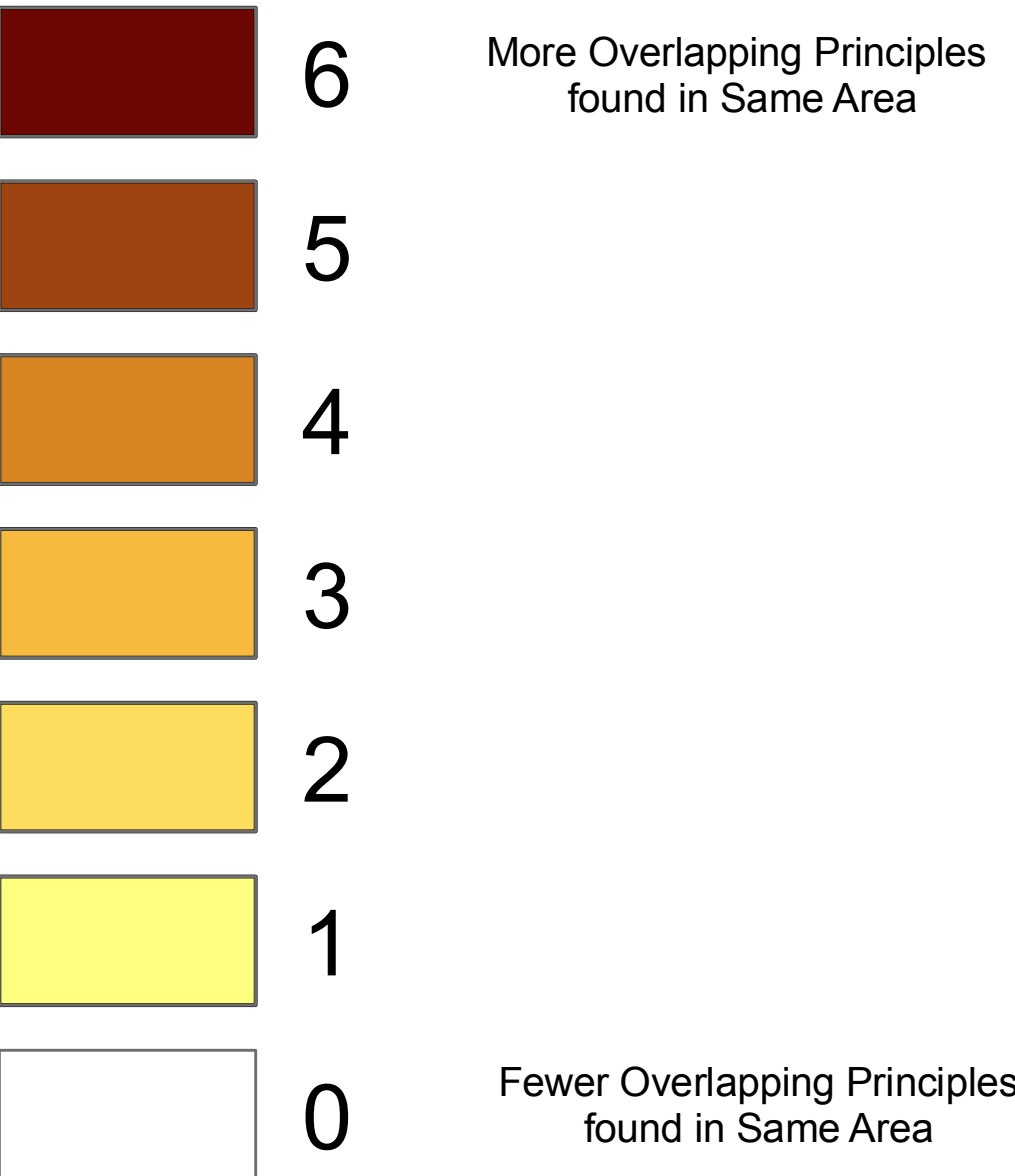


ECOLOGICAL CONSERVATION FOCUS AREAS

of principles/unit area



Roads

Lakes

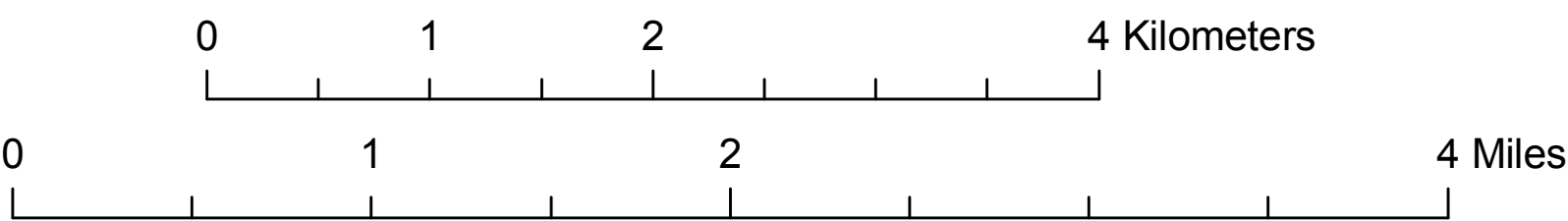
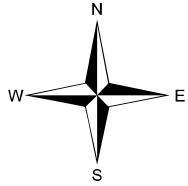
Streams

Ecological Conservation Focus Areas identify the degree of co-occurrence, or overlapping, of several ecological principles (listed below). It shows areas appropriate for conservation action, such as where to focus technical assistance or where to focus voluntary land acquisition. It provides land managers and conservation organizations with a picture of where to get the most ecologically rich places in the least land area, which is to say where there are the most ecological principles at play in the landscape. This map does not prioritize conservation efforts nor does it does incorporate necessary interconnections between ecological related areas. For example, for this analysis connecting lands and the large forest blocks they connect are treated as separate elements, ignoring the fact that the connecting lands are useless without the forest blocks (and to some extent, vice versa). So, even if land managers decided to protect all lands that had a high level of co-occurrence among the ecological principles, the result on the landscape would not necessarily maintain the current populations of wildlife or biological diversity. The result would, however, secure areas of most biological diversity in the least land area; the most cost-efficient use of a conservation organization's resources. This map targets the first places for conservation action and technical assistance, but is not a plan for what areas are important for future sustainability or where town planning or zoning should focus. A map titled "Tiered Ecological Priorities" is more appropriate to inform planning and zoning efforts.

Ecological Principles

- Maintain large, intact patches of native vegetation.
- Protect habitats that are key to the distribution and abundance of priority species
- Protect exemplary natural communities and aquatic features
- Maintain connections among wildlife habitats for species movement and gene flow.
- Maintain significant ecological processes (such as wetlands and floodplains recharging groundwater and filtering surface water).
- Contribute to regional persistence of rare species by protecting their habitat locally.
- Ensure that the full range of native biological diversity is maintained by protecting ecosystems that are poorly represented in the landscape

Data Sources; Arrowwood Environmental,
Vermont Center for Geographic Information,
Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.
Vermont State Plane Projection
NAD1983 Datum
Map by Jens Hilke
June, 2011



Forests, Wildlife & Communities Project

The Forests, Wildlife, & Communities Project is a collaborative among 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 forest land and wildlife habitat conservation.