STAYING CONNECTED
IN THE NORTHERN APPALACHIANS

A Bi-National Collaboration
to Restore and Enhance Landscape Connectivity
for Nature and People

Jessica Levine
SCI Coordinator
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“The mission of the Staying Connected Initiative (SCI) is to conserve, restore, and sustain critical landscape connections across the Northern Appalachian-Acadian region for the benefit of nature and people. Sustaining these linkages will help safeguard native wildlife and plants from the impacts of habitat fragmentation and climate change, and support human activities and values that are tied to the forested landscape. We work across borders and at multiple scales to address these challenges.”
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SCI’s Opportunity Question

How can SCI broaden and deepen its relevance with working lands interests toward shared goals and mutual benefits?
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SCI’s Work: A Multi-Pronged Approach

- Conservation science: our foundation
- Local outreach & engagement
- Targeted land protection
- Technical assistance for land use planning
- Making key roads more wildlife-friendly
- Improving policies

Mix of elements tailored to each linkage area

Different partners take lead for different parts
### A Big Network of Partners at Multiple Scales

**Regional Level – Steering Committee:**
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
- Maine Audubon
- Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
- Maine Department of Transportation
- National Wildlife Federation
- Nature Conservancy Canada (NB, NS, QC)
- New Hampshire Fish and Game Department
- New York Department of Transportation
- North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative
- Nova Scotia Department of Environment
- The Conservation Fund
- The Nature Conservancy (Chapters in NY, VT, NH, MA, and ME)
- Trust for Public Land
- Tug Hill Commission
- Two Countries, One Forest
- Vermont Agency of Transportation
- Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Wildlife Conservation Society - Adirondack Program
- Wildlife Conservation Society - Canada

**State Level – Vermont example:**
- The Conservation Fund
- National Wildlife Federation
- The Nature Conservancy (VT)
- Trust for Public Land
- Vermont Agency of Transportation
- Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Vermont Land Trust
- Vermont Natural Resources Council

**Linkage Level – Greens to Adirondacks Example:**
- Brandon Planning Commission
- The Conservation Fund
- Friends of Hawk Hill
- Hubbardton Battlefield Association
- Middletown Springs Conservation Commission
- The Nature Conservancy (VT, NY)
- New York Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York Department of Transportation
- Poultney Conservation Commission
- Rutland Regional Planning Commission
- Vermont Agency of Transportation
- Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Vermont Land Trust
- Vermont Natural Resources Council
- Wildlife Conservation Society – Adirondack Program
Conservation Science & Planning: SCI’s Foundation

- Linkage-specific GIS modeling
- Wildlife tracking
- Game cameras
- Citizen science
- Sharing results
Key Accomplishments

- Permanent protection: over 300,000 acres
- Technical assistance:
  - 41 communities, 7 regional planning commissions
  - Connectivity addressed in 20 plans/codes
- Extensive outreach to communities and organizations
  - Presentations, walks, meetings, publications
- Information sharing with transportation agencies
  - Best practices
  - Priority road segments
- Habitat connectivity criteria in 2015 state wildlife plans
How can SCI broaden and deepen its relevance with working lands interests toward shared goals and mutual benefits?
Opportunity Question: Obstacles

- Perceived conflicts between land conservation/ protection and working lands
- Existing conservation easement programs – especially for farmland – may not address habitat connectivity

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Opportunity Question: Advantages

• Multiple social, economic benefits of forested landscapes
• SCI is a large network of partners, including state agencies and conservation organizations – great potential, large scope
• “Ecosystem services”/ human benefits: increasingly important for SCI partners

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Opportunity Question: Why Help?

- Globally important landscape: most intact temperate broadleaf forest in the world
- Regionally and locally important: communities and wildlife depend on healthy intact forests, clean water
- Major threats: habitat fragmentation, climate change
  - *Ensuring the persistence of forested corridors connecting large forest blocks is essential to address these threats.*
- SCI and partners need to broaden our base to ensure the long-term integrity of this forest - we need your help.

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