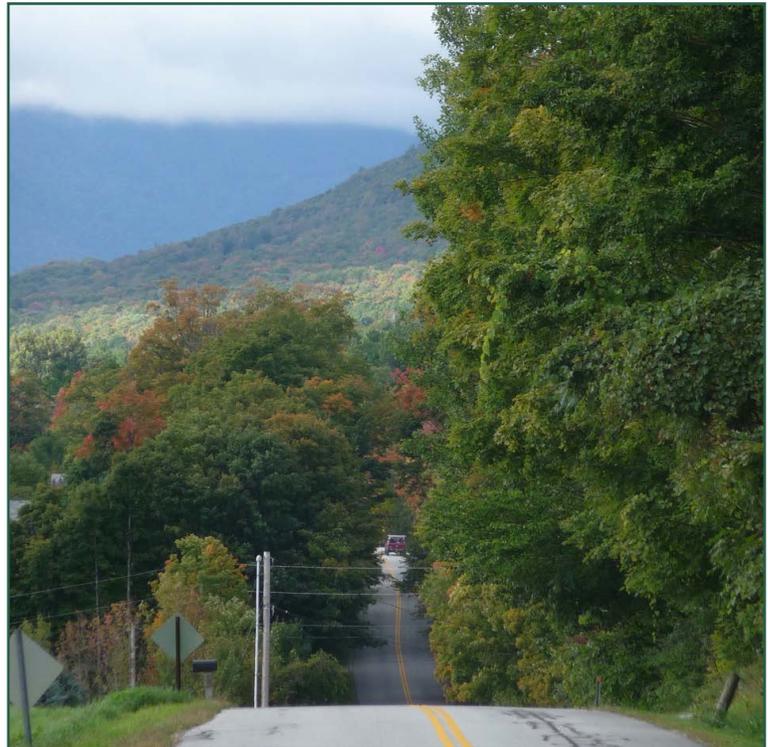




# Project Impacts

NSRC-FUNDED RESEARCH FINAL REPORT

## *Influence of Planning and Stakeholder Perceptions in Landscape Linkage Projects*



PROJECT AWARD YEAR AND TITLE:

**2012**

*Implementing Conservation Plans Through Municipal Land Use Planning*

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NSRC researchers investigated two landscape linkage areas in New York and Vermont, part of the federally funded Staying Connected Initiative (SCI). Researchers described approaches to implementation used by SCI partners, evaluated the planning environment in the two regions (Tug Hill to Adirondacks and Adirondacks to Green Mountains), and developed recommendations for bridging the conservation science-land use planning gap.

Researchers evaluated municipal plans and interviewed SCI staff partners, regional planners, and local government representatives in communities with plans that address landscape conservation and wildlife habitat. Results inform general conservation efforts and linkage projects conducted in the New York to Maine region, part of the Two Countries, One Forest organization. Findings address a growing need to implement biological conservation that extends beyond a single project such as SCI, especially as climate change concerns prompt greater demand for wildlife landscape corridors.

Findings reiterate that conservation implementation through land use planning requires coordination among multiple organizations and levels of government; small communities in the Northern Forest have the greatest need for planning support; and sustained funding is critical for conservation success. Unique insights show that building a set of strong relationships over time is key to realizing conservation goals, such as when a large grant is received similar to SCI funding. History of relationships among organizations is critical, and previous experiences with conservation programs and educational sessions matter in the success of new initiatives. Even small communities with reduced planning capacity willingly incorporate wildlife provisions in land use plans, providing opportunities for a community to learn how conservation values mesh with other community values.

