

Wildlife Travel Corridor Public Informational Meeting
January 20, 2011
Williston Town Hall Meeting Room
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

- **Introductions**
- **Website: Town of Williston > Natural Resources > Wildlife**
- **Sign-up sheet**

- **Purpose of the meeting:**
 - Answer your questions about wildlife habitat mapping in Williston
 - Gauge landowner interest in allowing a biologist to track wildlife on your property
 - Explain how the verified presence of wildlife corridors could affect your property
 - To learn from you what information already exists that I might not know about
 - Explain next steps and policy making process

- **Project Background**
 - **Wildlife Habitat Assessment**
 - In 2005 the town worked with the UVM spatial analysis lab to identify the 'largest undeveloped areas of habitat for wildlife' in Williston. This study highlighted the habitat units but did not show the travel corridors between them, let alone the corridors that crossed town boundaries.
 - **Existing Regulations**
 - The town already takes into account wildlife habitat, such as deer yards, when reviewing development projects.
 - The WCC is responsible for identifying these mapped conservation areas during the development review process.
 - The problem is that the mapping data is incomplete.
 - **What we have now for maps and data**
 - MAP 5: Conservation corridors are identified in Map 5 of the town's 2006 open space plan. The corridors shown here are the lowland corridors that follow Williston's streams and tributaries. What this map does not show are the upland travel corridors, therefore this map is incomplete.
 - Wildlife Habitat Assessment: In 2005 the town worked with the UVM spatial analysis lab to identify the 'largest undeveloped areas of habitat for wildlife' in Williston. This study showed the habitat units but did not show the travel corridors between them, let alone the corridors that crossed town boundaries.
 - State Identified Deer Yards many of which have not been confirmed in the field
 - PLACE Program data for bobolinks, bobcat, and salamanders
 - VTrans Data: Vermont Wildlife Linkage Habitat Analysis
 - Other?
 - **LCBP Wildlife Grant: VNRC, Arrowwood Environmental, SAL**

- Grant funds will be used to complete the Williston Wildlife Habitat Assessment Report, produce a comprehensive Wildlife Habitat and Travel Corridor Map, and develop policy language for the Planning Commission to consider for incorporation into the Town Plan and Bylaws. The policy language will be dependent upon the outcome of the study.
 - This project is breaking new ground for VT towns. Other VT towns have gone so far as to have the habitat assessments completed but few, if any have adopted language or mechanism such as a Wildlife Habitat District Overlay to effectively drive habitat restoration and conservation projects that will restore, enhance, and maintain critical habitats and habitat connections in Williston.

- **How will mapped wildlife corridors be protected? What is a corridor identified on my property? How will the presence of corridors affect development?**
 - Like now, travel corridors will be treated like all other conservation areas are treated now. At the recommendation of the WCC, development will be directed away from corridors wherever possible (i.e. Put the house in the western corner of the parcel instead of the east).
 - The town may use Environmental Reserve Fund dollars to buy the property at fair market value to keep development from disrupting the corridor (Senecal example)
 - Mapped corridors will help developers target areas for habitat mitigation (CSWD example)
 - Presence of habitat corridors might encourage a developer to transfer development rights from a sensitive parcel to another without critical habitat features.

- **Next Steps**
 - January – February 2011: Field Verification and revise maps
 - March 2011: Develop draft policy language and mechanism to effectively drive habitat restoration and conservation projects that will restore, enhance, and maintain critical habitats and habitat connections in Williston.
 - March – May 2011: Planning Commission Review

- **The Overall Purpose:**

The purpose of wildlife habitat mapping is to plan ahead. Over the years, wildlife habitat in Williston has become fragmented by development. The time is now to identify still existing important wildlife habitat and travel corridors so that future development can be carefully located and designed to avoid habitat fragmentation and adverse impacts.