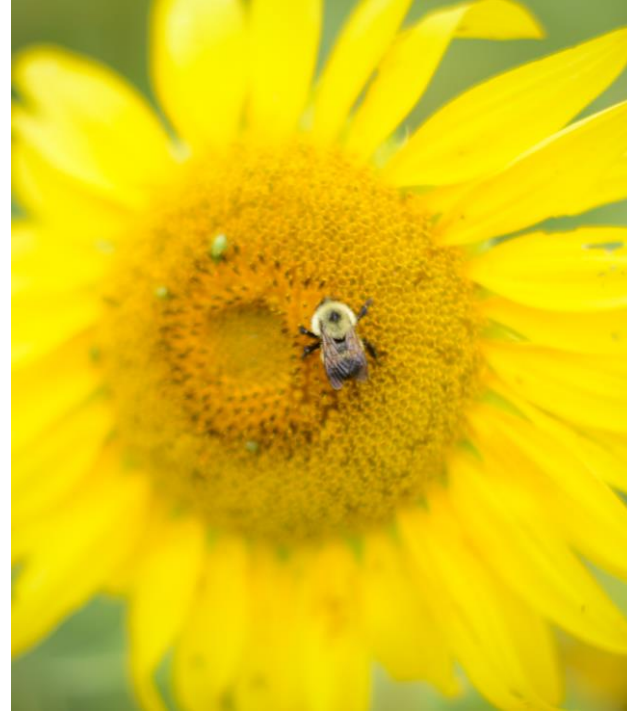




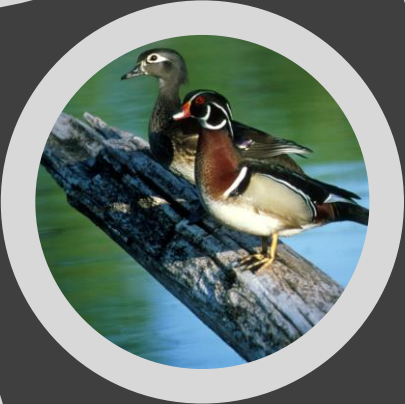
Beavers in Vermont

Testimony for the House Committee on Environment
January 29, 2025

Brehan Furfey, Furbearer Project Leader



The mission of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is the conservation of our fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the people of Vermont



Beavers are a Keystone Species

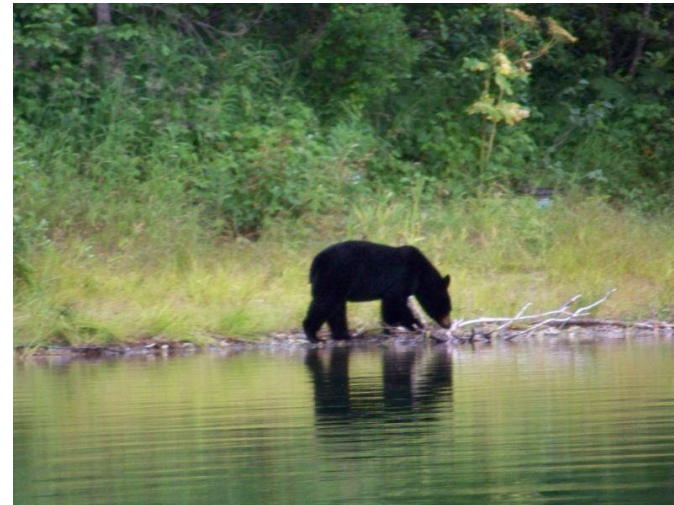
A beaver colony can build a 35' dam in a week!





- A colony typically supports 2 adults, 2 juveniles and 2 - 4 kits born each year.
- The 2-year-old juveniles are kicked out of the beaver pond in the spring on arrival of the new kits.

Beaver created wetlands are cyclic



Flooding

- Beaver created wetlands can help with seasonal flooding
 - ✓ Dams slow the flow of water,
 - ✓ reduces stream velocity,
 - ✓ allow sediments to filter out,
 - ✓ also allowing the stream to access the floodplain.
- The ability for streams/ivers to access the floodplain is crucial for water quality and reducing downstream flooding
- Infrastructure built within floodplain limits the ability for streams and rivers to access them
- Beavers are resilient, even if dams break

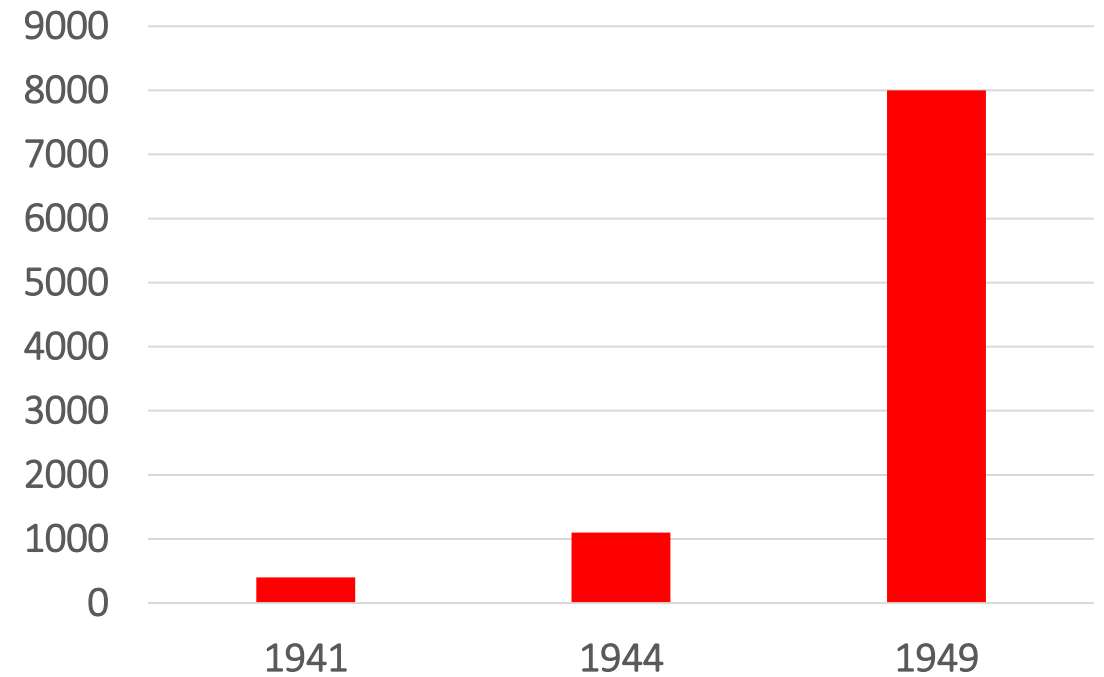


- Land use changes
- 90-95% forest to 30% by 1850
- Beaver had been gone from the landscape almost 100 years before VT was settled by people of European descent



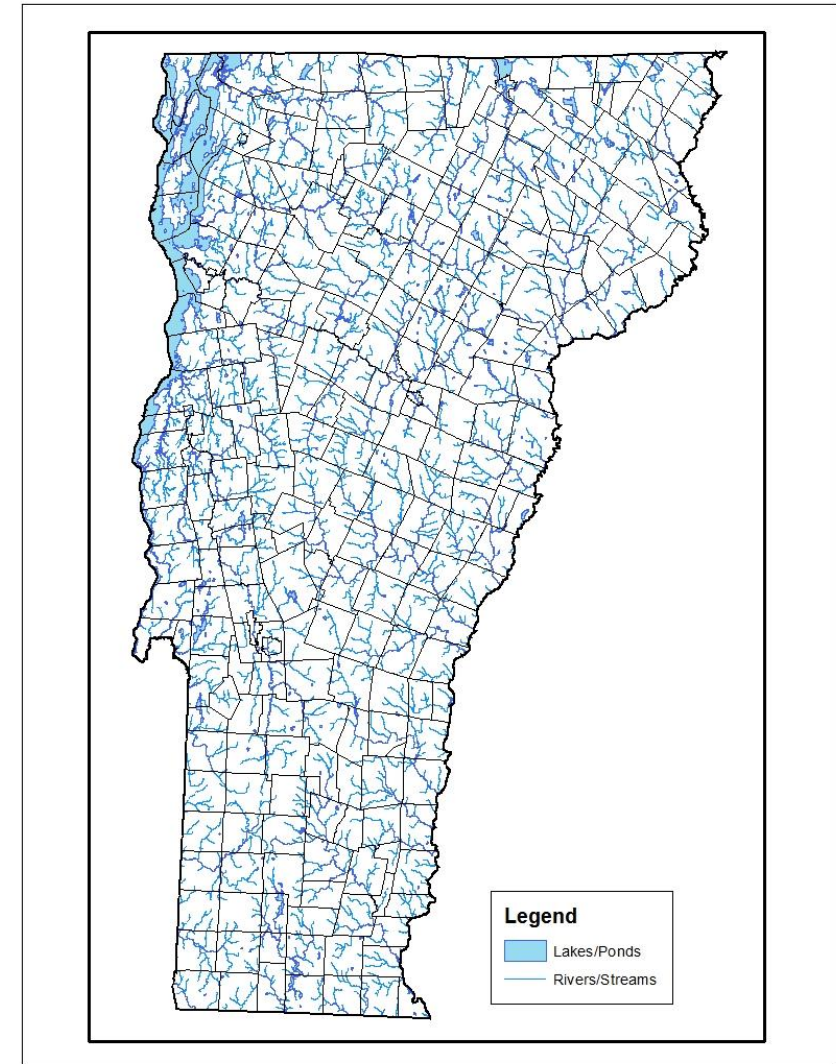
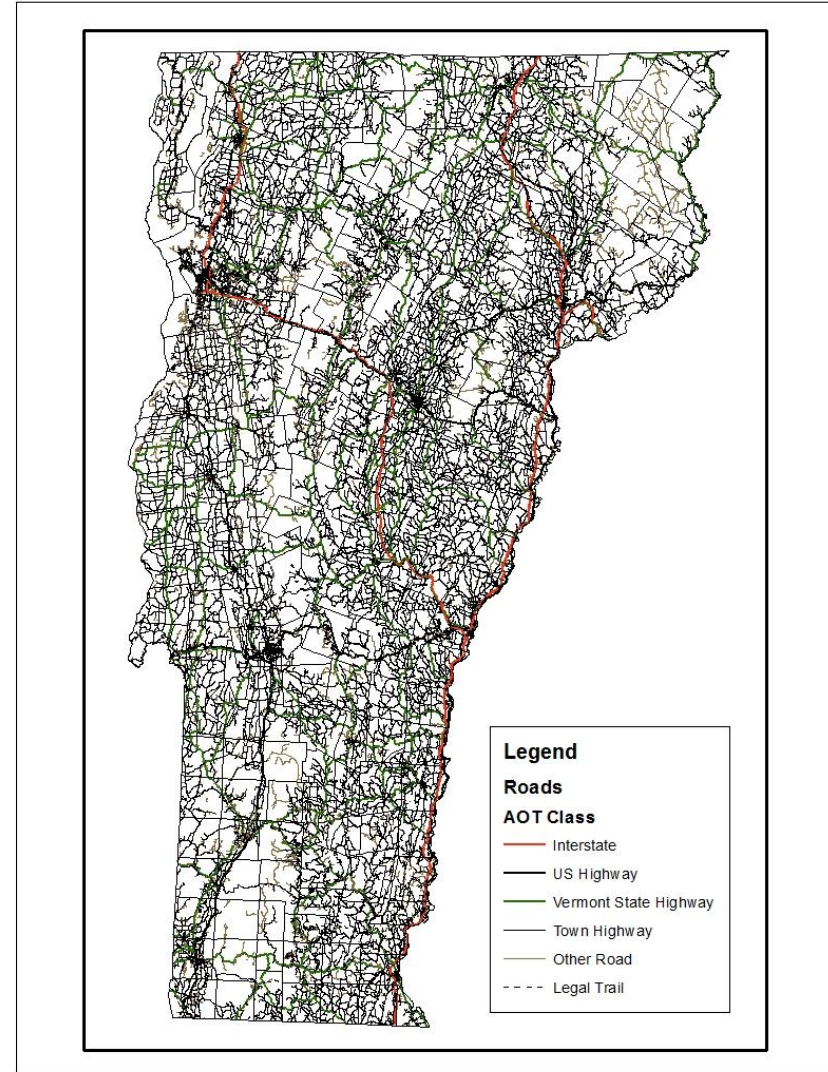


Beaver Population 1941-1949



- **1910** – Beaver officially protected
- **1921 to 1937** – beaver live trapped from NY & ME and translocated to VT

Many of Vermont's roads, houses, and other infrastructure were constructed in the absence of beaver



The Best Management Practices for Resolving Human - Beaver Conflicts in Vermont (BMPs)

- *The BMPs* attempts to simplify the regulatory framework while maintaining valuable wetland habitat.
- Discusses beaver biology, management, techniques for resolving conflicts & some of the rules and regulations regarding wetlands



Best Management Practices for Resolving Human-Beaver Conflicts in Vermont



Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
Vermont Department of Environmental
Conservation



August 2002
Revised 2004, 2014, 2017

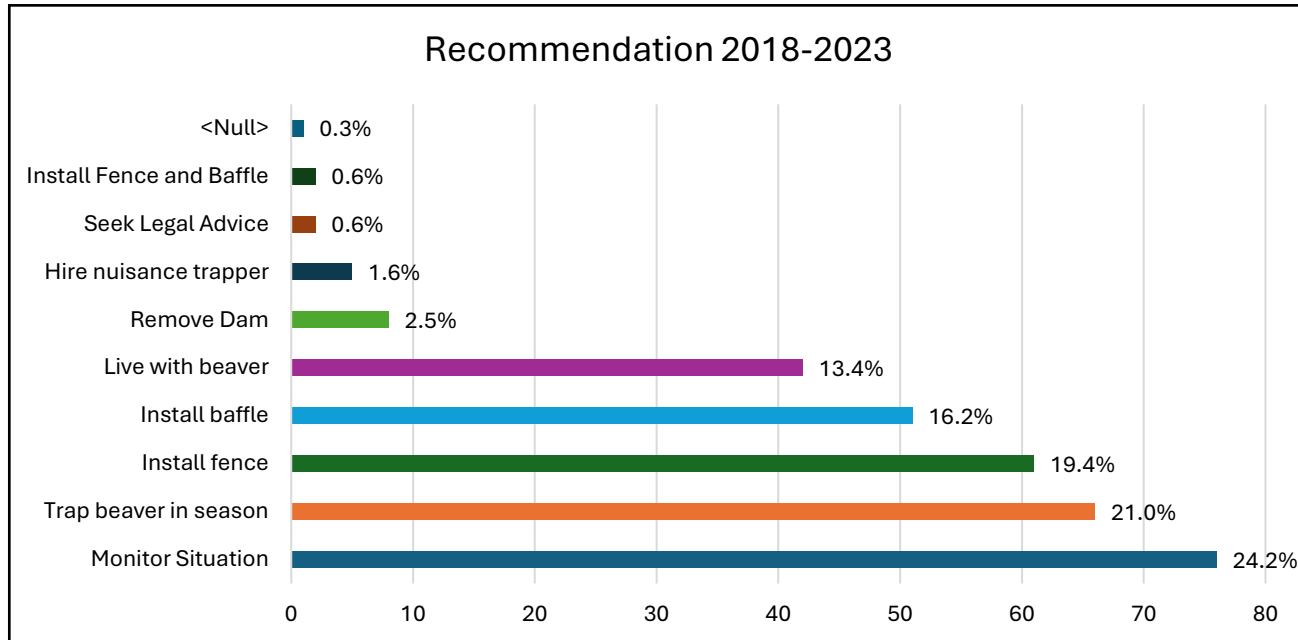
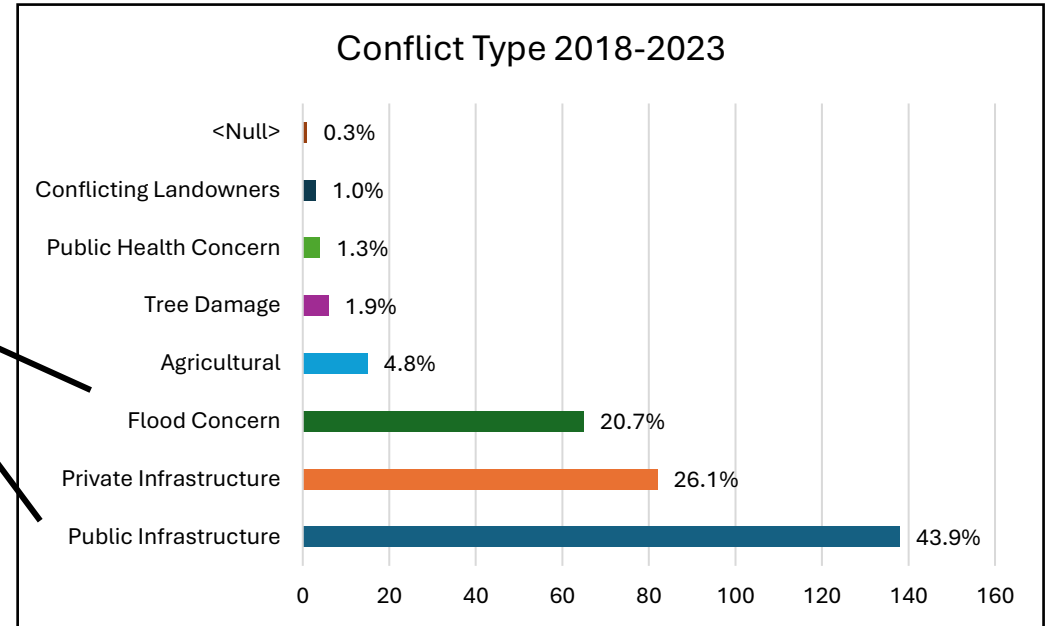
Beaver Baffle Project Goal = Maintain Quality Beaver Created Wetland Habitat



Beaver Baffle Project



Flood Concern
Private Infrastructure
Public Infrastructure



- Each year:
- Average 400 calls/emails regarding beaver activity
 - Average 50 site visits
 - Conflicts concerning public and private infrastructure are 70% of the complaints ('18-'23)
 - Approximately 1/3 of site visit recommendations are to install a water control device ('18-'23)



Doesn't Work in all Conflict Situations

Site
evaluation

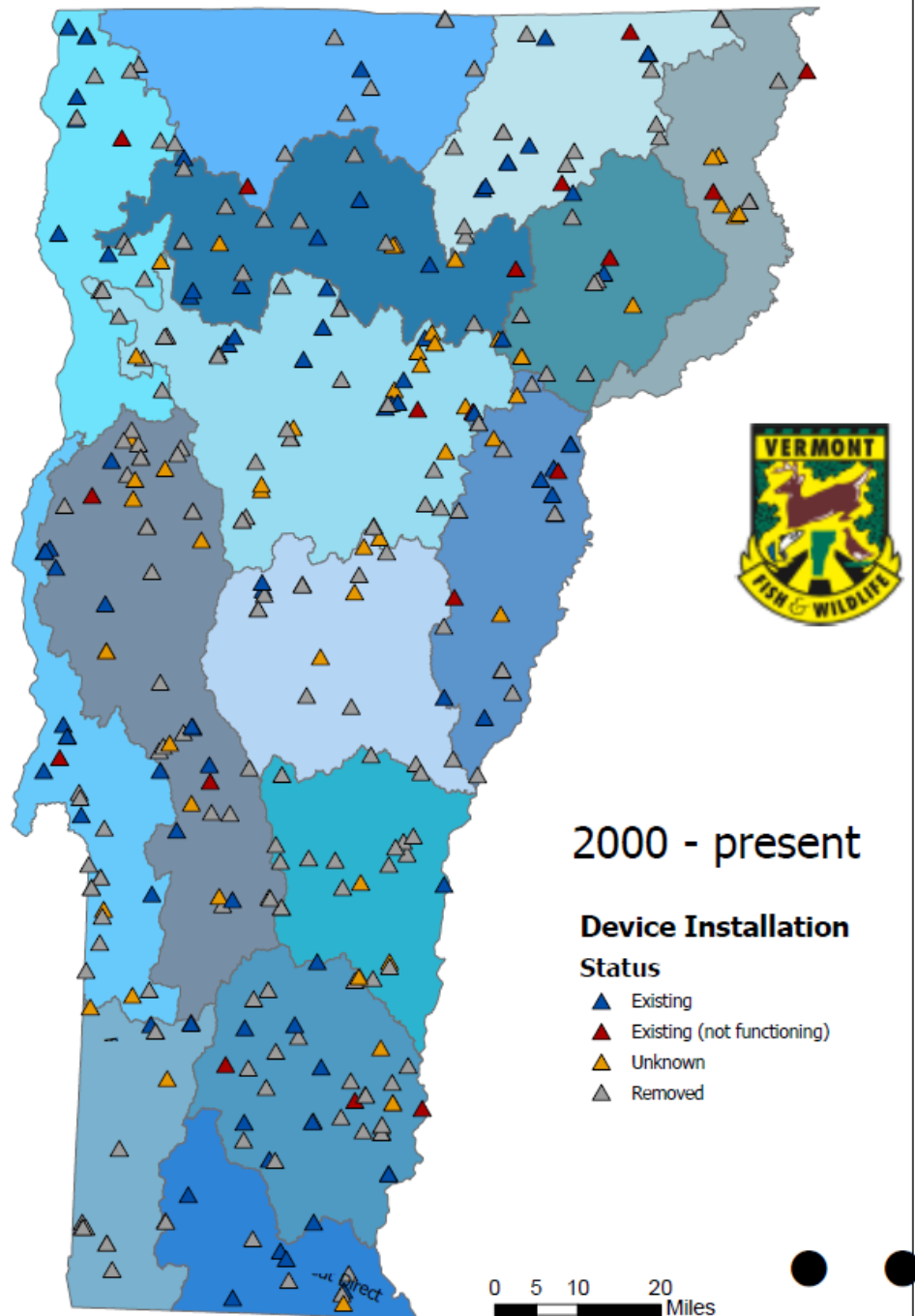
- Water volume and depth
- Site layout
- Beaver activity

Is this resolving the conflict? Is landowner satisfied with that level?

Device Installations

Since the project's inception in 2000:

- 341 total installations (as of 12/23)
 - Influencing over 3,700 acres of wetland habitat
- Around 100 devices continue to function each year
 - Continuing to influence ~1,200 acres of wetlands
- Beaver activity changes over time
 - Will salvage baffles from sites where they are no longer needed
- Install ~15 water control devices each year



What we know
about their
distribution
and
abundance

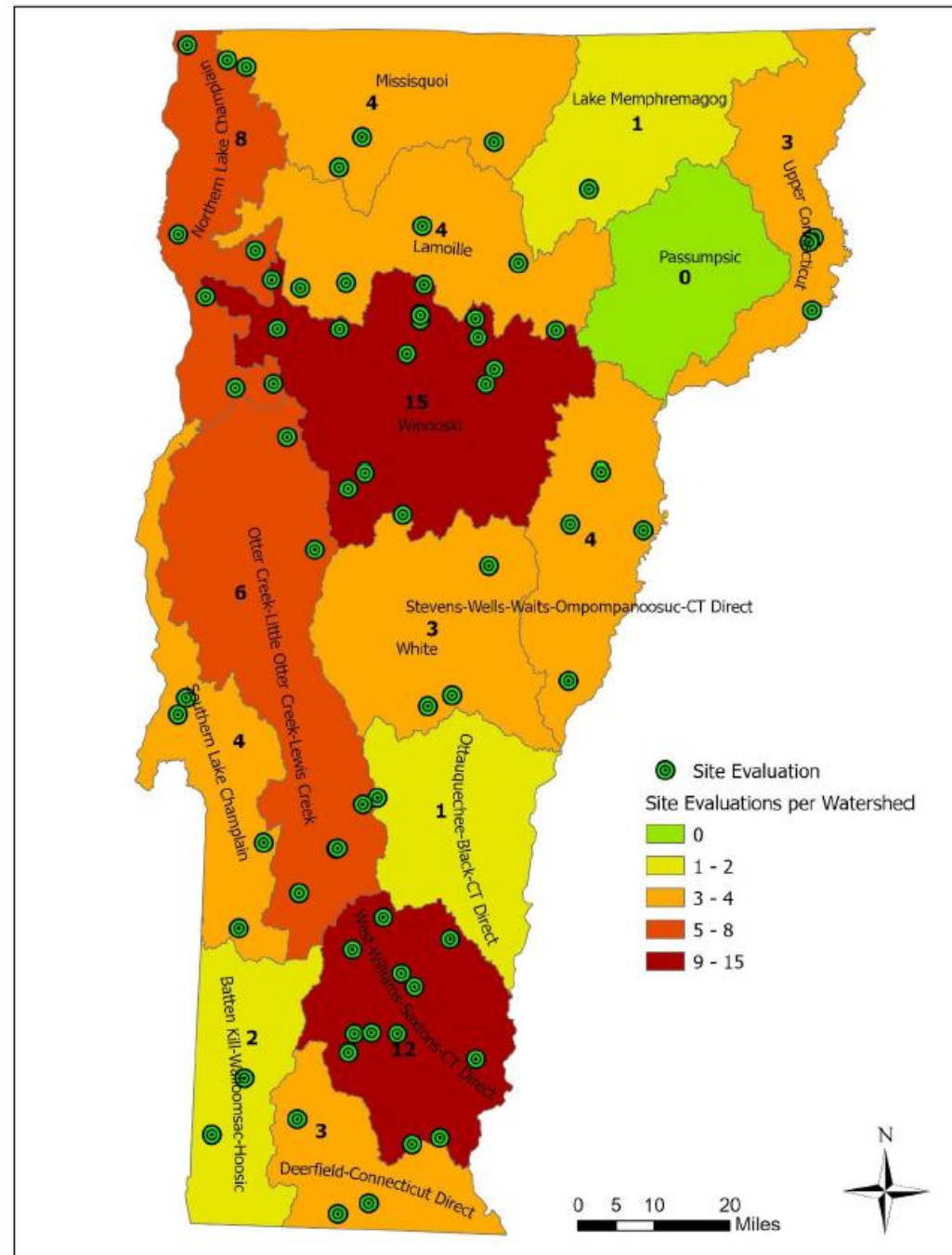


Figure 8. Distribution of 60 site evaluations conducted between July 2023 and June 2024.

QUESTIONS?

