Monkton

Community Values Mapping

January 2021

Jens Hilke

Community Wildlife Program

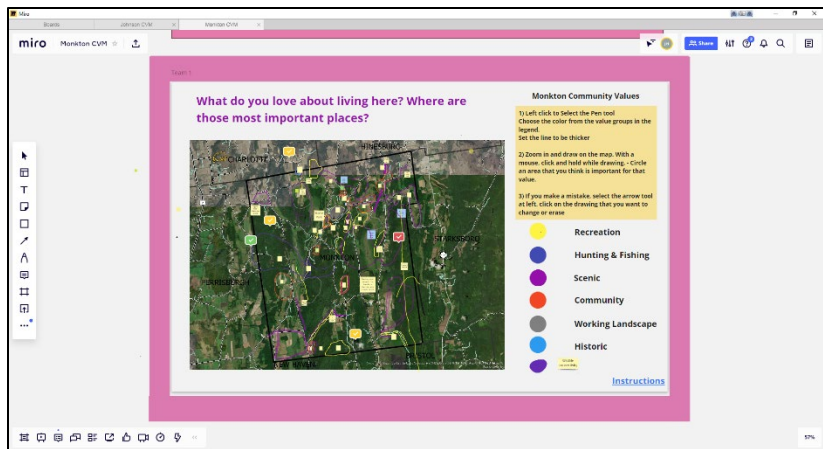**Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department**

Introduction

In November of 2020, the Monkton Conservation Commission invited the Community Wildlife Program to lead a Community Values Mapping event for the Town of Monkton, Vermont. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission decided on a three-pronged approach to values mapping to maximize human safety. Values were mapped at 1) a live online event on Thursday November 12th, 2020, 2) as part of a two-week asynchronous online "event" Nov 12 – Dec1, and 3) on a physical poster that was posted at a convenient location in town that provided some shelter but also air flow.

For all of these activites, participants were asked to think about two simple questions:

What places in Monkton do you love?

What do you value about these places?

At the live event, participants "gathered" on a Zoom meeting and were then randomly divided into six small breakout groups with a facilitator for each group. Participants then logged on to Miro.com, an online whiteboard. The whiteboard was equipped with drawing tools that all participants could use and a map of town for them to mark up. The map also included a legend of value groups for participants to categorize their responses (Recreation, Hunting & Fishing, Scenic, Community, Working landscapes & Historic). One at a time, a group member used the drawing tool to outline a location that he/she values and used a color that corresponded to one of the value groups. Once an outline was drawn, the participant stated *what* they loved about the place. For example, possibilities could include wildlife, views, working forests, farmland, economic resources, cultural/social resources, historic sites, places for recreation, hunting/fishing, or many other options. The 1-2 word description was documented using the comment tool or sticky note tool on the map.

The next participant chose either to use the same color (value group) to mark a place with a similar value or to choose a new color to outline a place with a different value.

Some places were valued for more than one reason. In these cases, places were outlined several times, each time with a different color as indicated in the legend.

Value Groups

The legend of value groups was pre-set as seen at right. For one team during the live event, the range of values expressed by participants was not adequately covered by these pre-set options and they added a "Catch-all" value group that included human values of natural resources. This is to say that participants identified the area as being valuable for wildlife and ecological values and found that important.

The full list of values listed was therefore:

- Recreation
- Hunting & Fishing
- Scenic
- Community
- Working Landscape
- Historic
- Natural Resources (Group 2)

Maps and Results

Results from all events—including six individual maps from the live event, one map from the asynchronous event and one map from the physical poster—were compiled to create the maps below. Digital data is also available to the town.
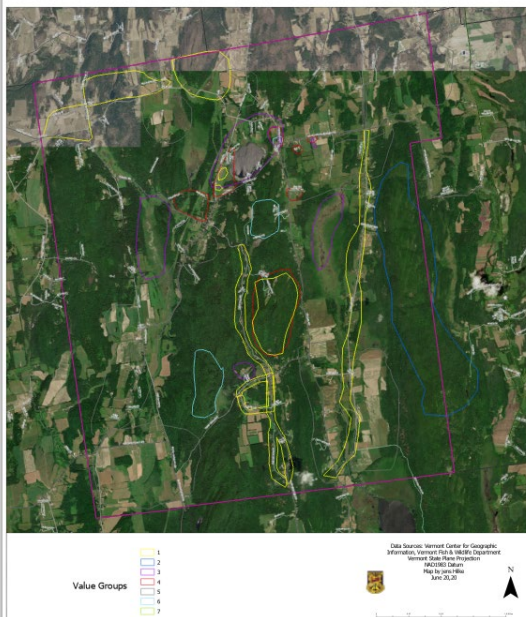
Results by Small Group:

The following maps show each of the small group maps as digitized. Values from these were later combined by value group for subsequent analysis.
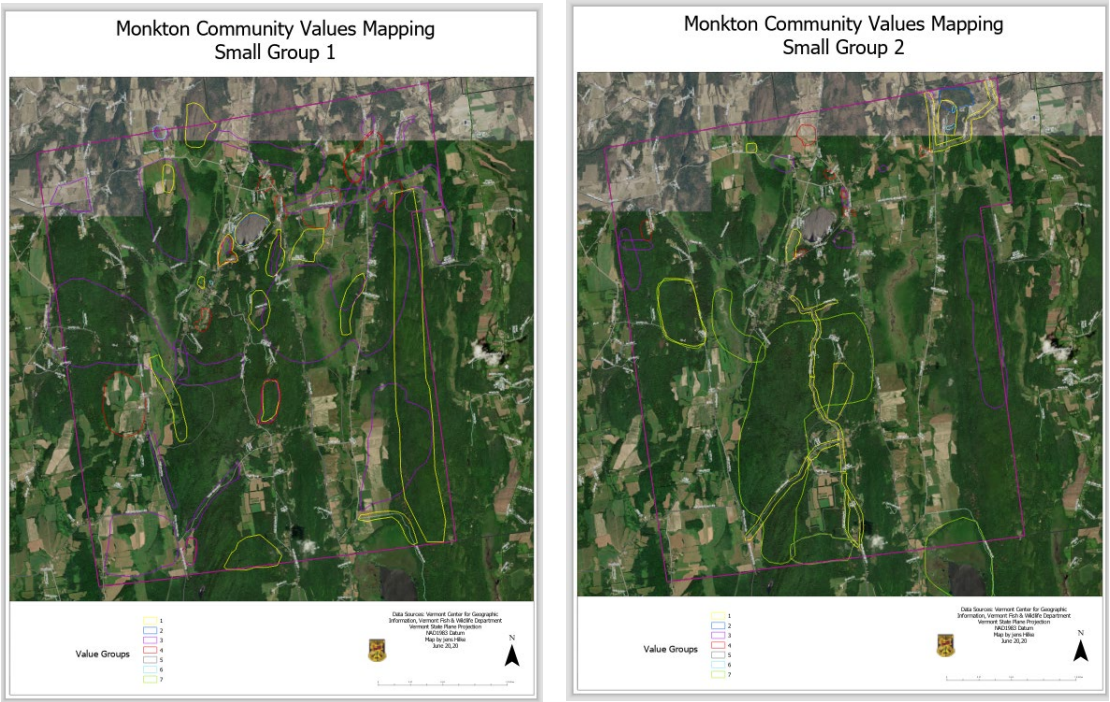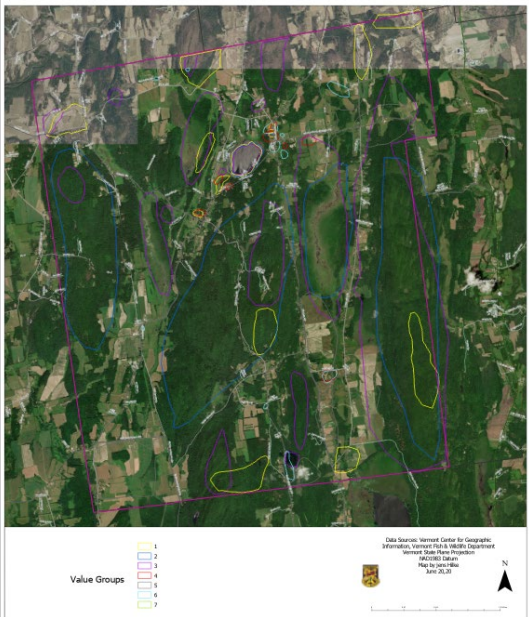
Monkton Community Values Mapping
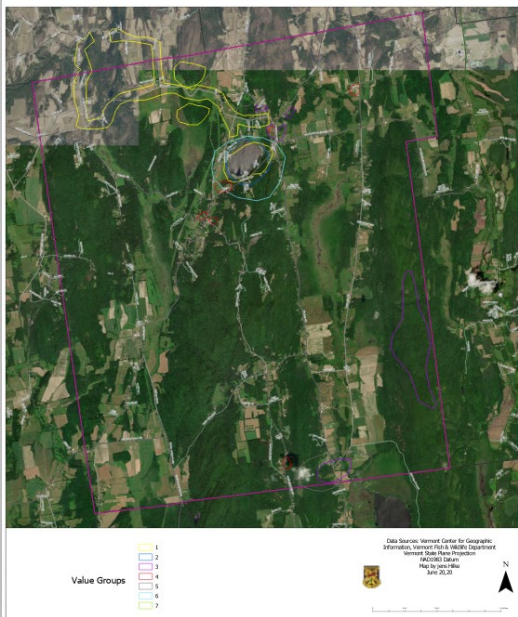Small Group 3

Monkton Community Values Mapping
Small Group 4

Monkton Community Values Mapping
Small Group 5
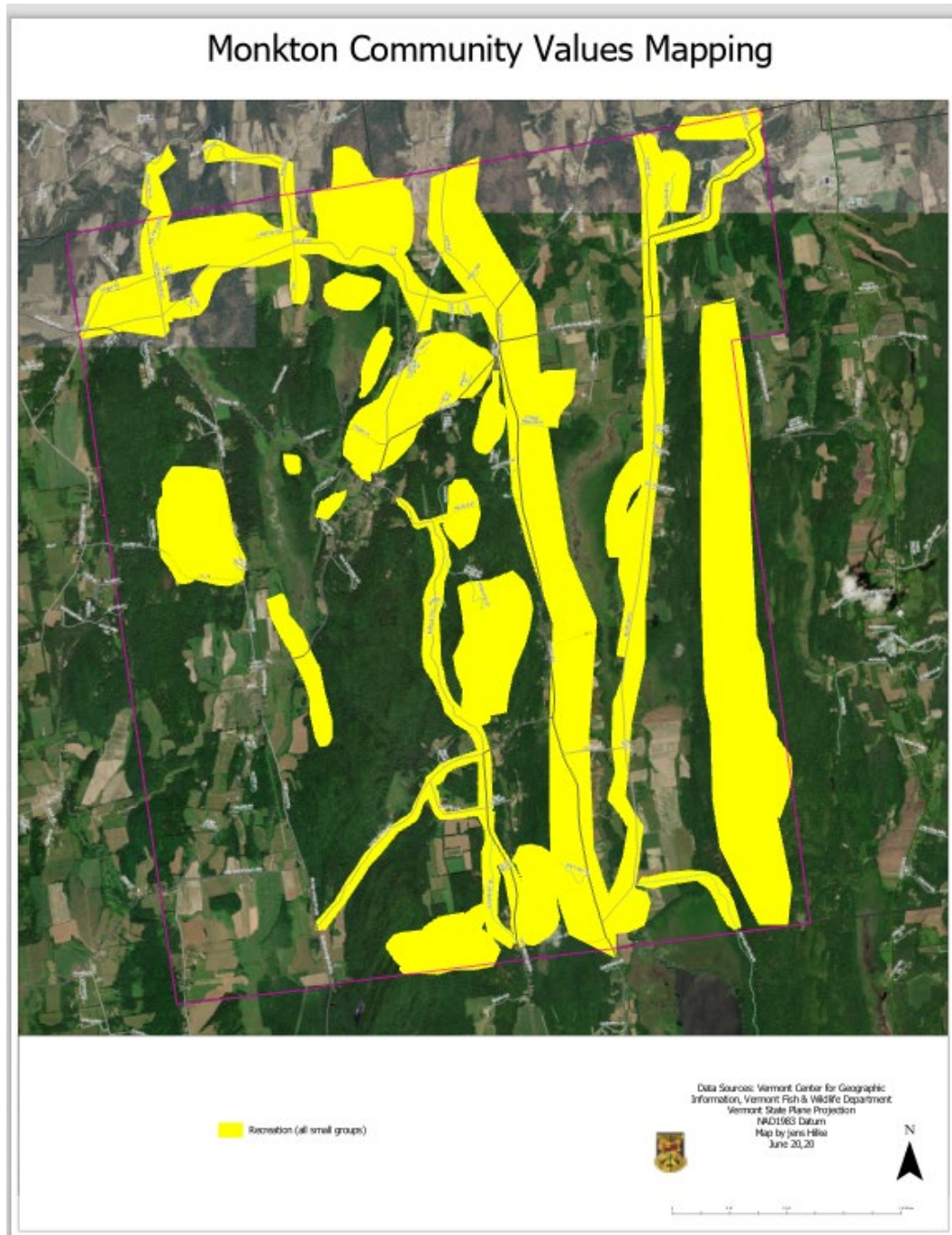
Monkton Community Values Mapping
Small Group 6

Value Groups
1
2
3
4
5
6
7

Data Sources: Vermont Center for Geographic
Information, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
Vermont State Plane Projection
NAD1983 Datum
Map by Jens Hilke
June 20,20

Monkton Community Values Mapping
Small Group 7 (Asynchronous Online)

Small Group 8 (The Physical poster)

Results from the physical poster were not drawn into value groups. Only one marker color was used and the actual value being described was not noted. Participants noted place names but not any of the values associated with those places. Consequently, it was impossible to digitize these results without huge assumptions in what the participant intended. Comparison of the areas drawn on this map against what was already included in the other seven maps showed no new areas covered. These results were not digitized.

Results by Value Group:

The following maps show each of the value group maps as digitized, including inputs from all Small Group maps combined.

Recreation:

Monkton Community Values Mapping

Recreation (all small groups)

Data Sources: Vermont Center for Geographic Information, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
Vermont State Plane Projection
NAD1983 Datum
Map by Jens Hilke
June 20, 20

N

Hunting & Fishing:

Monkton Community Values Mapping

Hunting & Fishing (All small groups)

Data Sources: Vermont Center for Geographic Information, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
Vermont State Plane Projection
NAD1983 Datum
Map by Jens Hilke
June 20, 20

Scenic:

Monkton Community Values Mapping

Scenic (All small groups)

Data Sources: Vermont Center for Geographic Information, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
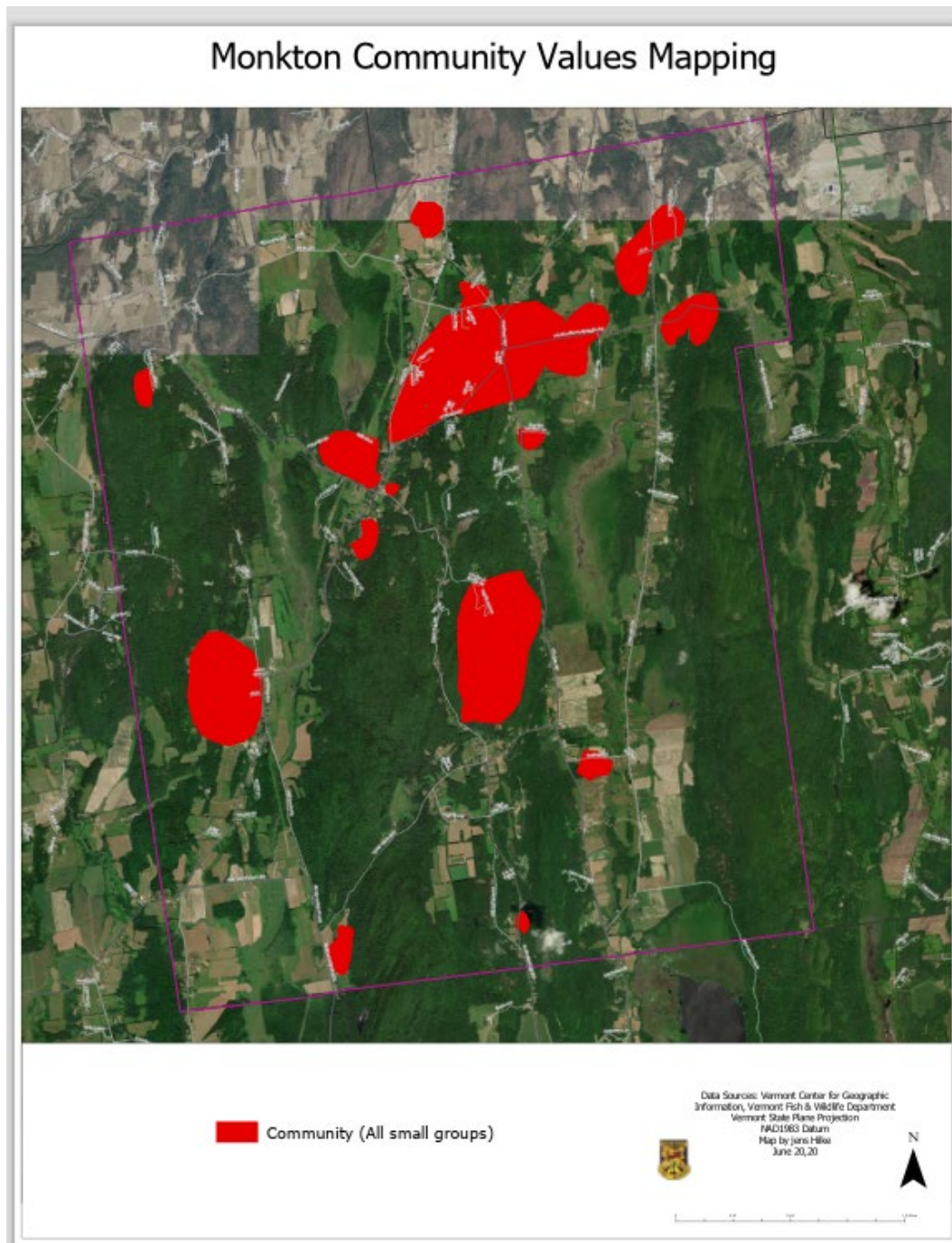Vermont State Plane Projection
NAD1983 Datum
Map by Jens Hilke
June 20, 20

It is also important to note that the "Scenic" value grouping apparently includes two different ways of drawing that value. It may be helpful to the town to distinguish between viewpoints (places from where a view can be seen), viewsheds (the entire land area that can be seen from a viewpoint), and scenic areas (which also include places in which the visually pleasing character is in the immediate foreground, such as a road passing through a tunnel of trees or a pathway along a pretty brook). For this exercise, these categories were not distinguished by all groups, and were lumped together for the analysis.

8

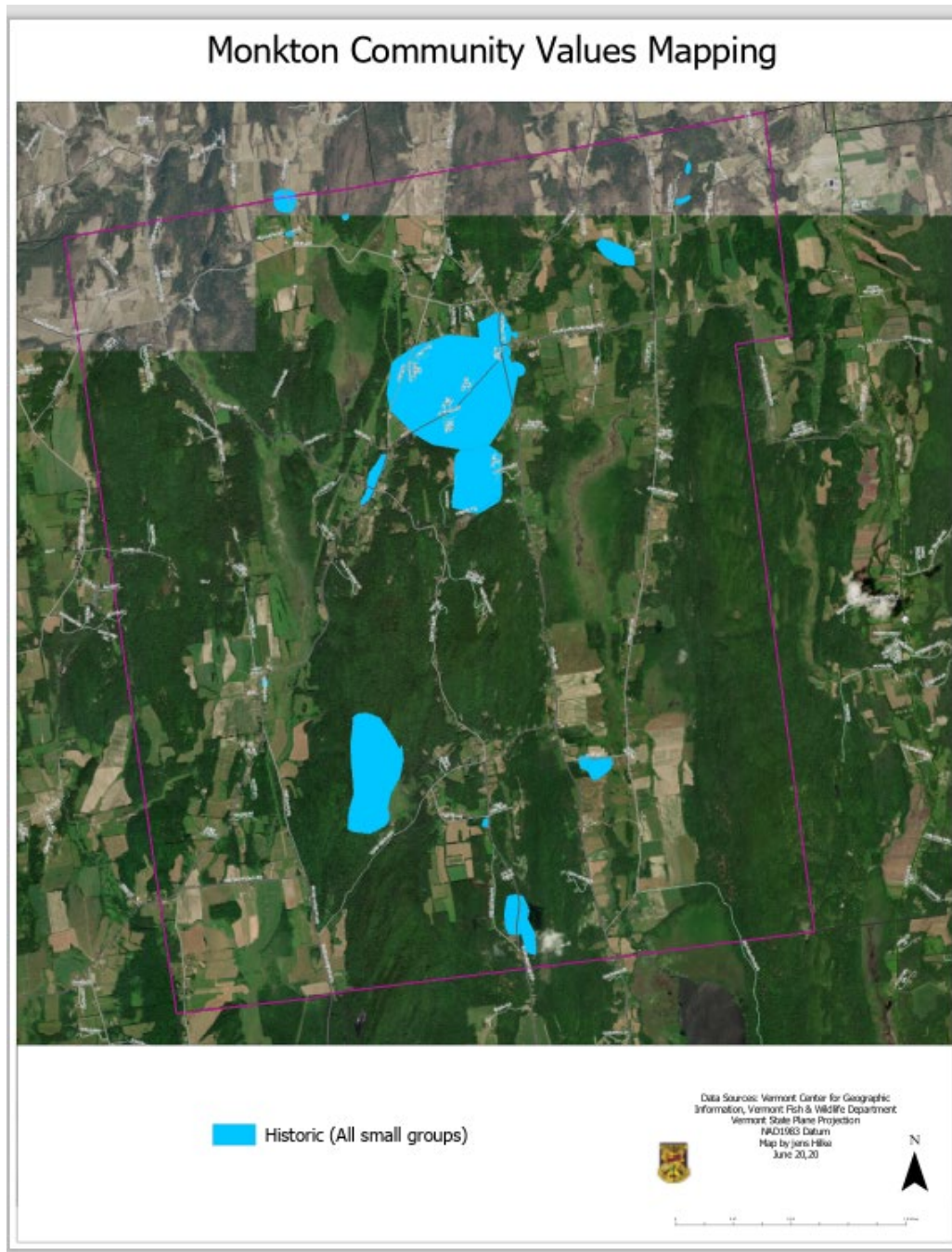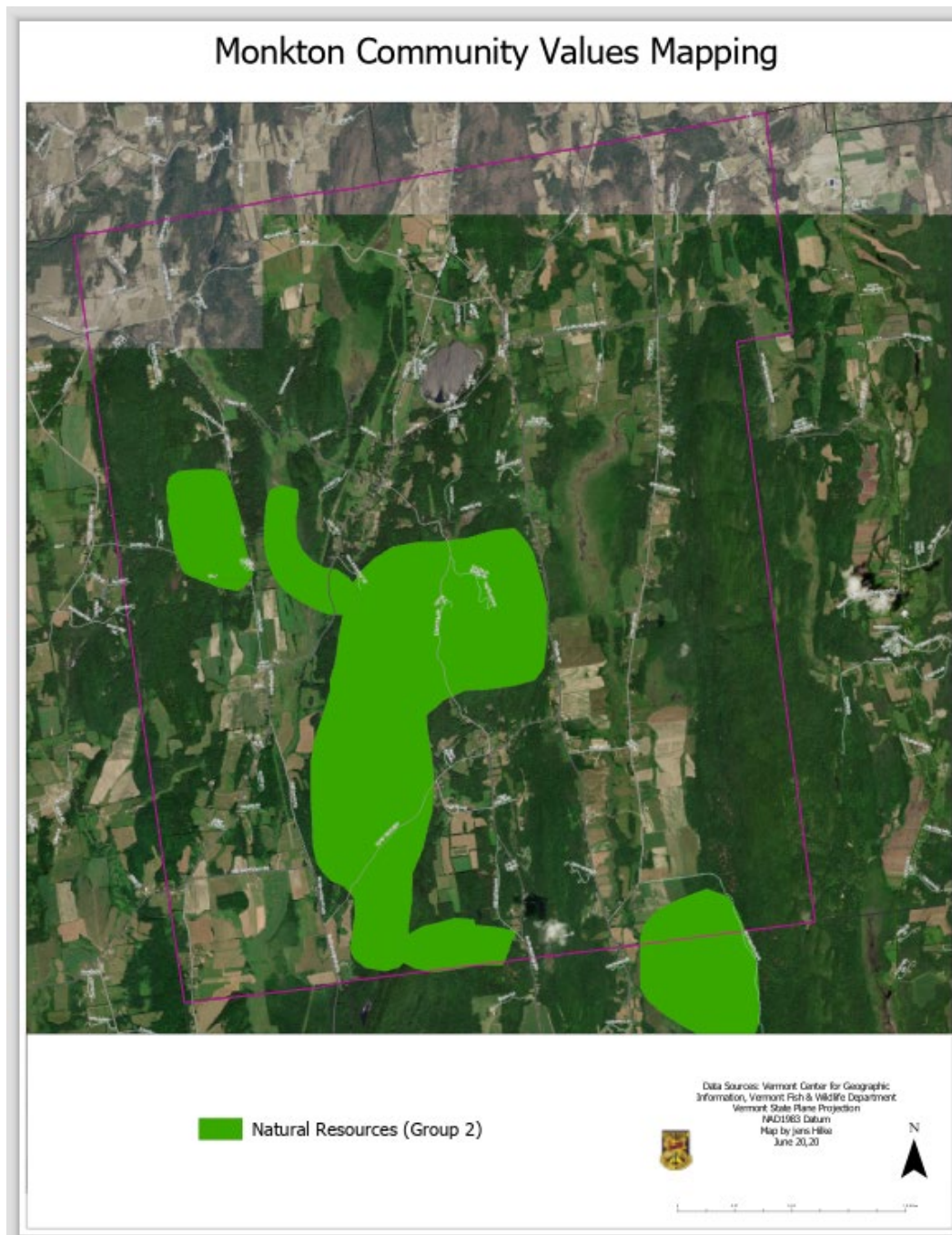**Community:**

Monkton Community Values Mapping

Community (All small groups)

Data Sources: Vermont Center for Geographic Information, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
Vermont State Plane Projection
NAD1983 Datum
Map by Jens Hilke
June 20, 20

Working Landscapes:

Monkton Community Values Mapping

Working Landscape (All small groups)

Data Sources: Vermont Center for Geographic
Information, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
Vermont State Plane Projection
NAD1983 Datum
Map by Jens Hilke
June 20, 20

N

Historic:

Monkton Community Values Mapping

Historic (All small groups)

Data Sources: Vermont Center for Geographic
Information, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
Vermont State Plane Projection
NAD1983 Datum
Map by Jens Hilke
June 20, 20

N

Natural Resources: (Small Group 2 created this category for their map)

Monkton Community Values Mapping

Natural Resources (Group 2)

Data Sources: Vermont Center for Geographic
Information, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
Vermont State Plane Projection
NAD1983 Datum
Map by Jens Hilke
June 20, 20

N

Overlapping Values Map

Each Value Group (e.g. "Recreation" or "Scenic") combines results from all of the small group maps in that category. Including the "Natural Resources value group that Team 2 created, there were seven value groups in all. The following shows an overlap of these seven value groups. The legend shows numbers 1-6. These do NOT refer to a particular value group. Rather, they show the number of value groups overlapping at that location. To determine which values are present at that location, refer to the Results by Value Group section.
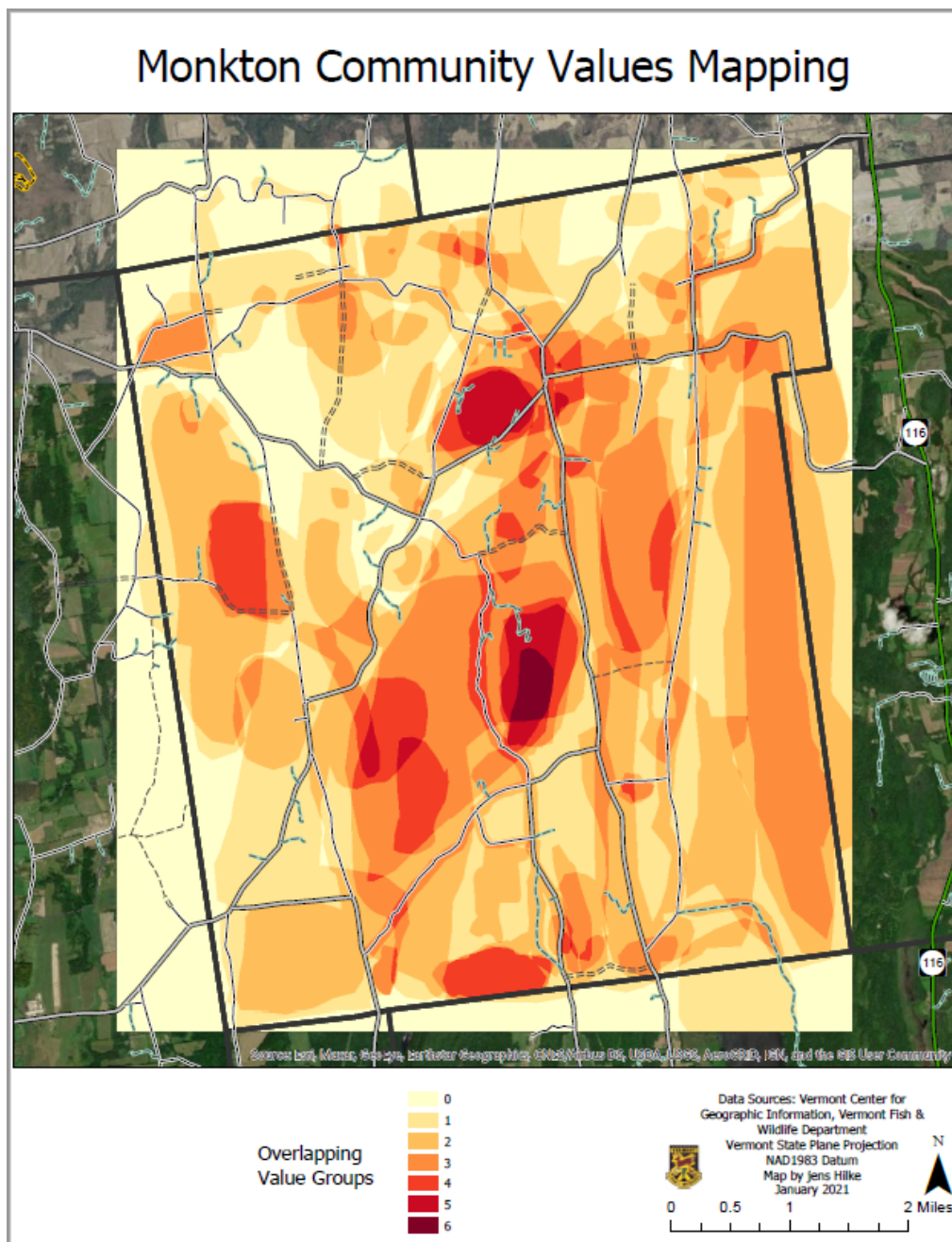
Overlapping value groups is not necessarily good or bad, it simply shows that a particular location is important for a variety of reasons. When thinking about any of these overlapping locations, it is necessary to understand the particular suite of value group present in any location to understand what implications that may have for land use planning or other community objectives. For example, a forested area that shows recreation, hunting & fishing, scenic, & working landscape values at the same location suggests the location meets a variety of community needs and may be unsuitable for other values such as residential development based on public opinion.

However, a location that shows recreation and hunting & fishing values might point to potential conflicts such as mountain biking and hunting occurring at the same time which is potentially dangerous. Furthermore, even areas that reflect only one value group might still be so important to the community that other values wouldn't be welcomed by the community there. So, overlapping value groups alone doesn't describe the level of importance of any value group at that location but does offer insight into where multiple values are held at the same place/time.

Additional Map Comparisons

The values mapped through this exercise can be helpful to a community in a variety of ways. Sometimes, it is beneficial to see how some values compare to other maps.

Overlapping value groups and Vermont Conservation Design:
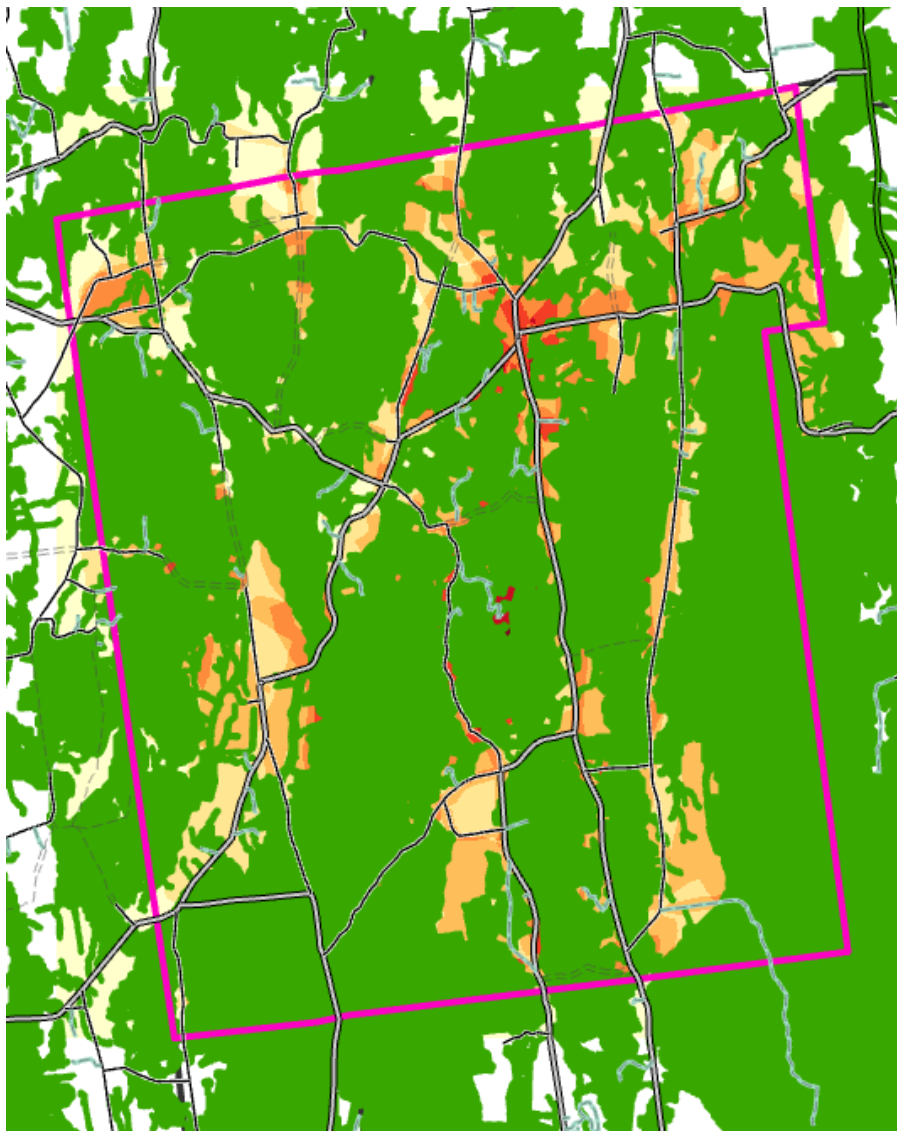
This map shows the Highest Priority areas of Vermont Conservation Design at the landscape scale (which in Monkton is the vast majority of the town, on top of the map of overlapping values. It is clear that most of the area of highest overlapping community values are also of highest ecological importance as well.