

OBJECTIVE TWO: CENTER VERMONT CONSERVATION DESIGN




This objective is focused on how to protect, restore and maintain an ecologically functioning and connected natural and working landscape.


This objective is guided by Vermont Conservation Design (VCD), a science-based framework to protect the lands, waters and wildlife that are most critical to an ecologically functional landscape. Vermont Conservation Design (VCD) allows us to identify where we can build upon our existing network of conserved lands in ways that advance the ecological goals envisioned by Act 59. The VCD framework highlights the need to promote conservation at all scales – from large forest blocks and riparian corridors to rare natural communities and species with specific habitat needs – to ensure we maintain and enhance ecological function and connection.




Potential Pathways to the Future


These potential pathways are an initial starting point to developing the Vermont Conservation Plan, These will be further refined by the various technical working groups and shaped by stakeholder input.

 **EXPAND ECOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION**
This pathway is focused on better representing all nine biophysical regions, and places additional focus on the six under-represented biophysical regions, ensuring that these places and their biodiversity will be conserved.

 **SUPPORT AQUATIC SYSTEMS**
This pathway identifies the actions needed to steward, manage, and restore riparian areas and aquatic systems on both existing and new conserved lands.

 **PROTECT CONNECTIVITY CORRIDORS**
This pathway identifies ways to protect landscape-scale corridors within Vermont's regional connectivity network that are conservation priorities, promote overall forest health and function, and keep corridors connected.

 **PROTECT RARE AND SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL FEATURES**
This pathway highlights the need to enhance and increase the protection of rare and uncommon species, significant natural communities, and the important habitats of Vermont Conservation Design.

 **IMPROVE FOREST STRUCTURE**
This pathway addresses the biophysical regions and their forest types that have been underrepresented in Ecological Reserve Areas, as well as locations for establishing Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Resource Management Areas. Actions taken under this pathway will improve representation of both old and young forests as well as the complexity and diversity of forest structure across the landscape.

