



7/15/2024 Testimony  
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**Act 59:** “Natural resource management area” means an area having permanent protection from conversion for the majority of the area but that is subject to long-term, sustainable land management.

• [GAP Code Assignment Document \(2021\)](#): Status 3: An area having permanent protection from conversion of natural land cover for the majority of the area, but subject to extractive uses of either a broad, low-intensity type (for example, logging, OHV recreation) or localized intense type (for example, mining). It also confers protection to federally listed endangered and threatened species throughout the area.

• [TNC Secured Areas 2022](#): GAP 3. Permanently Secured for Multiple Uses including extraction and recreation: An area having permanent protection from conversion of natural land cover, but the primary intention of the owner or easement holder is for multiple uses, which may include biodiversity but also recreation and certain extractive uses. Extractive uses may include either a broad, low-intensity type (e.g., logging) or localized intense type (e.g., mining).

## Other relevant definitions:

•[GAP Code Assignment Document \(2021\)](#): Status 4: There are no known public or private institutional mandates or legally recognized easements or deed restrictions held by the managing entity to prevent conversion of natural habitat types to anthropogenic habitat types. The area generally allows conversion to unnatural land cover throughout or management intent is unknown.

•[TNC Secured Areas 2022](#): GAP 39. Conservation land where the primary intent is the preservation of farmland. Agricultural Easement: Land in a permanent agricultural easement or easement to maintain grass (e.g., vegetable farm with permanent easement to prevent development).

•[TNC Secured Areas 2022](#): GAP 4. Not Conserved Open Space. Areas with no known mandate for permanent protection. Temporary easement lands (e.g., CREP 5-year term, similar X-year term agreements) and/or municipal lands (school yards, golf courses, soccer fields, ball fields, town commons) where intention in management and use of the open space is not biodiversity protection. It was beyond our capacity to comprehensively compile these GAP 4 lands, and as such, they are included only where source data made it feasible to easily incorporate them.

Connectivity Blocks			
Percent of each category that is in habitat blocks described by VCD (20 acres and up from 2016 landcover).			
Act 59 Category	% Highest Priority	%Priority	%Unprioritized
Ecological Reserve Area	96.41	1.53	1.58
Biodiversity Conservation Area	84.4	4.52	6.98
Natural Resource Management Area	83.25	9	4.1
Mixed Agriculture Use (TNC GAP 39)	8.94	8.1	19.41

Summary, by acres and contribution to VCD of the 4 conservation categories currently included in the spatial data that is the basis for the Act 59 Inventory.

Category	Total Acres	Contribution to Vermont Conservation Design (Acres)			Other		
		VCD HP Blocks <sup>2</sup>	VCD Priority Blocks <sup>3</sup>	VCD Riparian <sup>4</sup>	Unprioritized Blocks	Other <sup>5</sup>	Agriculture <sup>6</sup>
Ecological Reserve Area	233,045	229,411	1,713	513	310	689	410
Biodiversity Conservation Area	245,360	224,057	8,864	2,060	623	3,305	6,451
Natural Resource Management Area	866,617	776,601	47,477	3,344	8,063	19,434	11,697
Mixed Agriculture (TNC GAP 39) <sup>1</sup>	218,311	45,723	13,652	7,728	13,051	10,208	127,949

1-Lands currently coded as Category 4 in spatial inventory, includes parcels with mix of forest, wetland, and other natural cover along with agricultural cover

2-Any habitat block that is Highest Priority for Interior Forest, Connectivity, or Geologic Diversity functions

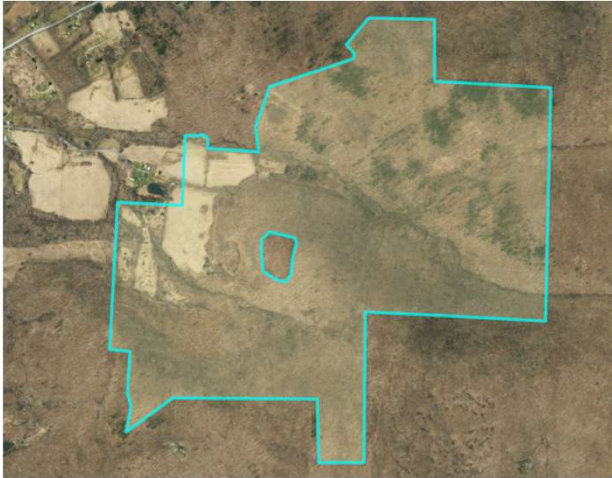
3- Any habitat block that is not HP for any function, but Priority for Interior Forest, Connectivity, or Geologic Diversity

4 - VCD Riparian Connectivity lands (high resolution natural cover within VCD Surface Water and Riparian Area) that is not in a HP or P habitat block

5- Other land in this category, generally occurring as blocks of natural cover smaller than 20 acres, but could include impervious surface or other anthropogenic land cover

6- Calculated using Agriculture layer from VCGI, based off 2016 high-resolution landcover (same input as VCD) with post processing to improve accuracy, but may not be currently in Ag use. Is known to include abandoned ag lands.

Note: report generated from April 30<sup>th</sup> draft of inventory and contains approximately 8,000 fewer acres of conservation land than currently included



Left: High acres of natural cover and high percentage of natural cover---Very, very Rare.  
Right: High percentage, but low acreage of natural cover. Relatively common



Left: Low percentage, low acreage of natural cover—most common

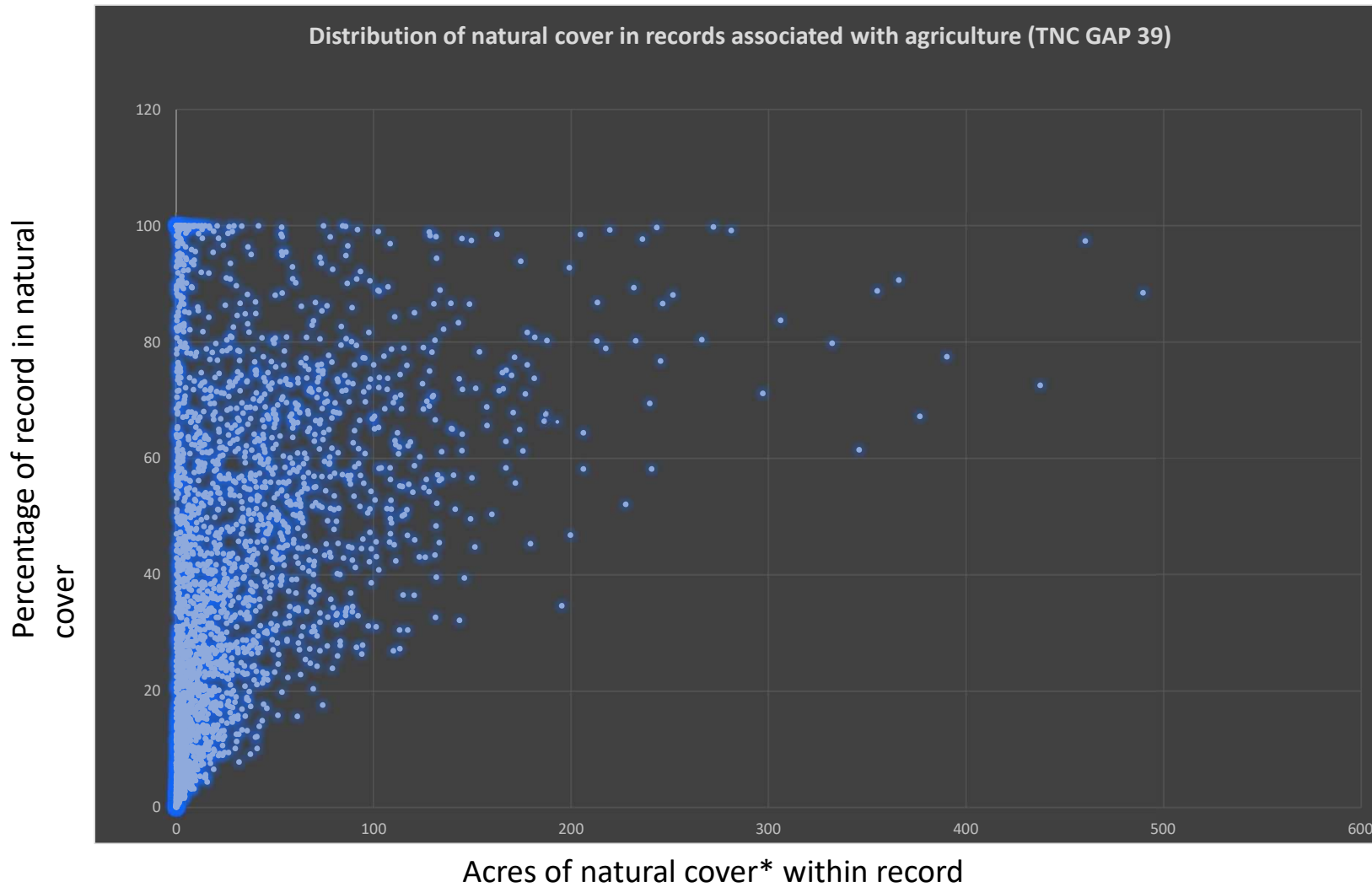


Table 3: Distribution of records assigned GAP 39 in TNC's Secured Areas Database (2022) by their acreage and percentage of natural cover. To interpret, the right most point represents a record that has about 480 acres of natural cover, which comprises about 90% of the area within the record. Total number of records on graph is ~3,100

<b>Conservation Category</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of VT</b>
Ecological Reserve Area	236,333	4.01%
Biodiversity Conservation Area	228,487	3.87%
Natural Resource Mangement Area		
a. Protected Forestlands	886,353	15.03%
b. Forests protected with agricultural easements*	86,174	1.46%
Conserved for Agriculture	141,540	2.40%
<i>Total area conserved for biodiversity (ERA, BCA, NRMA)</i>	<i>1,437,347</i>	<i>24.37%</i>

\*measured by occurrence in habitat blocks larger than 20 acres and all natural cover within riparian areas for land previously described as GAP 39 in Secured Areas Database (TNC 2022).