

# VT Agency of Natural Resources

Protecting, Managing & Conserving a Healthy  
Landscape for Forests, Fish, Wildlife, People and more



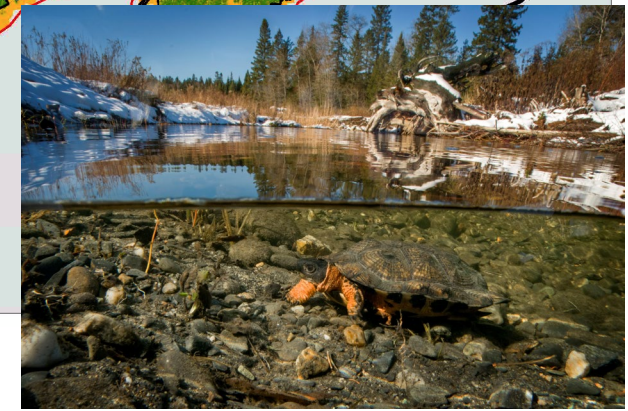
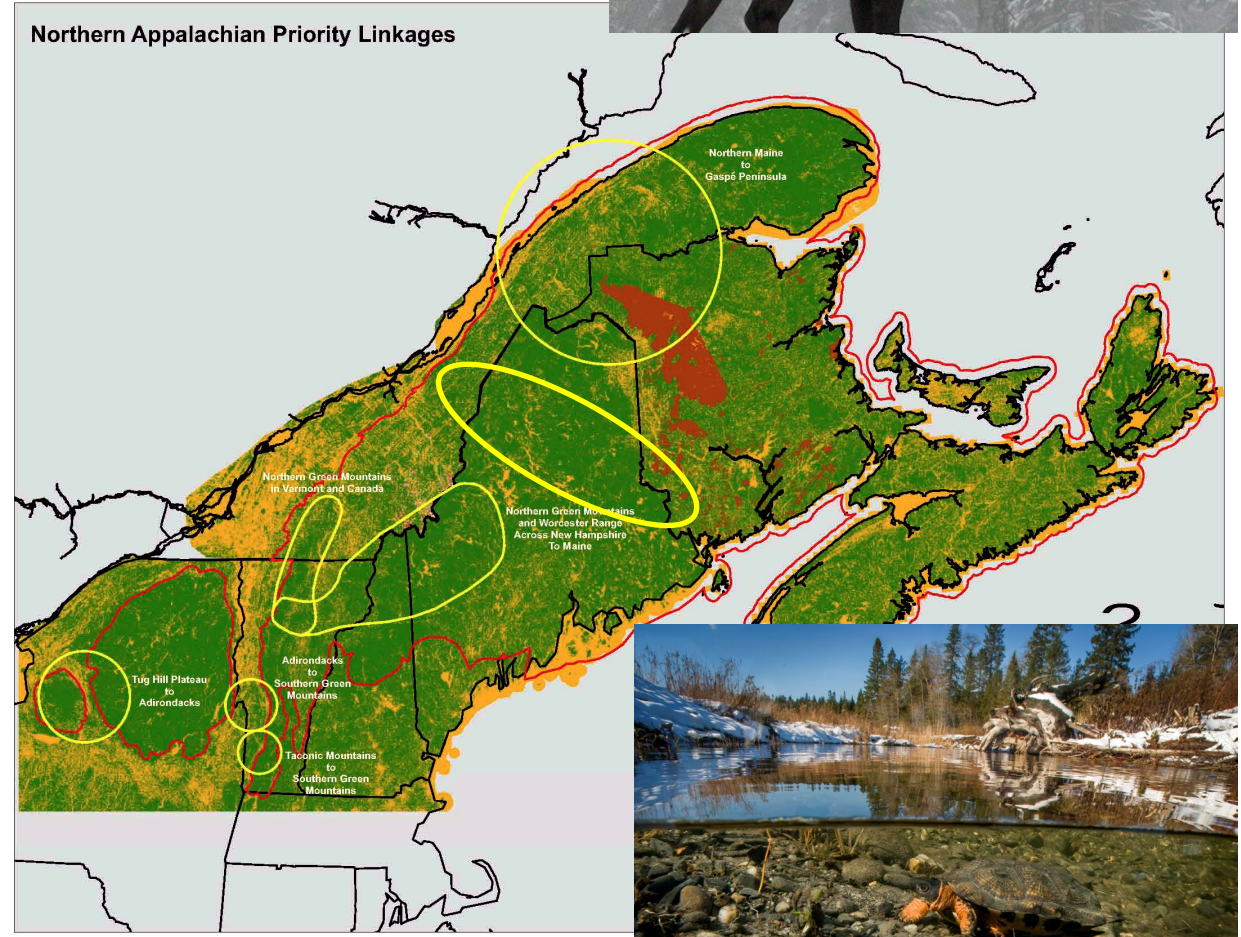
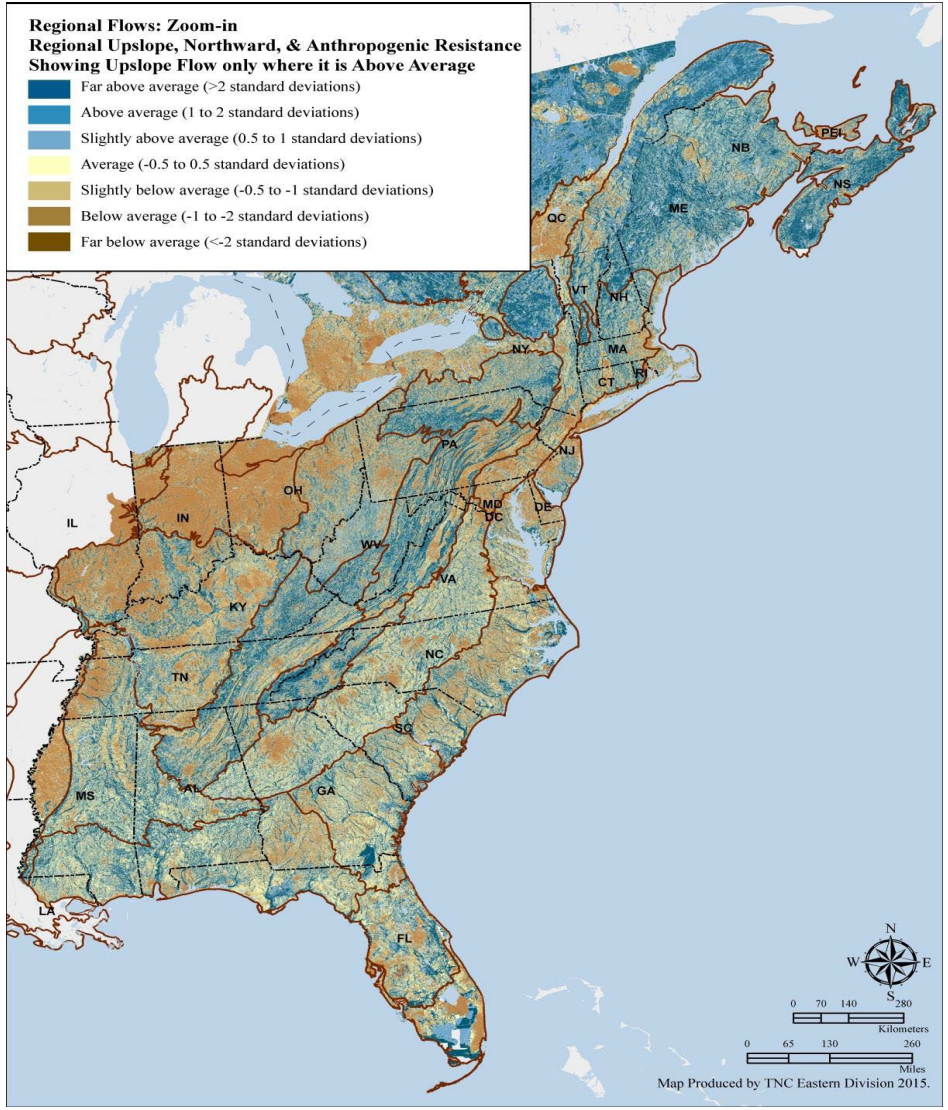
Becca Washburn, Director of Lands Administration & Recreation  
John Austin, Lands and Habitat Program Manager  
Wildlife Division



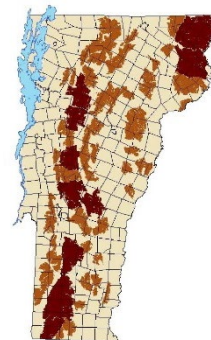
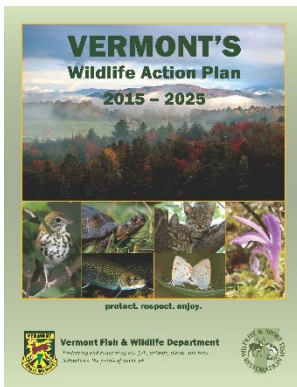
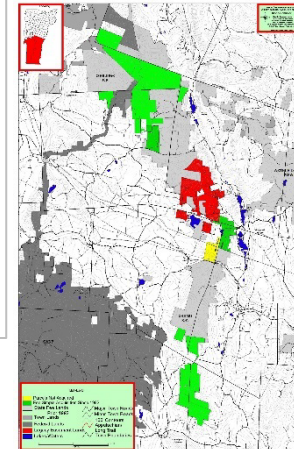
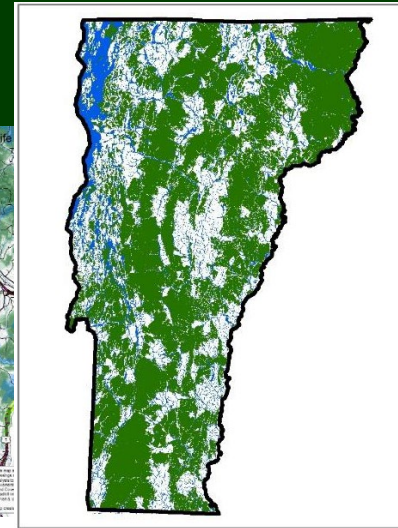
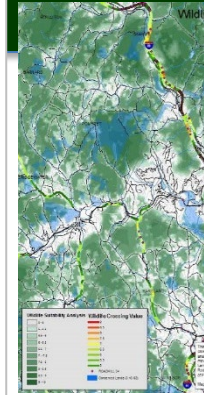
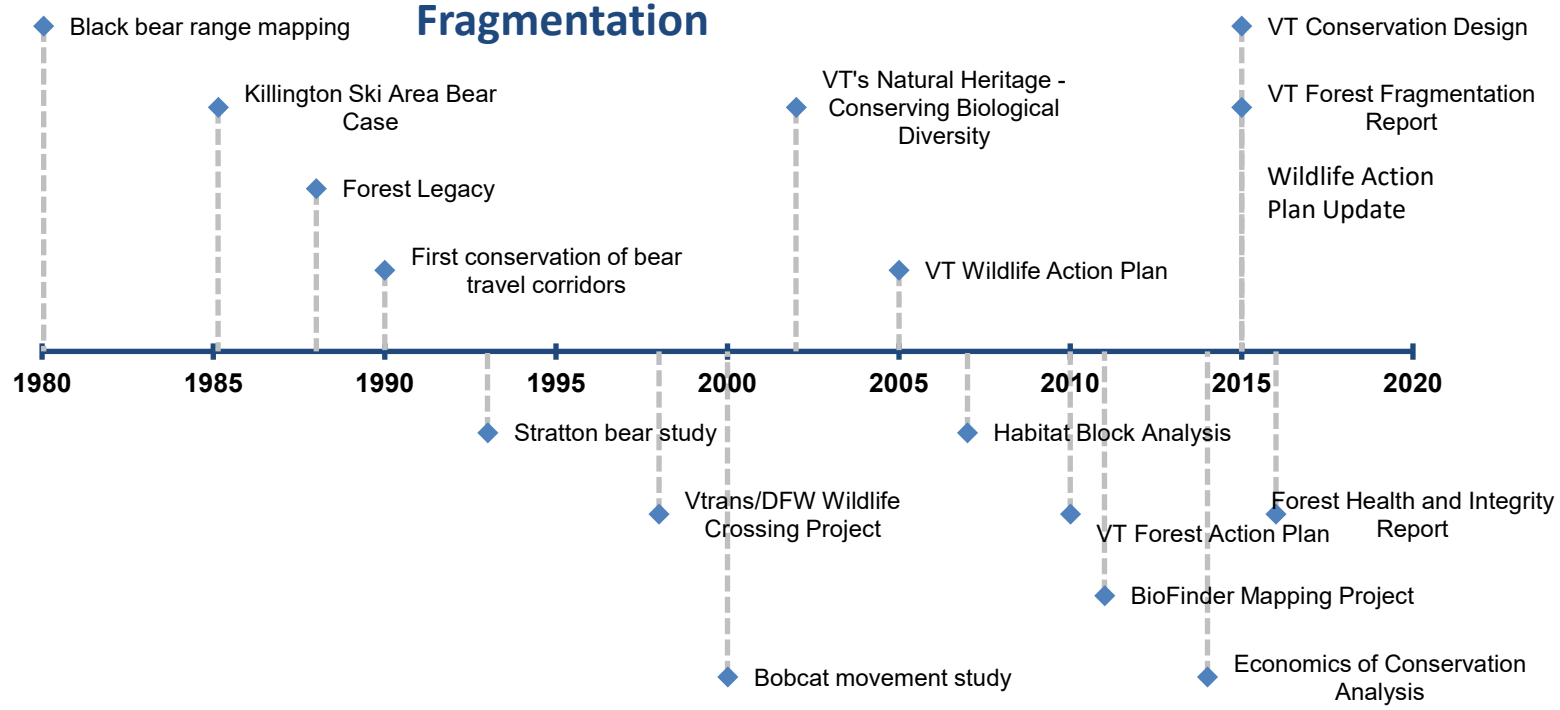
# How can we ensure the conservation of all species and maintain a healthy landscape?



# Regional Connectivity



# Progression of Knowledge & Information about Forest Fragmentation





## Habitat Conservation is Fundamental to Wildlife Conservation

- Technical Support to Private Landowners
- **Habitat Protection through Act 250 & Sec 248**
- Conservation Planning Support to VT Communities
- **Public Land Management with ALL Partners**
  - Land Conservation

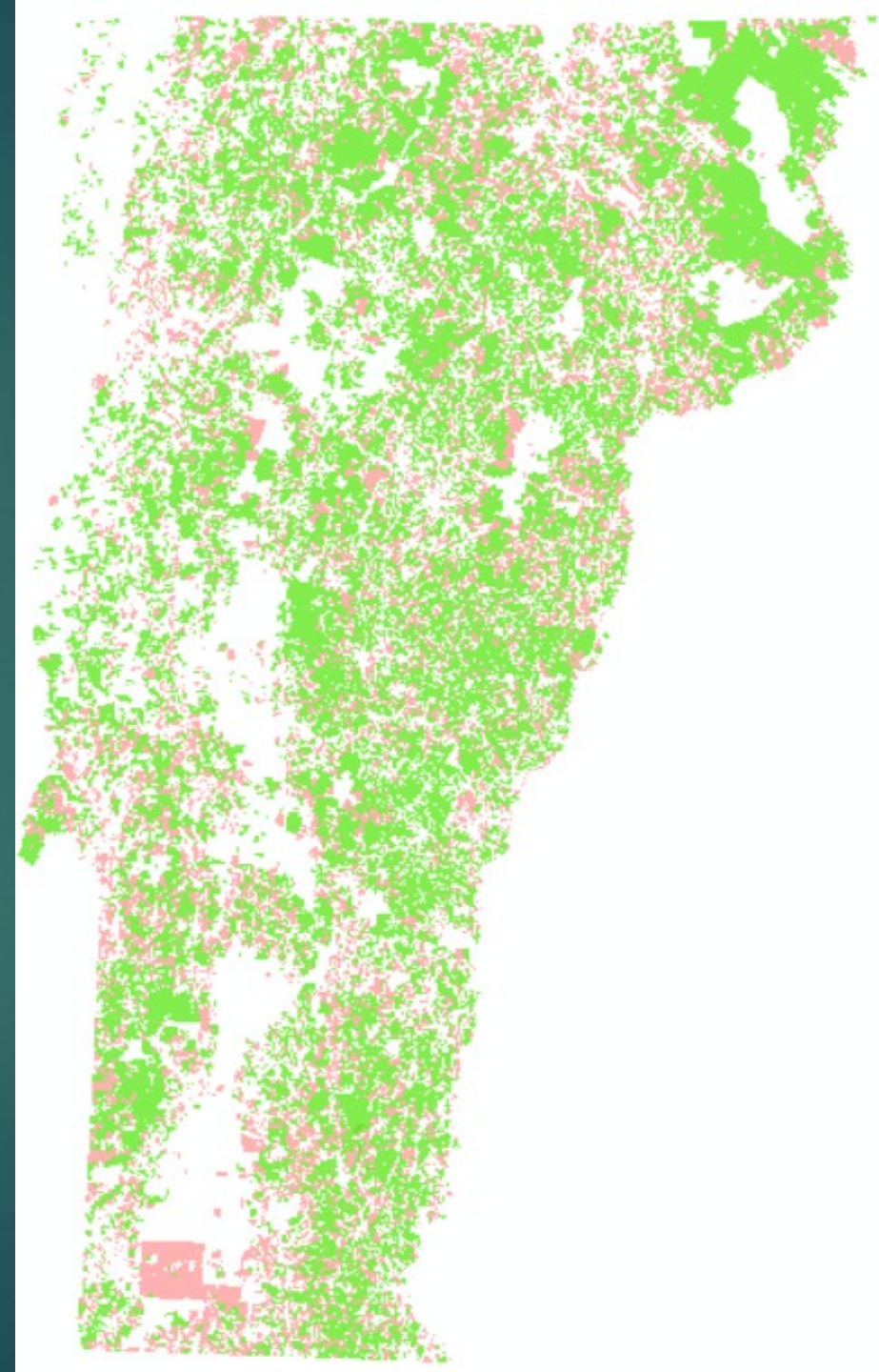
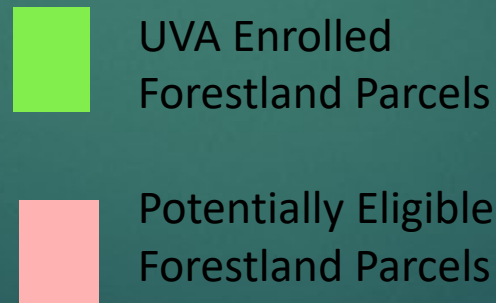
# Parcels Enrolled in UVA

55% of eligible forestland parcels are enrolled

- 16,000 parcels enrolled
- 29,000 parcels eligible

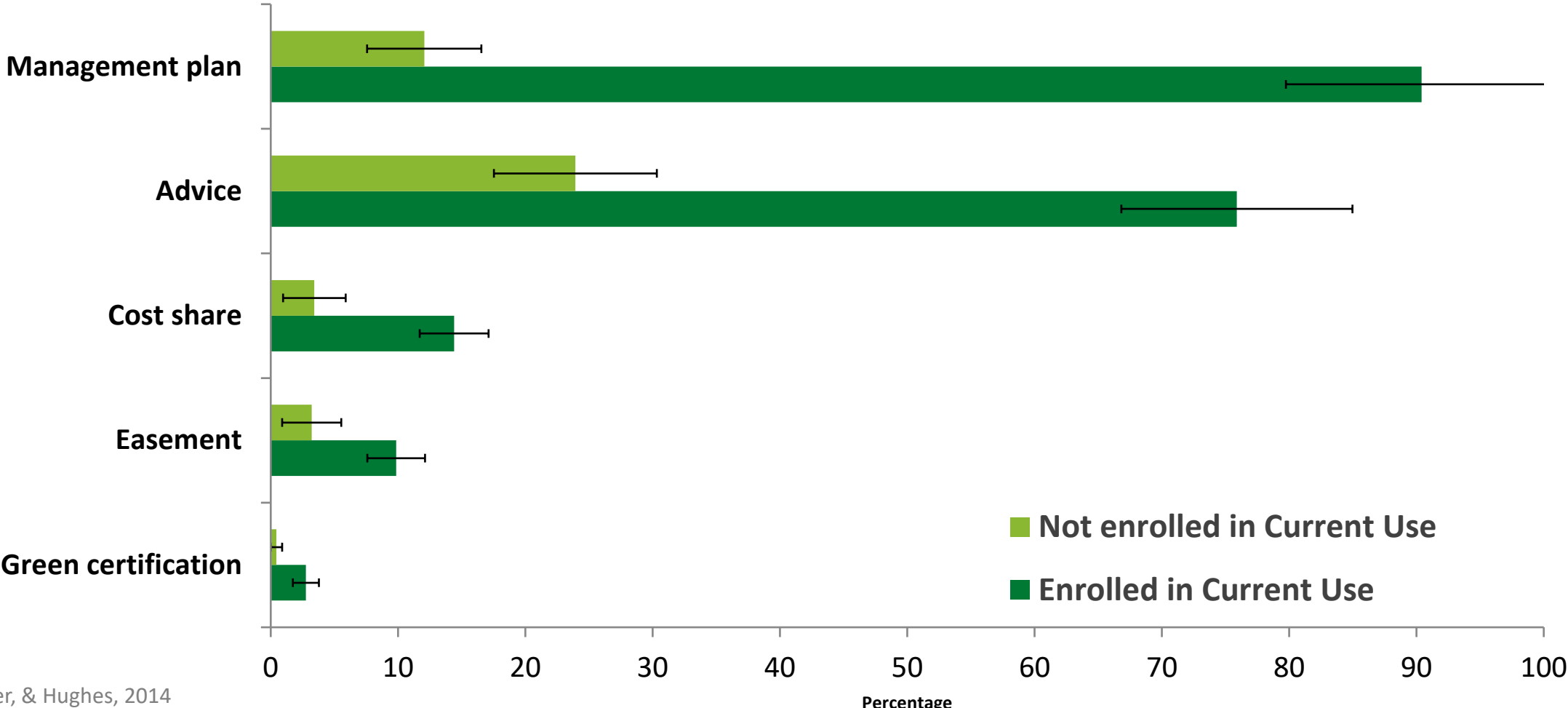
70% of eligible forest acres are enrolled

- 2.01 million acres enrolled
- 2.77 million acres eligible



# Extended Benefits of UVA Program

*Percentages of family forest land and ownerships with 25+ acres*



Butler, Butler, & Hughes, 2014





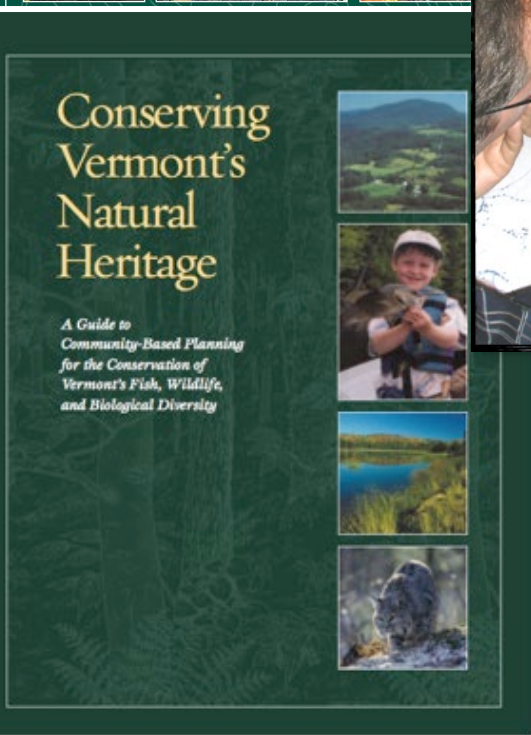
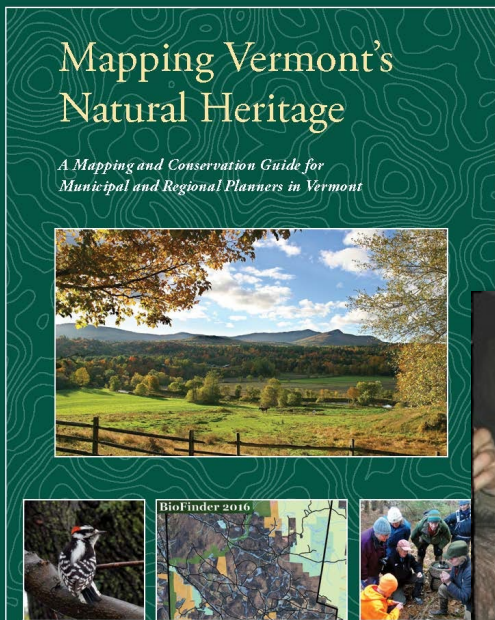
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	5 Year Total
Invasive Plant Control (acres)	800	622.6	831.8	507.8	856.3	3618.5
Tree and Shrub Establishment (acres)	2.5	1	33.6	29.5	4.9	71.5
Apple Tree Release (acres)	9.3	9.75	51.4	52.7	40	163.2
Early Successional Habitat Development (acres)	57	33.4	69.1	30.8	49.6	239.9
Delayed Mowing/Brush Hogging (acres)	65.9	112	93.2	60	41.8	372.9
Young Forest (acres)	53.1	59.6	97	78.1	59.5	347.3
Forest Stand Improvement (acres)	188.2	192.2	122.4	70.2	110.1	683.1
Mast/Crop Tree Release (acres)	67.5	28.75	80.4	135	119.8	431.5
FSI - Forestry for the Birds (acres)	17.2	14	25	10	15	81.2





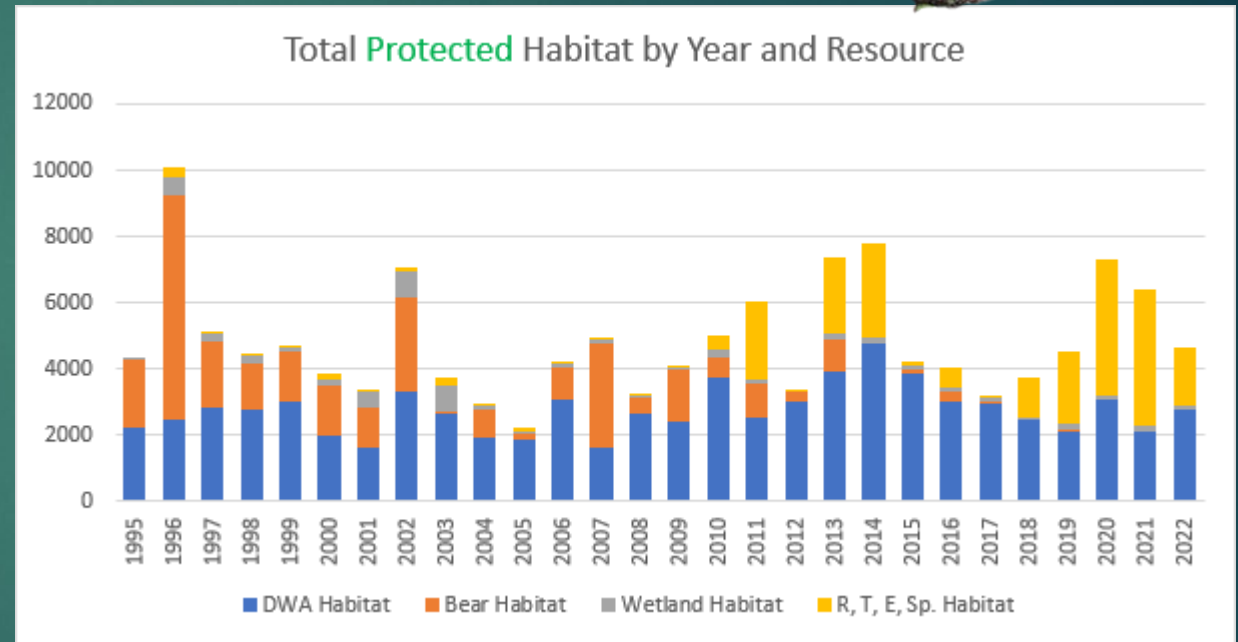
# VT Fish & Wildlife Dept. – Leading on Conservation & Land Use Planning

- ▶ 2016, Mapping VT's Natural Heritage
- ▶ 2005, Conserving VT's Natural Heritage
- ▶ Providing planning, mapping, and data analysis support to all 251 towns in Vermont
- ▶ Working closely with all VT Regional Planning Commissions
- ▶ Support the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions
- ▶ Worked with VNRC to assess and evaluate all town and regional plans every 10 years since 2000.



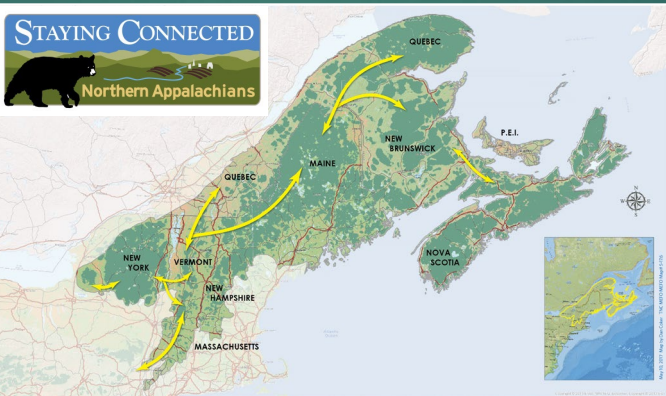
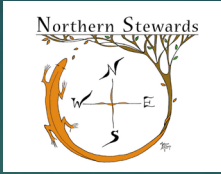
# VT Fish & Wildlife Dept. – Protecting Fish & Wildlife Habitat through Act 250, Section 248, Wetland Permits, FERC, and More

- ▶ Protected over 39,000 acres of necessary wildlife habitat since 2016.
- ▶ Map & provide data on fish, wildlife, habitats and natural communities to guide thoughtful development

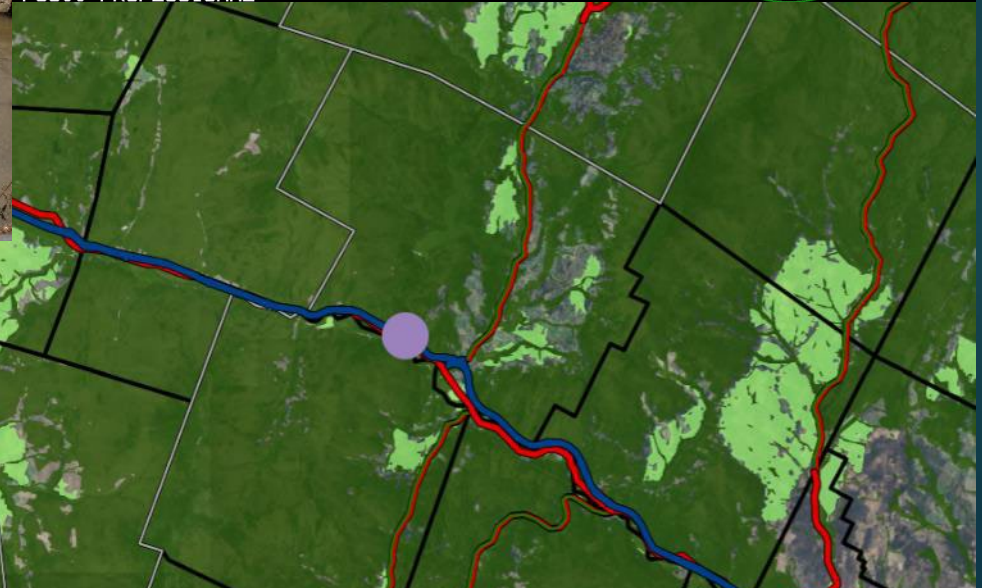


VT Fish & Wildlife  
Dept. – Addressing  
Wildlife  
Conservation in  
Renewable  
Energy  
Development





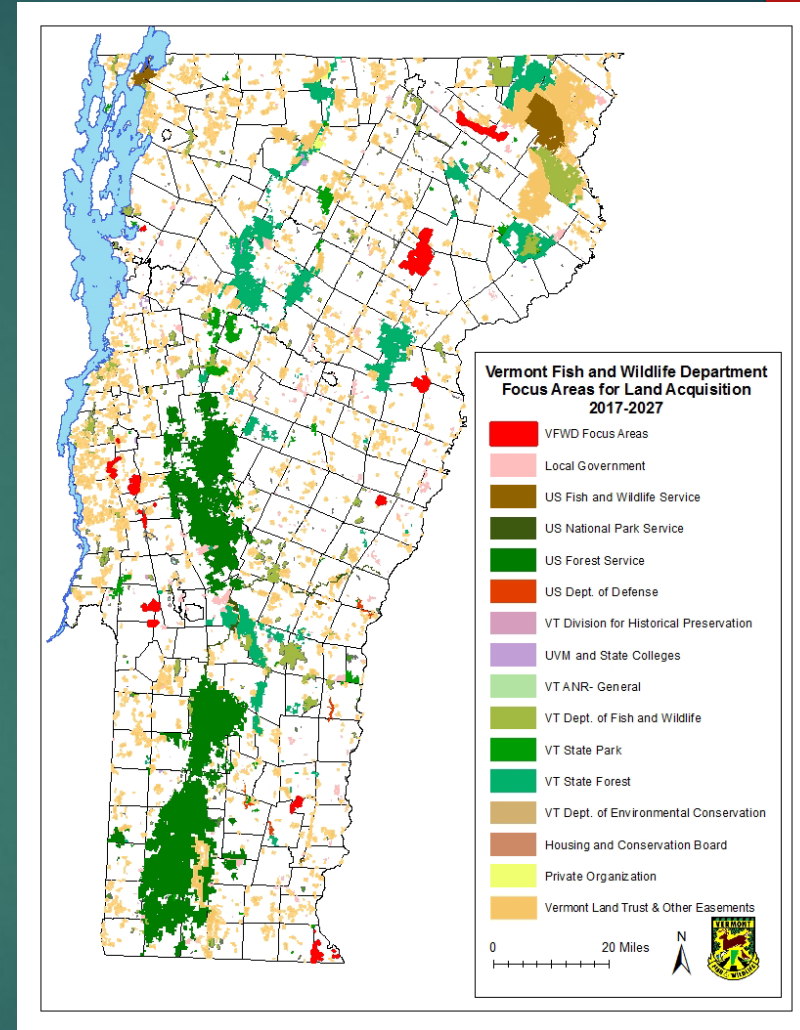
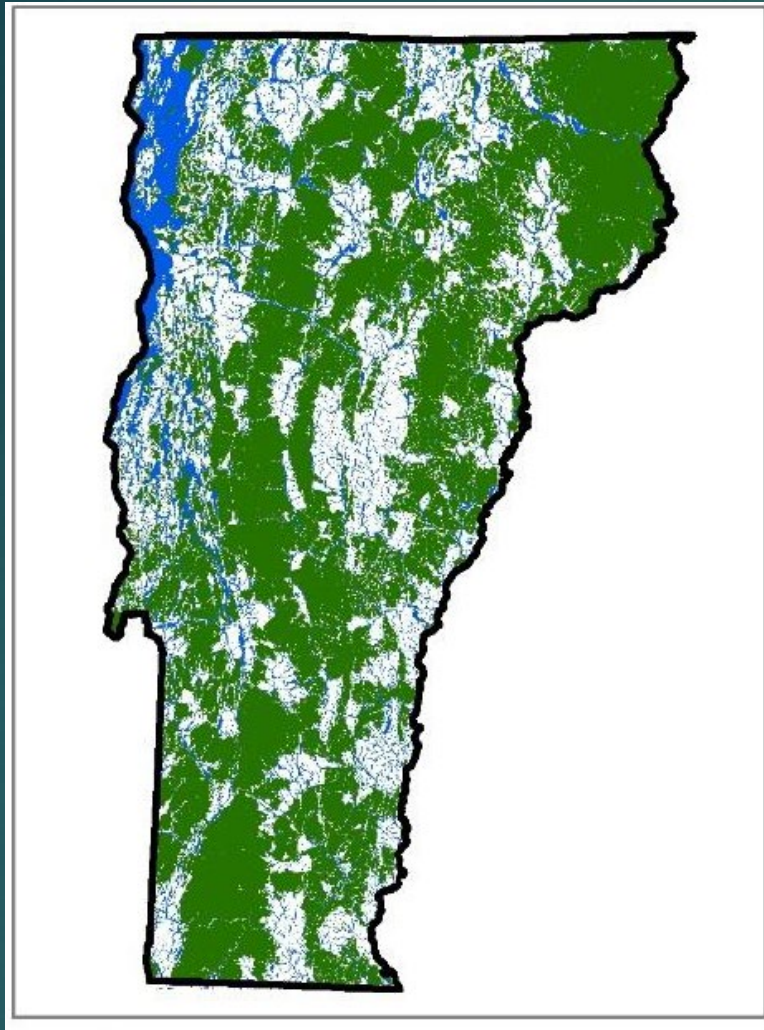
# Coordinating Transportation investments and Land protection



Little River Shelf under Interstate 89



# VCD & Land Conservation





# PERMANENT LAND PROTECTION

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## SUCCESS FACTORS

- Willing landowners
- Conservation organization
- Strategic conservation plan
- Funding
- Stewardship





# Fee Acquisition vs. Conservation Easements

## Fee Acquisition

- Acquire full “bundle of sticks”
- Highest value
- Most management authority & responsibility
- Ownership responsibilities

## Conservation Easement

- Acquire certain “sticks” like public access & development
- Less value than full cost to acquire parcel
- Management authority and responsibility commensurate with “sticks” acquired
- Stewardship obligations

Conservation values present on a property, in addition to other factors, will inform whether to acquire a conservation easement or fee title

# AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

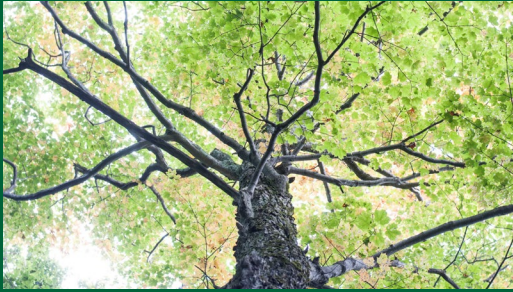


President Biden has issued a call to action that we work together to conserve, connect, and restore 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030 for the sake of our economy, our health, and our well-being.

- Pursuing a collaborative and inclusive approach to conservation;
- Conserving America's lands and waters for the benefit of all people;
- Supporting locally led and locally designed conservation efforts;
- Honoring Tribal sovereignty and supporting the priorities of Tribal Nations;
- Pursuing conservation and restoration approaches that create jobs and support healthy communities;
- Honoring private property rights and supporting the voluntary stewardship efforts of private landowners;
- Using science as a guide; and
- Building on existing tools and strategies with an emphasis on flexibility and adaptive approaches.

Language excerpted from Department of the Interior website: <https://www.doi.gov/priorities/america-the-beautiful>

# AGENCY OWNERSHIP & MANAGEMENT



## Acres

360,000 fee ownership

140,000 in conservation easements on private land



## Evaluation Criteria

Ecological values

Public access

Management value

Funding

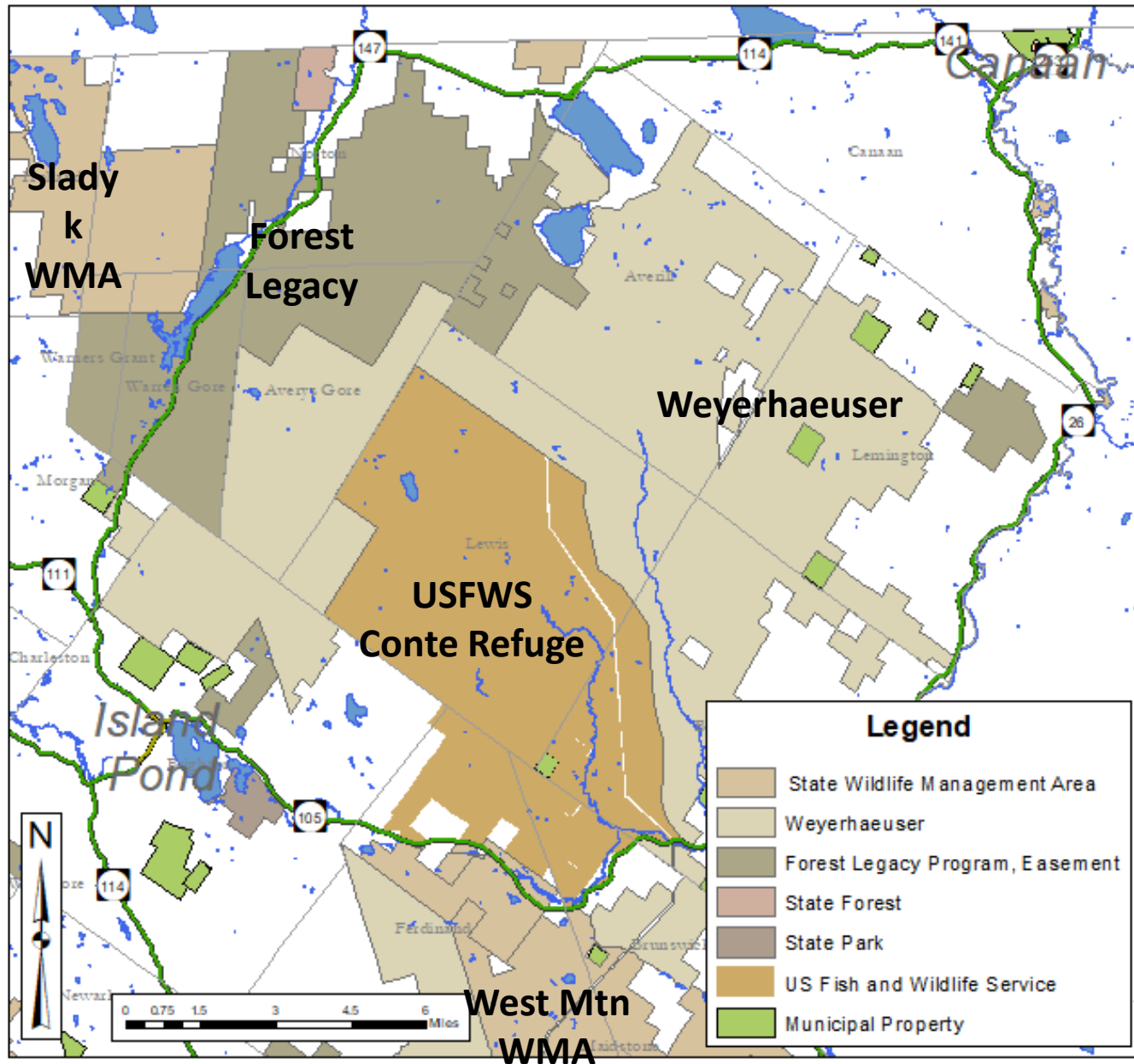
Partners



## ALBURGH BLUFFS

- 164 acres added to State Park
- 16 Natural communities
- 25 Rare or endangered species
- 15+ years to acquire
- Partnerships!
- FPR ownership





# CHAMPION LANDS

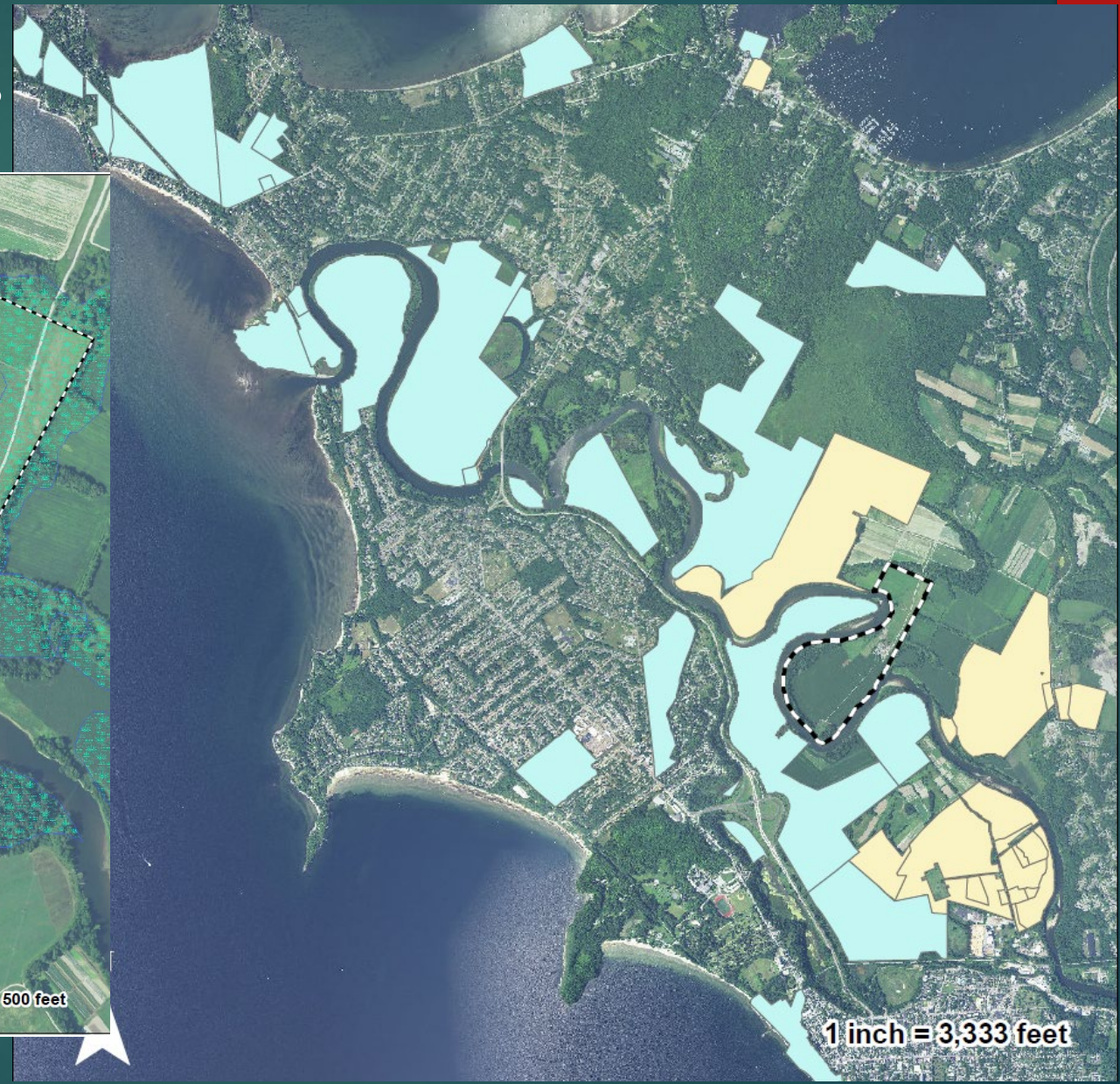
- 132,000 acres
- Conservation values
  - Working forest
  - Ecological protection
  - Public access
- Multiple ownership outcomes
- Partnerships!

# VFWD EPA-Funded Wetland Acquisition and Restoration

- Overview – How did this come to be?
- FY18, FY19 and FY20 total \$4.35 million
- Anticipate \$2 million for FY21
- Future Opportunities
- Minimum Requirements
- Steering Committee:  
Representation from DEC,  
Fisheries and Wildlife.



# Intervale WMA Fitzgerald, 124 acres



# AGENCY OWNERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

The Agency Lands concept is intended to foster inter-department coordination and communication and where appropriate, improve consistency regarding state lands management and administration while recognizing and embracing the important distinctions among the three ANR department land holdings.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Vermont is a patchwork of different land uses and ownerships requiring a variety of tools and strategies to maintain an ecologically functional and connected landscape
- Permanent land protection is an important tool that requires key success factors
- Not all land is equal –VCD informs where investments in permanent land protection will achieve the greatest benefits