

The Staying Connected Initiative –
Collaborating Across Borders to Enhance Ecological Connectivity
in Northeastern North America

Phil Huffman, Quebec-Labrador Foundation

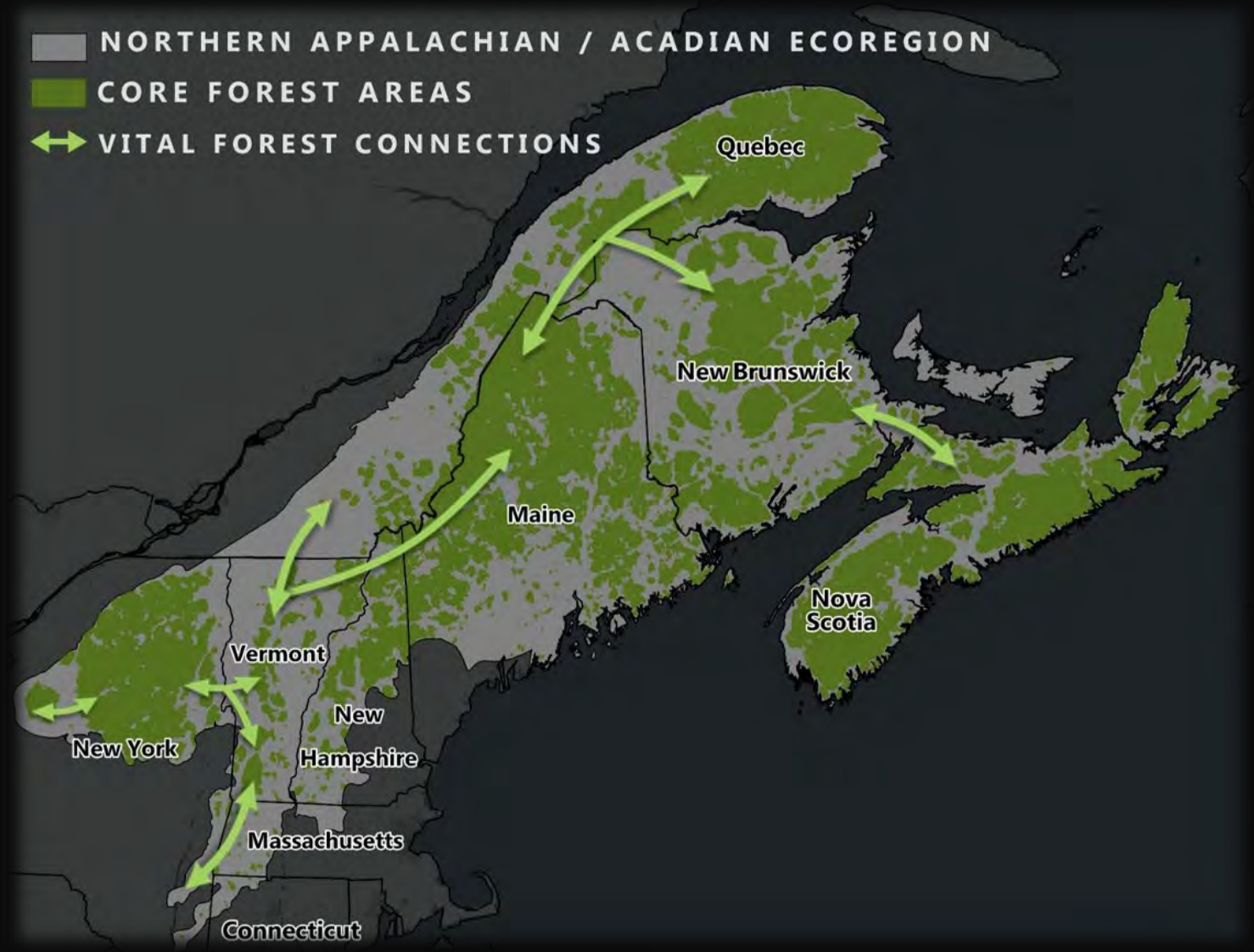
RCP Network Gathering
November 9, 2023



STAYING
CONNECTED
INITIATIVE

What is the Staying Connected Initiative?

- A transboundary public-private partnership that works to conserve, restore, and enhance landscape connectivity (terrestrial and aquatic) across the Northern Appalachian - Acadian Region of the U.S. and Canada.



Global Forest Loss: Temperate Mixed Forest

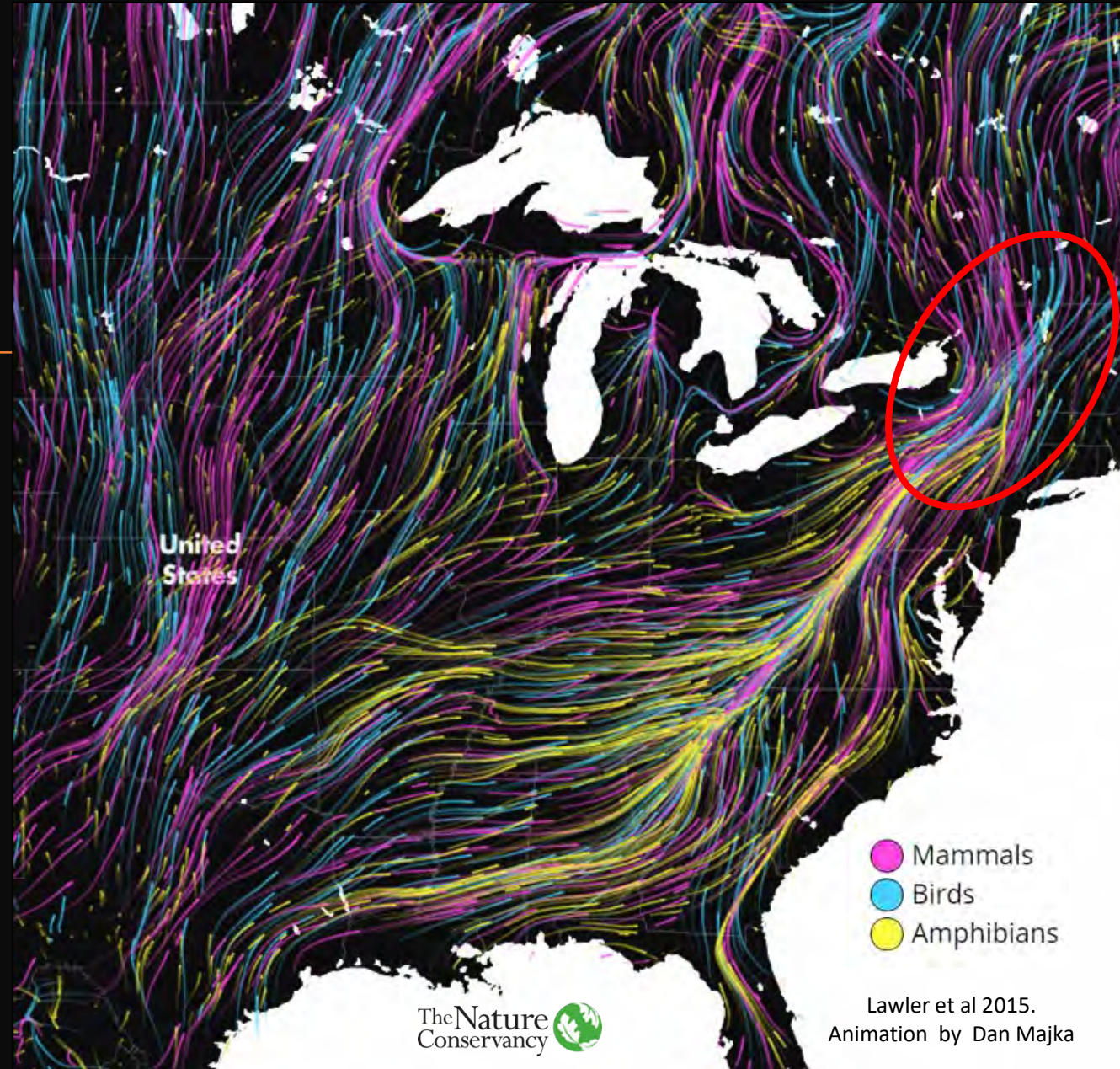




STAYING
CONNECTED
INITIATIVE

A Critical Climate Corridor

- Wildlife and plants are on the move northward as ranges shift in response to climate change.
- Maintaining and enhancing landscape connectivity has been identified as one of the most important strategies to enable this adaptation.
- Connectivity also helps slow climate change, as intact forested landscapes sequester and store vast amounts of carbon.
- The Northern Appalachian - Acadian Region has been identified as a critically important climate corridor in North America.



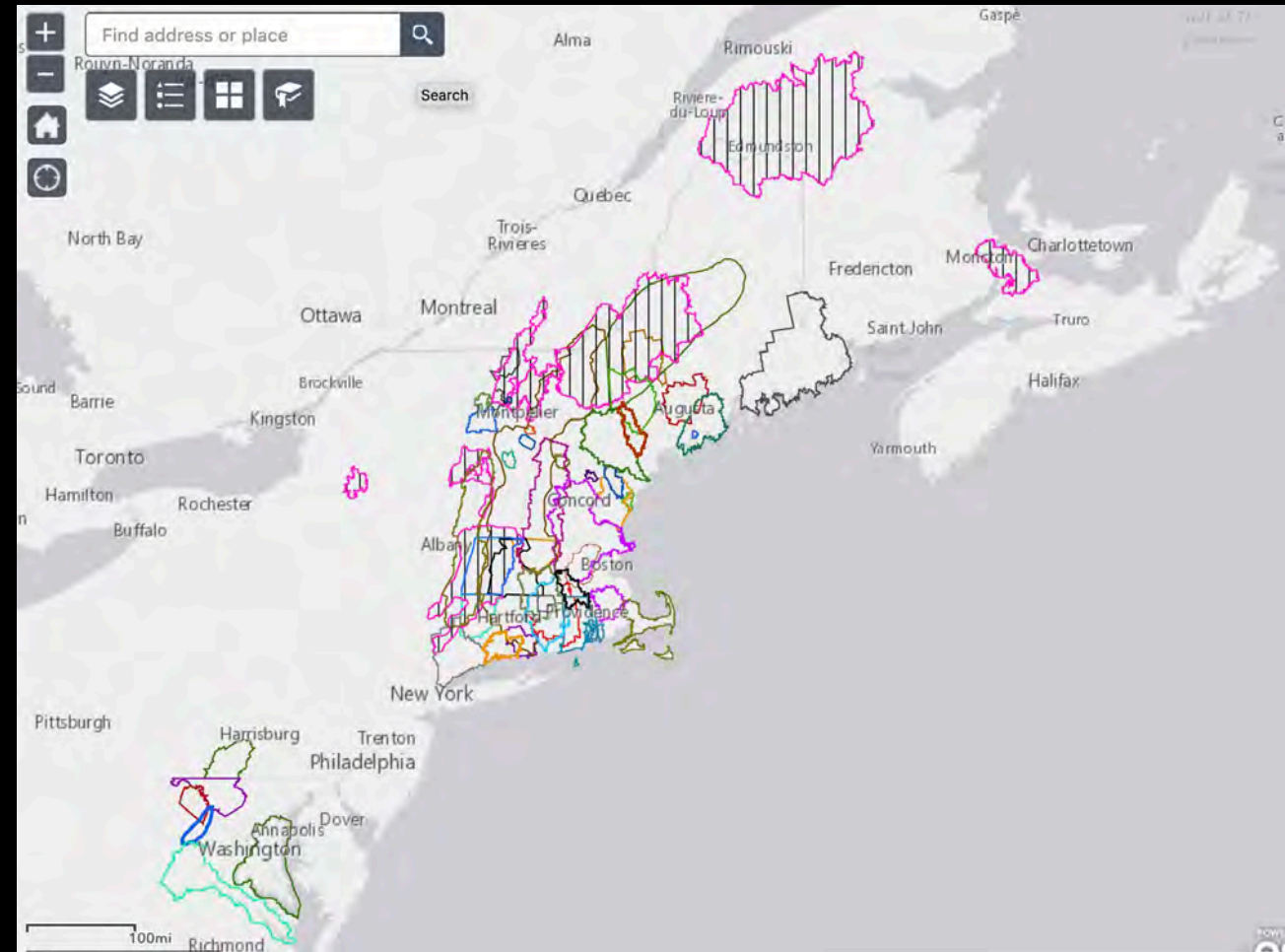
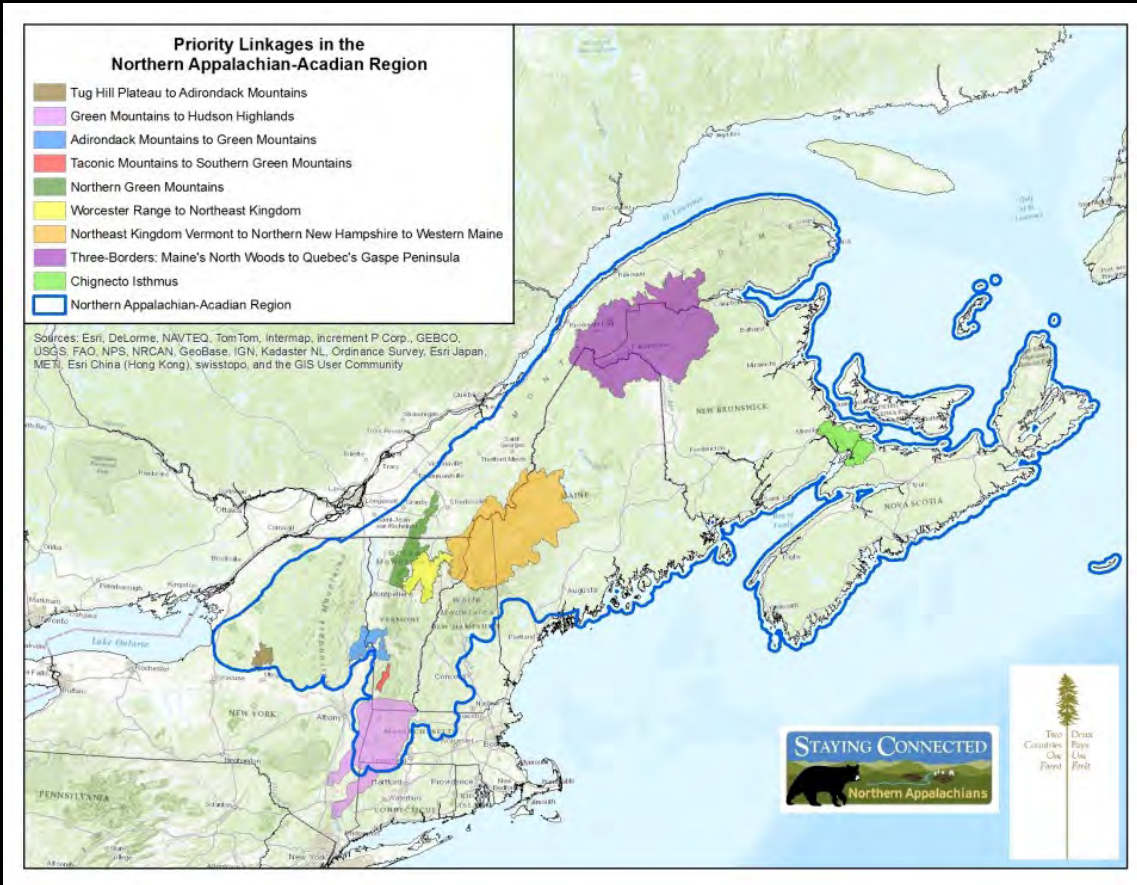
Origins of SCI





**STAYING
CONNECTED
INITIATIVE**

SCI – A Coordinated Transborder Network of RCPs





STAYING
CONNECTED
INITIATIVE

An integrated, multi-pronged approach





STAYING
CONNECTED
INITIATIVE

The SCI Partnership

(Government agencies in bold)

Adirondack Land Trust
Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative
Appalachian Corridor
ARC Solutions
Berkshire Environmental Action Team
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – New Brunswick Chapter
Center for Large Landscape Conservation
Cold Hollow to Canada
Dalhousie University
Fondation de la faune du Québec
Fundy Biosphere Reserve
Hilltown Land Trust
Horizon-Nature Bas-Saint-Laurent
Housatonic Valley Association
Kestrel Land Trust
Lighthawk|
Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust
Maine Audubon
Maine Department of Transportation
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Maine Mountain Collaborative
Mass Audubon
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife
Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques du Québec
Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec
Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS)
Nature Conservancy of Canada – Quebec and Atlantic Canada Regions
Nature New Brunswick
Nature United
New Brunswick Department of Transportation and Infrastructure
New Hampshire Audubon
New Hampshire Department of Transportation
New Hampshire Fish and Game Department
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
New York State Department of Transportation
Northeast Wilderness Trust
Northern Stewards
Nova Scotia Environment
Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forestry
Ontario Road Ecology Group
Open Space Institute
Otter Ridge Consulting LLC
Quebec Centre for Biodiversity Science
The Nature Conservancy – Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont Chapters
Trust for Public Land
New York State Tug Hill Commission
Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust
Two Countries, One Forest
University of Massachusetts - Amherst
University of Vermont
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service, Green Mountain National Forest
Vermont Agency of Transportation
Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
Vermont Land Trust
Vermont Natural Resources Council
Wildlands Network
Windham Regional Commission



**STAYING
CONNECTED
INITIATIVE**

The SCI Partnership



New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers Resolution 40-3 (2016)



40th Annual Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers - Boston, Massachusetts 2016
40e Conférence annuelle des gouverneurs de la Nouvelle-Angleterre et des premiers ministres de l'Est du Canada

RESOLUTION 40-3

RESOLUTION ON ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY, ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE, AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

WHEREAS, the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers have shown international leadership through their collective action to address environmental protection and climate change, especially through work to expand use and production of renewable energy and other efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS, the region's economy, culture, and identity are closely tied to and dependent upon its forests and water resources; and

WHEREAS, the region's cities and towns, infrastructure, and natural ecosystems are vulnerable to adverse impacts from climate change. Jurisdictions region-wide are taking steps to adapt to a changing climate, by making communities, infrastructure, and public investments more resilient; and

WHEREAS, the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers recognize the inherent connection between the region's forested landscape and its forest products economy, and the important role that private forest landowners play in the health and condition of its forests; and

WHEREAS, the Northern Appalachian-Acadian forest is globally significant as the most intact, contiguous temperate broadleaf forest in the world. The Northeastern coastal forest, including the coastal plain, and the Gulf of Saint Lawrence lowland forest provide a vital link for neotropical migrants of global significance. Boreal forests are globally important for millions of resident and migratory birds, including songbirds which depend on Boreal forests during different stages of their lifecycles. Together, these forests span portions of all six New England states and five eastern Canadian provinces. Global climate change is a prominent threat to the long-term health of these vital ecosystems. The spread of invasive species and wildlife disease, often exacerbated by global climate change, is another key threat; and



Northeastern North America Landscape Connectivity Summit



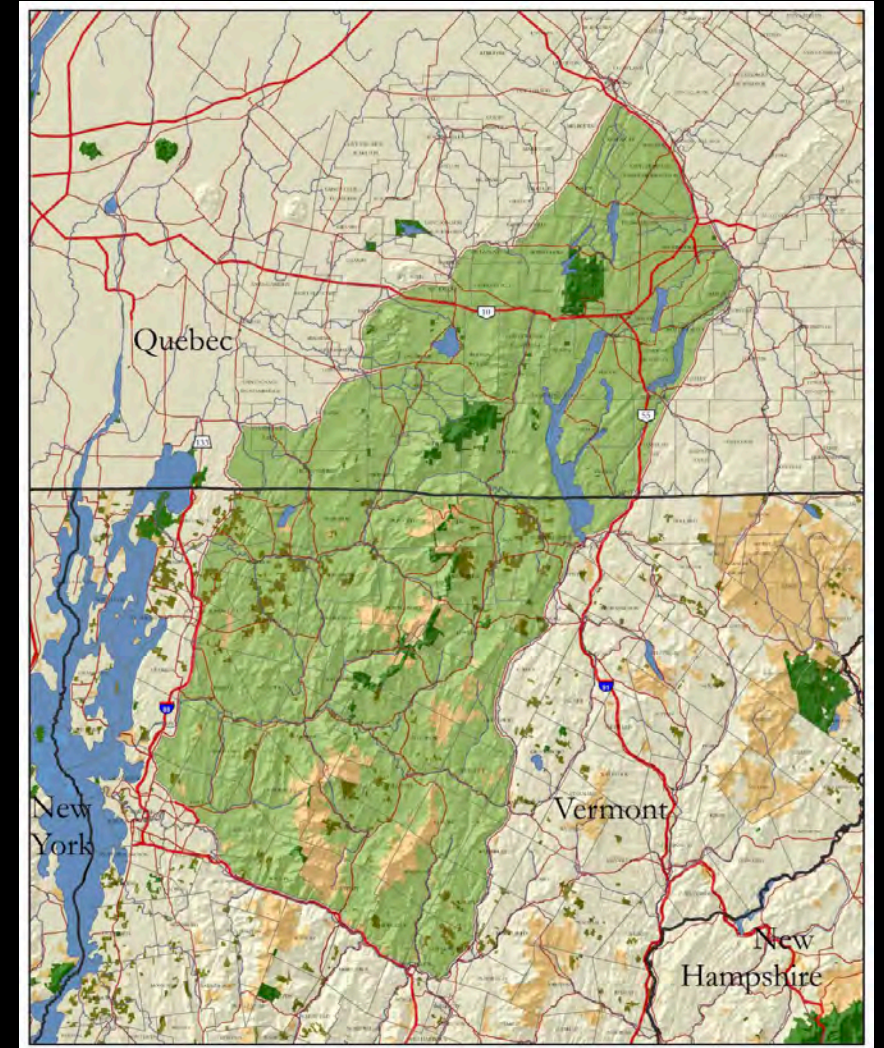
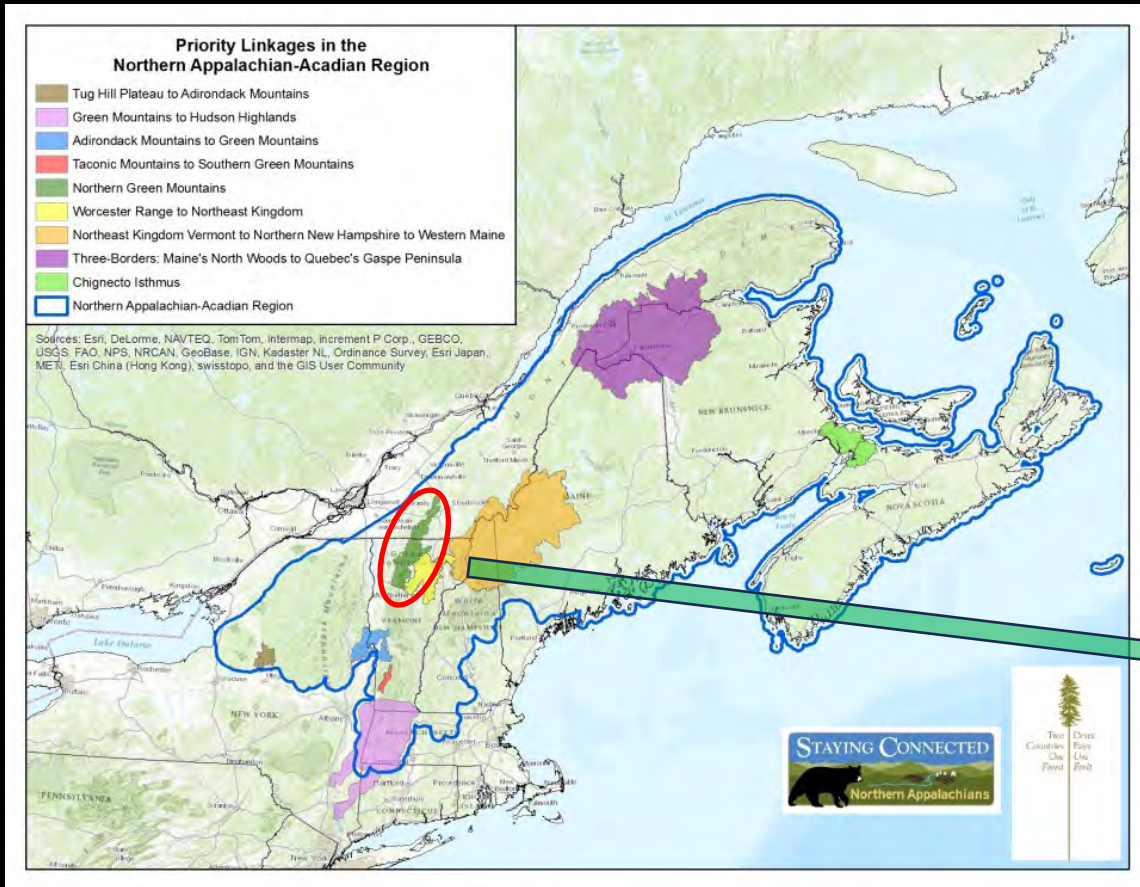
What/When/Where?

1. 1st ever region-wide transborder Summit focused on ecological connectivity conservation and restoration – June 11-13, 2024, Montreal (location TBD)
2. Connectivity “Blueprint” – Fall, 2024

Who?

- ❖ Provincial, state, & federal gov’t agency leaders and staff
- ❖ Indigenous leaders/representatives
- ❖ Other key players – NGOs, academia, funders, etc.

Zooming in on the Northern Green Mountains Linkage





STAYING
CONNECTED
INITIATIVE

Thank You!

For more information:

www.stayingconnectedinitiative.org

Mikael Cejtin, SCI Coordinator – mikael.cejtin@tnc.org

Phil Huffman, QLF – phuffman@qlf.org