration



IPBES 2018 , Rosenberg et al 2018

Nature is Dynamic



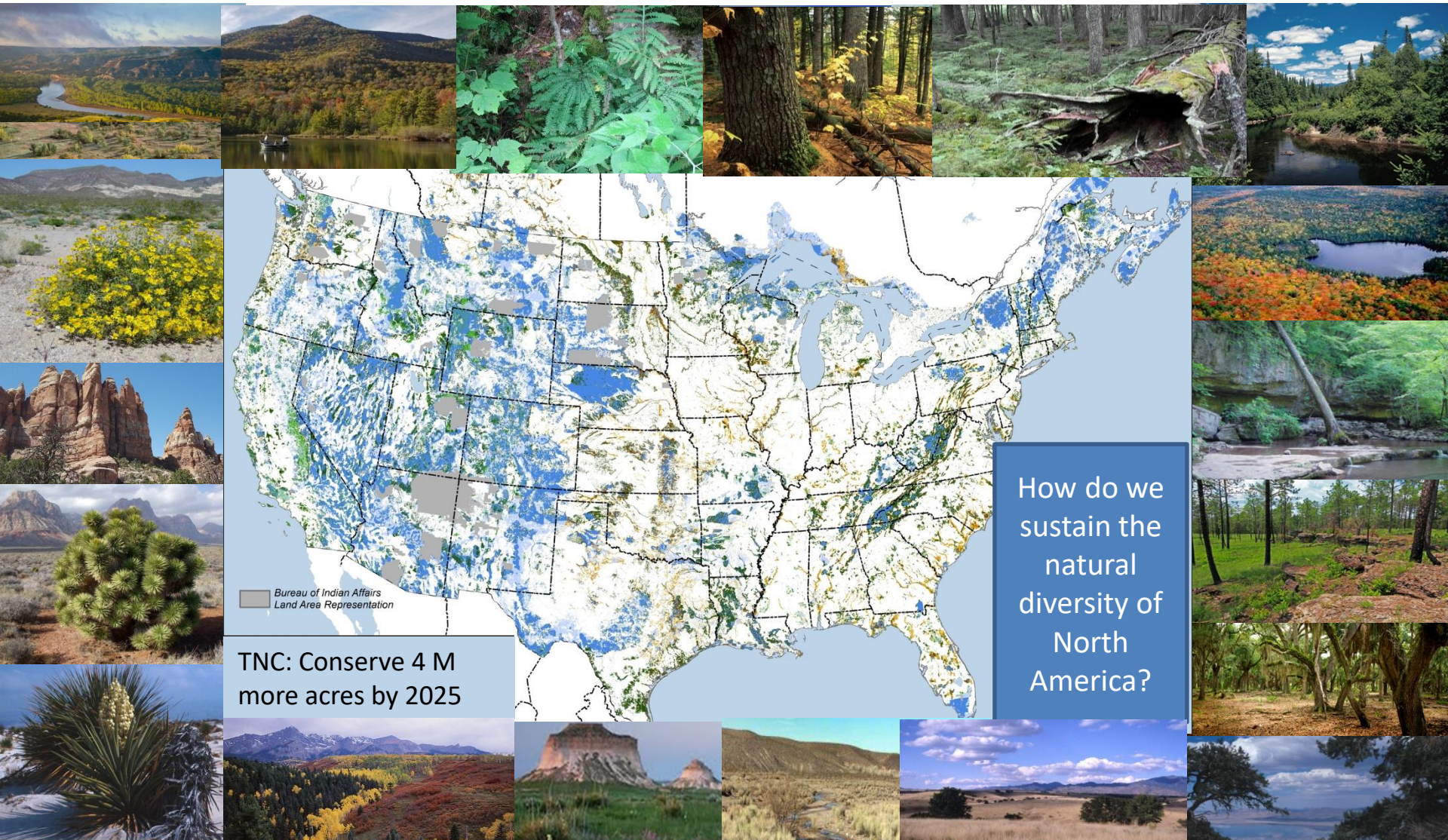
Chen et al. 2015, Science

86 Tree Species
N – 10 mi /decade
W – 11 mi /decade
Fei et al. 2017, FIA

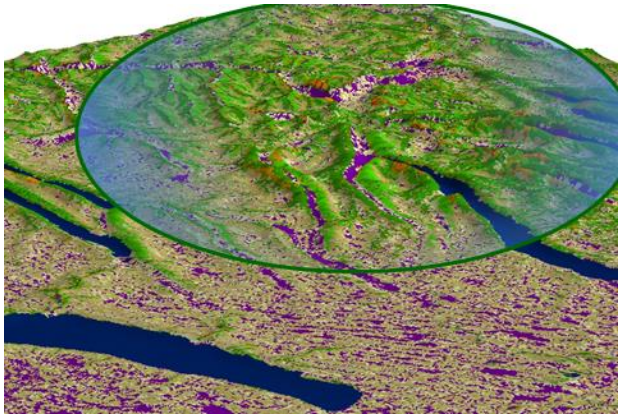
Median residence times range from **200-700** years (overall **500** years) and are shorter during times of warming *McGuire et al. in prep*

Conserve Resilient Land and Water

Conserve a network of resilient sites and connecting corridors that will sustain North America's natural diversity by allowing species to adapt to climate impacts and thrive.

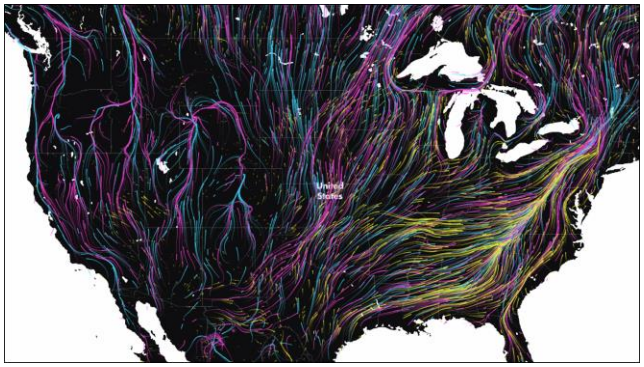


Key Ingredients



Resilient Sites

Land with many connected *microclimates* representing all physical environments



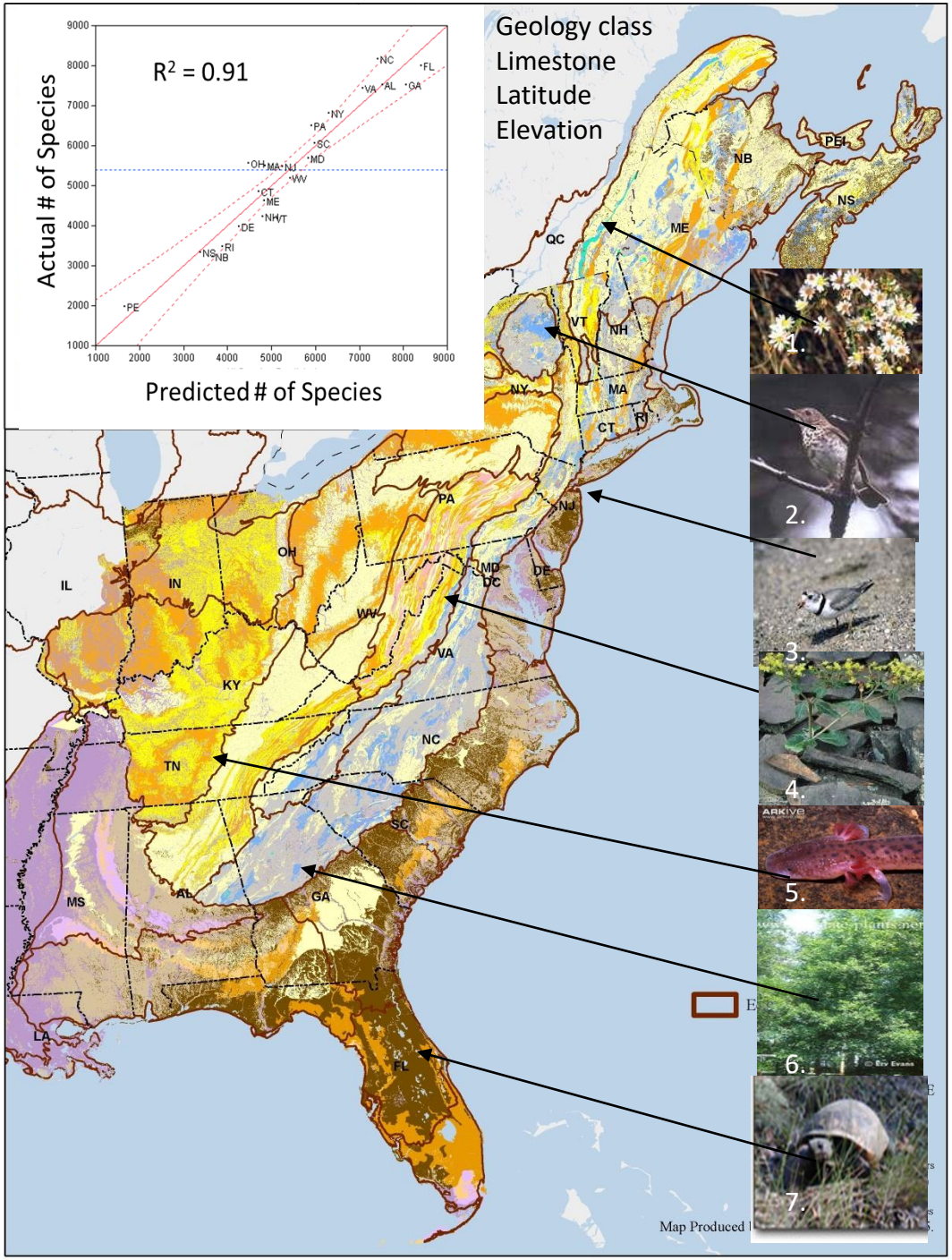
Connected Landscapes

A *connected* landscape that allows movement and facilitates range shifts

Resilient Biodiversity

Intact habitats, unique communities and rare species populations

Conserving Nature's Stage

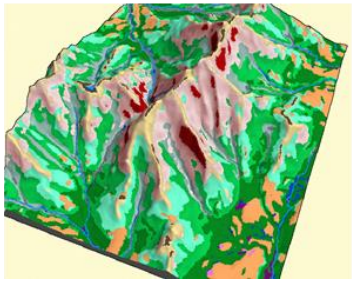


Representative Land

Biological diversity is highly correlated with **Land Properties** (Geology, Soil, Elevation, Topography, Hydrology)

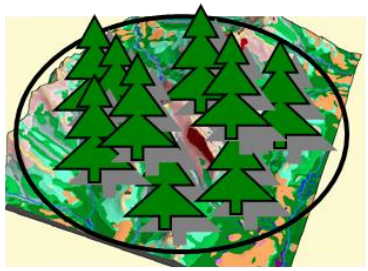
Many Microclimates

Create climate options

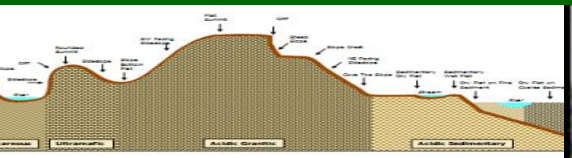


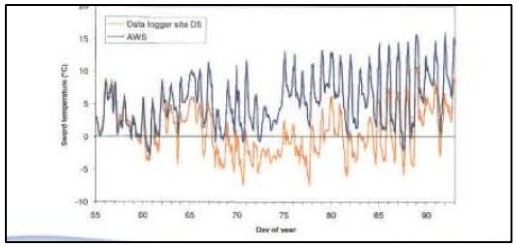
Locally Connected

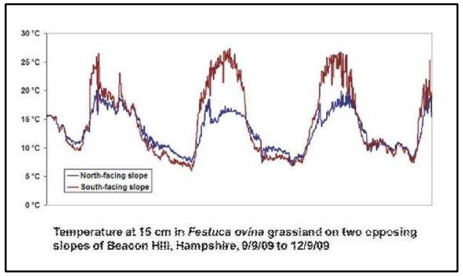
Allows species to move

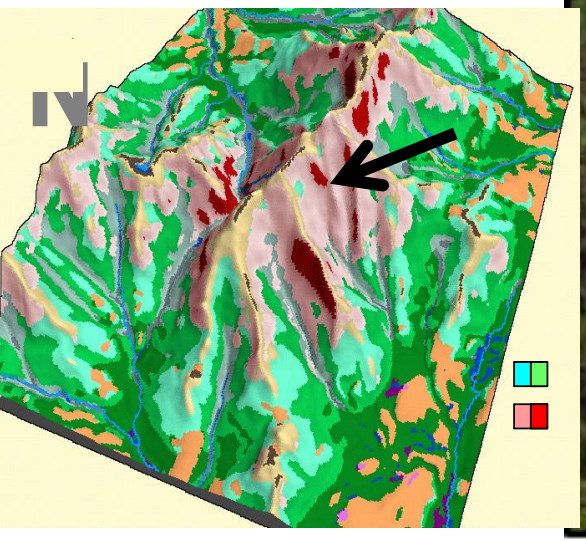


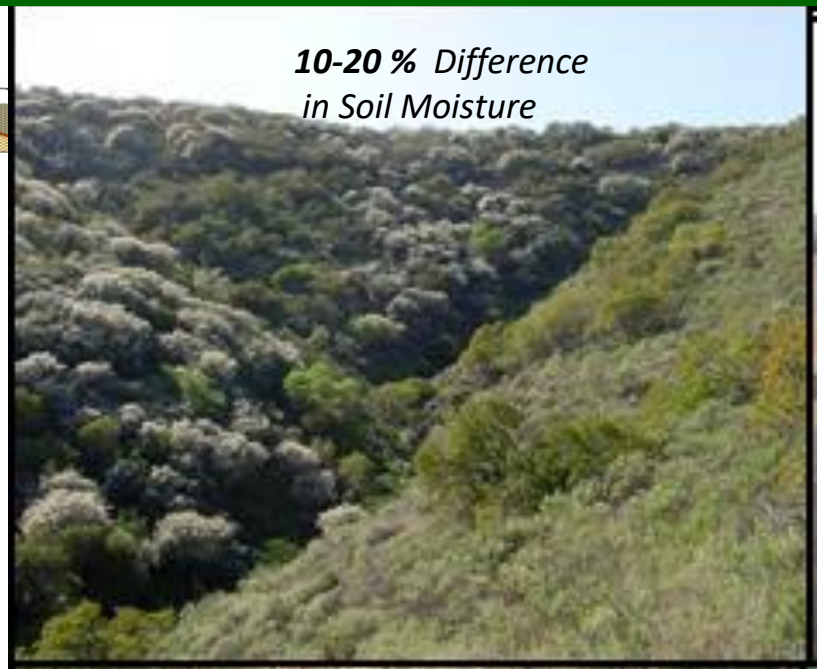
Climate Resilience: Microclimates







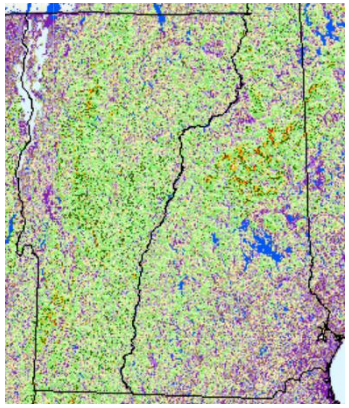




Climate Resilience: Microclimates

- Far Above Average
- Above Average
- Slightly Above Average
- Average
- Slightly Below Average
- Below Average
- Far Below Average

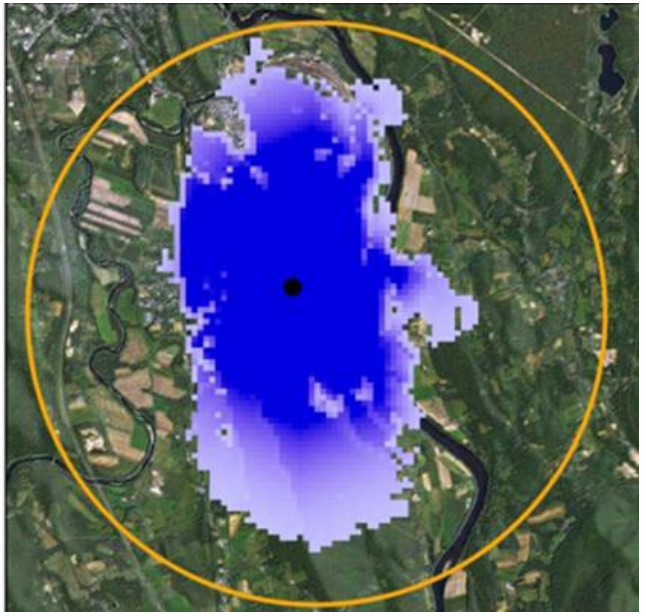
Relative to **Ecoregion** and **Geophysical Setting**



Climate Resilience:
Local Connectedness

Category	Weight
Developed	
-Low intensity	8
-Mid intensity	9
-High intensity	20
-Mine	9
Roads/Linear	
-Major	20
-Minor	10
-Unpaved	+1
-Transmission	9
-Pipelines	9
-Railroads	9
Agriculture	
-Corn/Soy	9
-Other Ag	7
-Hay Pasture	3
-Forestry (indust.)	4
Energy	
-Oil & Gas	7+
-Wind	+1
-Solar	

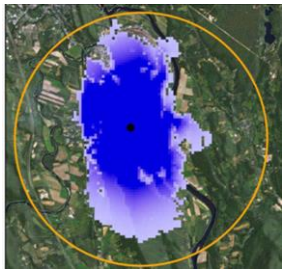
Natural	Weight
All Vegetation Types	1
Barrens	1
Water (by size)	1-3*



Vermont: Local Connectedness

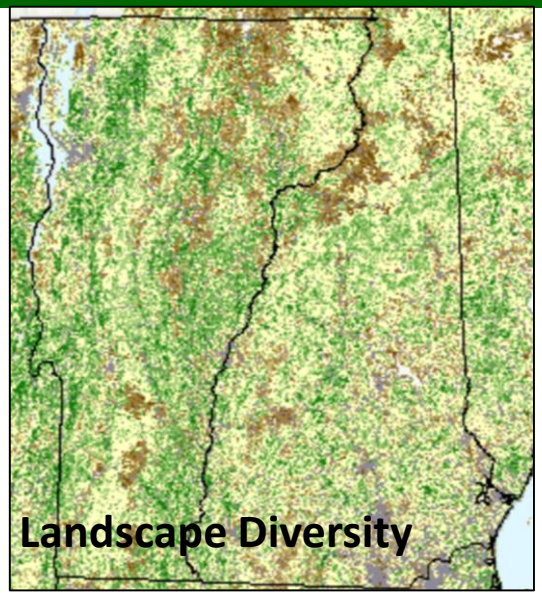
- Far Above Average
- Above Average
- Slightly Above Average
- Average
- Slightly Below Average
- Below Average
- Far Below Average

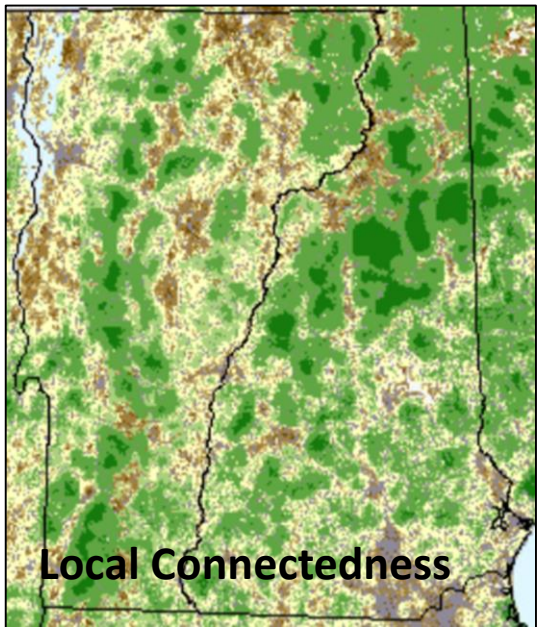
Relative to **Ecoregion** and **Geophysical Setting**

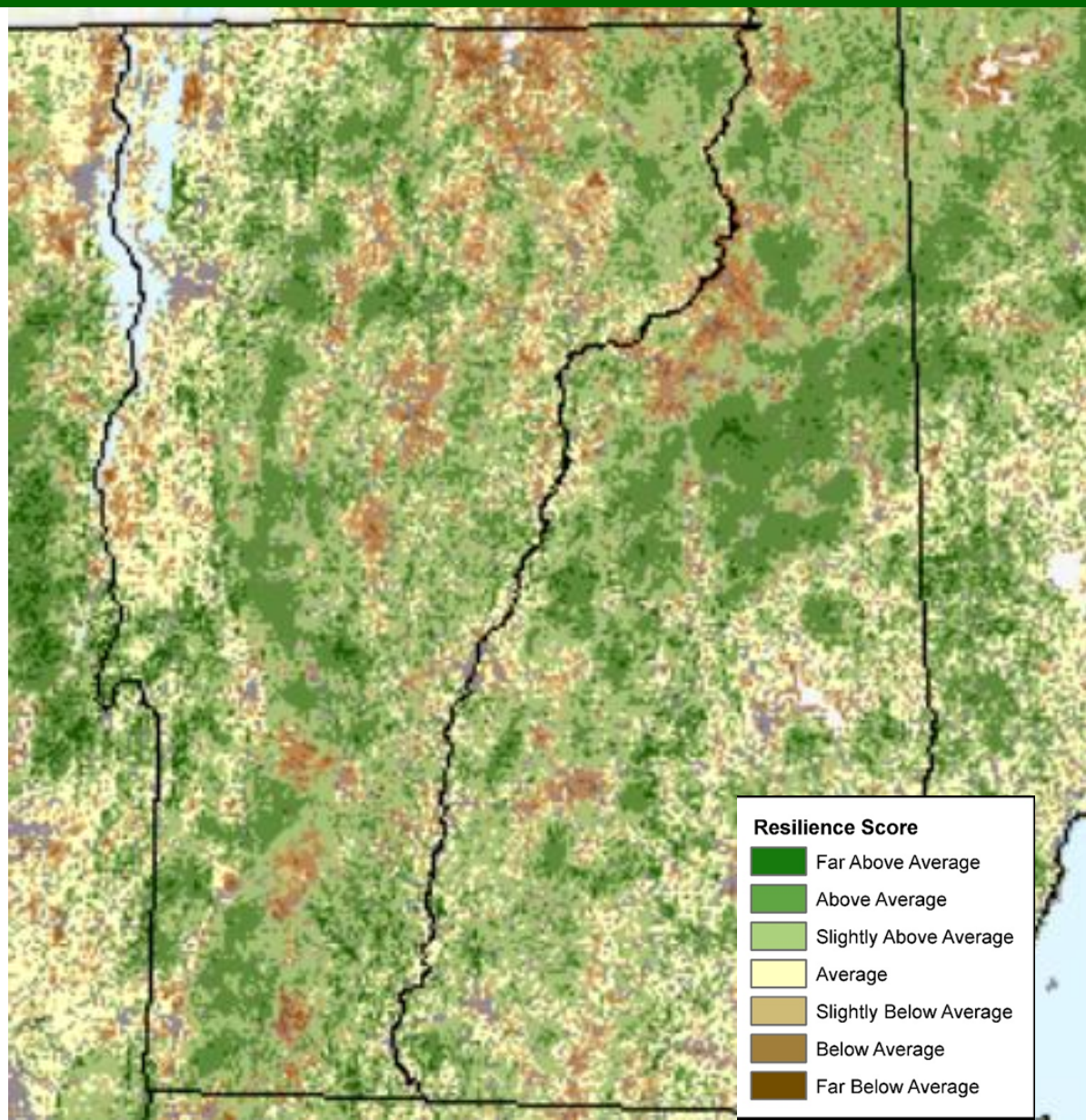


Vermont: Resilient Land

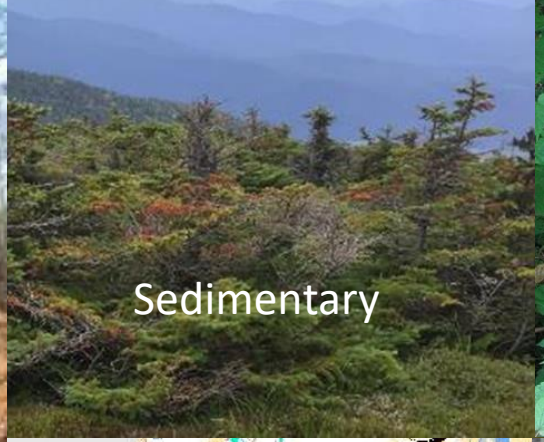
Site Resilience by Ecoregion





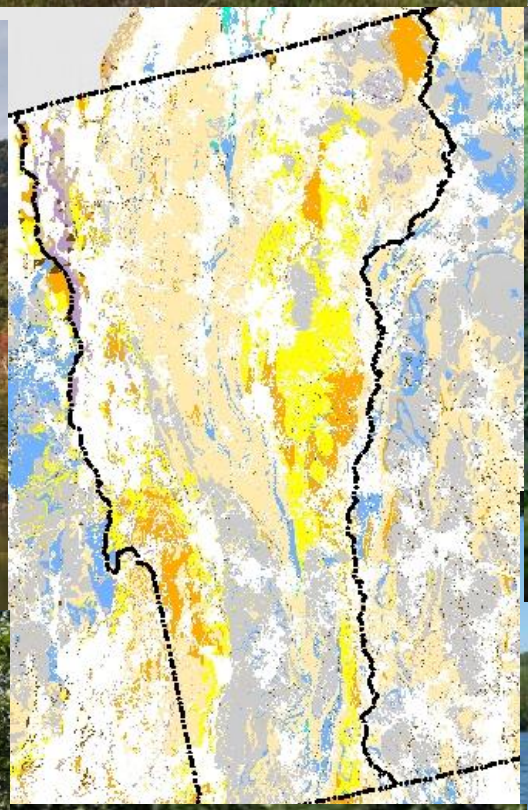



Clay


Sedimentary

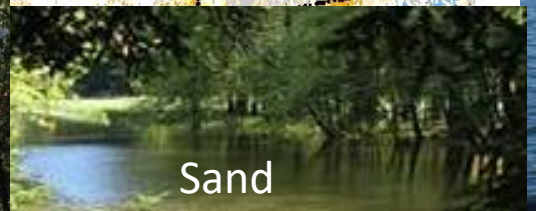

Ultra-Mafic


Limestone



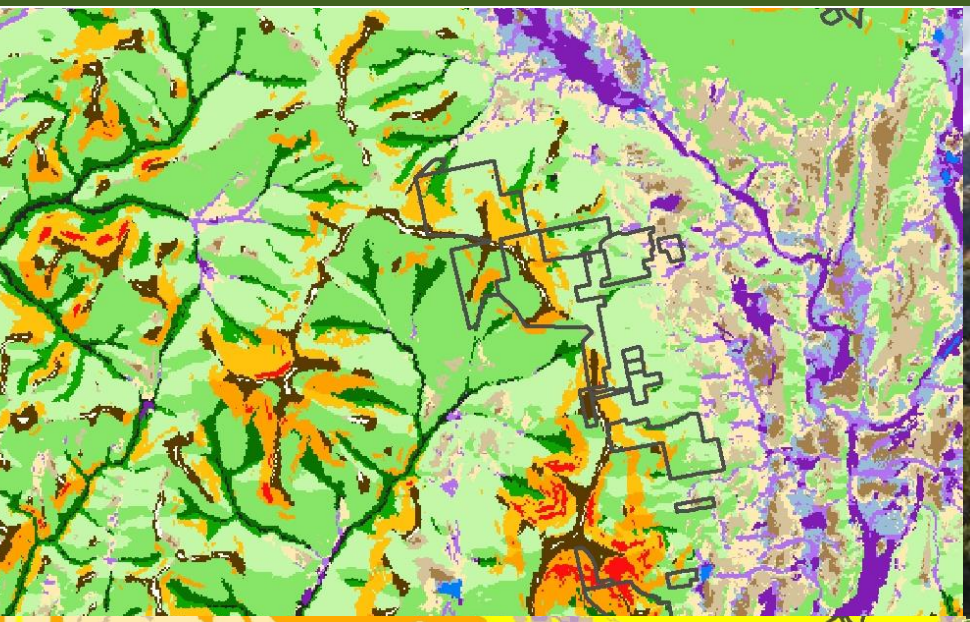

Limestone

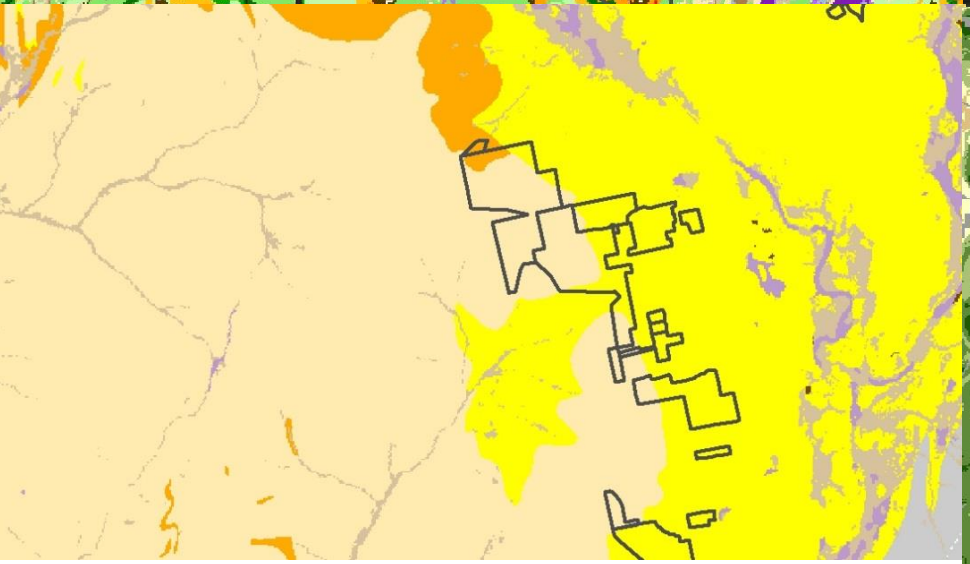

Mod
Calcareous


Sand


Granitic

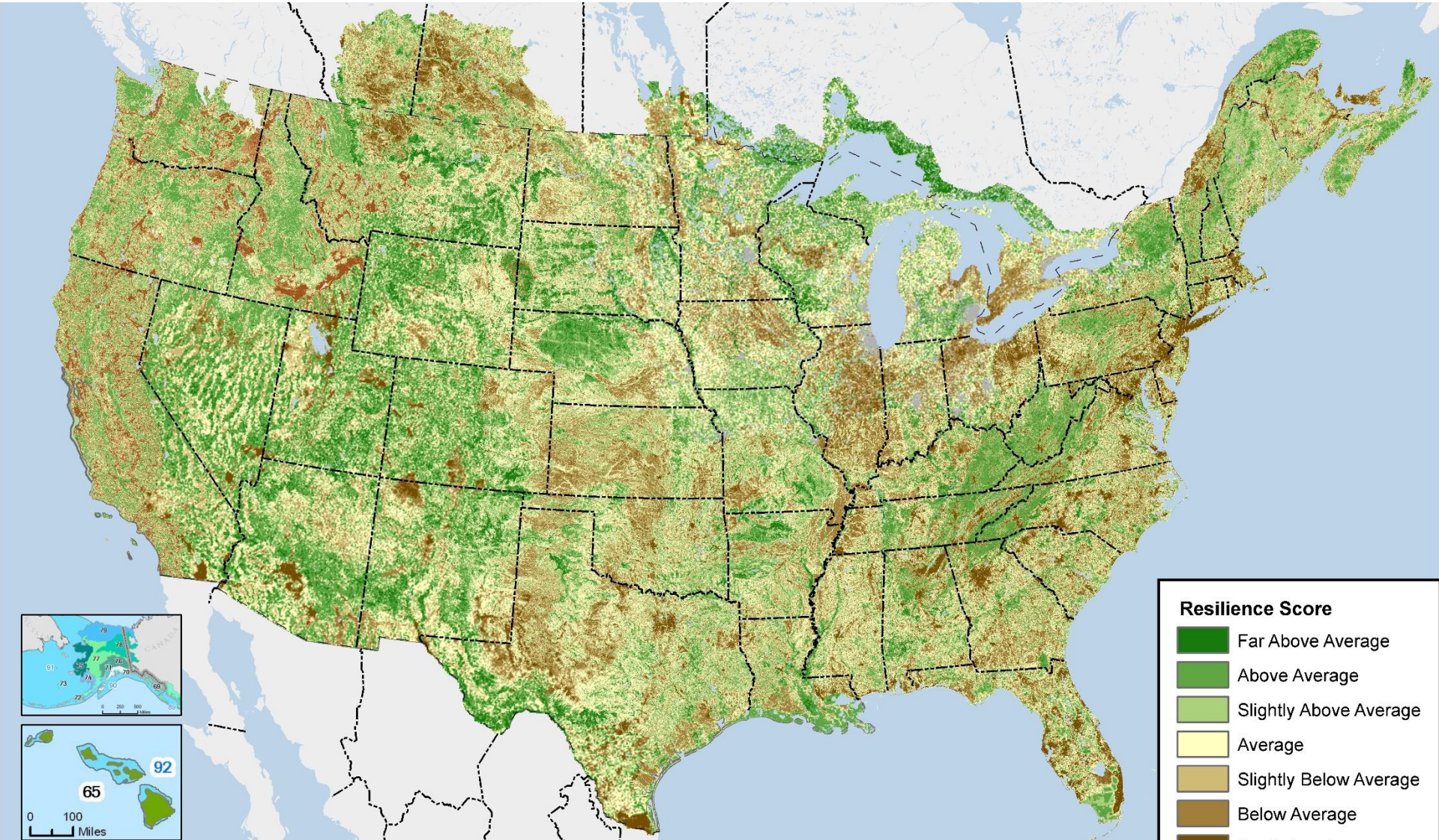
Acidic Sedimentary/ Calcareous: Equinox Highlands





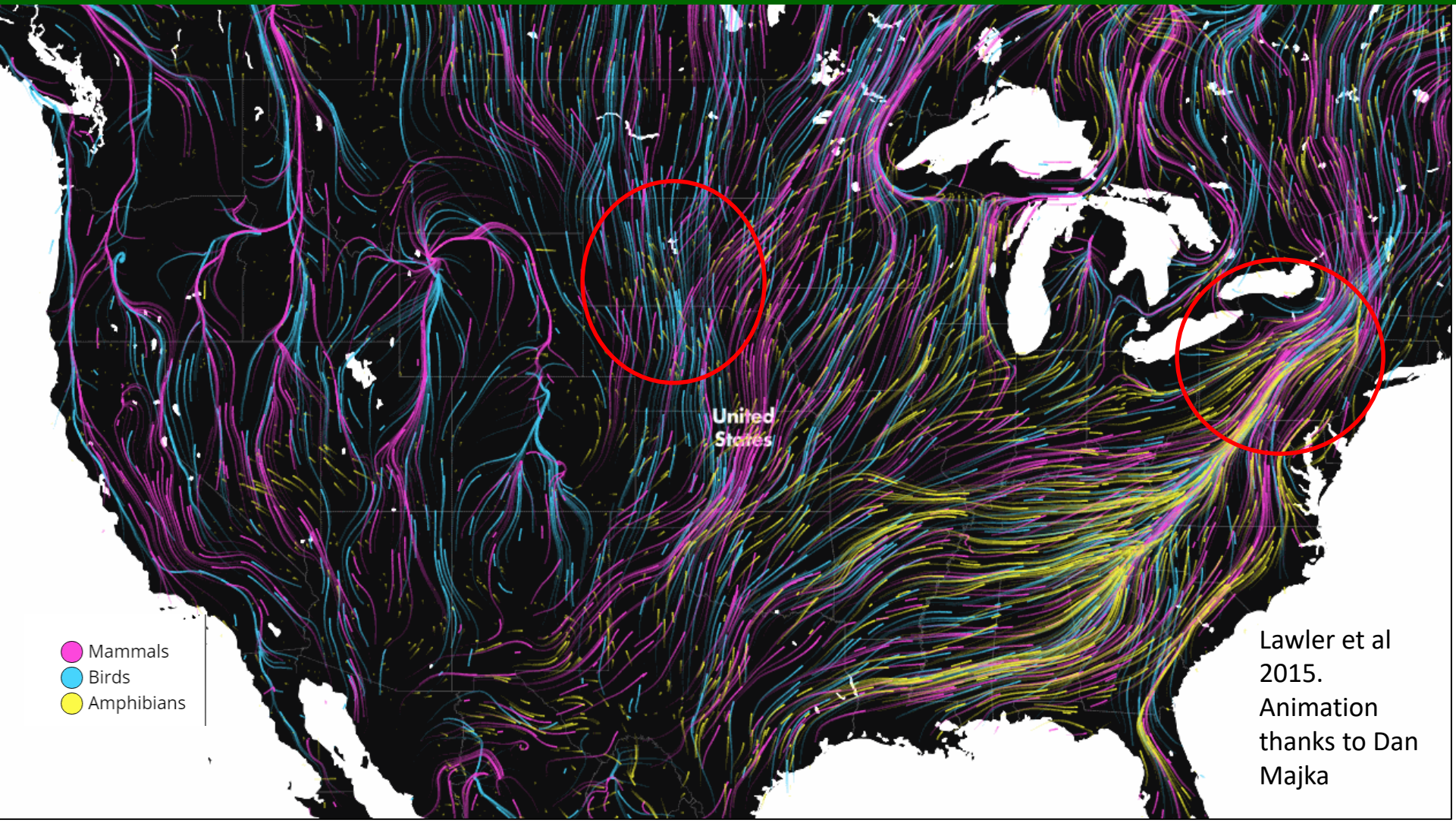
Resilient Land Map

Green = Land with the most microclimates in a connected landscape relative to their ecoregion and setting



Climate Flow

The Gradual Movement of Populations in Response to Climate Change



The gradual movement of populations across the landscape in response to climate change

Current Rates: 11 mile per decade North **36 feet** per decade Upslope

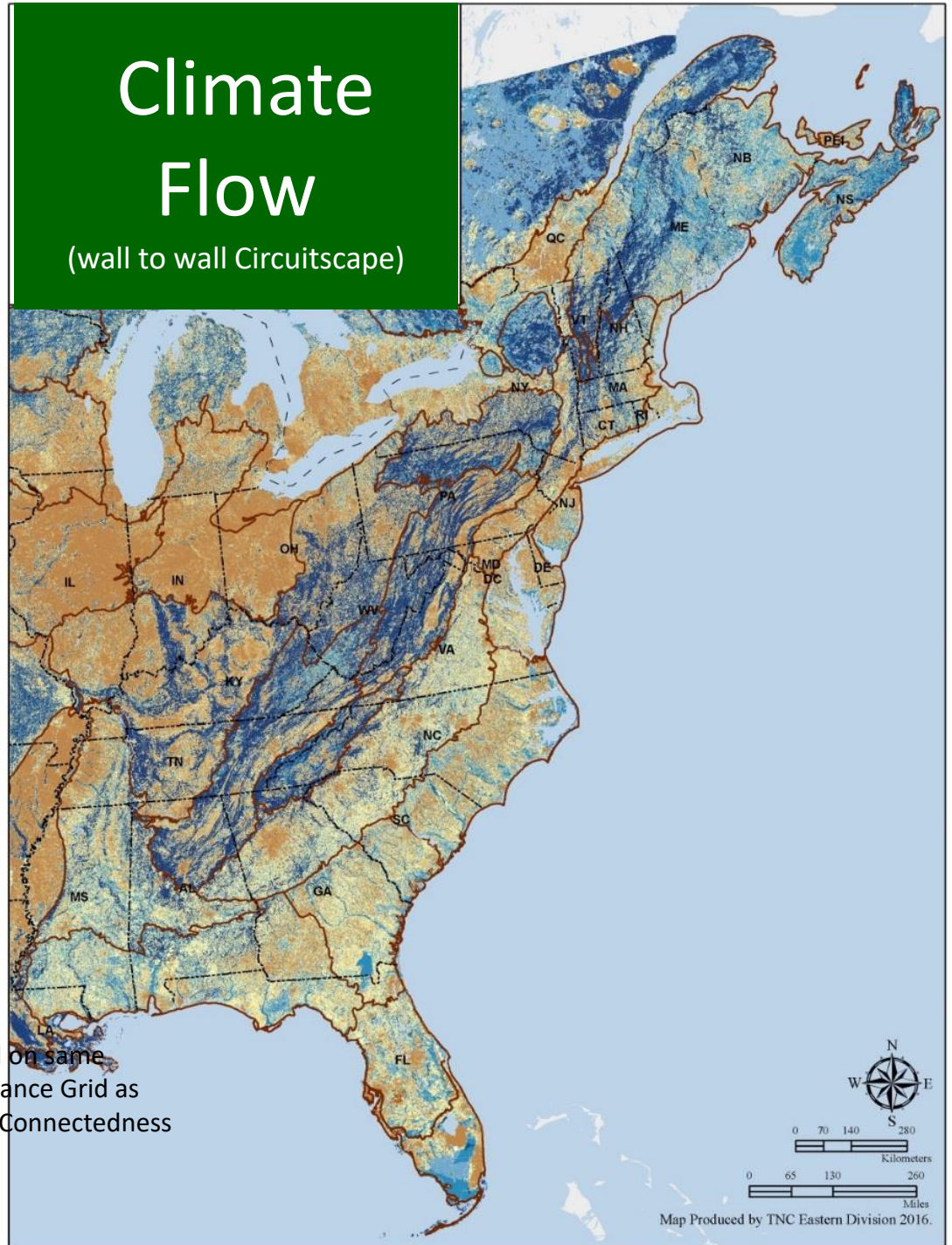
Climate Flow

(wall to wall Circuitscape)

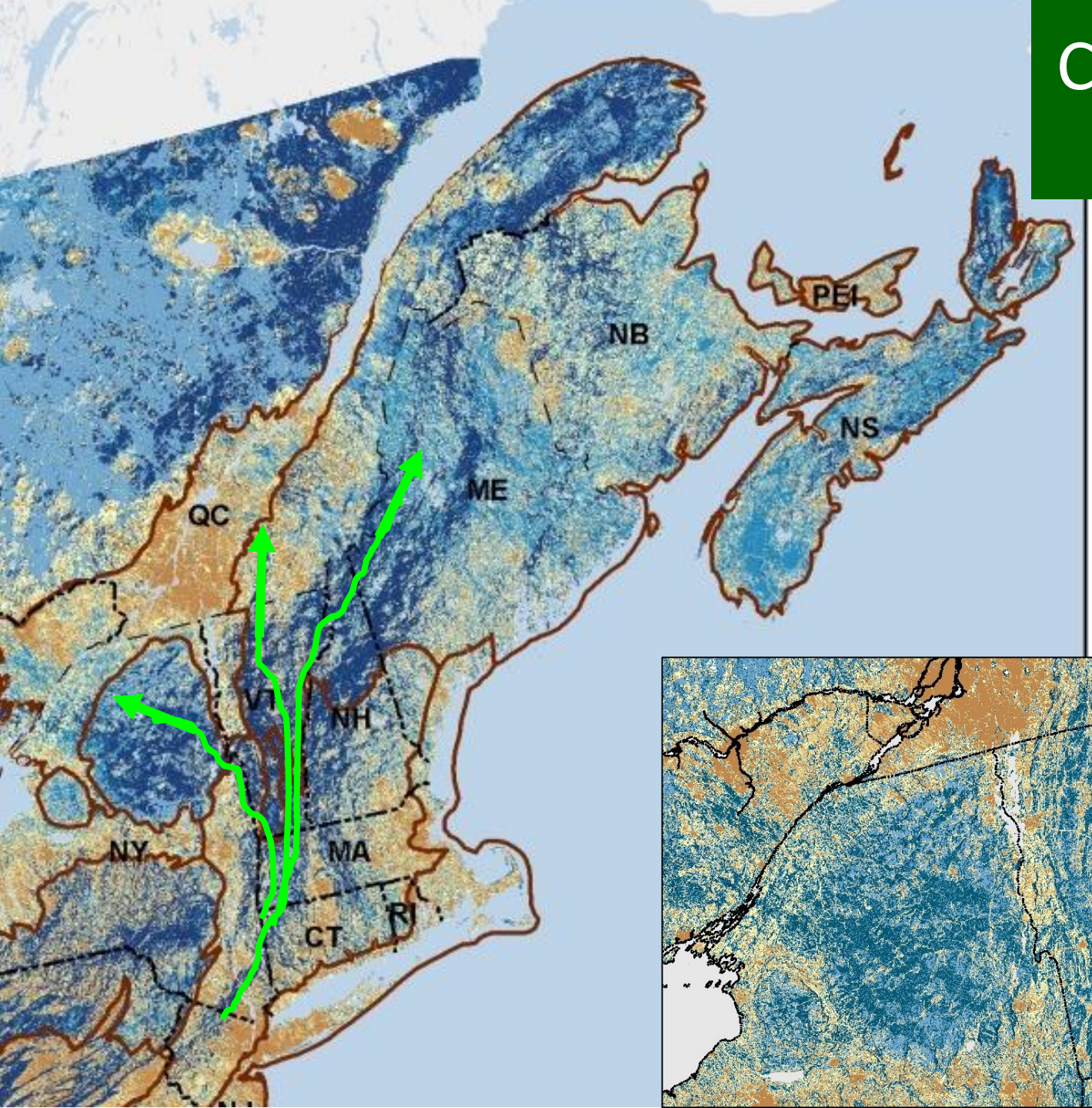
Resistance Grid

Category	Weight
Developed	
-Low intensity	8
-Mid intensity	9
-High intensity	20
-Mine	9
Roads/Linear	
-Major	20
-Minor	10
-Unpaved	+1
-Transmission	9
-Pipelines	9
-Railroads	9
Agriculture	
-Corn/Soy	9
-Other Ag	7
-Hay Pasture	3
-Forestry (indust.)	4
Energy	
-Oil & Gas	7+
-Wind	+1

Based on same Resistance Grid as Local Connectedness



Climate Flow
Vermont

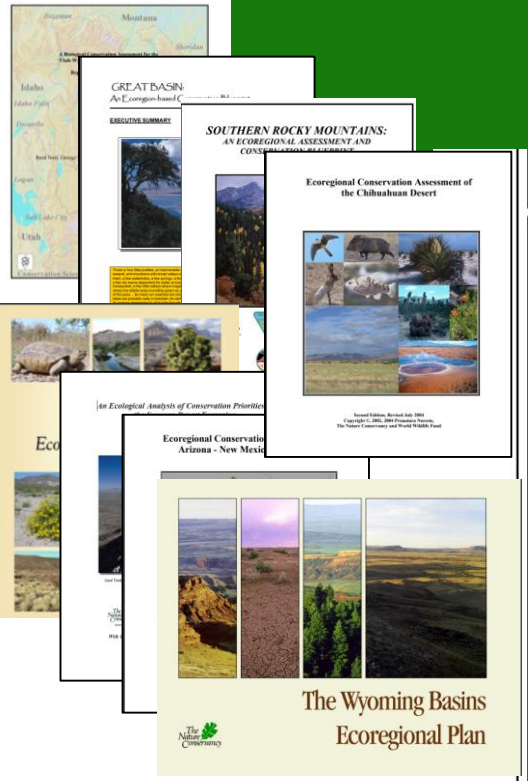


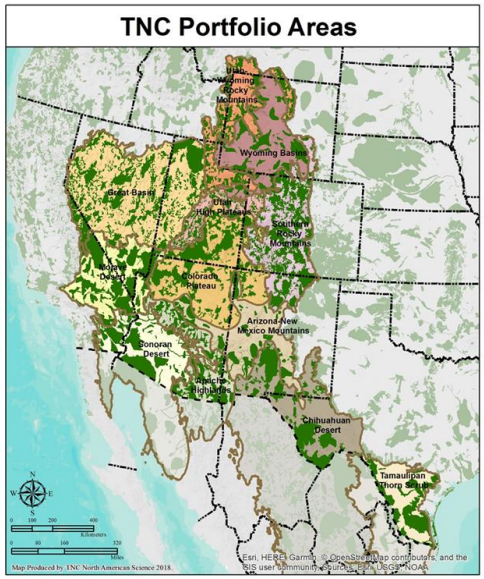
Where does flow get channeled into pinch points?

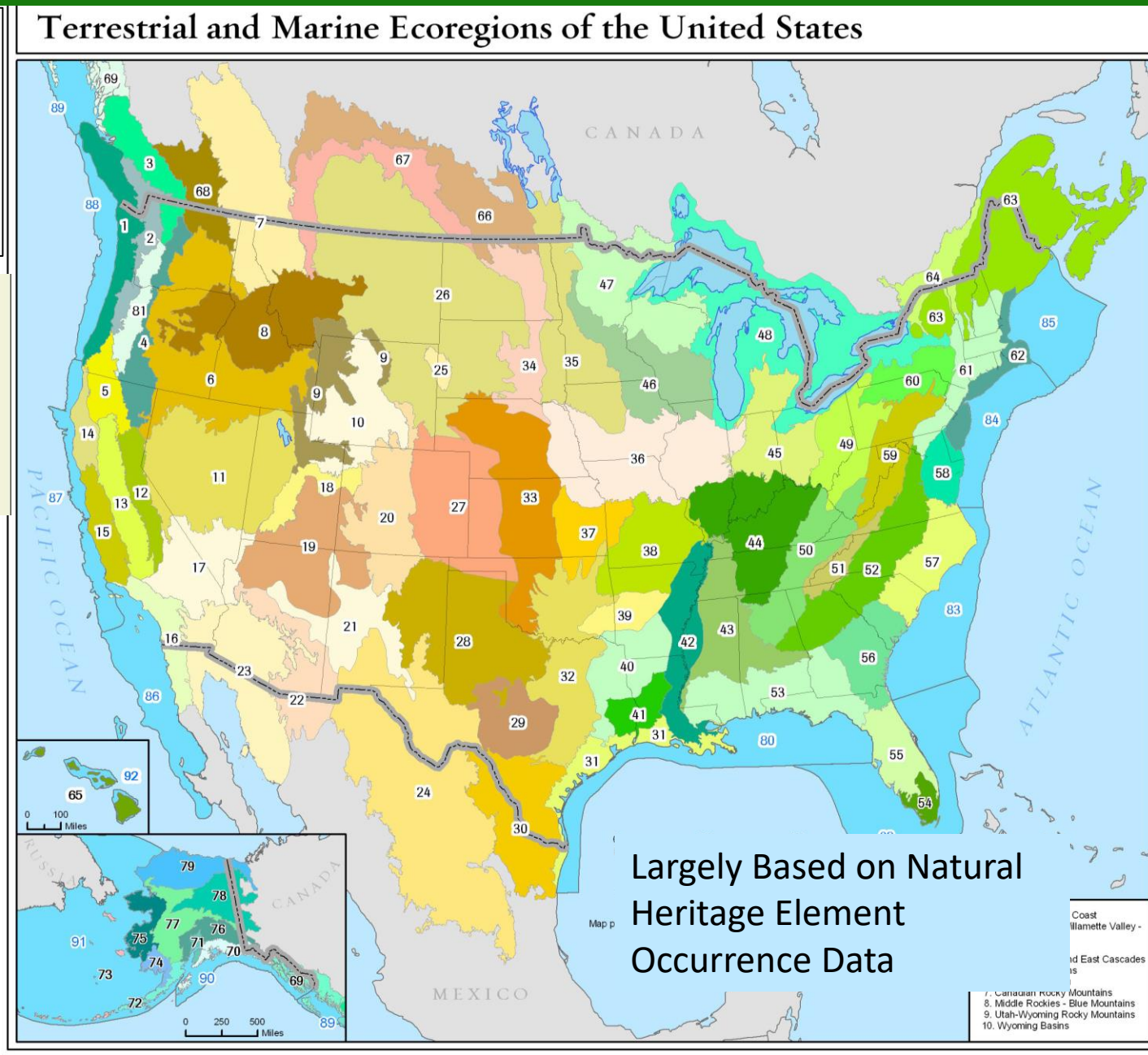
Resilient Ecosystems

Intact Habitats
Rare Species Populations
Unique Communities

Biodiversity Assessments







Biodiversity Assessments

VERMONT CONSERVATION DESIGN

MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING AN ECOLOGICALLY FUNCTIONAL LANDSCAPE

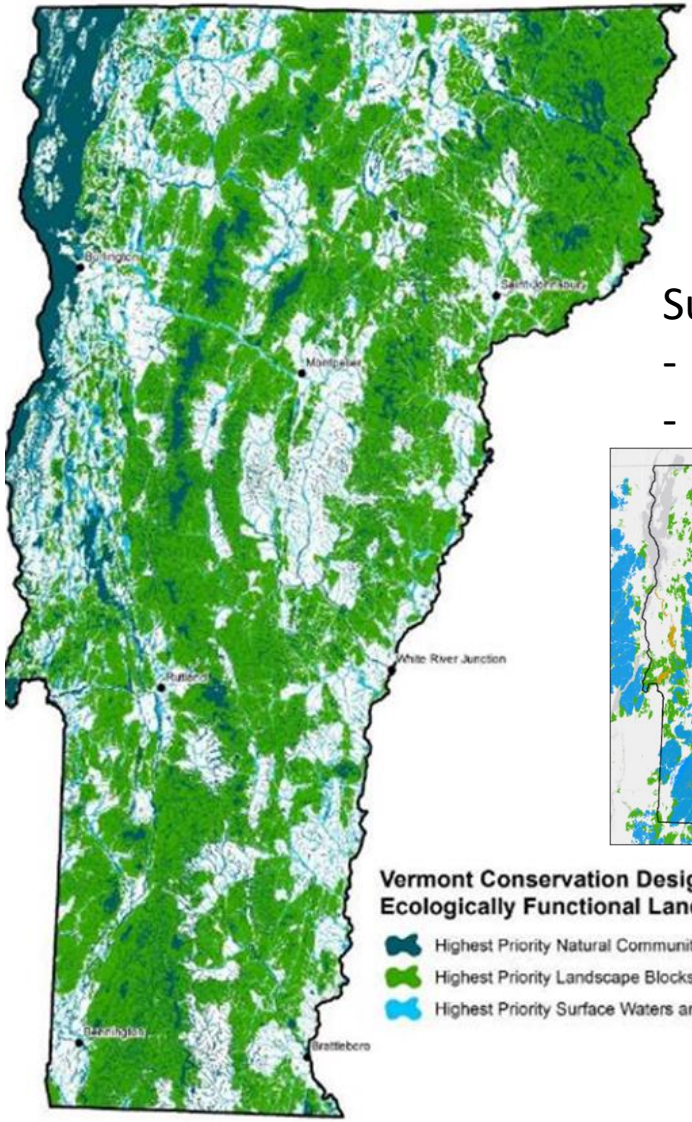
Summary Report for
Landscapes, Natural Communities, Habitats, and Species

February 2018

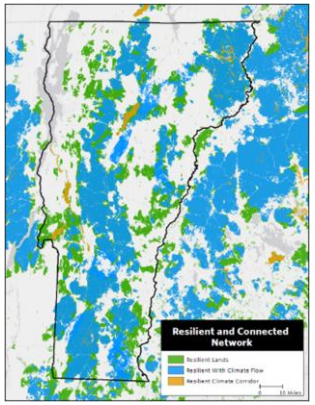
Eric Sorenson and Robert Zaino

Core Participants:
Jens Hilke, Doug Morin – Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department
Keith Thompson – Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
Elizabeth Thompson – Vermont Land Trust

VERMONT
AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Respect. Protect. Enjoy.



Subset
- resilient
- high flow

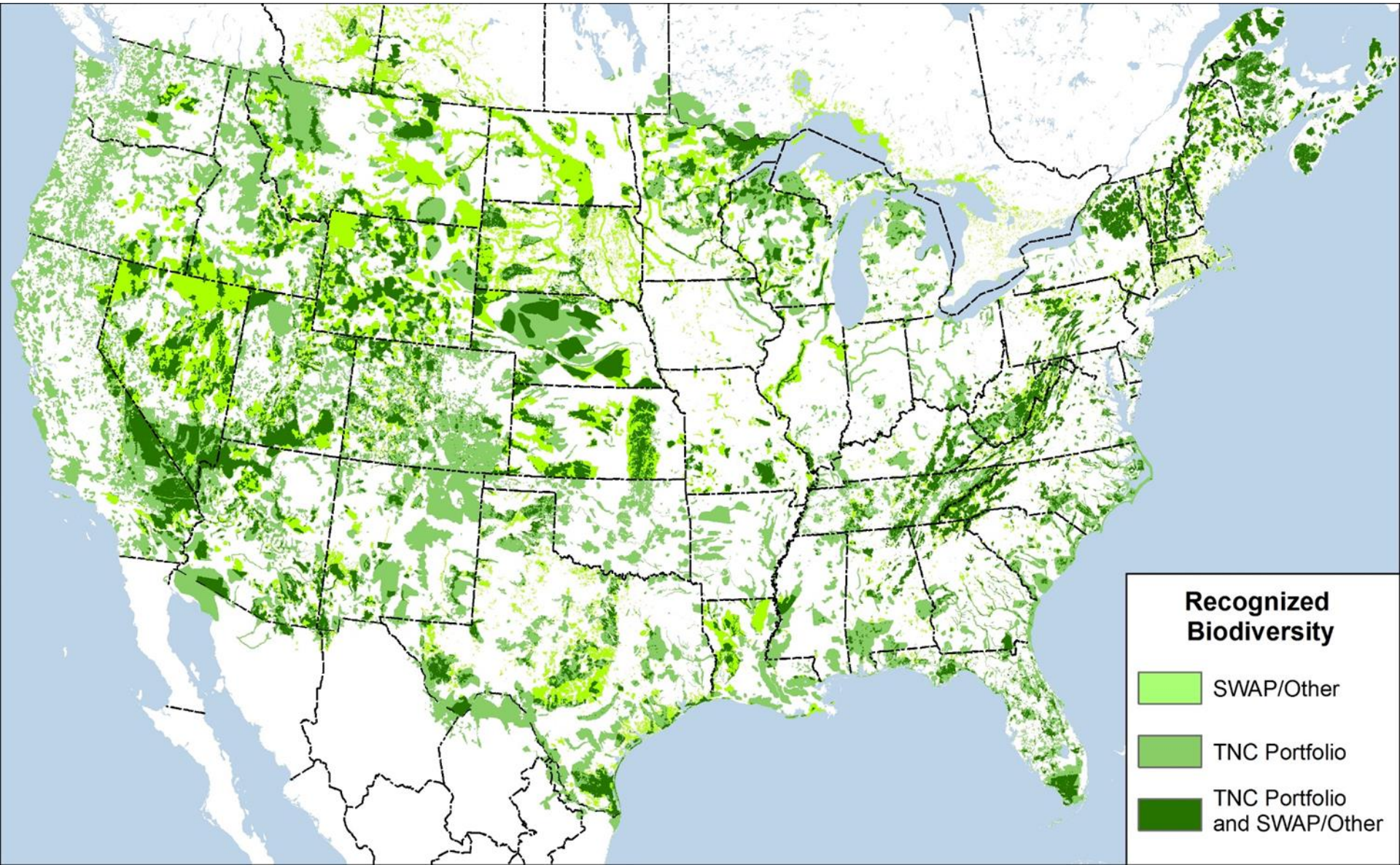


Vermont Conservation Design
Ecologically Functional Landscape

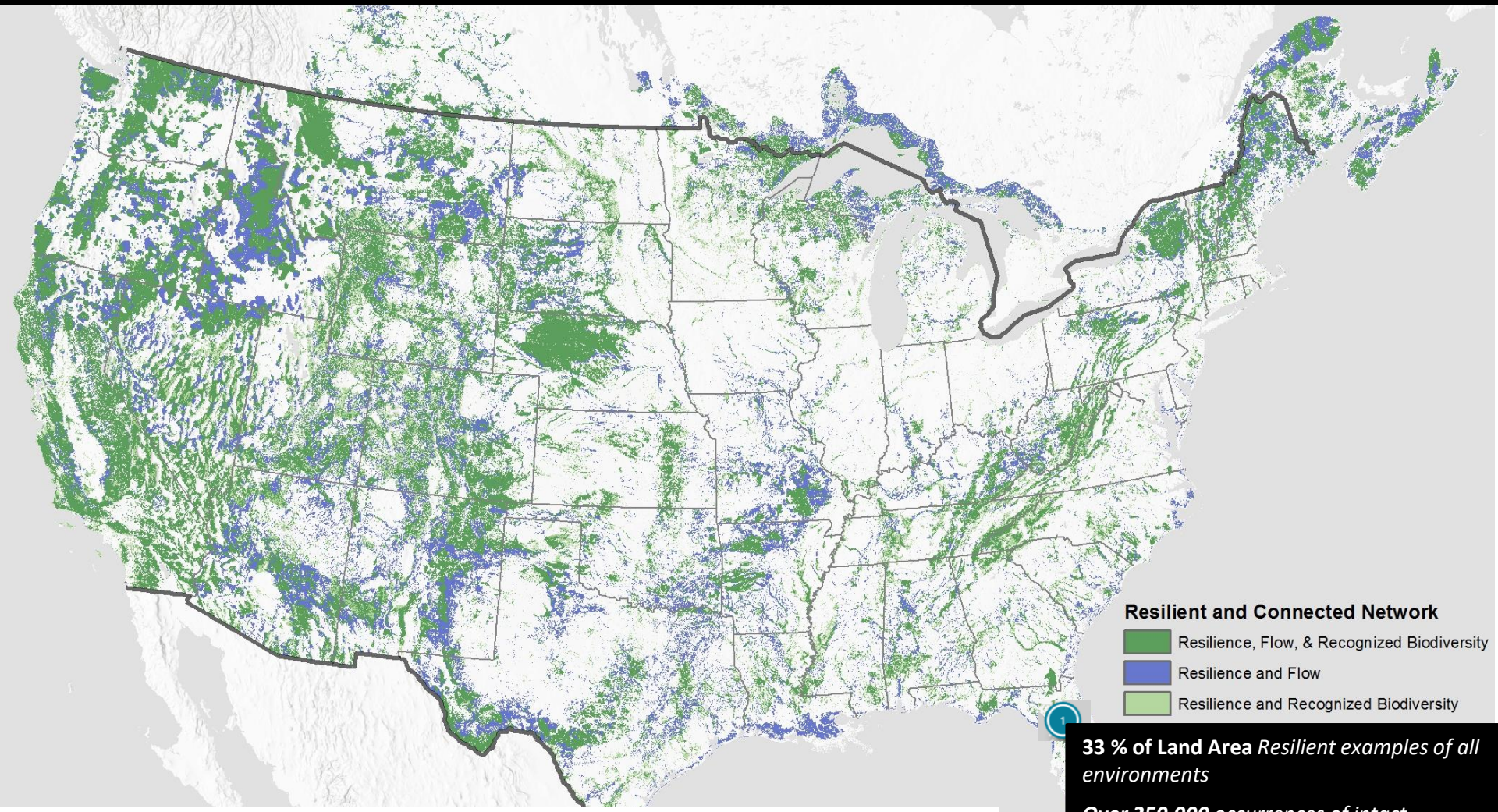
- Highest Priority Natural Community & Habitat Features
- Highest Priority Landscape Blocks
- Highest Priority Surface Waters and Riparian Areas

Recognized Conservation Value

(Places with confirmed diversity or critical habitat TNC Ecoregional Plans, SWAPs, NHP)



Resilient and Connected Network



33 % of Land Area *Resilient examples of all environments*

Over 250,000 *occurrences of intact habitats, rare species, unique communities*

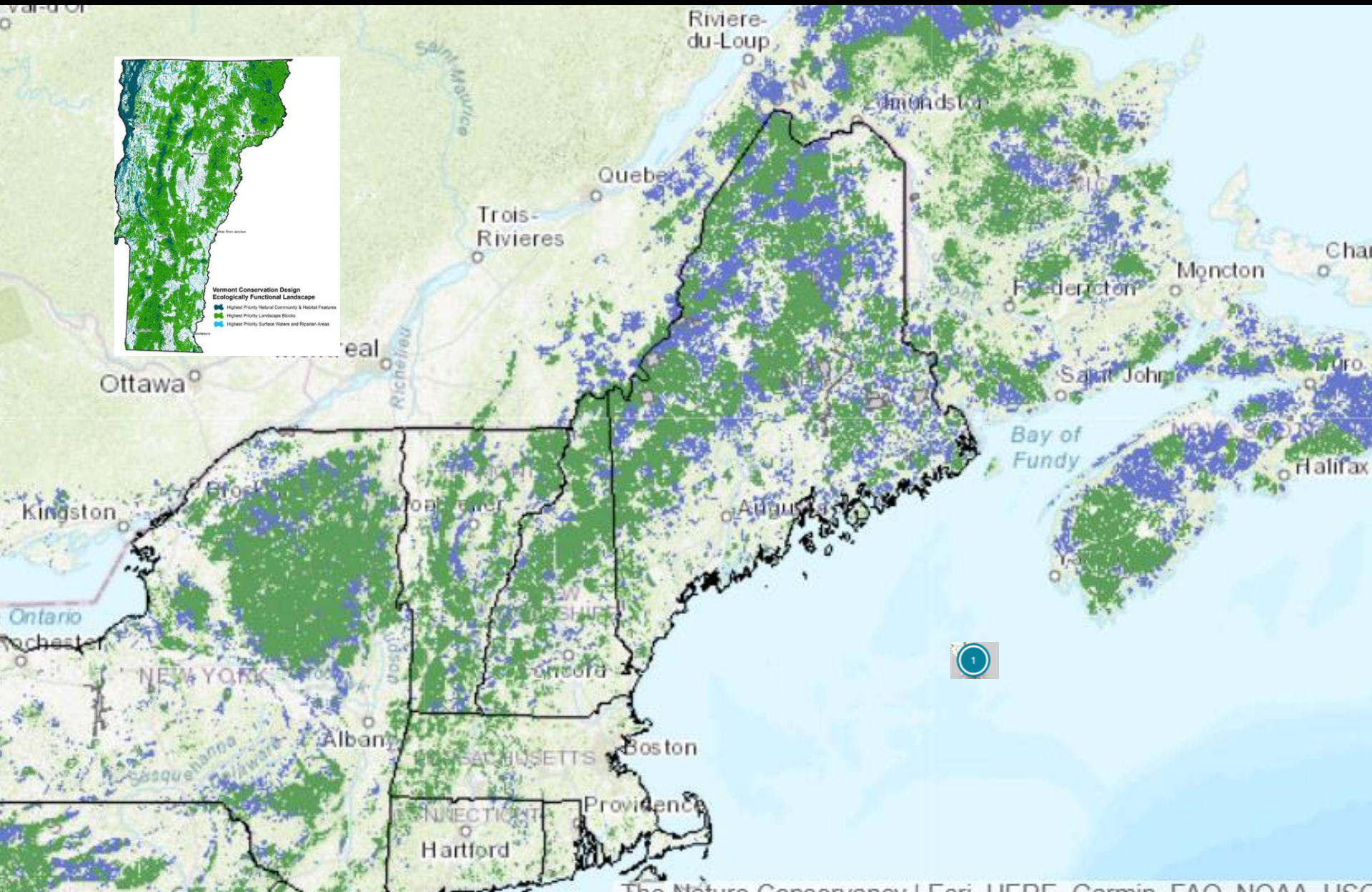
Arranged *for maximum climate flow*

44% *Secured*

Global Deal for Nature: 30 by 30
30% of each Ecoregion by 2030

Convention on Biological Diversity (Target 2) By 2030 well-connected and effective systems of protected areas covering at least 30% of the planet, focus on biodiversity

Resilient and Connected Network



Benefits for People and Nature

Oxygen for
1.8 billion people

75% of
high value source water
66+ million acres

56% of all
Above-Ground Carbon
3.9 billion tons

Mitigates
1.3 million tons
of pollution
$913 million

Generates
approximately
$25 billion
in recreation

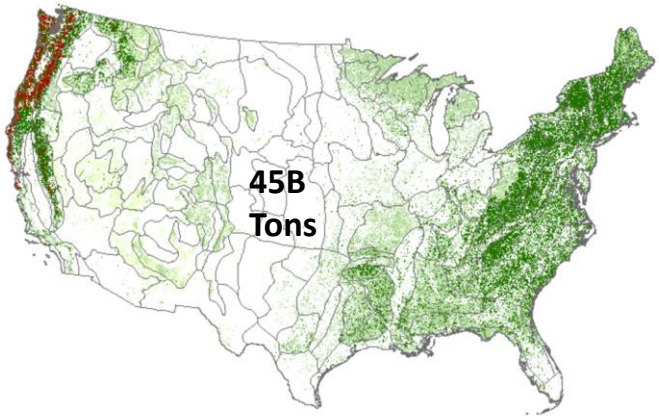
Photo credits clockwise from top middle: © Nick Hall; © Cameron Davidson; © Roland Taylor/TNC Photo Contest 2019 ; © Bridget Besaw; © Byron Jorjorian

Carbon

RCN = 33 B Tons

Forest Ecosystem Carbon

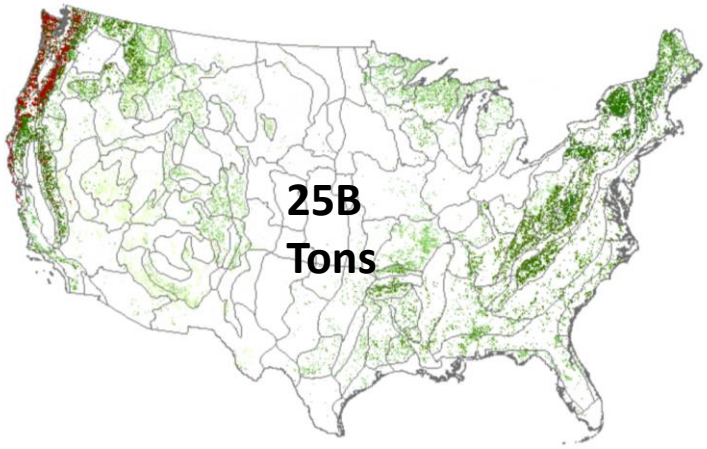
Williams et al.2020



Tons / Acre	RCN
= 1– 28	76%
= 28-75	50%
= 75-160	54%
= 160-292	**84%**
	56%

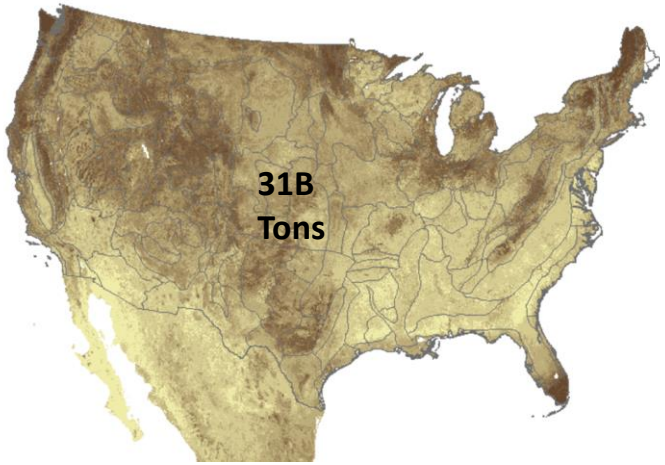
Forest Ecosystem Carbon in **RCN**

56% of all Forest Carbon



Soil Carbon:

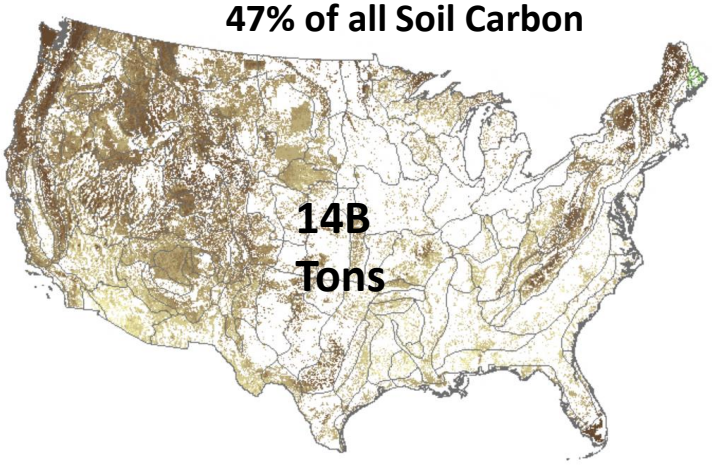
Guevara et al. 2020



Tons / Acre	RCN
0-5	31%
5-12	32%
12-16	38%
16-21	46%
21-26	55%
26-33	55%
33-71	**71%**
	47%

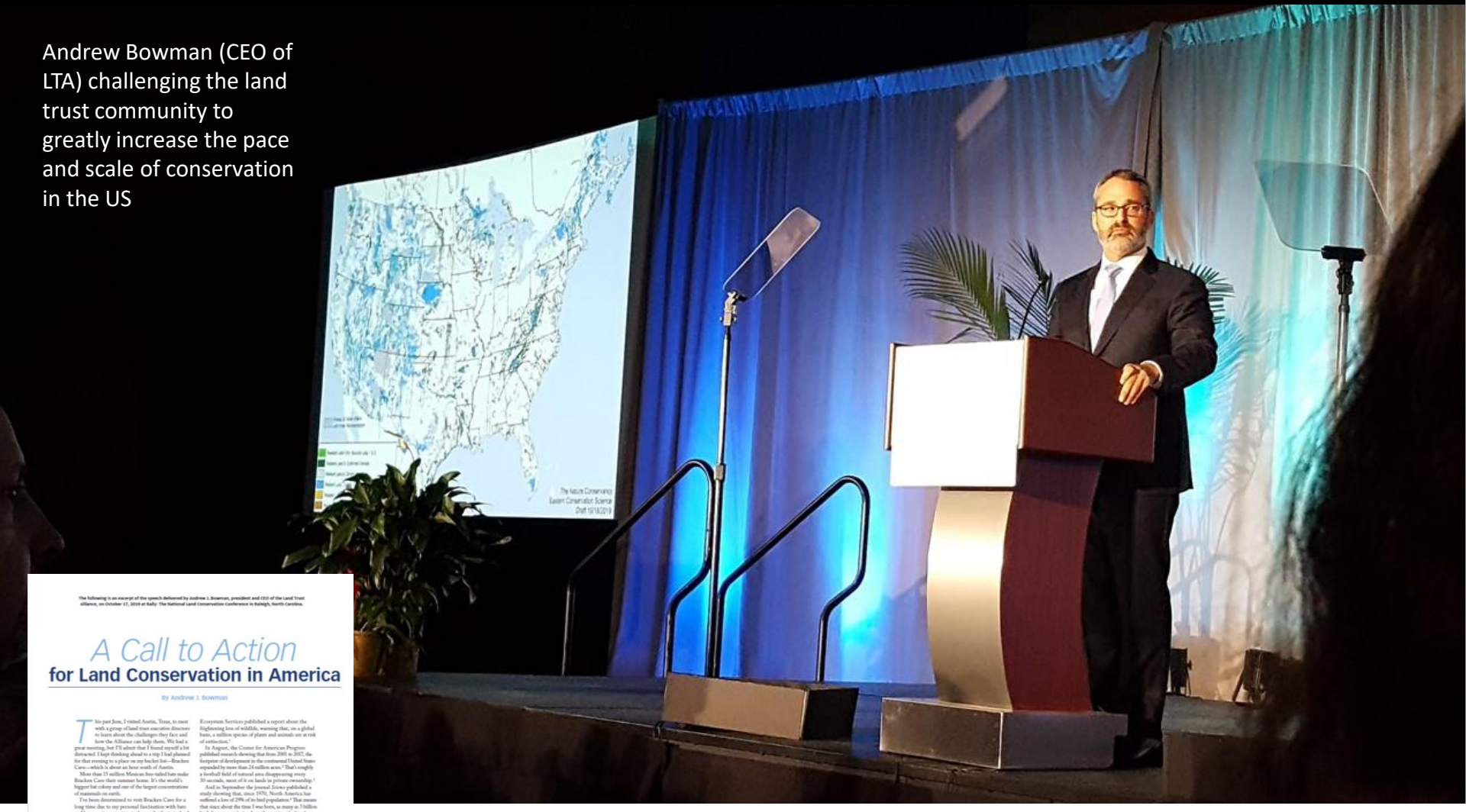
Soil Carbon in **RCN:**

47% of all Soil Carbon



COLLABORATION

Andrew Bowman (CEO of LTA) challenging the land trust community to greatly increase the pace and scale of conservation in the US



The following is an excerpt of the speech delivered by Andrew J. Bowman, president and CEO of the Land Trust Alliance, on October 17, 2018 at Rally: The National Land Conservation Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina.

A Call to Action
for Land Conservation in America

By Andrew J. Bowman

This past June, I visited Austin, Texas, to meet with a group of land trust executive directors to learn about the challenges they face and how the Alliance can help them. We had a great meeting, but I'll admit that I found myself a bit distracted. I kept thinking ahead to a trip I had planned for that evening to a place on my bucket list—Bracken Cave—which is about an hour south of Austin.

More than 15 million Mexican free-tailed bats make Bracken Cave their summer home. It's the world's biggest bat colony and one of the largest concentrations of mammals on earth.

I've been determined to visit Bracken Cave for a long time due to my personal fascination with bats and because its protection is the result of private land conservation at its best. The Nature Conservancy, Bat Conservation International and other conservation partners have worked tirelessly for decades to protect not just the cave but 1,500 acres of critical surrounding habitat.

Visiting Bracken Cave at dusk allowed me to witness millions of bats emerging to hunt for insects. The show did not disappoint. The sheer abundance of life moved me deeply. The sound and sight of millions of bats soaring overhead was awe-inspiring. It was beautiful. Stunning. Life and career-affirming. And to think that this process unfolds for hours and hours, every summer night, as it has for thousands of years.

The Real Story of Our Time

I share this experience with you not only to highlight what motivates so many of us to do our work and to celebrate what our community has achieved. I am also using this example of species and ecosystem health as a foil for what I see as the real story of our time.

Since last year's Rally, we have been inundated with scientific evidence that the natural world is emptying and unraveling.

In May, the United Nations Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services published a report about the frightening loss of wildlife, warning that, on a global basis, a million species of plants and animals are at risk of extinction.[1]

In August, the Center for American Progress published research showing that from 2001 to 2017, the footprint of development in the continental United States expanded by more than 24 million acres.[2] That's roughly a football field of natural area disappearing every 30 seconds, most of it on lands in private ownership.[3]

And in September the journal *Science* published a study showing that, since 1970, North America has suffered a loss of 29% of its bird population.[4] That means that since about the time I was born, as many as 3 billion birds have gone missing from the continent's skies.[5]

Shocking as they are, these sobering statistics don't surprise those of us in this room tonight. We see with our own eyes the disappearance of wildlife, whether they are insects, birds or charismatic megafauna.

Paraphrasing Aldo Leopold, one of the penalties of working in our field and having deep knowledge of ecology is that one lives in a world of wounds. And he made that observation decades before climate change was even on our radar.

Last October the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a particularly hard-hitting report. It laid out compelling reasons why the world should aim to keep the increase in global mean temperature from exceeding 1.5°C rather than 2°, and it explained just how difficult that will be to accomplish.[6] The report asserts that to avoid truly catastrophic climate change, we must cut global greenhouse gas emissions roughly in half by 2030.[7]

And a scientific report released in conjunction with this September's U.N. Climate Action Summit revealed that emission reduction commitments of nations under the Paris Climate Agreement are woefully inadequate.[8] The level of commitment needs to triple to achieve a 2°C limit and must be increased fivefold to reach a 1.5°C limit.[9]

Land Trusts: Over 100 are using the data for decision making
Agencies: Majority of Eastern SWAPS, Many Federal Adopters
Funders: 37 million from Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
TNC: Division Protection Plans, USGR

Definition of Conservation

Forests: a Natural Solution to Climate Change

Forests filter our drinking water, provide homes for wildlife and improve our health. Forests also fight climate change in many ways.

Wildlands

Forest reserves, managed by nature and without harvesting, remove large amounts of carbon pollution from the air and store it in tree trunks, leaves, roots and soils. Protecting forests and allowing them to grow for centuries means they can store more carbon each year.

Woodlands

With careful planning and management, most forests can produce wood products while also increasing the carbon stored in the forest over time. Locally harvested wood can replace building materials that have a larger carbon footprint, like steel and concrete, reducing carbon emissions.

Sometimes, forests have been so damaged by poor forest management, invasive species, or disease that they aren't storing as much carbon as they could. Restarting these forests by harvesting damaged and diseased trees may store more carbon over the long term.

Carbon exists in several places and forms:

In the air: At high concentrations in the air, carbon dioxide is a pollutant and a green-house gas that warms the planet.

In plants: Plants turn carbon dioxide into sugar (glucose). In this form, carbon is food for plants and other organisms in the forest.

In wood: Trees and shrubs turn carbon into cellulose. In this form, carbon can be stored long-term in tree trunks or in lumber.

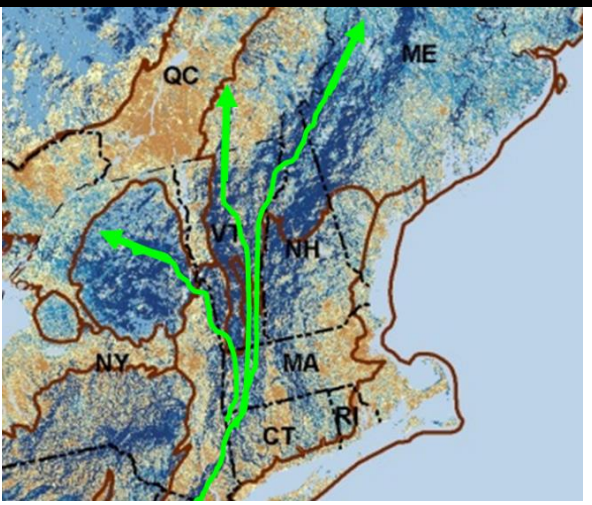
Trees in Cities

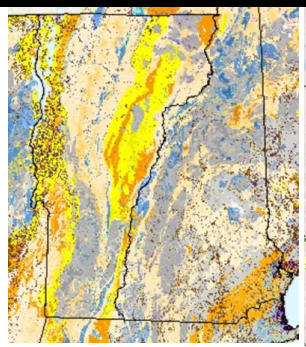
Trees planted in cities store carbon as they grow and reduce energy use from buildings shaded and sheltered by the trees. Just as importantly, trees also reduce asthma rates, heart disease and stress.

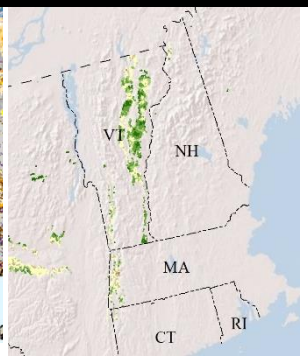
To tackle the climate challenge, we need to grow and protect forests, but that alone is not enough. We must also reduce fossil fuel use and adapt to the changes we're already seeing. **Learn more at: nature.org/climate**

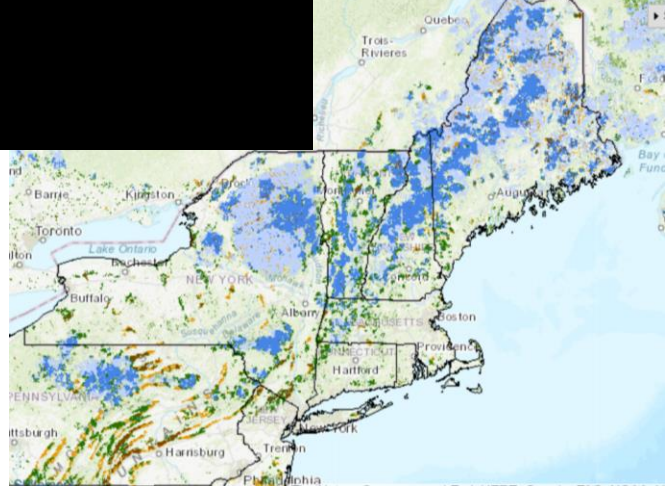
The Nature Conservancy

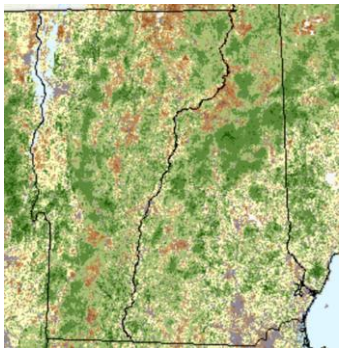
Vermont has it all

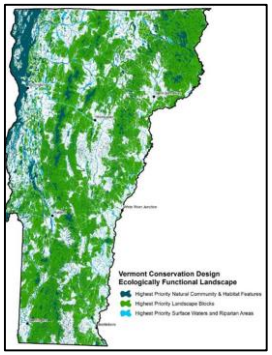


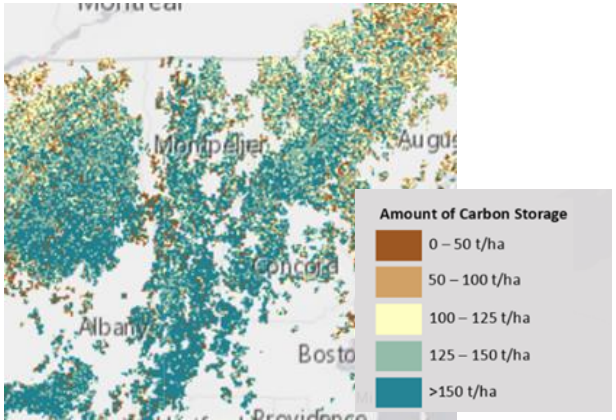












- A crossroads of connectivity
- A diverse physical landscape
- Largest concentration resilient limestone in East
- A center of terrestrial resilience
- A terrific state plan that reinforces and complements TNC network
- Relatively intact forest storing huge amounts of carbon
- A community that values nature