



# The Staying Connected Initiative

*Sustaining landscape connections across  
the Northern Appalachians*



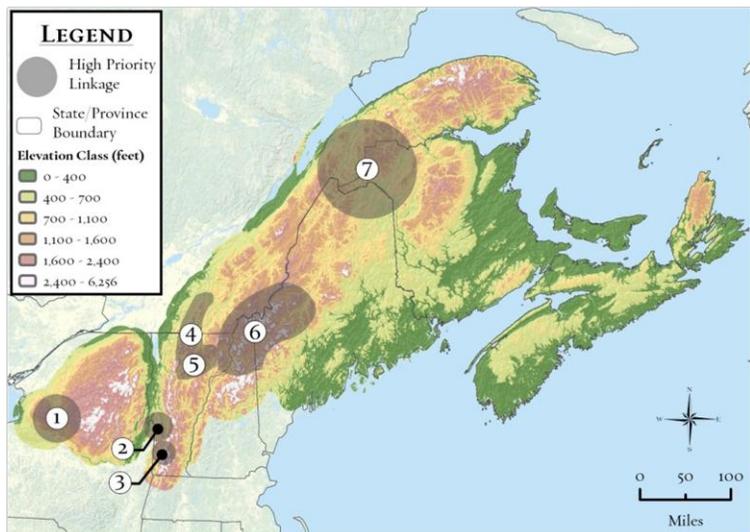
## What is the Staying Connected Initiative?

**Staying Connected in the Northern Appalachians** is an initiative to help safeguard wide-ranging and forest-dwelling wildlife such as bear, moose, lynx, marten and bobcat from the impacts of habitat fragmentation and climate change by maintaining and restoring landscape connections across the Northern Appalachians region.

## What is the Staying Connected Initiative doing?

**Staying Connected** is helping individuals and communities to choose actions that will sustain wildlife and local community values such as hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation in a rapidly changing world. The initiative focuses on seven priority areas across the Northern Appalachians where landscape connections for wildlife movement are at risk due to development and roads:

- ① Tug Hill Plateau ↔ Adirondack Mountains (NY)
- ② Adirondack Mountains ↔ Green Mountains (NY-VT)
- ③ Taconic Mountains ↔ Southern Green Mountains (NY-VT)
- ④ Northern Green Mountains (VT-Canada)
- ⑤ Worcester Range ↔ Northeast Kingdom (VT)
- ⑥ Northeast Kingdom ↔ Northern NH ↔ Western Maine Mountains (VT-NH-ME)
- ⑦ Maine's North Woods ↔ Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula (ME-Canada)



Within these landscapes, project partners and communities are identifying the key areas of local connectivity – or linkages - that allow wildlife to successfully move through intact and fragmented landscapes. We are engaging landowners, organizations and municipalities to protect, restore, maintain, and enhance habitat blocks and the connections among them. And we are working with state transportation agencies and local communities to reduce the dangers to wildlife seeking to cross well-traveled roads.

## Why does this work matter?

The Northern Appalachians region, also known in the U.S. as the “Northern Forest,” is one of the most intact temperate broadleaf forests in the world. Spanning two countries, four states, four provinces and 80-million acres, it provides a home for more than five million people, as well as rare alpine vegetation, many at-risk species, old-growth forests, very large blocks of unfragmented forest, and high quality rivers. Canada lynx, black bear, and other wide-ranging species still have the opportunity to roam freely across much of the area. Nevertheless, the Northern Appalachians are hardly immune to the significant challenges posed by fragmentation and climate change. Recent scientific analysis coordinated by the bi-national Two Countries, One Forest collaborative reveals that the region risks being separated into a series of disconnected ecological islands — isolating wildlife populations and limiting their ability to migrate and adapt in response

to a changing climate. Many species of wildlife need to move around to meet their basic life needs, such as to find food and breeding areas, for migration between winter and summer habitats, or to disperse from an overcrowded territory. Large carnivores such as black bears can range up to 10 miles (16.1 km) in a single day, and up to 40 miles (64.4 km) over the course of a season, while even smaller predators like fishers can cover three or four miles a day.

To sustain healthy populations of wide-ranging mammals and other wildlife, we must maintain large areas of core habitat as well as the areas of land that link those core habitats. Consequently, “landscape connectivity” – the degree to which the landscape allows animals to move between patches of suitable habitat to meet their life needs - has emerged as a paramount conservation need. **Staying Connected** is a large-scale, coordinated initiative aimed squarely at taking action in response to this challenge. Roads, development, and people are here to stay. But with sound science, solid partnerships, and local ingenuity, we can keep the Northern Appalachians connected for wildlife and for people, today and into the future.



## How is Staying Connected funded?

**Staying Connected** is one of only 12 projects funded nationwide in 2009 through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s Competitive State Wildlife Grants Program – the country’s core program for preventing wildlife from becoming endangered in every state. Additional funding comes from the Wildlife Conservation Society’s Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund, established with support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust, and from project partners. These commitments have enabled **Staying Connected** to launch the partnership, fund core operations, and implement a diverse mix of targeted conservation actions through 2012. Maintaining and restoring landscape connections across the Northern Forest is a much longer-term effort, however, and success will require greater capacity, additional funding and expanded partnerships.

## Who is involved with Staying Connected?

**Staying Connected** is a collaboration of twenty-one public and private entities working together to maintain landscape connections across the northern forest region. The Nature Conservancy’s New Hampshire Chapter serves as the fiscal agent and overall project manager for the initiative. Partners include:

Maine Audubon	Trust for Public Land
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	Tug Hill Commission
Maine Department of Transportation	Tug Hill Tomorrow
National Wildlife Federation	Two Countries, One Forest
New Hampshire Audubon	Vermont Agency of Transportation
New Hampshire Department of Transportation	Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife
New Hampshire Fish & Game Department	Vermont Land Trust
New York Department of Environmental Conservation	Vermont Natural Resources Council
New York Department of Transportation	Wildlands Network
Northeast Wilderness Trust	Wildlife Conservation Society
The Nature Conservancy (NY, VT, NH, & ME)	

We invite you to “Stay Connected” by supporting activities that value wildlife and wild places; link up conservation lands; promote hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation; and protect our extraordinary quality of life in the Northern Appalachians.



Map prepared by The Nature Conservancy, NH Chapter  
Photo credits: Black bear (Eric Aldrich), Fisherman (Eric Aldrich), Bobcat (Paul Bolduc)