

February 12, 2026

Tom Rogers, Executive Director of Stowe Land Trust, and Eve Frankel, Vermont State Director of The Nature Conservancy, presented on why the Stowe Valley matters for conservation, how they are working together to protect it, and how working forests, farms, wildlife habitat, and recreation fit together.

Why the Stowe Valley is Unique

- The Valley has **high climate resiliency**, according to The Nature Conservancy's science.
- It contains **critical wildlife corridors** and sits within the Appalachians, which is especially important as species shift their ranges northward in response to climate change. Animals are effectively moving "right up the chain" of the Appalachians, and connected forests in this region are essential to that movement.
- These mountains and forests form the **headwaters for more than 200,000 Vermonters**, meaning conservation here benefits communities far downstream.
- It is centered around Vermont's highest peak and contains some of the state's most iconic landscapes.

Protecting this valley protects both nature and people.

How Stowe Land Trust Approaches Their Work

Considers flood resiliency, working farms and forests, wildlife and biodiversity, and recreation.

- By **protecting forests, wetlands, and streams**, Stowe Land Trust protects downstream communities, safeguards wildlife habitat, reduces flooding, and ensures clean water.
- **Conserving land has a direct impact on flooding and water quality:** 1 healthy acre of forests absorbs 36x more water than 1 acre of developed land.
- **Protecting working landscapes** also ensures that family farms can continue sustaining Vermont's local food economy and preserves Vermont's rural character.
- **Expanding outdoor recreation** allows more people to connect with nature and introduces the next generation to the outdoors. Stowe Land Trust works to expand access for all and has recently completed trail upgrades at [Kirchner Woods](#) for adaptive mountain bikers.

February 12, 2026

Stowe Land Trust's Valley-Wide Approach

As our local communities become more interconnected, Stowe Land Trust has expanded to serve the broader valley, reflecting our shared challenges and opportunities across town lines.

By working to protect land across the valley, we can:

- Protect wildlife
- Ease pressure on popular trailheads
- Expand access to nature
- Tackle shared challenges around development, housing affordability, and recreation

Learn more about several new land protection projects that reflect our valley-wide approach:

- [Muddy Moose](#)
- [North Hill Forest](#)
- [Stagecoach Meadows](#)

Urgency for Biodiversity & Climate

The Nature Conservancy works to protect wildlife and biodiversity and address climate resiliency.

- **Partners with transportation agencies** to improve wildlife crossings and enhance public safety
- **Engages with landowners** to protect key land and tackle protection initiatives
- **Supports partner-led initiatives** to increase the scale and capacity of land protection across Vermont

Conservation in the Stowe Valley is not separate from the community. It protects wildlife movement in a changing climate, reduces flooding, supports working farms and forests, strengthens the local economy, and ensures that future generations inherit a thriving, connected landscape. **We are all in this together.**

February 2026



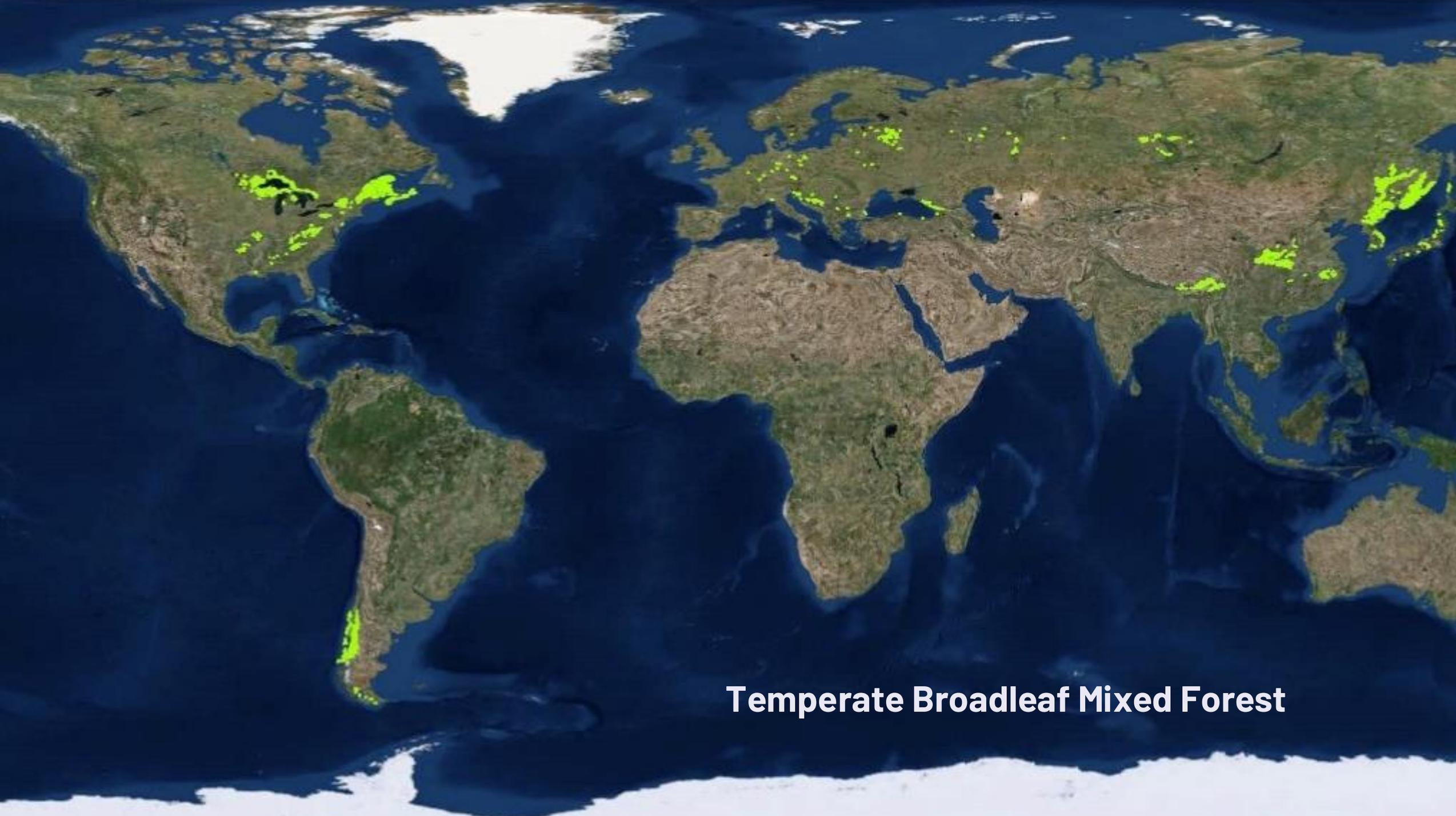
Vermont & The Appalachians

HOPE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

Eve Frankel

Vermont State Director of The Nature Conservancy



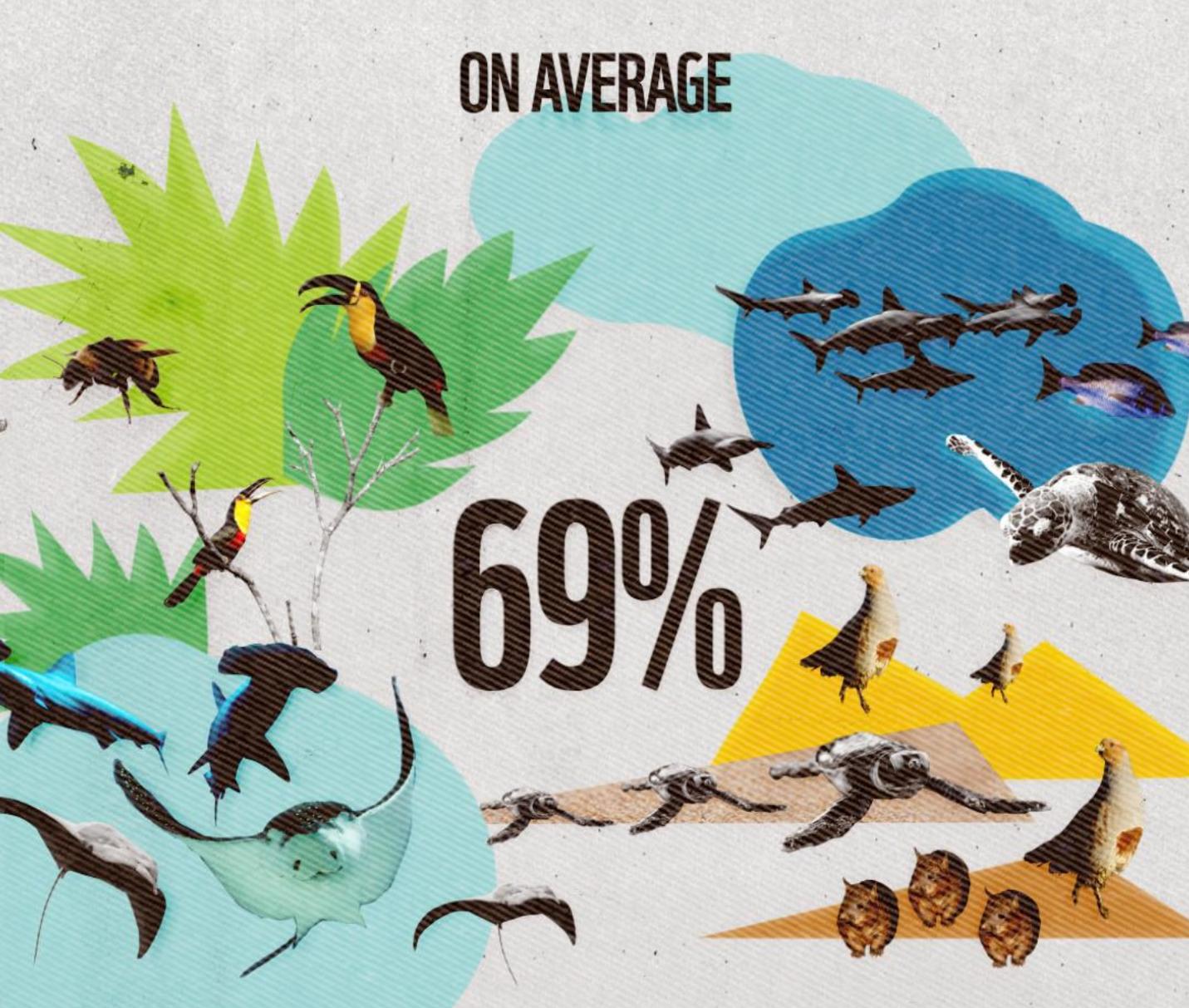


Temperate Broadleaf Mixed Forest

ON AVERAGE

69%

drop in populations of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians since 1970.



Ecosystems in Decline

Critical ecosystems that regulate our climate, support biodiversity, and support life on Earth have faced devastating declines over the past few centuries.

Rapid rates of biodiversity loss put many regions at risk of long-term economic instability, worsen climate change, and exacerbate global problems such as the food price crises.

Learn more about **BIODIVERSITY LOSS**

Data is up to 2019 except for wetlands, which is up to 2000. Source: Ipbcs

The Appalachians

A GLOBAL PRIORITY LANDSCAPE



Why are the Appalachians important?

United States

Mammals



Birds



Amphibians



80 million hectares of land

30,000 species rely on its habitats

Sequesters over **9 billion tons** of carbon

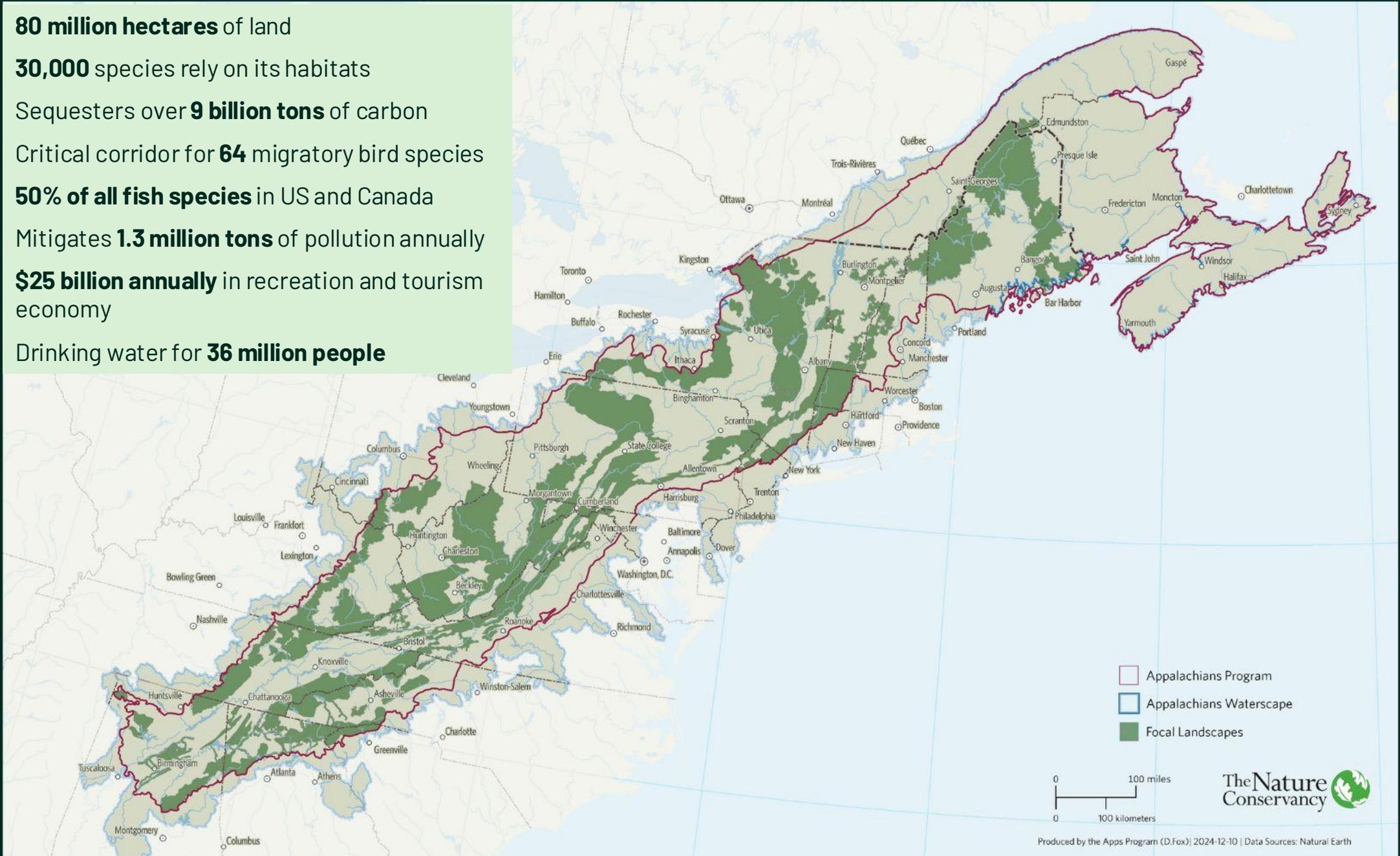
Critical corridor for **64** migratory bird species

50% of all fish species in US and Canada

Mitigates **1.3 million tons** of pollution annually

\$25 billion annually in recreation and tourism economy

Drinking water for **36 million people**





Resilient and Connected Lands

TNC is among a satellite of partners trying to conserve 30% of VT's lands & waters



Our Approach



WILDLIFE FRIENDLY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Collaborate with transportation agencies to improve wildlife passage and enhance public safety.



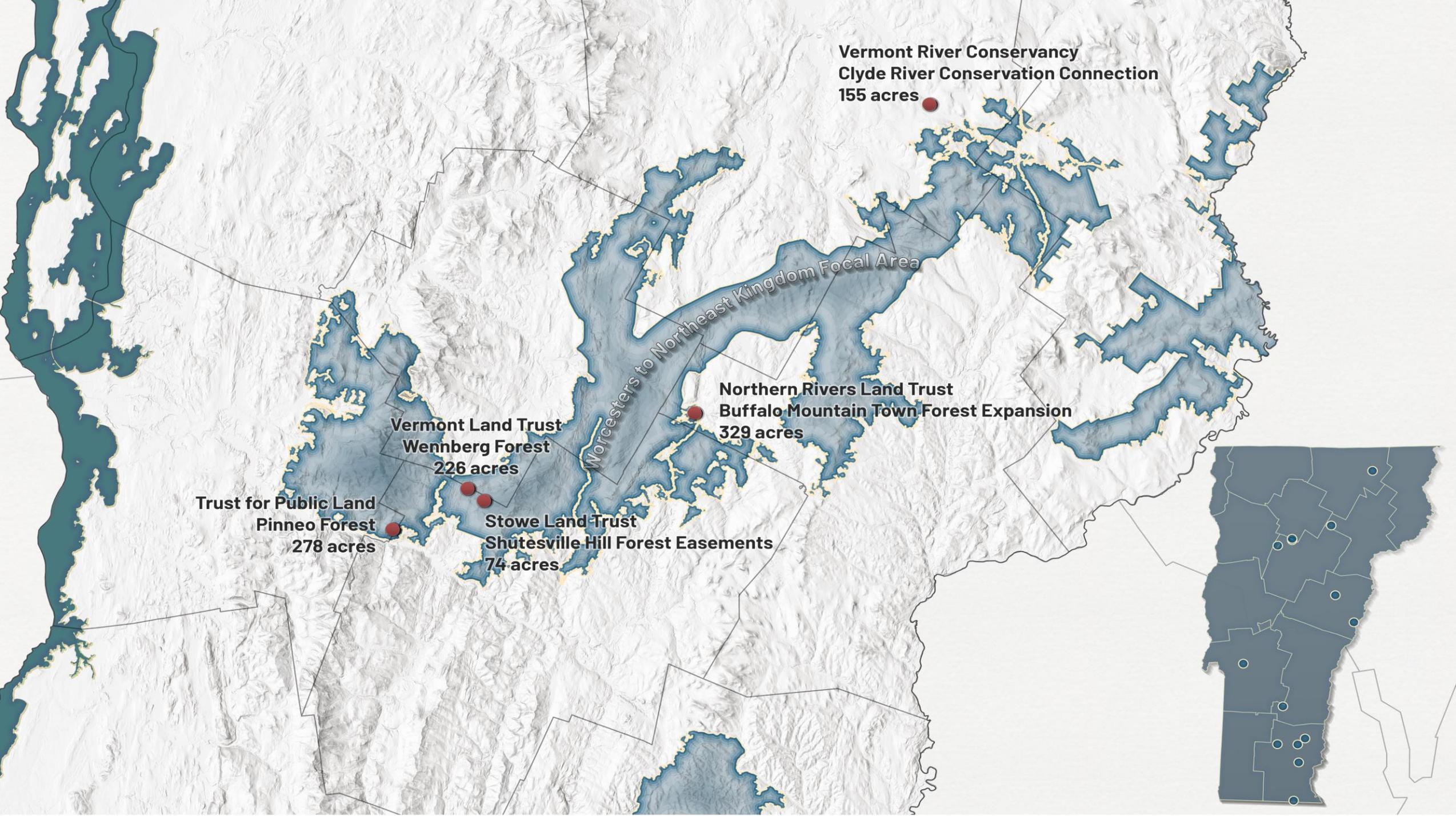
LARGE COMPLEX LAND PROTECTION

Engage large landowners and use innovative financing strategies to tackle land protection initiatives that only TNC can do.



PARTNER-LED PROTECTION VIA VT BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION FUND

Increase the pace, scale, and capacity for land protection across the Appalachians by supporting partner-led initiatives.



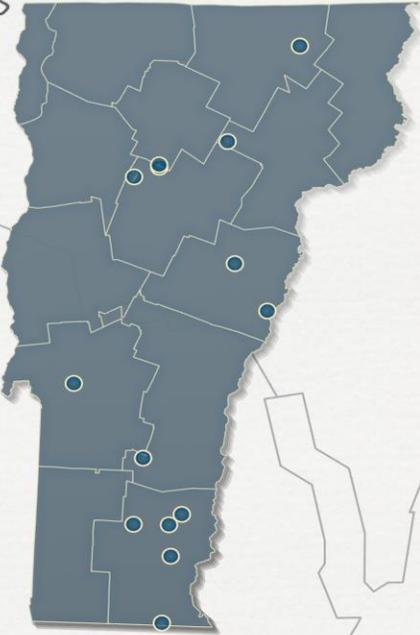
**Vermont River Conservancy
Clyde River Conservation Connection
155 acres**

**Northern Rivers Land Trust
Buffalo Mountain Town Forest Expansion
329 acres**

**Vermont Land Trust
Wennberg Forest
226 acres**

**Trust for Public Land
Pinneo Forest
278 acres**

**Stowe Land Trust
Shutesville Hill Forest Easements
74 acres**







Together we will find a way





Home Ground: Conservation, Community, and the Mt Mansfield Valley

Tom Rogers

**STOWE
LAND TRUST**









STOWE
LAND TRUST

stio

STOWE
LAND TRUST

STOWE
LAND TRUST

stio

STOWE
LAND TRUST

stio

STOWE
LAND TRUST

stio

STOWE
LAND TRUST

stio









**DOLLAR
GENERAL**

A photograph showing a parking lot completely flooded with murky, brown water. In the foreground on the left, a yellow sign with black text reads "DOLLAR GENERAL". A dark-colored sedan is partially submerged in the water, with only its roof and the tops of its windows visible. In the background, there is a large, two-story light-colored building with a flat roof and several windows. To the right of the building, a red awning is visible. A utility pole with multiple power lines stands on the left side of the frame. The sky is overcast and grey.











Photo by Richard Levine









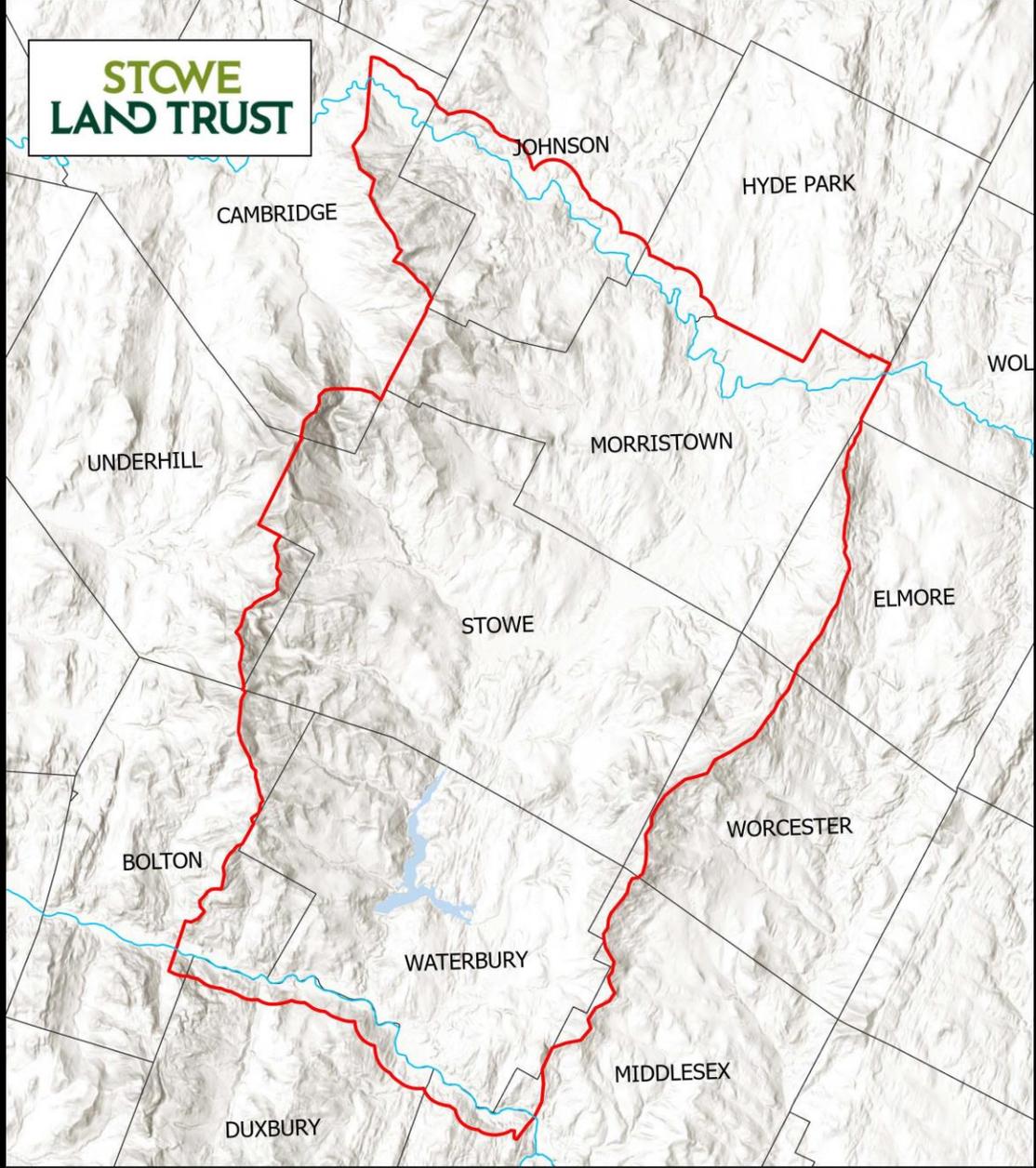






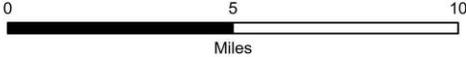






Conservation Region

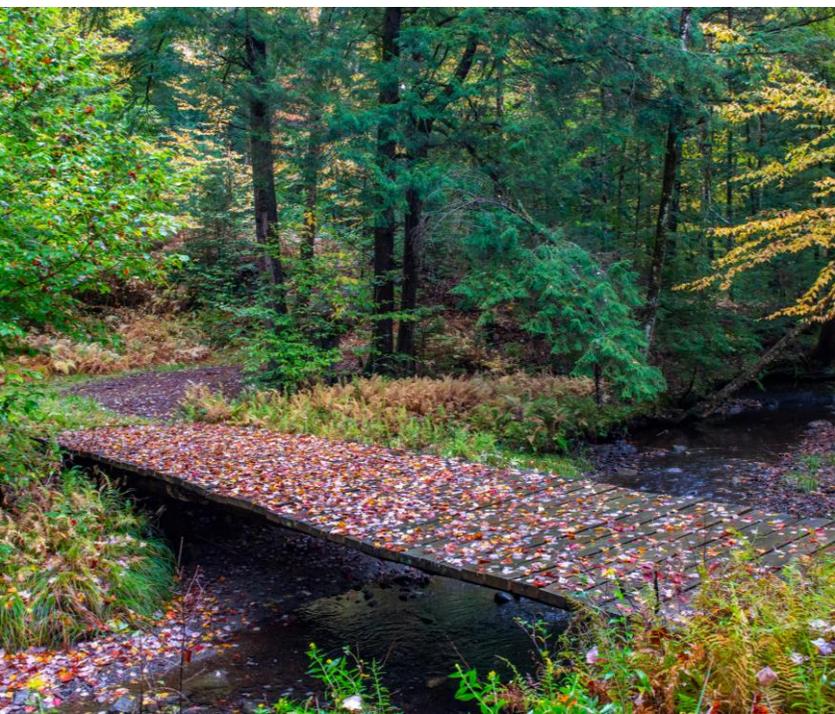
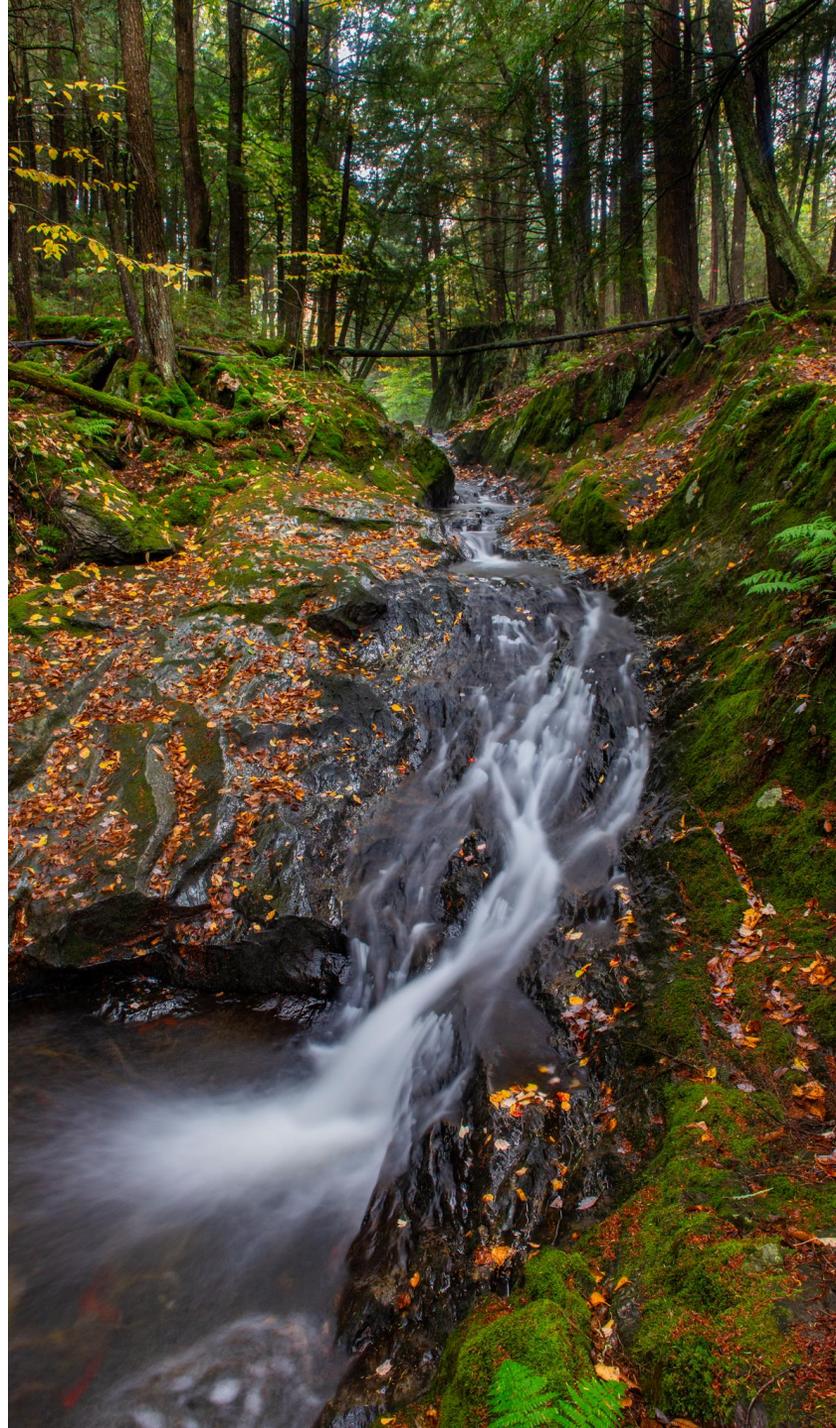
Scale: 1:183,159
Date Exported:
2/11/2026 12:54 PM











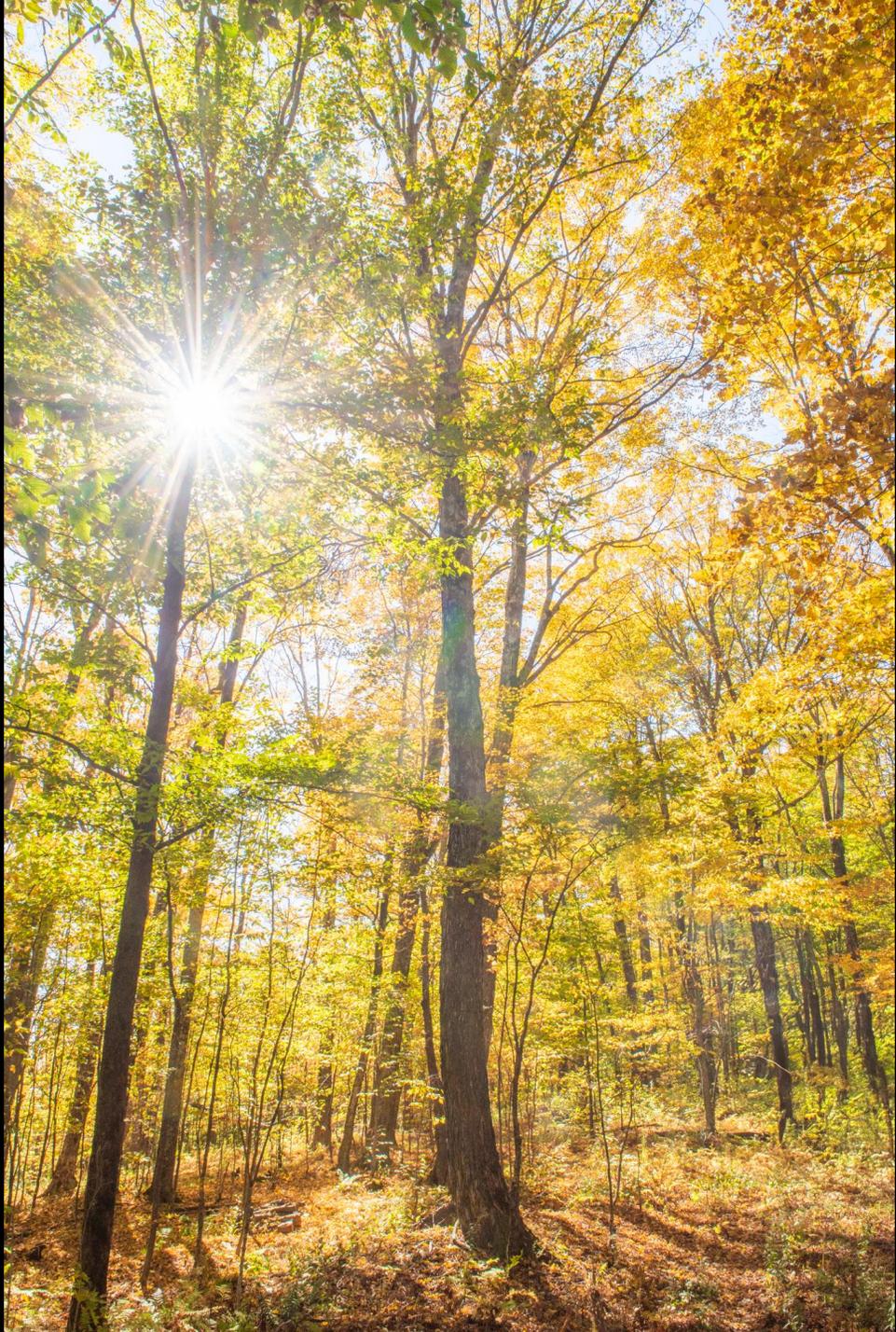






















*“A true
conservationist
knows that the
world is not given
by his ancestors,
but borrowed from
his children.”*

-Wendell Berry









Home Ground: Conservation, Community, and the Mt Mansfield Valley

Tom Rogers

**STOWE
LAND TRUST**