

ELT 2 Activity 2: *Choosing the right tools for your community.*

Understand the problem → Understand your town → Establish your options

Town of Foreston

- 1. Understand the problem:** You are concerned about future development around and in the forested wildlife corridor (brown) affecting wildlife movement and populations.

Wildlife Corridor



On this map, your town is outlined in white. The brown shows the intact forest areas that create the wildlife corridor. The red dot is the village center. The yellow arrow points to the wildlife corridor.

Regional View



This map shows the zoomed-out landscape context of your town's wildlife corridor. The red arrow represents the path wildlife must take to move north and south.

2. Understand your town: Read the following descriptions of your town.

Foreston Town Description

Population 4,000

Land Use Context

Most land in town is forested and in private ownership, with some farmland and rural residential development along roads. An established village includes small businesses and residential neighborhoods.

Existing regulations

Zoning

Subdivision regulations

Town staff and community capital

Town administrator

Part-time zoning administrator

Active Planning Commission

Development Review Board

A small core of active volunteers

Budget for conservation (planning, projects, land conservation, etc.)

Limited, but some grant writing capacity exists. Town works with the Regional Planning Commission on a limited basis.

Political climate

Recent tension and conflict over local budget. Many feel vulnerable after a recent economic downturn.

Community Values (as identified at a recent community forum)

- Maintaining forest health and water quality
- Having wildlife present in the town, and maintaining wildlife habitat
- The rural lifestyle and scenic nature of the community
- The strong working lands economy

Feelings on Regulation

Strongly divided. Many think landowners know what's best for their land and don't want regulations. Others favor zoning to maintain wildlife habitat and preserve the town's rural character.

Existing Communication Networks

Foreston has an active Front Porch Forum, and there's a

high level of turnout at town meeting. Word spreads neighbor to neighbor. There are several established, active groups, such as churches, a fish & game club, an active historical society, and a writing group.

3. Establish your options: Select 3 tools you'd like to pursue to protect the wildlife corridor in your community. Choose from the tools listed in the table below.

As you make your selection, consider:

- Does the action/tool help the natural resource that you want to protect?
- Does it align with community values?
- Do you have the capacity needed to accomplish this task?
- Who else can help? Is there an opportunity to build on existing efforts?

| Tools available | Details |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Zoning updates | Update existing zoning with standards that development must meet to support natural resources, density-based approaches to protect open space, stream buffer requirements, etc. |
| Subdivision regulations | Subdivision regulations control the pattern of development by limiting road/driveway lengths, defining clearing areas around roads and buildings, or requiring open space to be preserved/connected. |
| River corridor regulations | These are primarily meant to protect property against flood damage, but they can be extended to protect the surrounding vegetated river corridor. |
| Natural resources inventory | Inventories can be used to build community understanding, understand resource vulnerability, and lay groundwork for zoning or use of other tools. |
| Private land conservation | Identify priority parcels for conservation, then work with landowners and a land trust or other entity to find methods to conserve them. |

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| Establish town forest | Purchase land that can be enjoyed for recreation, used for education, and/or managed for timber, wildlife habitat, or water quality. |
| Outreach to landowners | Help landowners understand what resources are present on their parcels, options for management, and resources to help cover costs (UVA, etc.). |
| Succession planning for landowners | Provide educational opportunities to landowners about estate planning, including a range of options – conservation, subdivision, LLCs, etc. |
| General Outreach & Education | A speaker series, a field trip or hike, a citizen science program, the publication of a newsletter, etc. If you choose this, please specify the type of outreach you'll do and how it supports the other tools you pick! |

4. Present: Group presents the three tools they selected to address the problem given their community characteristics