



## Wildlife Connectivity Lesson (Grades 3-6)

Provided by Berkshire Natural Resources Council/MassLIFT AmeriCorps



Provide students with an overview of why animals need to move (maintain diversity in species, keep population up, threat of becoming endangered decreases, food availability and other resources are lacking in their core habitat, migration) and what things restrict their movements (roads, highways, fences, buildings, open fields, dams, domestic animals).

Resources:

<http://stayingconnectedinitiative.org/>

<http://stayingconnectedinitiative.org/assets/GreensHudsonHighlands.jpg>

<http://www.linkinglandscapes.info/monitoring.html>

<http://stayingconnectedinitiative.org/assets/GreensHudsonHighlands.jpg>

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### Role Play Game

Role play the difficulties animals face moving across a landscape.

Assign Group 1 students as different animals (fox, flying squirrel, wren, salamander, frog, trout, porcupine).

Assign Group 2 students as different barriers to movement (barbed wire fence, dam on a stream, cars on a busy road, buildings, an outdoor cat, etc.)

The objective of the game is for Group 1 to move from one side of the classroom or playground to the other by staying in character. (i.e. wrens can only fly short distances, flying squirrels need to glide from tree to tree and close distances, frogs can only hop, fish can only swim).

**Explore some of the concepts during the game:**

*What if this was a four lane highway instead of a two lane road?*

*What if this fence was joined up with the neighbor's fences so it became really long? How would you get across the area now?*

*What if the stream didn't have a barrier?*

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### Closing the Gap

**How do we improve habitat connectivity?**

Give each student the provided map of Berkshire County. Show them the sample pictures of wildlife corridors. Let them draw their wildlife corridors on the provided map. As they connect the conserved land, draw attention to the many barriers seen on the map.

**Wildlife Corridor Example Pictures:**





- Forests
- Roads



Berkshire County Map