Vermont Town Forests

Additional Protection
- Conservation Easement
- Federal, State, and Private

Statewide Distribution
- School Forest: 3% (2,177 Acres)
- Miscellaneous: <1% (220 Acres)
- Town Forest: 64% (43,926 Acres)
- Town Park: 7% (4,888 Acres)
- Town Watershed: 19% (12,682 Acres)

Abstract
Town-owned properties form an important part of Vermont’s forested landscape, and they play a critical role in the state’s ecosystem. They provide habitat for wildlife, contribute to soil health and water quality, and maintain ecological integrity. However, these lands are not always protected from development. To better understand the distribution, extent, and use of municipal forests, the Vermont Town Forest Database was created in 2009 and includes a comprehensive data layer for 242 towns. This dataset provides valuable information for land management, conservation planning, and research. For example, it includes data on forest type, topography, hydrology, and wildlife distribution. The database is updated annually and can be accessed online.

Conclusions
As of April 2011, the database contains 250 properties constituting 43,926 acres. Almost all properties are forested. This database is already a valuable tool for land managers, planners, and conservationists. In addition, the data can be used to support research into the impacts of human activities on forests. The dataset can also be used to assess the effectiveness of conservation strategies and to identify areas in need of protection.

Sources:
- Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
- Vermont Land Trust
- The Trust for Public Land
- Vermont Center for Geographic Information
- Individual Vermont towns
- U.S. Geological Survey Gap Analysis Program

Additional Protection
- Conservation Easement, Covenant, or Deed Restriction: 21% (14,373 Acres)
- No Additional Protection: 79% (53,892 Acres)