

Wetland, Woodland, Wildland

A Guide to the Natural Communities of Vermont



Elizabeth H. Thompson
and
Eric R. Sorenson

*Illustrated by Libby Davidson,
Betsy Brigham, and
Darien McElwain*

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Natural Communities
of Vermont*



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**The publication of *Wetland, Woodland, Wildland*
was funded by:**

The Nature Conservancy
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife
Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation
Vermont Community Foundation
Barbara Dregallo
Warren and Barry King
National Wildlife Federation
Conservation and Research Foundation
The Friendship Fund
Bill and Claire Thompson
Nancy Wolfson
Central Vermont Audubon

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Published by

Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife
and

The Nature Conservancy



Distributed by

University Press of New England
Hanover and London

Published by The Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Department
of Fish and Wildlife

Distributed by University Press of New England, One Court Street, Lebanon,
NH 03766

© 2000, 2005 by The Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Department
of Fish and Wildlife

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Printed in the United States of America 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN: 1-58465-077-X

Library of Congress Card Number: 00-103493

Book design by Mirabile Design
Book formatting by Rachel Goldenberg
Icons and profile maps by Laura Maker
Printed by Queen City Printers Inc.



To our parents

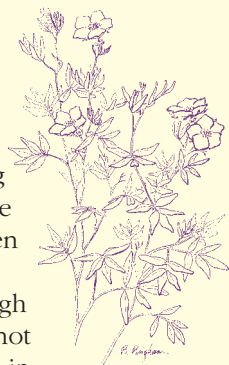
*Bill and Claire Thompson
Allan and Edith Sorenson*

*who first showed us the beauty
and intricacy
of the natural world*



*The first field guide to
Vermont's natural communities.*

The concept of *natural communities* is becoming a widely accepted way to organize our collective thinking about landscapes, much as *taxonomy* has been for species and *ecology* for processes. In a way, the concept actually marries taxonomy and ecology, through an underlying premise: though distinct, organisms do not live outside an environmental context; rather, they live in association with other organisms, the assemblages predictable if we know the embracing geology, climate, and history of a place.



The authors – both preeminent Vermont field ecologists – lead us skillfully into and through the wonderful array of the state's natural communities. They provide valuable background information, descriptions of over 80 community types, their constituent species and ecological values, places to visit, and conservation considerations. And they do it all in an engaging way. While comprehensive, the book is never overwhelming. While scientific, it is well within reach of non-scientists, remaining accessible through good writing and appealing illustrations.

This book, I'd say, will attain a certain stature. As its subtitle indicates, it will indeed be a guide, but not just in the ordinary sense of the word. It will also show us how to look at landscapes differently from now on.

– Charles W. Johnson, retired Vermont State Naturalist, March 2000

Published by

The Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife



Middlebury Bicentennial Series in
Environmental Studies

Distributed by
UNIVERSITY PRESS OF NEW ENGLAND
Hanover and London
www.upne.com

ISBN 1-58465-077-X



9 0000



9 781584 650775

\$24.95