

Vermont Sporting Journal

Volume V, Issue 10 * January 2022



**Mikeljohn H Mascitti,
8 years old celebrates
his harvest with
dad Mikeljohn**



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2% Hunting and Fishing Education * 2% Habitat Improvement * 2% Preservation of the Second Amendment

Are You Insane?

By Brad Roy

It's time I came out and said it. I've spent a long time feeling a tad loony without even knowing it. The past two years has been tough on all of us for various reasons, but I think my mind was fractured long before that. I think back to the comfort of my teenage years, where I could spend each day with the complete and assured understanding that I knew just about everything there was to know. What's funny is how every New Years since those younger days, I can't help but reflect on how much less I feel I knew then the year prior. This fact of life is tough for many of us to concede to, and may have something to do with this nagging feeling of insanity that has wrapped around me tighter and tighter for the past fifteen years or so. In order to paint you a better picture of how I arrived at my self-diagnosis, I'm going to spend a bit of time telling you a personal story from my life.

I started deer hunting when I was just ten years old. A young boy, following in his father's footsteps (quite literally) through the woods of Central Vermont. Now, the first few

years a hunter spends in the woods are undoubtedly as formative and influential as the first few months a newborn spends with their parents. More concisely, I believe an entire lifetime of habits (good and bad) can be formed in a relatively short period of time. With this in mind it comes as no surprise that components of the hunts of my earlier life have been burned into my brain, and before long became the only way I saw fit to pursue game. It is difficult to recognize a phenomenon like this establishing itself until it is too late, and like a pickup truck through thin ice, I was in deep long before I ever saw it coming.

Now I remember the first deer I ever harvested just like it was yesterday. In fact, that spikehorn is still hanging in my stairwell to serve as a reminder every morning as I head to my coffee cup. With a vivid memory of how that crisp youth weekend morning took place, I often went back to that exact location, using the exact same tactics for years and years after. Was it a good spot? Sure thing. BUT, was it always the best choice? Most

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certainly NOT! By committing my time and effort to repeat what had been successful once before, I was consistently blinding myself from searching out new, better locations. Not only did I prevent my mind from grasping better ways and locations to hunt, I was in a state of perpetually limiting my own success by chasing success I'd found in the past.

Now I did get myself to other locations from time to time, and I quickly realized that along with my known little honey hole spot I really liked hunting some local farms I knew. Farms combine the perfect combination of feed, cover, and compartmentalized land to really boost my confidence while sitting on stand, and a little success in the past kept me trying the same thing over and over again. While my tactics often gave me the opportunity to spend a lot of time watching deer, I could rarely put quality deer within range. Year after year of growing more frustrated with not being able to make the final connection of arrow to animal, I recently began to reflect on what I needed to change to increase my success. As most strokes of genius do, this particular one hit me all at once...HARD. My consistent desire to do the same thing that had worked in the past had kept me stuck in the rut of hunting where I WANTED the deer to be, not where they actually were!

I had spent years hunting the edges of open fields simply because I was usually able to see a lot of deer, but in hindsight rarely was I able to get one in range. My limited success kept me trying the same thing over and over again, hoping for the slim chance that things would work out, so my eyes stayed shut to other tactics that could have potentially worked a lot better.

It has been said that the definition of insanity is attempting to do the same thing over and over again while expecting different results. By that definition I have to readily admit that I have been insane for quite some time! I know, right now you're thinking "sign this guy up for a Nobel prize, he's saying I should hunt where the deer are...truly fascinating..." But my deeper point is that when our brains recognize our own successes, they are often blinded to the fact that there are other ways to achieve more success that may be even better.

It wasn't until blood trailing a wounded deer this year that I began to learn about the entire world I was missing back just a hundred yards or two from the field edges I had been sitting for years. Finding bedding areas, pinch points, and all sorts of funneling geographic features that had never crossed my mind until I stumbled right into them! While

my own epiphany came in this way, a similar change of mindset could very well be just what you need to implement to increase success this coming season.

With the deer season all wrapped up for 2021, many minds have shifted to other outdoor pursuits for the coming New Year. That being said, I write this article to ask if you have maybe been just a little insane in your pursuits outdoors lately? Have you revisited why you choose your current set of tactics, locations, and methods? Have you really thought about if the choices you make afield are because they are the best choice you can make, or are you stuck in the rut I have been by doing the same thing over and over while expecting a new result? If you're one of the lucky ones who isn't "Insane" by this definition, congratulations! You are a much more skilled outdoorsperson than I can credit to be myself, but I will venture to guess that each and every one of us can think of something we've been doing simply because "that's how we do it" instead of because that's what we think will make us successful.

I would like to wish all of you a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2022, and in this crazy world we live in, ask you all to try your best to keep your insanity in check! ☒



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VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

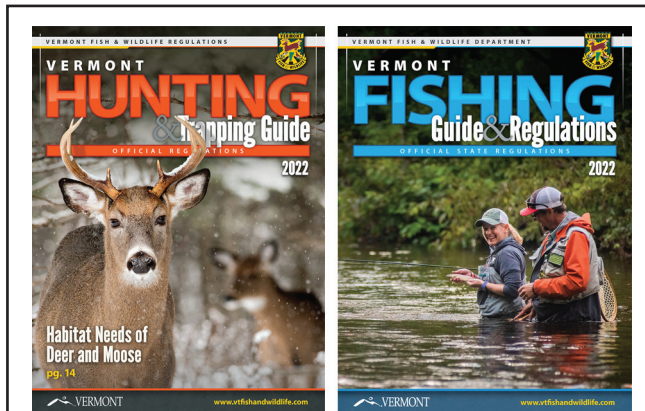
Vermont hunting, fishing and trapping licenses for 2022 and license gift certificates are available on the Fish and Wildlife Department's website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com).

“Our licenses for the New Year will be popular based on the increased interest we are seeing from people who want to enjoy more outside activities like hunting and fishing,” said Vermont Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Christopher Herrick. “Ice fishing is a lot of fun, and it will soon be possible with colder weather.”

“A license gift certificate is the perfect gift for a friend or family member who hunts or fishes,” he added. “You can go to our website, fill out the certificate and pay for it online, and then you can print it to present to your recipient.” A [gift certificate link](#) is on the Vermont Fish

and Wildlife's [website home page](#) and in the license section. The person who receives the certificate must go to the website to redeem it and purchase their licenses.

Herrick noted that proceeds from license sales have helped pay for some of Vermont's greatest wildlife conservation success stories, including restoring game species as well as helping nongame species such as peregrine falcons, bald eagles, loons, and ospreys. These funds also are used to manage [Wildlife Management Areas](#) that provide critical habitat for many species as well as recreational opportunities for Vermonters.



Copies of Vermont's 2022 Hunting & Trapping Guide and 2022 Fishing Guide are available free from license agents statewide.

Printed copies of the “2022 Hunting & Trapping Guide and 2022 Fishing Guide” are available from license agents. The department's website has links to online versions as well.

Existing permanent, lifetime or five-year licenses can be updated online on January 1. ☒

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Ice Fishing Clinics Start January 7

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release



Vermont Fish & Wildlife's ice fishing clinics offer a great opportunity to learn about the different kinds of ice fishing.

Learning how to participate in an outdoor activity can be challenging, and ice fishing is a good example. Knowing this, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has scheduled a series of free ice fishing clinics for anyone who would like to learn about the latest proven ice fishing techniques.

“Our [ice fishing clinics](#) will be held from January through March with the possibility that some dates may change according to ice and weather conditions,” said Fish and Wildlife Education Specialist Corey Hart. “Everyone is welcome no matter their experience level. We want this to be fun and helpful for all.”

Each clinic will last 2 ½ to 3 hours, and exact location details will be given when people register for the event. Topics to be covered include ice safety, hole drilling, equipment and techniques, regulations, and different techniques for different fish.

A variety of clinic topics are being offered to reach beginners and experienced anglers. Introduction to Ice Fishing clinics will cover all the basics while species-specific programs such as Trout Fishing are perfect for anglers with

some ice fishing experience but who may be looking for more specific tips on targeting certain species.

All participants will have the opportunity to practice what they have learned near the end of each event. Everyone is urged to wear clothing suitable for the weather conditions.

Pre-registration is required and can be done on Fish and Wildlife's website www.vtfishandwildlife.com. Corey Hart at LetsGoFishing@vermont.gov or 802-505-5562 will be available for questions.

In addition to the programs listed to the right, more programs will be added throughout the winter, so check the website frequently. ☒

Vermont Fish & Wildlife's Ice Fishing Clinics for 2022

Friday, January 7 -- 4:00 p.m.

Introduction to Smelt Fishing at Joes Pond Fishing Access, Danville

Saturday, January 8 – 8:30 a.m.

Introduction to Ice Fishing at Lake Paran Fishing Access Bennington

Friday, January 21 – 2:30 p.m.

Trout Clinic at Lake St. Catherine State Park Boat Launch Poultney

Saturday, January 22 – 9:00 a.m.

Introduction to Ice Fishing at Singing Cedars Fishing Access Orwell

Saturday, February 26 – 9:00 a.m.

Introduction to Ice Fishing at Retreat Meadows Fishing Access Brattleboro



My 2021 Deer Season

by Brett Ladeau

As I thought about this article earlier in the fall, I had a few storylines in mind. The first storyline was that of my daughter getting her first deer.

Sydney, now 19, has turkey hunted with me off and on since she was 9 but hadn't really shown much interest in deer hunting. I think we went out one- or two-times during youth season years ago but the deer hunt didn't really excite her. However, this summer she told me she wanted to try for her first deer this year. The idea of having her join me throughout the fall excited me but my own desire to deer hunt has waned as of late. We did manage several sits through archery season but the only deer we saw were heading in and coming out. We never did see a deer while sitting. We ended the season trying to get a deer in their late muzzleloader season. While we saw deer, nothing presented a shot opportunity.

A second storyline I had in mind was topping my beautiful 2020 Pennsylvania 8 point. However, that was not in the cards this year either.

The third storyline was a more normal deer season for me. I typically am lucky enough to get a deer or two between all the states I hunt and sometimes more. I have hunted since 1980 and there have only been a few years where I didn't get at least one deer. There were a few years when I was in the military that I didn't get to hunt and most recently in 2015 I had some personal issues that prevented me from hunting as much as normal. As the season progress the likelihood of a typical season dwindled too.

I guess that leaves a fourth storyline and that's the one that seemed to payout. I didn't start deer hunting this year until the first part of October. The Vermont archery season was



uneventful. It seemed like every choice I made was the wrong one. As I mentioned previously, the only deer I saw was heading in or coming out of the woods. Nothing while on stand at all. I spent most of my time in November hunting deer in New Hampshire. I spent the early November hunting spots that I knew quite well and while I had pictures of beautiful buck, I just wasn't seeing much daylight activity. The second part of the season I hunted new areas, but in the general vicinity of my normal areas. I was hoping by branching out that I would find their daytime haunts. This technique seemed to work. I was getting a few daylight pictures and even saw deer while in the woods. I did manage to rattle a deer in, but it smelled me just before it stepped into a clear opening. I did see it in the thick brush, but I could never confirm if it was a buck or not.

My preferred hunting method is to still hunt likely areas and while conditions were not perfect, I did cover as much ground as I could. I found a fresh sign, but my timing was always a bit off. After some fresh snow in late November, I was able to track a deer to its bed, but it turned out to be a doe. I don't have much experience tracking but when I picked up a single deer track, I was hoping it was a buck track. I didn't follow it long before it started feeding. I slowed to a crawl and eventually saw it in its bed. I was slightly disappointed it was a doe but still a cool experience.

There are some years that I cannot seem to do anything wrong, but this year just seemed like I was snake bit and couldn't make a right choice in the deer woods. I still had hope that I



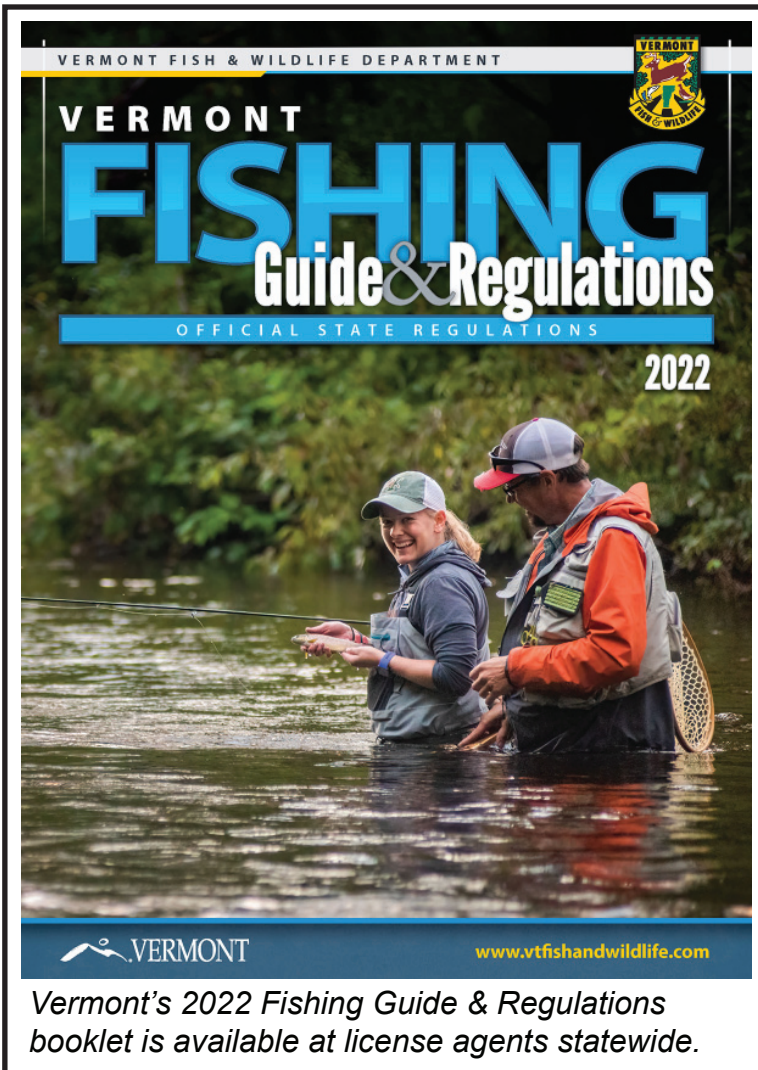
could get a deer or two on my annual trip to Pennsylvania. I had high hopes of filling at least one of my doe tags or maybe catching up with another nice buck. However, it wasn't meant to be. I hunted the first two days with my Dad's old Remington model 722 in 300 Savage and had a chance at a nice doe but missed. I still cannot figure out what happened, but my Dad always said when he missed that there is a lot more room around them than in them. The next day I had another opportunity at a doe and again I missed, this time with my trusty 7mm-08. Again, there was no real reason that I missed. The deer was calm and had no idea I was there, but the deer

God's had other ideas, I guess. I did manage a New York deer hunt in late December and saw deer but with no deer were harmed on my hunts. The 2021 deer season didn't provide any venison, but it did provide ample time with my daughter and friends, and that's what I will take away from it. The time spent with them made the unsuccessful hunts successful. The older I get the more I just enjoy my time being out in the woods. Don't get me wrong, my goal is to still try to fill a tag or two, but I really enjoy the company of friends and the silence of the woods. Already looking forward to spring 2022 and beyond. ☒

New Fishing Regulations Begin January 1, 2022

Simplified regulations will provide many new fishing opportunities

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release



Vermont's fishing regulations will look different on January 1, 2022. But don't worry, most of the new regulations have been simplified and provide additional fishing opportunities. If you fish like you have in the past you will be legal, with a few exceptions.

"We've worked with our biologists, warden service staff, fish and wildlife board, and the public to develop regulations that are easier to understand while still providing protection for fish populations across Vermont," said Director of the Fish Division Eric Palmer. "These new changes allow anyone to fish nearly all waterbodies in the state year-round as long as they practice catch and release."

Some additional highlights include:

- In certain lakes and ponds, the winter harvest season for trout will start on January 1.
- You can keep 8 trout from streams and rivers. This means 8 total fish of any combination of Brook, Brown or Rainbow Trout.
- Many waters that were previously seasonally closed are now managed under general regulations.
- All of these changes mean that the number of tables in the Fishing Guide is reduced from 10 to 3.

To get all the details, visit Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website at

www.vtfishandwildlife.com

where you can download a copy of the 2022 FISHING GUIDE & REGULATIONS or grab a hard copy at one of many license agent locations across the state. ☒



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Sandplain Forest Restoration to Begin at Sandbar Wildlife Management Area

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

A timber harvest project at the Sandbar Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Milton along Route 2 will begin soon to restore a unique and rare sandplain forest natural community that will benefit many wildlife and plant species, according to Vermont Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Christopher Herrick.

“We are collaborating with the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation on this project to restore the native pitch pine and oak habitat,” said Herrick. “Sandbar WMA has one of the largest remaining examples of this increasingly rare habitat in Vermont. Sandplain forests have been lost primarily to development, and there are only a few examples left of this size in Chittenden County.”


“The timber harvest will remove some red pine as well as the non-native black locust, Japanese Larch, and honeysuckle,” says Wildlife Biologist John Gobeille. “The black locust and honeysuckle are very invasive.”

“There should be a very good response by wildlife once the project is completed,” added Gobeille. “There will likely be a lot of re-growth of aspen and gray birch for deer browse and new feeding areas for wild turkey.

Shrub development will be beneficial for shrub-nesting songbirds such as indigo bunting and eastern towhee.”

“Forest raptors will also benefit from the new hunting areas. The release of oak in the understory and the pitch pines will eventually promote more mast for wildlife. The existing large pitch pines will be retained and should experience larger seed crops once their canopies are released and will allow more germination of this characteristic species of sandplain habitat.”

A prescribed burn to needed help establish pitch pine and oak is planned for red pine plantations on the area after logging is completed. ☒




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“My Knife” by Stu Maynard

I’m sharing this not for profit, or any special accolades, just because Larry and Iris meant so much to me in my younger years! Actually, all the boys (the four of them) as well as “Uncle Windy” were high on the list of people I most admired.

In the late seventies, I collected a piece of steel from my grandparents old maple sugar place. I had years before I learned that Larry Benoit was not only the best deer hunter in America, but that he also made some of the finest knives in Vermont, or the entire northeast for that matter.

I wanted “the master” to make a knife for me that I could carry in all my hunting years to come. I witnessed many years of huge bucks hanging from the porch at their red schoolhouse in Duxbury. To say he was my idol would be a understatement.

As I visited them one weekend morning, as I did on occasion, I asked Larry if he would make a knife out

of the steel that I recovered from my grandparent’s sugar place. He was more than happy to help a young aspiring hunter and neighbor out.

The steel I had was from an old



Larry Benoit

sleigh runner and I asked Larry if he would make me a knife to the exact specifications as his own personal knife that he carried. After starting the knife, going through what was left of his grinding wheel, and a quarter of a new one he finished my knife. He told me the steel was black diamond steel and my knife should last forever! He also made me a sheath to the same dimensions as his.

I wasn’t finished at that point, I then asked him to make a similar knife for my son. He went through the rest of the new grinding wheel and had to add another to complete the second knife! He said that particular steel is the best and he couldn’t get it for the knives he normally makes.

Larry was so nice he took pictures throughout the process so I could see and learn what was involved. A wonderful man and human being like no other!

I can’t remember what I paid for the knives, but he made sure to cover his replacement grinding wheels I remember him saying.

My “special knife” will go to my son some day along with my 30-06 Remington pump 760 carbine that Larry also customized. My trigger pull was too stiff for his liking. So, he removed the trigger assembly and went to work on it. Again, I can’t

thank him for all the special attention he demonstrated towards me!

In conclusion, Larry would see my special knife for many years to follow. I would bring it to him for annual sharpening and polishing. He never failed to mention how it took a toll on his grinding wheels. RIP Larry Benoit! ☒

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Two For the Price of One

By Ken Jones

In the turkey hunting world, often times you encounter more than one bird. Sometimes when the situation is right and state laws allow it. You can even take more than one bird on a specific hunt. But it's magical when more than one bird is taken with one shot!!

Here in Vermont it is legal to take both your spring birds on the same day. In May of 2016 I had just had my old Winchester 12 gauge repaired and even though I hadn't hunted with it in years I thought it'd be nice to get one more with it before going back to my black powder passion and my TK2000.

It was a special season since my best friend Phil who has since passed away from cancer was home from Utah and we'd be hunting together. We were a few days in and had gotten on some gobblers on the roost. When they flew down we tried to get them to join us but as gobblers often do, they came to where we could see them but wouldn't commit and continued past us.

I had a pretty good idea where they would go and we had to hustle to get there first. Knowing this place we were hunting very well I knew they'd be headed to an area I called the graveyard. I'd killed enough turkeys in that corner to fill a small cemetery.

We made it with more time to spare than I thought. After close to an hour of calling periodically and getting no response. It seemed our four suitors had different things on their minds. In a last ditch effort to raise a gobbler, Phil jumped on a box call excitedly and sure enough they answered and weren't far!!

We tucked back in against a large Boulder and began calling some more. Just minutes later having not been answered again I spotted the four demons below us making their way to the graveyard from the back side. They came via an old logging road and then into a natural little funnel that would put them in our laps.

The plan was for me to let the first bird pass and when we both had birds in front of us, we'd take out two of the four officers. Well, as you know, the best laid plans often don't go accordingly. That first bird got in front of me and decided he'd start scratching and feeding. This is happening at a distance of about ten paces. Now the other three are closing and one of em is about to bump his head on the barrel of my shotgun!! Fearing that we may come out of this with an empty sack if they figure out what's up or before this bird gets concussed by my barrel. I shifted to the second bird and fired. In the chaos that ensued, Phil rocked up to one knee and as that first bird was exiting. He made a fantastic running shot and it seemed the plan worked. Although not as smoothly as we planned. When we stood up and went to retrieve our





us and threw a few loud yelps from a box call at em. Surprisingly, I was met with a resounding gobble from both birds. This was already going better than I expected. Generally, when they have the hens they don't really have much to say. I slid a little farther in and while I was setting up they gobbled again and closer!! What pulled them away from the sure thing they had I don't know.

Within minutes

birds, mine was a mere five steps away and low and behold, another one was laying dead at about ten steps!!! I had done it with out even knowing it. A one shot double and we walked out of their with three of the four officers riding in our vests!!! A hunt I'll never forget.

Now, fast forward to the next spring. I'm back hunting with my muzzleloader and it's the fourth day of the season. I'd tried some birds from the roost and came up short so off to work I go. As I'm driving, I spot two longboards with two hens in a field that butts up to some ground I could hunt. This is where self employment has it's advantages.

I got down in to my area with a hundred yards or so of timber between

their gobbles were shaking the ground and ringing through the timber. Then I spotted them. Coming on a string. Now I was done calling and let them continue to search for this new game in town. When the lead bird stepped into the spot I'd hoped he'd go to, I settled the cross hairs on the TK and squeezed. When the cloud of smoke cleared,(there's always a split second of "what happened" with a muzzleloader) much to my surprise, the bird I was on and his counterpart we're both flopping!!! Apparently he had lined up with his buddy while I was taking aim and he wasn't far enough behind to escape the load of TSS meant for the lead officer!!! So after 35 plus years of figuring I'd never pull off a one shot double. I'd now done it two years in a row!!! But this story isn't over.

It's now the spring of 2018 and I'm guiding a fella trying to get a bird in all 49 states that have turkeys. On our first day in my excitement to set up on a gobbling bird I guess I pushed a little to close and bumped the bird. That evening I roosted two gobblers and at first light, we were on em.

As we approached the birds gobbling on the limb, I sent him ahead to set up where he felt comfortable, and I would hang back and attempt to call the birds through him. Plus, I didn't want to be the one that bumped another bird on him. He was a seasoned turkey hunter and knew what he was doing.

I gave the birds some very soft calling to begin with and they were very responsive. But they started to drift above us towards some fields. I got a little more aggressive with the calls and soon they were gobbling back in front of my hunter. Shortly after that, I heard his shotgun report!!! I remember thinking," I hope he didn't miss!!!" As I walked over to survey the damage, I saw him picking up a nice long beard when something fluttered right next to me. I looked down and to my surprise, a second long beard lay in the leaves!!!! He'd tagged out with one shot!! He looked at me and said," Now that, was a turkey hunt!!!"

So stay frugal out there my friends. Sometimes it's sale day in the woods and it's BOGO or two for the price of one. Remember, be safe, have fun and shoot em up!!!!

Caption: The author and the three one shot doubles in a row!! ☒

Legislative Update with Evan Hughes

Many Vermonters do not want to believe that the lack of enforcement of federal laws on our southern border is resulting in drug cartels smuggling in MS-13 gang members and other convicted violent criminals, increasing use of dangerous illegal drugs like crack cocaine, heroin, and fentanyl, and that disease-infected non-USA citizens continue pouring into this country, posing a threat to Vermonters.

Too many people want to believe that this is just a problem «down there», and is therefore far removed from impacting Vermonters. They are very wrong.

The jury in the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse returned a verdict of «Not Guilty» on all five counts of the serious charges against him. The firearm charge was dismissed because the S&W M&P 15 was clearly not a «short barrel» rifle.

The charges came from the actions of Rittenhouse on August 25, 2020, during several days of rioting in Wisconsin. During the trial, the nation was able to watch videos of what happened and Kyle Rittenhouse's actions. The public was able to see how the mainstream media and politicians grossly misrepresented what had happened. The inexcusable prosecutorial misconduct of the prosecutors was exposed for all to see.

The jury deliberated for several days and returned their verdict. The mainstream media immediately proclaimed a miscarriage of justice. In reality, the jury of 12 citizens listened, deliberated and proved that the American system of Justice and its jury process works.

The nation awaits the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS). The court heard oral arguments on November 3, 2021. The case, New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen, challenges the draconian gun permitting laws of New York. As the

title of the article in the link below states, at the oral arguments, the majority of the court expressed serious reservations about the constitutionality of the New York law.

The lower courts around the nation have disregarded the SCOTUS written opinions in Heller (2008) and McDonald (2010). Ideally, a victory for gun owners would include the standard of “strict scrutiny” being incorporated in the majority opinion. This would be a major step toward overcoming the contempt of the lower courts for “Heller” and “McDonald” decisions.

The antigun members of the U.S. House and U.S. Senate have been quite clear in threats of «packing» the SCOTUS if the court reaches an opinion they hold offensive to their gun control agenda. Bullying is their standard practice.

The NYSRPA is represented by Paul Clement, a former United States Solicitor General and current partner at the prestigious law firm of Kirkland & Ellis. The SCOTUS often releases the decisions and written opinions of the most controversial and high-profile cases in June, just before the court adjourns until its return in October.

<https://www.scotusblog.com/2021/11/majority-of-court-appears-dubious-of-new-york-gun-control-law-but-justices-mull-narrow-ruling/>

The Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs (VTFSC) and the Vermont State Rifle & Pistol Association are parties to an Amicus brief in the NYSRPA v. Bruen case cited above. The NYSRPA and VTFSC are the NRA State Associations for their respective states.

Seven Days: “Backstory: Nastiest Blowback”

<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/backstory-nastiest-blowback/Content?oid=34544708>

Kevin McCallum, Seven Days writer of the original article, acknowledges in his follow-up piece that he was biased in the first story. As is shown in the quote below.

Did he not expect a response to his self-admitted bias? In the original story the very next paragraph reports knowledgeable responses providing accurate evidence challenging his admitted “hyperbolic” nonsense.

Also, years ago the Department of Defense published a document defining an “assault rifle” as requiring a selector capability for full automatic fire. Not semi-automatic.

I also knew that I was being a bit hyperbolic when I described the experience of firing the rifle for the first time as “like a meteor had struck the earth in front of me” and the “deep shock wave” it sent through my body.”

In Vermont, the legislature returns in early January for the second year of the 2021-2022 Biennium. There are gun control and anti-hunting bills currently introduced and set for continued battle. These can be reviewed at the VTFSC website at:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/csbtvfsc/pages/1/attachments/original/1633534916/2021-22_legislation.pdf?1633534916

Hunters beware! For those who mistakenly believe there is not an active anti-hunting campaign going on in Vermont, take a look at the recent Boston Globe article on hound hunting. Does anyone really believe the anti-hunters will stop with bear hounds?

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/12/27/metro/tiktok-bear-hunter-dog-controversy-that-has-embroiled-vermont/> ☒

Two Groton Residents Guilty of Interfering with Bear Hunters

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Two Groton residents were issued citations by a Vermont State Game Warden on November 11, following the investigation of an incident of hunter harassment. Both were found guilty of interfering with hunters on November 22, in Caledonia Superior Court.

Topsham resident Theodore Shumway and two companions were hunting black bear with hounds in the 26,000-acre Groton State Forest near Noyes Pond on October 9, 2021. A bear led the hounds onto private property before climbing a tree. The hunters entered the woods from Buzzy's Road and retrieved the hounds, leaving the bear in the tree.

On returning to his truck with leashed hounds, Mr. Shumway encountered Donna Babic and Betty Eastman releasing air from the tires of his truck. Following an argument between the parties, one of the two women allowed a German shepherd out of their vehicle. The loose German shepherd attacked and injured one of the leashed hounds, which required veterinary care.

Vermont State Troopers responded to an emergency call from Mr. Shumway to defuse the situation. A subsequent investigation by a Vermont State Game Warden found the licensed and permitted bear hunters to be acting lawfully.

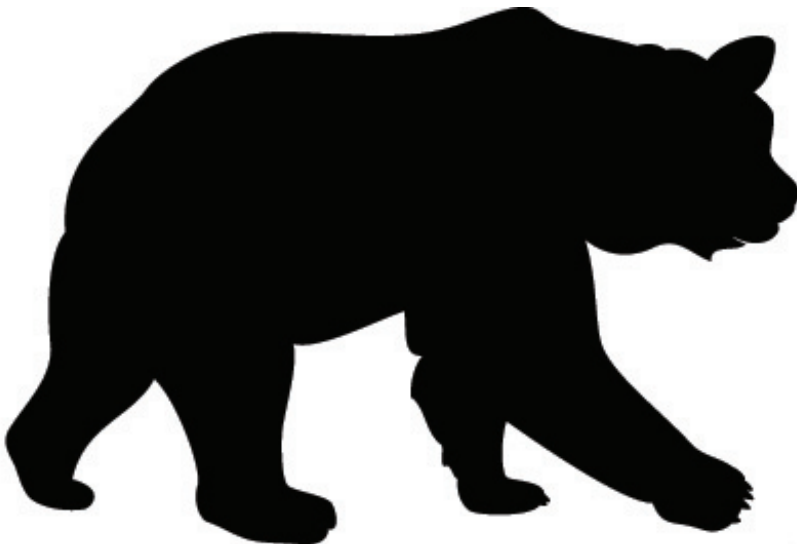
The game warden cited Ms. Babic and Ms. Eastman with violations of [Title 10 VSA 4708](#), Interfering with Hunting, Fishing or Trapping.

“Vermonters don’t always agree on wildlife management, especially when it comes to big game,” said Colonel Jason Batchelder, Fish and Wildlife’s Chief Game Warden. “Even so, I would ask that Vermonters respect one another’s constitutional right to hunt. Intentionally interfering with legal hunters in any fashion will result in court action, especially in a potentially dangerous fashion as we saw in this case.”

The department supports public engagement with wildlife management through appropriate channels, including town government, the legislature, and the Fish and Wildlife Board.

“Managing Vermont’s wildlife for a public with diverse values is a challenge and a privilege,” said Commissioner Christopher Herrick. “I encourage all Vermonters to join me in remembering our shared passion for wildlife, no matter how different our practices or approaches may be, and to remain civil and respectful as we discuss these important conservation issues.”

Babic and Eastman were each fined \$262 and will lose their license privileges for fishing, hunting and trapping for a year. ☒





Brian Pellegrini



*Blast from the past.
Dennis Roberts*



*Brandon Carrier and dad, Jack
with 479 lb moose*



Heather Ibey with 4 pointer



*Brandon Carrier with a
New Hampshire buck*

Vermont's Preliminary Report on 2021 Deer Seasons

Hunters Took More than 15,000 Deer in 2021

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The final number of deer taken in Vermont's 2021 hunting seasons will not be available for a few more weeks, but the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department says the final tally will be around 15,600 deer. Those deer will provide approximately 3.1 million servings of local, nutritious venison.

The buck harvest will be close to 9,000, which will be down slightly from 2020 (9,255) but near the 10-year average of 8,938. The final antlerless deer harvest will be around 6,600, down considerably from 9,735 in 2020, but similar to antlerless harvests prior to 2020. Some of that decrease was due to the department issuing fewer muzzleloader antlerless permits this year. However, the

archery season harvest, which accounts for much of the total antlerless deer harvest, will also be down substantially from 2020.

"Some decline in the harvest was expected this year, as we've been working to reduce deer numbers in some areas to keep them in balance with the available habitat," said Nick Fortin, the department's deer project leader. "Hunting conditions were also challenging again this year. Warm weather and abundant fall foods limited deer movement and made it difficult for hunters to locate them. Changes in hunting participation and effort related to the pandemic likely affected this year's harvest as well."

The primary goal of Vermont's deer

management strategy is to keep the deer herd stable, healthy and in balance with available habitat. "Maintaining an appropriate number of deer on the landscape ensures deer and the habitats that support them remain in good condition and productive," said Fortin.

The 2021 White-tailed Deer Harvest Report with final numbers will be on Fish and Wildlife's website in early March. Beginning in late March, the department will be holding informational hearings to share biological information and to listen to any information people wish to share. ☒



Winter Wildlife Ecology and Forest Management at Hinesburg Town Forest

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Join Ethan Tapper, the Chittenden County Forester for the Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation, and Andrea Shortsleeve, Wildlife Biologist for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Dept. on Saturday, January 29, 2022, from 1:00-3:00pm for a free, public walk of a forest management project being implemented at the Hinesburg Town Forest (HTF).

This walk will highlight winter wildlife ecology, wildlife tracking, and how active management of the HTF is expected to influence wildlife habitat and behavior.

The Hinesburg Town Forest is an 839-acre property, owned by the Town of Hinesburg and managed under the guidance of Chittenden County Forester since the 1950s. It is a beloved public resource, used by people from all over the region for hiking, mountain biking,

hunting, bird and wildlife-watching and other activities.

To learn more about the Hinesburg Town Forest project, check out the links and resources at: <https://linktr.ee/HinesburgTownForest>.

To join the walk, meet at 1:00pm on Saturday, January 29 at the HTF trailhead on Hayden Hill Road East, 0.3 miles from the intersection with Texas Hill Road. Please note that the Hayden Hill Road East trailhead is not accessible from Hayden Hill Road West, and that if you put “Hinesburg Town Forest” into your GPS it will send you to the incorrect trailhead. Please come prepared to spend two hours out in the elements, including some walking over slippery and uneven surfaces. ☒



VTF&W photo by Tom Rogers

F&W's 2022 Conservation Camp Registration is Open

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release



Vermont Fish & Wildlife's Green Mountain Conservation Camp program offers young people the opportunity to learn about natural resource conservation and develop outdoor skills through hands-on learning experiences.

If you are 12 to 14 years old and want to learn about Vermont's wildlife and gain outdoor skills, consider attending one of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's Green Mountain Conservation Camps this summer.

Specific details about what protocols relating to COVID-19 will be in place will be communicated via the department's [website](#) as they become clear.

The one-week camp programs are held at Lake Bomoseen in Castleton and Buck Lake in Woodbury. Campers participate in hands-on learning about fish and wildlife conservation, ecology, forestry, orienteering, safe firearm and archery techniques, swimming, canoeing, fishing and more. Natural resource professionals come to the camp to share information on their programs and take campers out for field activities.

"Whether kids come alone or with friends, they are guaranteed to meet new people and form new bonds while experiencing Vermont's natural resources to the fullest," said Fish and Wildlife Education Coordinator Alison Thomas. "An important take-away message and common theme during the week is that conserving and managing habitat will help ensure Vermont will have fish and wildlife in the future."

"We would love to have all of the advanced sessions filled for girls who have already attended a basic session," added Thomas. "Advanced sessions are for campers who have completed a basic session the summer before and who are 16 years old or younger. Advanced sessions include more in-depth activities about backpacking, camping, natural resources, and unique hunting and fishing techniques."

Conservation Camps open June 19 and continue until August 19. Tuition is \$250 for the week, including food, lodging and equipment.

[Applications and information](#) are available at www.vtfishandwildlife.com.

COVID-19 remains an unknown factor in planning for the 2022 Conservation Camp program. Keeping staff and campers safe and healthy could mean last minute changes. While registration is open, with all camp weeks available to the full number of campers, the specific details of how camp may run are subject to change based on guidance from the Vermont Health Department and the Governor's orders. This could include and is not limited to, reducing the number of sessions held, reducing the number of students in each session, or canceling the program for 2022. For more information, contact FWGMCC@vermont.gov or call 802-522-2925. ☒

December is the Start of Bird Feeding Season

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release



Bird feeders offer an easy and safe way to interact with wildlife but installing them after December 1 limits the potential to attract bears.

VTF&W photo by John Hall

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department recommends Vermonters wait to put up bird feeders until December 1 to avoid attracting bears.

Doug Morin, Vermont Fish and Wildlife's bird project leader said, "This may be a particularly good winter for attracting winter birds arriving from Canada, including Evening Grosbeaks and Purple Finches. Black oil sunflower is a good seed choice that will attract a variety of birds, and folks may want to try other seeds or suet to attract certain species. Thistle, for example, attracts many of the finches. Gardeners will find leaving late-blooming flowers uncut provides seeds which can also attract birds."

While watching your bird feeders, you can participate in one or more bird monitoring projects by looking up the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, the Great Backyard Bird Count and Project Feeder

Watch—all three collect important information to understanding bird populations.

The Fish and Wildlife Department offers these tips for bird-friendly bird feeding:

- Keep cats inside. Domestic cats are the leading cause of bird death in North America, and feeders can make birds particularly easy prey.
- Place feeders closer than 4 feet or farther than 10 feet from a window. Being close to, or far from a window reduces bird collisions.
- Clean feeders regularly. To eliminate harmful bacteria and viruses, feeders should be washed every few weeks with a 10 percent bleach solution, then rinsed and allowed to dry before refilling.
- Feed birds only between December 1 and April 1 but remove feeders if you see signs of bears. Most bears should be in dens during this time, but some delay entering their dens while even those that have dened may re-emerge to feed if there is a period of warm weather. Bears that learn to get food from people will continue to do so, potentially leading to property damage and dangerous encounters with people which can result in the bear's demise. ☒

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Nesting Loons Have a Record Year

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Vermont's loons are thriving with a record 109 nesting pairs recorded in 2021, the highest since loon monitoring began in 1978, according to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department and Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE).

"Across Vermont, 77 loon nests produced 125 chicks this year, and 84 of those chicks survived through August," said VCE wildlife biologist Eric Hanson.

VCE leads the Vermont Loon Conservation Project in partnership with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

"We are very grateful to Eric Hanson and the many volunteers who help monitor Vermont's nesting loons," said Fish and Wildlife's bird biologist Doug Morin. "The loon has been the flagship species of our nongame work ever since the nongame tax checkoff and conservation license plate programs have been helping to fund these efforts."

"Vermont's loon project is a tremendous success story," added Morin. "It's hard to believe that in 1983 there were only seven nesting pairs."

Loons were removed from Vermont's endangered species list in 2005 following decades of recovery efforts. One of the main threats still facing loons as they continue to recover is human disturbance during the breeding season.

"Many areas where loons are nesting on Vermont's lakes are surrounded by signs reminding people to give loons the space they need, but not all nesting areas are marked," said Morin. "We ask people to enjoy loons from a distance, whether they are in a motorboat, a canoe or a kayak."

Morin also reminds people to avoid lead fishing tackle. Loons sometimes swallow stray fishing tackle and suffer the effects of lead poisoning. Lead sinkers weighing one-half ounce or less are prohibited for fishing in Vermont. And, he recommends that anglers be careful to not attract loons to their bait and lures, and especially don't leave any fishing line behind as fishing tackle does kill loons. ☒

*VTF&W background photo by Tom Rogers:
A record 109 pairs of loons nested in Vermont in 2021 with 125 chicks hatched and 84 surviving through August.*

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Has Online License Gift Certificates

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Finding a gift that will continue to give for a full year is a challenge, but the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has a solution on their website — a [license gift certificate](#) for hunting and fishing licenses.

"It's the perfect gift for a friend or family member who hunts or fishes," said Cheri Waters, Fish and Wildlife's licensing coordinator. "You can go to our website, fill out the gift certificate and pay for it online, and then you can print the certificate to present to your recipient."

The gift certificate has a link in the license section of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com). The person who receives the

certificate must go to the website to redeem their certificate and purchase their licenses.

"If you have a friend or relative who hunts or fishes, this is an easy gift-giving solution," said Waters. "The gift certificate will cover licenses for 2022 or for licenses in future years." ☒



Vermont Fish and Wildlife's license gift certificate is available on their website.

The Trapline

by Randy Barrows, Arrowhead Trapping Supply

Happy New Year everyone. I for one was certainly glad to flush 2021 out of my system. I have gotten my shots to be safe and pay little attention to the daily news. Hunters and trappers out doing their thing outside with only Mother Nature to deal with have got to be the safest bunch going. I think we stay well outside of our six foot range, or is it eight, or maybe ten, or who give a rats darieaire! Sitting here writing this I am watching a football game with 60 thousand in attendance , elbow to elbow. Guess they are exempt.

As I am writing this I glance out the cabin window and notice its snowing quite hard. This is the first significant storm we have had this winter. Mother Nature has been real good to trappers this year. Tempatures have been steady, no real warm ups or freeze ups. For those of us who ground trap the weather has been a blessing. The last few years have been a struggle for land trapping. I just watched a video sent to me by a 15 year old new trapper who is now water trapping and noticed the streams are still running and the ponds have little to no ice on them. It certainly makes it a lot easier when you can travel around easily and not have to chop ice to put sets in or check them. He just stopped by and showed mw some fur and it is looking fine.

Speaking of fur things do not look hopeful for this year either. You can not give coon away, otters, 35.00, beaver 10.00, mink 5.00, coyotes 20.00, bobcat 30.00, skunk 5.00, . Muskrats are about the only fur that are holding up well. At a recent auction the top price was 5.00. Thats not to shabby if you can find them. The last few years rats have been tough to find. Please remember these quoted prices reflect prices paid for the top of the class fur. Smaller sizes and other imperfections will drop the prices.

Speaking of prices, have you tried to buy supplies lately?? Seems like every item has jumped a bit, some items a lot. My supplier advised me another issue is product bouncing in a bay in a shipping container that can not be unloaded anytime soon, and once it is unloaded God only knows how long it will take to get on a truck and delivered. I know these facts do not affect most seasoned trappers as we have all we need and then some but I know new trappers that come to my shop are struggling. Try to find locking 330 trap setters right now. Good luck.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record I will again advise folks of the importance of keeping track of what is going on under the golden dome in Montpeculier. The over paid suits will be starting back up soon and unfortunately the people who hate our way of life will be there trying to stop everything we enjoy doing. We have been lucky so far. Many states can not say the same. Rumor has it that they will try to stop all trapping , end all types of hunting with hounds, make it illegal to use trail cameras. They have tried to stop trapping for the 60 plus years I have trapped, way back to the days of Fay Abbott and Iris Mugenthaler with no success. That certainly does not mean nothing will happen this year. The folks at Protect Our Wildlife have full warchests and do not work for a living and are somewhat of a threat. If you dig through their jabber with a open mind you quickly see that nothing they provide is based on science just their animal loving rhetoric. The hound issue came up last year but went no where, except in the Northeast of Vermont. Nulhegan management plan was renewed with huge restrictions on hound hunting. My question is how in the hell can this happen????? These lands were bought with tax payers dollars and certain groups should not be shut out. The camera issue came out last fall. Some joker, Mr. Breton , who writes for FUR FISH and Game proposed this legislation because his group Backpackers of Vermont or something along those lines thinks its not fair to animals to have their pictures taken. I have already sent a letter to FUR FISH and Game asking how they can have this fellow write for them when he is pulling this B,S. in his home state. My suggestion to Breton, back pack up, head to a border, take a hike and stay there!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

So I ask that you pay attention to what is going on. Get to know your town reps and state reps. Put their numbers on speed dial so you can call them often. Be polite but firm when talking to them. If you holler and scream you will not gain a thing.

Also join up some organizations that promote what we do. Join the Vermont Trappers Association. Vermont Bear Hound Association, Ruffed Grouse Society and on and on. If and when adverse legislation should rear its ugly head , these organizations send professionals to speak in the dome or funds to help the anti everything world go away. Have a great new year and be sure to take a kid out with you. ☒

VF&W's Groundbreaking Map Project Wins \$100,000 Federal Grant to Help Wildlife Adapt to Climate Change

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department won a \$106,256 [competitive](#) grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to take advantage of groundbreaking new data that will help conservation planners protect plants, animals and their habitats in the face of climate change.

[Vermont Conservation Design](#) is a science-based assessment of Vermont's ecologically functional landscape that helps guide strategic fish and wildlife conservation. "With this grant, we are excited to fine-tune our assessment to better identify lands and waters that contribute to Vermont's healthy environment with climate change in mind," said Director of Wildlife Mark Scott.

First released in 2015, Vermont Conservation Design maps the habitat needed to ensure Vermont's wildlife remains healthy and abundant. Six years later, new state-wide ["Lidar" data from the Vermont Center for](#)

[Geographic Information](#) provide an opportunity to upgrade this conservation tool.

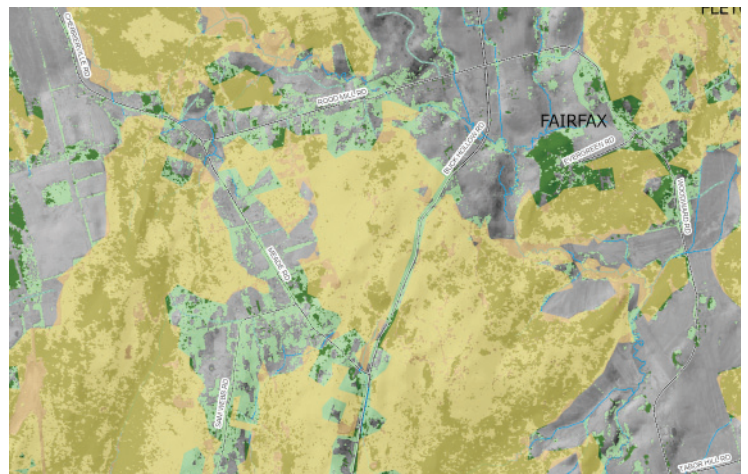
Lidar, short for Light Detection and Ranging, is a remote sensing technology that uses aircraft-mounted laser scanners and a global positioning system to map landscape texture, giving researchers a more accurate understanding of land cover. It provides 400 times higher resolution than any previous landcover data.

The new data will reveal critical details for wildlife movement and ecological connections, like hedgerows through fields and forest edges close to roads. These connections allow animals to move from one habitat block to the next as they adjust their ranges to climate change.

"These very detailed land cover maps will help us find the places where wildlife, such as black bears and bobcats, can travel between large patches of forest," says Jens

Hilke, a conservation planner at Vermont Fish and Wildlife. "It is critical that wildlife have the ability to move around the state and beyond, especially as climate change pushes plants and animals into new habitats." Federal support for this project highlights the department's leadership in science-based conservation. "[The Competitive State Wildlife Grants](#) provide a proactive, collaborative and innovative mechanism for addressing significant threats to our nation's cherished wildlife and their habitats," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Principal Deputy Director Martha Williams.

"This grant enables us to enhance and accelerate our work with new science, so that priority species from moose and northern long-eared bats to native bees and rare plants remain healthy and able to adapt to climate change in Vermont and beyond, Scott added." ☒



2016 lidar-derived tree cover (light and dark green) overlaid with 2011 habitat blocks (orange) highlights the opportunities to improve Vermont Conservation Design with new data that account for connecting landscapes.