

Charlotte Conservation Commission
Town of Charlotte
Charlotte, VT 05445

November 30, 2016

Charlotte Planning Commission
c/o Daryl Benoit, Town Planner
Town of Charlotte
Charlotte, VT 05445

Re: Conservation Commission report on the impact of the proposed subdivision known as KR Properties, LLC, at the corner of Mt. Philo Road and One Mile Road on Areas of High Public Value: Significant Wildlife Habitat (Core Habitat and Wildlife Corridors)

Planning Commission Members:

The Charlotte Conservation Commission first reviewed the subdivision proposed for the Krasnow property, KR Properties LLC, in the spring of 2015. The concerns of the Commission were laid out at that time in a letter from the Conservation Commission by Roelof Boumans. His letter follows our current recommendations.

In a visit to the project in November, 2016, Conservation Commission members focused on Lots 6, 7 and 8. The building envelopes of Lots 6 and 7 are located on land designated as Core Habitat on the Town's Significant Wildlife Habitat Map.

Core and Forest Habitats are crucial for the survival of species such as fisher and black bear that require large ranges undisturbed by human activity. Other, more tolerant, species, such as bobcat, white-tailed deer and Eastern coyote require isolated habitats during certain phases of their life cycles, such as denning and rearing their young.

Ecologist Jeff Parsons of Arrowwood Environmental, noted in his Dec. 4, 2015, report to the Town regarding this subdivision, "If Core and Forest Habitat were eliminated from Charlotte and the town was left with all small woodlots and edge-dominated human-altered landscapes, wildlife populations of all but the most tolerant species of wildlife would suffer." Species that require "larger blocks of forest and access to different habitat elements in different locations on the landscape" would be placed in jeopardy.

A priority conservation strategy of the State of Vermont's Wildlife Action Plan (2005), is to "identify and prioritize, for conservation, existing contiguous forest blocks and associated linkages that allow for upward and northward movement (of species) in response to climate change." A document by Vermont Fish and Wildlife developed in support of the plan ("Vermont Habitat Blocks and Habitat Connectivity," April 2014), notes, "Habitat loss and fragmentation are considered two of the major factors driving loss of biological diversity and degradation of ecosystem services (such as air quality and climate regulation), both in the United States and globally."

Lots 6, 7 and 8 are part of an essential wildlife corridor connecting Mt. Philo to Pease Mountain. Therefore, we recommend that no alteration be allowed to the forest in this area.

Lot 8 plays an important role in the connectivity of forest blocks because its aquatic habitat forms a wildlife corridor between Mt. Philo and Pease Mountain: Animals follow stream beds and the edges of wetlands to travel from one forest block to another.

We also have significant concerns about development on Lots 4 and 5, because they, too, are in Core Habitat.

We have attached a series of maps with annotations that further illustrate our concerns about this project.

Members of the Conservation Commission will attend the Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, Dec. 1. We look forward to supporting your decision-making process.

Sincerely,

Amos Baehr, Chair
Derk Bergquist, Secretary
Meg Berlin
Susan Blood
Roel Boumans, Vice Chair
Michael Kirk
Linda Radimer
Mary Van Vleck, Treasurer

To: Planning Commission

Jeannine McCrumb, Town Planner

From: Roelof M Boumans,

Chair of the Charlotte Conservation Commission

Representing the Commission

On April 28, 2015, the Charlotte Conservation Commission reviewed the Sketch Plan for KR Properties LLC, a proposal for a 9-lot residential development off One Mile Road. (SE corner of intersection with Mount Philo Rd). Acting upon our mandate to advise on potential impacts to public value and in particular those that are interfering with the ecological integrity of our town, we would like to bring forward the following concerns:

1. Impact to wildlife:

Based on accounts from neighbors, the development will be located next to critical deer wintering yards.

The development will also cut into an important wildlife corridor connecting two of the most important wildlife areas in Charlotte, Mt Philo and Pease Mountain. We expect that if this development is approved it will cause a reduction of habitat potential in both of these areas, in particular for those species requiring larger roaming areas.

2. Impact to water regulation: (Stormwater issues)

Roads and driveways are major conducts of stormwater and cause rainfall to run off over land (flushing), rather than through infiltration into the soil. It is of utmost importance that building roads is kept to an absolute minimum. Other impacts of roads and driveways are the creation of forest edge, prime opportunities for many of the invasive species to get established.

In establishing the length of driveway proposed in this sketch plan, we anticipate increases in problems with erosion downstream.

3. Impact to water quality:

Increases in runoff through surface water tends to increase nutrient loads into Lake Champlain, in particular when these runoffs are funneled through the roads.

4. Impact to wetlands:

It came to our attention that the driveway planned off Mount Philo Road is crossing a wetland, and our concern is that such will require the use of culverts to raise the road above the water levels to cause channelization and add to the problem of increase runoff from this development.

Sincerely

Roelof M Boumans

Concerns regarding the development plans as proposed for the KRC properties LLC.

The property under consideration is owned by KRC properties and is located between Mount Philo and Pease Mountain. (fig 1).

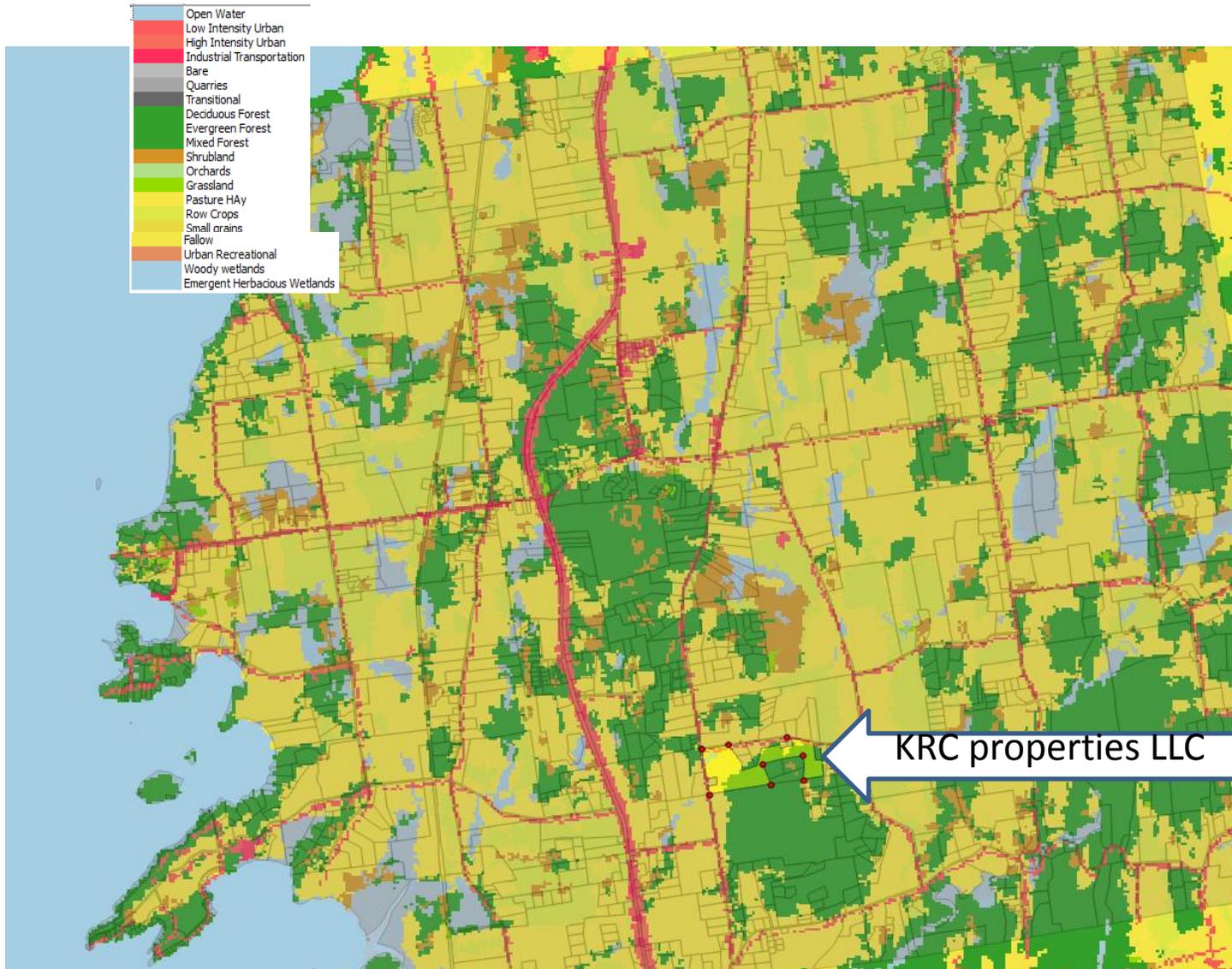


Figure 1 KRC properties projected on a USGS National Landcover Landuse map

Important conservation issues associated with the property are the presence of significant core habitat on the east, significant aquatic habitat and linking habitat on the west side of the property (figure 2)

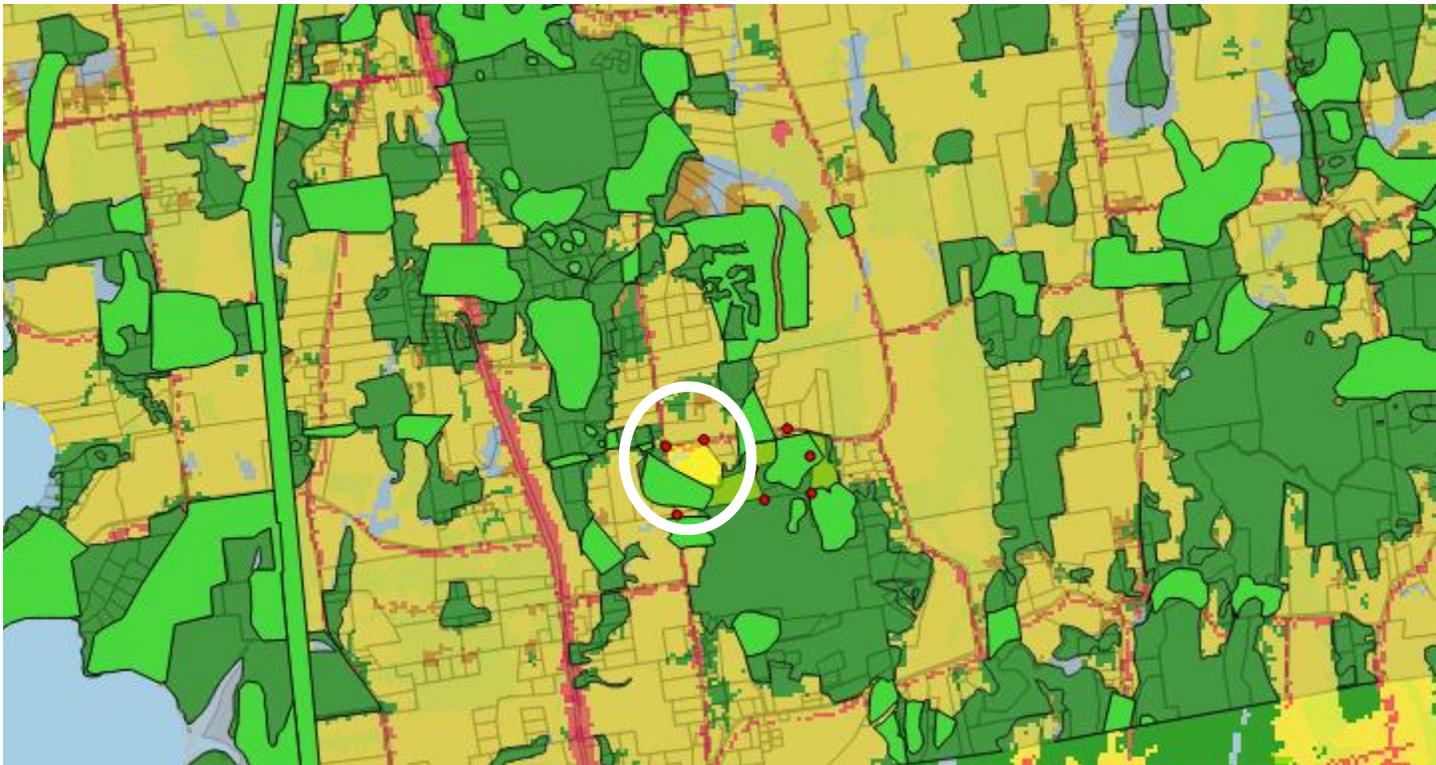
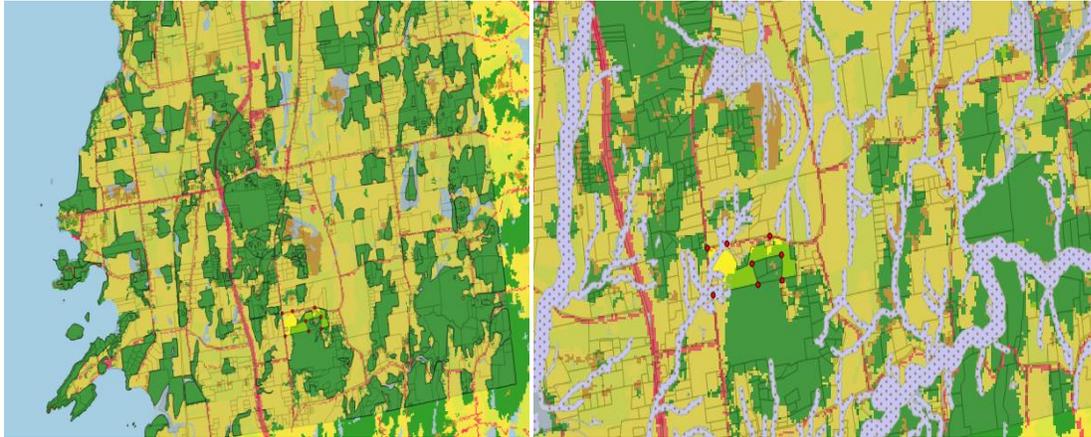
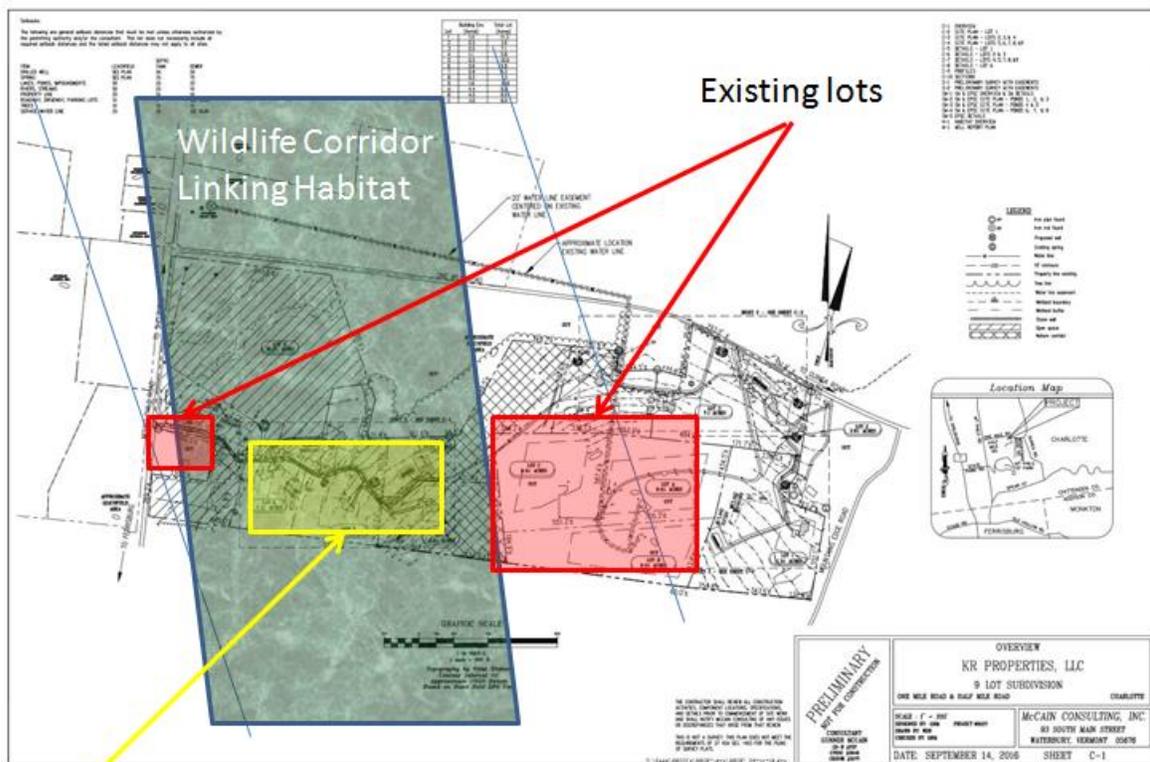


Figure 2 Charlotte significant habitat layers on core habitat (upper left), aquatic habitat (upper right) and linking habitat (lower)

Our concern is with all three issues, but mostly with a further degradation in connectivity and wildlife corridor that we anticipate will result carrying out the development plan (figure 3).



Proposed Lots

In particular as this parcel is already a weak link in a larger scale corridor that connects Charlotte to wildlife populations in the Green Mountains (figure 4)

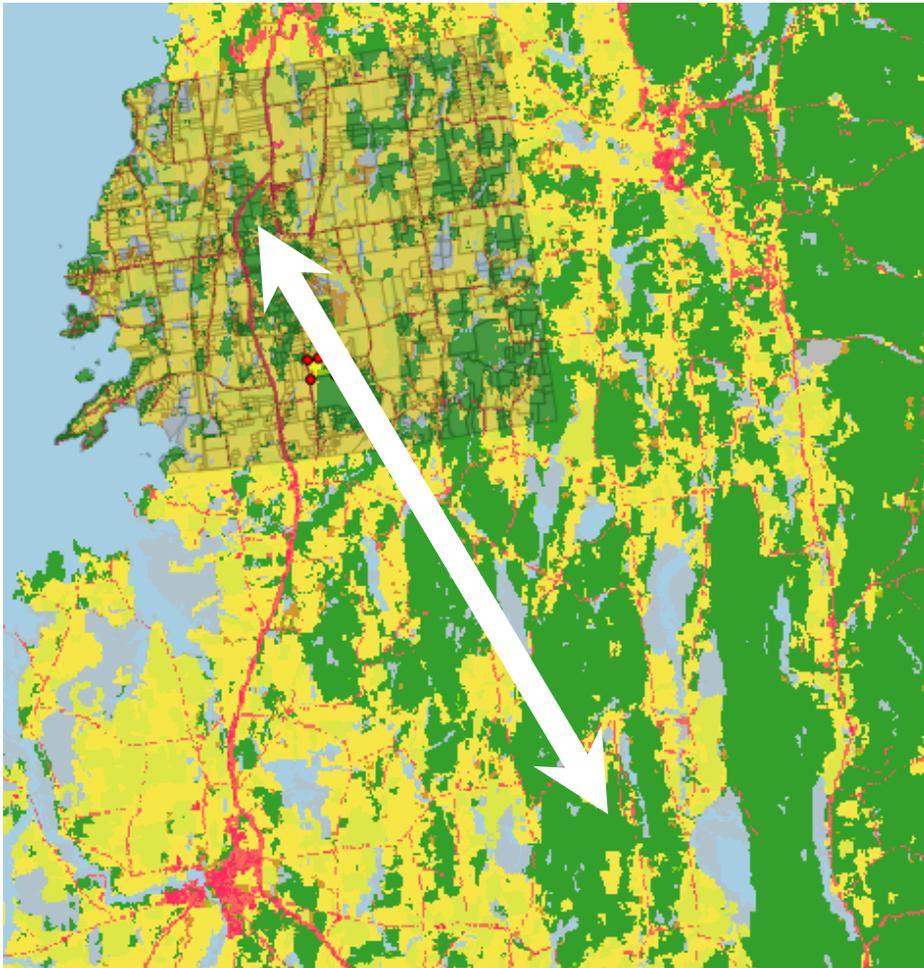


Figure 4 Wildlife corridor between the Green Mountains and Charlotte indicated by locations of forested areas.

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Pease Mountain

There are many options on the length of your hike on Pease Mountain depending on the ability of those in your group and the amount of time that you have.

Quick Facts

Trail Activity	
Town	Charlotte (VT)
Difficulty	Easy, Moderate
Length	2.6 miles, Network
Surface	Packed Earth/Dirt
Fees	

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Current Weather

Nov 26, 2016 Light Rain **44.2°F**

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◦ Little Country Hills Show | [View Trail Posting](#)

Severing this link will impact the ability of Charlotte children to experience the wildlife that has become part of their educational experience. Learning about and viewing wildlife in its natural habitat prepares our youngest residents to become stewards of this land in the future!