

TIERED ECOLOGICAL PRIORITIES

- Primary Conservation Areas

Secondary Conservation Areas

Tertiary Conservation Areas

Developed & agricultural land

Streams

Lakes
- Roads

Interstate

Primary

Class Two

Class Three

Class Four

Tiered Ecological Priorities is intended for municipal & watershed level planning. It is recommended to be used as a tool for municipal governments (planning commissions & other groups) to consider as they craft town plans & implementation strategies. This map is based on the best-available data in 2011. The information can be used to identify priority areas from an ecological perspective, but the map should not replace site-level review. This map shows areas that ecologists have deemed important for conservation. The four levels reflect what are believed to be the most important places for maintaining the region's fish and wildlife populations and biological diversity.

Primary areas are the most fragile and sensitive. They are limited in area, and hence offer additional flexibility in management. Small portions of this area can be encroached upon or developed without losing their current ecological functions. These areas are sensitive to the impacts of development. It is best to place development near the edges, rather than penetrating into the middle of these sensitive areas.

Secondary areas are still very significant ecologically, but are larger areas and hence offer additional flexibility in management. Small portions of this area can be encroached upon or developed without losing their current ecological functions. These areas are sensitive to the impacts of development. It is best to place development near the edges, rather than penetrating into the middle of these sensitive areas.

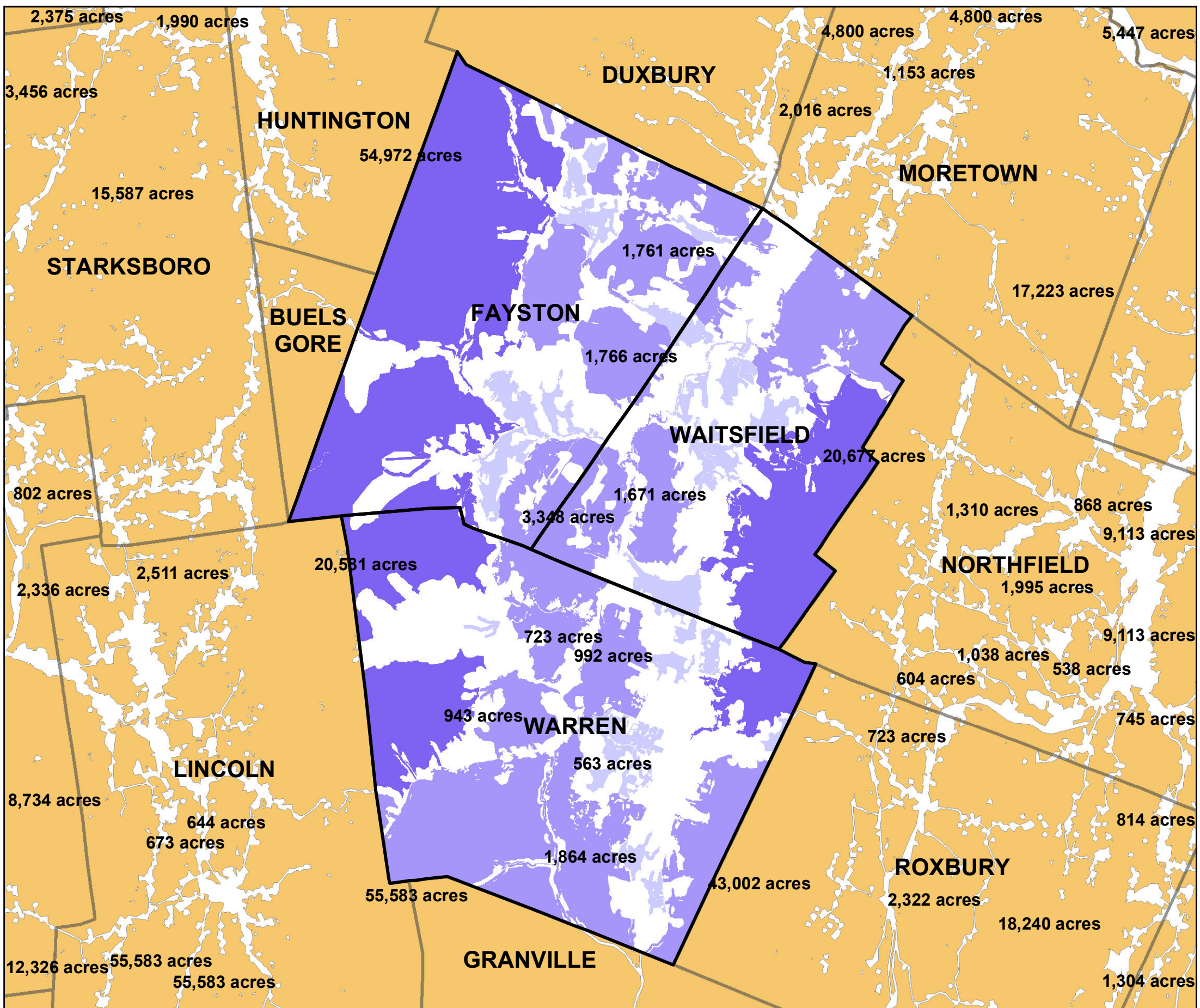
Tertiary areas are ecologically important as habitat for far-ranging animal species and generally supporting or buffering the more ecologically sensitive areas. Tertiary areas include large habitat blocks identified as Contiguous Habitat Units (CHUs) in natural resource inventories conducted by Arrowwood Environmental (see CHU Inset Map). When planning at the municipal level, it is helpful to refer to the Contiguous Habitat Unit Map as a companion data set. Development in Tertiary areas should minimize the fragmentation of these habitat units into smaller, more isolated blocks. Therefore, efforts should be made to cluster development around the edges, rather than penetrating into the middle of the blocks.

Developed & agricultural lands include transportation, residential, commercial, and utility lands as well as row crops and pasture. These areas still offer ecological benefits and may contain features that haven't been identified but do provide the most flexibility in development and management.

The Tiered Ecological Priority Map is a valuable resource for municipal and watershed level planning. Municipal governments should engage in additional coordination with the Forests, Wildlife, and Communities Project partners and professional planners to develop appropriate planning and zoning strategies to complement this map. Development review standards and other zoning techniques should be developed through a public process that carefully balances natural resource planning with the full suite of public values.

Contiguous Habitat Units

(Continuous natural cover surrounded by roads, development and agricultural lands)



Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Areas identified on the Tiered Ecological Priorities Map overlap with large forest blocks identified as Contiguous Habitat Units (CHUs). It is important to reference the CHU map produced by Arrowwood Environmental when conducting natural resource planning. For example, maintaining large blocks of forest cover and minimizing fragmentation of these blocks into smaller and smaller units is critical to maintain viable wildlife populations, sustainable forestry, watershed functions, and other public values. Please refer to the Tiered Ecological Priorities Map for specific recommendations on planning strategies.

- Contiguous Habitat Units
- Acre
- 50,001 - 154,565
- 10,001 - 50,000
- 5,001 - 10,000
- 501 - 5,000
- 20 - 500
- Habitat Blocks (Statewide)
- Town Boundaries

Primary Conservation Areas

- Rare, Threatened, & Endangered species element occurrences
- Wetlands & Streams (with 50' buffers)
- bat hibernacula with 300' buffer
- All lands over 2700' for ticklethrust
- Riparian habitats as mapped by Arrowwood
- Vernal pool with 100' buffer
- FEMA 100yr floodplain
- Fluvial erosion hazard zone
- S1,S2,S3 natural communities and other locally significant (defined by Arrowwood) Natural communities that have a small or large patch size
- Road crossings (delineated by arrowwood) that occur on rt 100, rt 17, German Flats Rd, East Warren Rd, and Sugarbush access rd
- All lands with natural cover (using 2006 CCAP) within 1/4 mile of the above significant road crossings

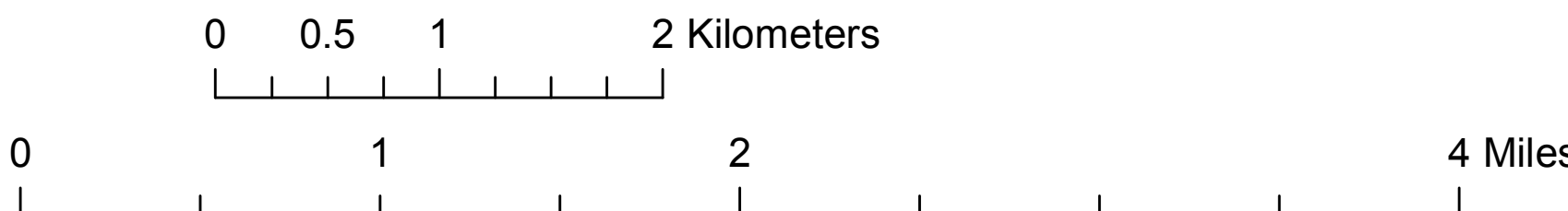
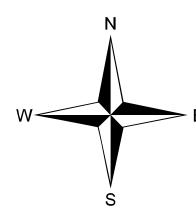
Secondary Conservation Areas (Excludes Primary)

- Vernal pools with 600' buffer
- Early Successional Habitats (arrowwood)
- Ledges (arrowwood)
- Grassland
- Locally significant natural communities defined by Arrowwood and NOT included in No Touch (=S4 and S5 Natural communities or ones with Matrix patch size)
- Road crossings (delineated by arrowwood) that are NOT included in No touch (= road crossings on smaller roads with less vehicle traffic)
- All lands with natural cover (using 2006 CCAP) within 1/4 mile of the above road crossings

Tertiary Conservation Areas (Excludes Primary & Secondary)

- All land included in a contiguous Habitat Unit (of any size) defined by Arrowwood

Data Sources: Arrowwood Environmental,
Vermont Center for Geographic Information,
Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.
Vermont State Plane Projection
NAD1983 Datum
Map by Jens Hille
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Forests, Wildlife & Communities Project

The Forests, Wildlife, & Communities Project is a collaboration among the Mad River Valley Planning District, local and state conservation organizations, state and federal agencies, and representatives in towns in the Mad River Valley to implement a regional and landscape level approach to wildlife and forestland conservation by engaging and assisting landowners, residents and local officials about community oriented and landowner based strategies for forestland and wildlife habitat conservation.