

## Appendix 2. Interview protocol

### Biodiversity and Water in the Winooski Watershed – Stories of People and the Land | Interview Questions

Thanks for your time and your willingness to show me around. You know this area better than most, and I'm curious to learn about it from you.

1. To start off with, I'm going to ask you a little about your life, but first could you tell me your name?
2. Great, thank you.
  - a. Where do you live? (if not obvious, like right there)
  - b. How long have you lived here?
  - c. Where have you lived before you came here?
  - d. What is (or has been) your profession?
  - e. What has been a defining passion of your life?
3. How would you describe your relationship to the land here? I know that's a really general question! You can interpret it however you'd like.
4. Thinking about your (the) whole property, what are some of the things you love about this place?
5. What about the other end of the spectrum, what are some things you don't love about this place?

Great, thank you. Before we walk around I'd like to get your thoughts on conservation and biodiversity.

6. So, are you (or this property) a part of the Current Use program or any other conservation measures?
  - a. Why did you decide to conserve this place?
  - b. How was that process for you?
    - i. [prompts if they don't understand or don't answer]
    - ii. How did you feel going through the process?
  - c. [Or, if not conserved]
    - i. Why not?
    - ii. What do you think of Current Use and other conservation efforts?
7. What does your relationship to the other organisms on Earth look like?
  - a. To the degree that you care about them, could you explain to me why?
  - b. [if they do care about them]
    - i. What are your hopes and fears for them?
    - ii. What solutions are there to your fears?
    - iii. How would people have to change to get to those solutions?
8. Not everybody knows what biodiversity is. Are you familiar with that term?
  - a. Two possible answers:
    - i. If yes: Great, could you explain it to me? This is not a test! Just curious how you think about it.

- ii. If no: Ok, well biodiversity is a measure of the entire variety of organisms that live in an area. So all of the animals and plants and fungi. Conserving biodiversity means trying to plan human activities so that species and their habitats don't disappear from the landscape or go extinct. Does that make sense?
- b. I'm trying to understand the different reasons people do or don't value biodiversity. Could you tell me a little about your perspective?
  - i. [I won't ask these to every person, they will just be added to various conversations when it makes sense].
  - ii. Have you thought about this for a long time, or is thinking about biodiversity a new thing for you?
  - iii. [If they are talking about values broadly construed ... maybe ...] How do values (like, morality or principles or ethics) play into what you think about biodiversity?
  - iv. Do you encounter people who feel really differently about biodiversity than you do? Can you tell me about that, and what that's like for you?

Ok, great, thank you so much. How about we move on to something a little different.

So, I'm hoping that you'll take me to some of the places on your property that are particularly meaningful or interesting to you, whatever the reason might be.

I'm especially interested in natural areas on the property that

- you see as ecologically important. Or maybe,
- places that you manage in some way.
- If you hunt, or fish, or go bird watching, maybe we could visit one of your favorite spots.
- Or maybe you've got a place that you treasure for some other reason.

Really, whatever is important to you – I'd love to go there! We can go to as many or few places as you would like, but two or three stops would be totally fine. Why don't we take a five minute break, and then head off.

- 9. Alright, great, do you have a spot you'd like to take me? [I may start asking questions 10-13 during the walking]
  - a. Why did you choose to take me here?
  - b. Optional questions if appropriate:
    - i. What does this place mean to you?
    - ii. Do you have any strong memories from this place?
    - iii. Why did you choose to manage this place as you have?
    - iv. What would you like me or other people to understand about this place?
    - v. Does this place relate to your answers to the biodiversity questions we talked about XXX [at the house, on the porch, wherever], or not really? Totally fine if it doesn't.
  - c. Are there any other places you would like to take me?
    - i. [If we haven't visited a natural place I will ask]: Are there any places with wild animals or plants that you could take me?

OK, let's start walking back. I've got some more questions to ask you along the way before we wrap up.

10. Back when we started talking, you described your relationship with this place. What would your life be like without your relationship to this place?
11. So we've talked a fair bit about how important this land is to you. [Other folks have come up a number of times. I'm curious if you have any general thoughts about:] How this land might be important to other people?
12. What does the future of this place look like after you (or the current landowner) are no longer the landowner?
  - a. Who do you think the land will go to?
  - b. What are your hopes for this place? [code: What are your hopes and fears for this place?]
  - c. What are your fears?
  - d. What do you think the solutions might be to those fears?
13. If the land could talk, what do you think it would say?

You have been really kind to talk with me about the land here and your relationship to it, and that's it for my interview questions, I really appreciate the time and energy you've shared with me today. If you are interested though, I've got a bit more to ask and say about Vermont Conservation Design. It's something that I'm interested in, but we can also totally just be done right now.

14. What do you know about Vermont Conservation Design?
  - a. Are you interested in hearing about it from me, and looking at how your property fits into the ecological function of the wider area? No pressure ... it's just something I'm interested in.
    - i. Answer: No.
    - ii. Answer: Yes.
      1. Great...[At this point I will explain Vermont Conservation Design and show them the elements of their property that are important to the ecological function of the state.]
      2. Could I go to some of these places on your property and take photos of the natural features?
      3. Is there anything you'd like to tell me about these places before I go?
15. Is there anything else you would like me or other people to understand that we haven't touched on yet?

Thank you so much, It was great to meet, and I really appreciate everything from today. We're officially done with the research interview [nothing recorded after this point will be used in the research study]. I couldn't bring this up before because I didn't want to bias your answers for research purposes, but outside of my research I'm also working on putting together education material for a local biodiversity organization. I'm trying to help school children and other people

understand why biodiversity, conservation, and the natural world are important. If it's OK with you I'd like to go take some pictures of the places you took me today, and use some of the stories you told me during the interview. Is this something you would be interested in? It's totally OK if not. [If they are OK with it I will ask them to review and sign a consent form.]

Great, well thank you so much again, take care.