

TOWN OF READING
Proposed Zoning Changes – April 3, 2019

Significant Wildlife Habitat Overlay District

The Planning Commission proposes designation of a Significant Wildlife Habitat District (SWHOD) which encompasses two landscape features (wildlife travel corridors and deer wintering habitat) critical to sustaining wildlife populations within the town and surrounding region. A wildlife corridor is a link of wildlife habitat, generally native vegetation, which joins two or more larger areas of similar habitat. By maintaining landscape connections between larger areas of habitat, corridors enable wildlife (e.g. deer, black bear and bobcat) to migrate seasonally to find food, mates, den sites, etc. Habitat loss and fragmentation resulting from increased land parcelization and use conversion are the two main contributors to continuing wildlife and floral biodiversity decline at the landscape scale.

With assistance from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (VFWD), the Planning Commission has identified several critical habitats on which the town and its citizens can have an influence. Namely these include two principal wildlife travel corridors and several deer wintering areas. The proposed SWHOD and standards (section 2.4.9 of the Zoning Ordinance) are intended to provide for land development within Reading in a manner that minimizes and mitigates impacts on these wildlife resources.

On behalf of the Planning Commission
Stephen Strait, Chair