This map identifies the terrain lands and waters most important for supporting ecologically functional ecosystems, natural communities, habitats, and species. It is a compilation of many datasets, each included because it represents an ecological component known to contribute significantly to Vermont’s biodiversity.

Components are divided into two scales: landscape-scale priorities form the green background and represent broad ecological patterns such as connected forests and water networks. Community and species-scale priorities are the lands and waters critical to individual species or groups of species, and they appear as the purple foreground. These priorities are just as important for maintaining biodiversity as the broad landscape patterns but are more concrete, depicted as individual occurrences rather than broad patterns.

Landscape Scale: To identify priorities, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department landscape geographic areas ("blocks") or "highest priority" patches in interior forest blocks, connective blocks, riparian corridors, surface waters, and physical landscapes. An "interior forest landscape" includes all of these components, lands considered to be "highest priority" for any component are given "highest priority" status on this compilation. Used instead as "priority" for any component is likewise considered "priority," unless considered "highest priority" for another component. While this map shows only the combined priorities, you can see each component individually on the distribution website. Maintaining an enhancing landscape scale priorities is likely to conserve the majority of Vermont’s species and natural communities, even as the climate changes.

Community and Species Scale: Priorities at this scale are critical for maintaining individual species or groups of species, identified as having a conservation need. They include wildlife corridors, representative bays, riparian corridors, surface waters, and ground and surface waters, and occur to develop, rare and unusual species, significant natural communities, gallery forests, and shrublands, etc.

All data were collected for use at the state level. There may be errors, and these errors may be transmitted when translating data into implementation measures. Whenever possible, the collection of field inventories a conservation will likely enhance a community’s ability to prioritize.