

**Appendix 3.** Examples of each relational values theme coded in our study

Table A3.1

<b>Relational values theme</b>	<b>Examples</b>
balance	I mean I think any time we take stuff out of the woods, we were talking about that before a little bit, I think there's some loss of ecological integrity. And, you know, if, and to me it's just a balance of how do we decide where the best places are to harvest. I think we should get all of our, we have a lot of things we do with wood and wood products, and I think we should do all we can to get those locally. But we should do it in a way that we harvest so mimic as many of those natural processes as we can. Including leaving dead wood and standing dead.
balance	I guess what I hope is that, going forward, more people can do as we're doing in the Green Mountain Club, for example, and give back. Find ways. And I, I say this as a hunter. I'm a deer hunter. But you can't just be out here popping off deer. You've got to give back. You've gotta somehow make it better for animals. And that's what I hope more people will do. And part of making it better for animals is, is to recognize that, you know, their, their -- refugia, their quieter habitats, their bigger, wilder places like this -- really work for them. And it's, it's not appropriate for us to be everywhere. So. Part of giving back is to say, "here's where I won't be." You know. "Here's where I won't insist on a lot of recreational infrastructure."
balance	Like there's the, this is the kind of thing we'd stop and talk about when we're doing firewood gathering. Like there's a tree that snapped off up there, and it's all sound maple. And like do we leave that one, leave it for woodpeckers, and it'll be good in 10 years or 20 years, or do we cut it for firewood? This one we'll probably cut for firewood because, you know, there's one, there's some others, there's another one that will be ready soon. So we try to leave a bunch of snags around, but that one's ours for firewood [chuckle].
balance	And you can see, this is a good example of that three dimensional structure of the landscape, and these big broken tree that came down. And that, for decades and decades, if a tree like fell on this land it would be removed. And... that's not wrong from the farm's point of view, but, it's not as good from the wildlife's point of view. And so, what we're trying to do here is to say, well, what's, where's the balance?
bequest	I don't, I don't ever want to move again, you know, it's, like, nice to be tied to it. And then sharing it with the little one, or soon-to-be two, but, you know and seeing what they're interested in and not. And having her just grow up with like a wetland next to her house, like how cool is that? I mean maybe she'll be like, "ugh, Dad, you and your weird wetland," but maybe she'll be like, "yeah we had a wetland, and like, you know, it's not some stinky thing, it's really cool. And, you know, we did this and did that."

- bequest You know what, those plants are gone. Where are they? You know, where can I find those plants now? You know, for a while, a period of my life I walked away from all of that because I tried to fit into the white world, still trying to fit in. But I totally walked away from everything, all of that. And in the process this happened. So I think that's also, you know I'm now getting back to an age where it's like this is important instead of chasing what the what everyone says were supposed to chase. And it's not here to pass on to anybody. It's not here to pass on to my kids.
- bequest I don't know. 'You done well? You tried.' Maybe that's the word. 'You tried. You left it better than when you started.' I don't know. Maybe 'you haven't done enough.' Probably, I think it's all of those. 'You haven't done enough.' I know I haven't done enough. I can't do enough. I want to do a lot more but I can't. I'm alone. And I've got a wife and kids and grandkids, but I'm alone. You know, they don't have the same values I do. Uh, that is, my wife doesn't. I think the kids, two of the kids do. The third one is off and running. I think 'you tried. You did alright. You haven't done enough.' All of that! 'I'm better off than when I started.' Um. 'Keep going, pass it on.' I think all of that.
- bequest There's a reason why you own land, it's not because you want to make a lot of money. It's not a money maker, you just, it's part of your happiness. It's a big part of the happiness in your life. There's landowners love to walk on their land. Unless you're a developer. If you want to own some land to develop, that's different. I'm a developer, I've developed the back corner. I brought a project through Act 250 in Vermont. Which is a toiling process. But I recently sold fifteen building, fifteen units, building lots. But I understood that I had to do that in order for me to keep the rest of the farm and give it to my kids. I had to sell a piece, I had to develop a piece, so I'm a developer but, I had to do that, it was almost like cutting my right arm, selling some of our property that way, but um, I knew I had to do that to be able to live in Chittenden County and keep the rest of the farm as is. So I'm ok with that.
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- care about And then it's also just like I just love it. You know it's just like I had like a dog who used to work with me all the time – it's going to be a good beechnut year – and uh, I loved him so much, and then he just like died. And you know I felt like I didn't like lose the capacity to love, that thing I didn't lose like any like space in my body where it where I would like hold that love, you know, it's just I just didn't have that anymore. And I think I sort of feel this way about about this place where like here is this thing that I love so much, and I just like expanded to like meet the challenge of being like the steward of this, of getting to be the steward of this place. And I didn't have it I'd probably be okay, but my life wouldn't be as rich.
- care about And there's just something about playing and learning in that. There's no way that you can't develop a love for it. You know, it's hard to abuse something that you know is an extension of yourself.
- care about Interviewer: How would you describe your relationship to the land here?  
Participant: I love it. It's very simple.

- care about Yeah, everything like I sort of feel like this property in some ways is like this like injured compromised thing that I'm like like trying to take care of but it's everything about this place is hard. You know and it's like a place a place that only a forester could love really. And a forester who is it who is actually into like timber production and like making money off the land would not love it.
- care about Interviewer: Do you think they distinguish you from other people?  
Participant: Probably. Yeah, I've had them walk on my back trail just minutes of my passing. I don't, you know, I know – maybe they know I love 'em [laughs]. When I was younger, I used to climb up the cliff faces and take pictures of the dens and stuff. All kinds of intrusive stuff, which I now, you know, am ashamed about, really. But, I've got the pictures [said with a smile].
- care about I grew up on this land, so, you know, there's deep roots. So I love my land, if that's what you're asking. And, as far as, um, you know, it's all pasture and grass. So I know I'm not a polluter. Um, you know, so, um, in my job, I can, I see a lot of different land and landowners and see what is out there, and when I compare my own farm and forest, I know, like I say, I'm not a polluter. And I, I've been doing different things to enhance wildlife on my property. That's important to me. So, um, that's, you know, it's like, I know my land like the back of my hand. You know, that kind of thing. I'm a hunter, so I hunt my land. I make maple syrup. So I'm, you know, so I'm using it in those ways.
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- connectedness I keep saying it again and again. This is you. This is you. And it's me. And you know, and so it's, don't be afraid to sink in. Don't be afraid to like just kind of, be part of it. And don't be a tourist. And don't just be an academic. Be better than that. Be better than all of those things. And I think that if you really want to have a sense of what the land is don't be afraid to depend on it a little bit. Don't be afraid to give it an elbow. It's made for that.
- connectedness There are, you know, there are philosophers that say we love ourselves, I mean maybe above all we love ourselves. And, and, when, when you consider yourself only an extension - extension? - or part of, the land, you can't help but love it. And you can't help but feel what it has for its own intrinsic value is given to you if you, if you pay attention. Much the same way as the fortunate ones of us get from our parents their values and strengths and beliefs.
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eudaimonia	<p>Participant: [sigh] Well I think that one of the most important things that we can achieve in a life is happiness, and that comes from Democrates, one of the Ancient Greeks. And a hundred years after Democrates came to that point of view Plato was exploring it and said well if that is true how do we get to happiness. And his conclusion was that we get to happiness through virtue. And that we get to virtue by simply doing one good thing after another, and that after a while we will create a string of good things that will have more value than any string of pearls or chain of gold we might ever hold. And so, the happiness that is one of my passions is not a hedonistic happiness, but it is a deeper sense of peace with the world and with myself.</p> <p>Interviewer: And that's come from pursuing those, that string of good actions?</p> <p>Participant: Yes, yeah, yeah. And so, in that way, the part of the work of the life is to try to do things that are meaningful, and largely that has been about how do we create meaningful food? How do we create food that is a joy to eat but is also responsible to the health and well-being of the people who eat it, and is responsible to the community, and responsible to our environment.</p>
eudaimonia	<p>There's a reason why you own land, it's not because you want to make a lot of money. It's not a money maker, you just, it's part of your happiness. It's a big part of the happiness in your life.</p>
eudaimonia	<p>Interviewer: To the degree that you care about them, could you explain to me why?</p> <p>Participant: I just, to me it's almost an impossible question. But I, um, this is sort of a circuitous way, but I used to have a lot of problems with depression. I don't anymore. But always the one thing that could, I realized could make me feel better was the natural world. And also just beauty, which I find mostly in the natural world, whether it was a sunset or a walk or digging in the dirt. And to me it's like, it's what gives life meaning. It's what makes it valuable. You know that, I mean, for me to live in a city that's all concrete and people, you know? If the liveliest creatures you have are pigeons and cockroaches. You know, that's really sad. You know, and I also, well I guess you know to me it's all the richness that keeps me going. I mean every morning I go and let the chickens out. And sometimes the weather's horrible and it's hard, but I'm always glad to do it because of, whether it's experiencing the weather, or what birds are singing, or what things smell like, that's the richness of life. You know it's like, you know, we could eat some gross food that gives us all our nutrients you know out a tube, but all of the joy of flavors and eating and, you know, the smell of things, the social experience, would all go away if we ate like that. And to me, you know, life in a masonry box would be bad. Because all the richness is in the world around me.</p>
friendship	<p>Well, I'm going to say something that is going to come off as hopelessly odd, but, I, at this moment I get to stand among friends. There's... millions. And one of the things that I've come to, uh, appreciate is that it's not just the, the megafauna and flora that are integral to my life. It's the uncountable trillions of little guys in the soil that are absolutely essential to my wellbeing and to the wellbeing of everybody else, that I appreciate and find beauty in, and I find peace in.</p>
friendship	<p>And this painted turtle became my buddy, [hahaha], he would almost eat out of my hand. It's just nice to know a turtle.</p>

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- friendship I hope that there are some people who really like red maple because of it's often it's a species that I'm like I'm like cutting red maple to thin around red oak cuz I like red oak, especially with the with this land because they basically cut all the red oak and now I've become obsessed with releasing each remaining red oak and then trying to regenerate red oak in all these really intensive ways. I look at red oak and I'm like, ahh, the ultimate tree. [laughter]. And I look at red maple and I'm like pbhh. But, like, I still really love them. You know I think that they're I still think that they're amazing it's just sort of like like red oak is like that person that you like really respect and you like are about and red maple is like the friend that you have who is like can't get his shit together. You know and you still like you love him cuz you like grew up together or whatever but you're still like gahhd, I wish he could just get it together [laughing].
- friendship You know, between climate change, sea level rise, and all that sort of stuff, um, you know, any of this land that you totally make so it can't be developed or used in any way, um, you know, there's going to be a lot of people in New York City and Boston that need some place to live [laugh]. Whether it's going to be here or just further out in the countryside I don't know, but if you believe in global warming and sea level rise and, and the changes to drought, the heavy rains, the flooding, you know, this is high land. It's, it's not dry land, but some of it's dry. So, um, you know, do I have an obligation, five hundred years down the road, to have land here that's buildable? Um, or do I have an obligation to all my salamander friends [laugh]?
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- heritage Protection goes back to it's been in [his] family for so long that he feels a need to honor the family's tradition of keeping the land together in one piece and taking care of it. And that's been kind of an overriding thing for you in your decision making. It's been a responsibility that was handed to you from your parents, and his parent's parents, you know, since his great grandfather, it's uh, yeah, it's a responsibility in that way as well as it's just a responsibility to maintain it, to finance it, to uh, yeah.
- heritage They criticize me highly because I'll say to them what if you were that tree and then they like see that's my point you're worshiping the tree and I'm like I am not worshiping the tree I am trying to tell you that if you weren't who you were and you were thus and so, do you think you would have any thoughts or feelings about that? Because my heritage says that is a living being.
- heritage He doesn't unfortunately know the Abenaki words because my father passed away. He would have taught them to him. because I was his plan, and, but he does say thank you. So we still have taught him that the English version of that is that you're thanking that animal for having given its life for you to live and to have, you know. And so he does he does at least say thank you, he, but he doesn't know the Abenaki words. Which is, that's also sad.
- heritage So that's a little bitty patch of rich woods right there, but it's also Uncle Walter's dump. So you know, tin cans, glass bottles, maidenhair fern [laugh]! Toothwort [laugh]!
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- identity So I think I wouldn't have a sense of myself if I didn't have this place. Does that makes sense?

identity	One of the most valued things that I did as a child, this was my playground. All day long, man. This wasn't a study, this wasn't class, this is where I went to get the hell away from bullies. This is where I went to get away from my father who was kind of a jerk. And to, you know, I was safe here, this land, this didn't judge me. Just by spending a lot of time there I started forming this relationship, so now I value this differently, right?...So, when you allow a child to form relationships that are really personal, then that becomes a value system. Why would I want to hurt this? This wasn't the bully? You know? So I have a dear spot for this, and that's probably why I am the way I am. In part.
identity	Interviewer: So, how would you describe your relationship to the land here? Participant: Oh man! [laugh] Really?! It's like, uh, it's everything. I'm not sure I can do that. I don't know what to say about that because it's really everything. It really feels like, um, it feels like where I belong. And, the more I live here the more I realize that I don't know much yet. And, um, the more there is to know. And the more things I'm excited about learning. And the happier I am about, about... I love it here. I don't, um, and I don't think you, I think every year you spend in the same place, um, it gets deeper. I have been coming here since I was a small child and I fell in love with it, at first, and... I'm connected to the prairie landscape as well, where I spent most of my childhood, really. But then hadn't been back for 50 years, and so that was, so last year I went back to Iowa for the first time in 50 years and that felt, that felt really powerful. But, but I've been here, and living here for my whole life since then, so, so I feel a much stronger connection here. Especially with the pond. Not very articulate on this subject [laugh]. It's too important to talk about!
identity	Sorry about the emotional part of it, earlier, but you've got to get used to the idea. But, no, 1797, and we really, uh, enjoyed it, and it's been in the family. And I've done a lot of research on that. The, and uh, born here, married here, live here, and I'll die here. I'll get buried here. I may not die here, but I'll get buried here. So. Circle of life. How's that for an interesting thought? Talk about a stubborn old Vermonter.
kinship	I still believe and was raised that these are all our ancestors [later clarified to mean relations], these these are all living, you know beings, that building isn't but you know the trees, the plants the animals.
kinship	I'm not a virtual treehugger, I'm a literal tree hugger. They're just cousins, they're not trees, for instance, for me.
life teaching	Hmm. [little laugh] I don't know. Again, I don't -- I - uh - I'm sorry I don't have any answer for that. It isn't that, ah. I -- I guess I just don't really think about it that way. You know, its probably a shortcoming on my part, but. Ah, I mean, I think, if we could listen, uh, not so much if the land could it, if we could -- the land is talking, in its many many multitudinous ways. But if we could listen better we'd probably do a better job at living life. [pause] You know, we'd learn a lot more about patience, and, you know, sharing, and, you know, we'd learn, we'd learn to recognize greed for what it is, and waste for what it is. If you think about it, there's no waste in nature. Why is it that there's so much waste in what we do? What's that tell us?

- life teaching So, um, I think it made me a better person. I think it made me a softer and more compassionate person. And just in like when I'm walking around. I also know that it's a skill. If you stop doing it, you'll get rusty. And uh, so like having some kind of relationship with the land kind of forces you to know your feet. To know what is. Know how to live in a place with variables. Where things are messy and confusing and different from one day to the next. It gives you problem solving skills and awareness that I probably wouldn't have otherwise. But if you imprint that way as a little kid then you're kind of like the salmon in the stream. You come back to it. You imprint on that as a fry. It becomes part of who you are, and somehow you just instinctively know how to move in and out of that state. That state of going back upstream to your roots is something that you can do if you have that as a child. So I feel that a lot now.
- life teaching Mhmm. Yeah. Yeah I mean it's, it's just the same way that like everybody feels busy all the time, you know. Like no matter how much stuff you're doing or how much stuff you've got in your schedule, everybody feels really busy all the time. And then you're like 'I'm, you know, maximum busy. I couldn't be busier.' And then something happens and you know, your life adjusts and you fill it up with stuff. You know, and then, it's amazing, sort of the capacity of the human being to like absorb extra responsibility like this. I think it's made me a better person. In a lot of ways, you know, like having to be responsible for something like this, which is totally not about me. You know? it's cool. I think everybody should do it. The problem is it's expensive.
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- other I'm a guest. They live here. [laughs, ha ha ha] In my head, that's how it is.
- other Other organisms on Earth... I guess my relationship is of deep respect. I, I grew up hiking the Sierras, and I was taught every cloud formation, every rock type, every wildflower, every tree, every track, and I think, I didn't appreciate it then, um, but I think that that is what connected me to that place, and just comparing, you know, this place that I feel pretty connected to and Vermont in general, compared to what I grew up with, um I just have a respect of the landscape and everything on it, and I feel strongly that we should do everything we can to conserve what we have. Especially considering climate change and um species populations also decreasing.
- other Well I think it has so much to do with this, uh, interdependence. This understanding that I cannot be successful without them. And it's, it's a little bit of a one-way street. They can be very successful without me [laughing]. Um, so, I'm in the humbled position in this relationship [haha], which is, which is really sort of turning the world on its head. Because in a lot of ways, um, the human experience has seen itself at the pinnacle at, of, of life on Earth. And, that point of view suggests that we're actually, that it's an upside down pyramid. That, we're, uh, we're sort of at the bottom, we're the least, the irony is that we are simultaneously the least important species and the most influential species. And that's a paradox that I think, um, that we haven't resolved yet.
- other But, mostly, I mean, right now because my mobility is more limited, I do this walk every day, or almost every day. And um, and it just is a, kind of an emotional, psychological relief to be in the woods. Even though my house is in the woods. I mean it's not the same. And I can't, I can't snowshoe anymore in the winter, so, like when the mud finally subsides it's just, an incredible relief to be able to get back out.
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partnership And I start to see the lives around me as my partners in this journey. And that, as partners, as a partner with them I have both the responsibility and the opportunity to either be constructive to the lives of others or to be hurtful to the lives of others. Or to simply turn my back on them.

partnership And and I feel like the mindset that I'm approaching this place with like is it's going to be mutually beneficial cuz this place also makes me feel amazing all the time and I love it, and it's just a wonderful place to sort of be in partnership with. But I think we can benefit each other. And I wish that everybody who owned forested land like cared about it and thought about it as much as I do about this place. Cuz if they did they'd be there'd be, you know, most of the problems that we have to just go away.

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responsibility And then something happens and you know, your life adjusts and you fill it up with stuff. You know, and then, it's amazing, sort of the capacity of the human being to like absorb extra responsibility like this. I think it's made me a better person. In a lot of ways, you know, like having to be responsible for something like this, which is totally not about me. You know? it's cool. I think everybody should do it. The problem is it's expensive.

responsibility You want to make sure you're doing that in a good way. Because that has one outcome, you know, that's a lot of responsibility. It's a good one though. So I think of 'I'm a moose, how do I want to die?' How do you want to die? You've got a choice, you're going to die today. What's your choice? Slow and miserable, dieing partially of bloating and infection, I mean, or you were just walking down the path, thinking about the hottest chick you ever met, and you're just gone. I don't know where they go. But I know they didn't suffer. Couldn't. I didn't allow that to happen. So that's values. And uh, I try to convey that to a lot of people.



responsibility It's just amazing. It's just I mean to me it's like strikingly beautiful. And then it's just also when I come out here it's like, I can't own this. What an absurd idea! You know like I'm the owner of this piece of land. Like, do I own this rock? you know like, it doesn't make any sense. That's what I'm usually struck by and then it's also sort of like, working in Chittenden County it's it's comforting to be among forested mountains like this. Sometimes where you're like you know you'll be working all day in Shelburne on little like 25 acre lots or whatever. You come out here and it's like big woods.

[10 second pause]

So it's just amazing. You come into these places and I'm just like feel so much like responsibilities also it's like, not that I think that I own them or that yeah that they belong to me or that I'm like smarter than them or better than them in any way but just like responsibility just like take care of all of this. Like all the organisms here. And then, you know looking back and being like man oh man have we like to changed this Earth. You know, it's like a pretty amazing opportunity to get to get to be sort of in charge of one little pretty cool chunk of it. And just try and really take care of it, with the idea that we're not the only thing that matters here, you know? I feel like that's an important like, there are people who are really good land stewards that do a really good job from the perspective of managing it purely for them. You know, managing it purely for humans. And there are people who are who do you know actually treat the forest really well, I think operating from that mindset. But I think there will always something be something lost unless you're also managing for the intrinsic value of all these, the intrinsic value of these systems and the organisms that occupy them.

responsibility I'd like to give them, without them feeling shamed, and without them feeling like it's something that they could never do. But we make a list of all the little things that we can do and there are hundreds of things that we can do. And let's choose five, let's try that out for the next week, see how that goes. Come back, report out how, you know, how we did. So having those conversations. Will all kids follow through? No, but most will. Really try something out, and really think about that. Um, the balance is not having like an ominous forecast and having kids get that sense of fear, and we're doing this out of fear, but doing it out of responsibility, and taking initiative and being proactive as opposed to feeling shamed and being reactive. Does that make sense?

responsibility We have to get past that idea of we can keep doing developments if we want to end up with stability. And I think stability in the land base is what we need now. That some places aren't going to be developed. That some places are going to stay whether it's wild or well-managed that we need to have we need to have those places stay the way they are. so it's it's a it's a landowner concession. It's the landowner kind of giving up something that I think it's there's a societal responsibility to to support it. You know, that we need, because it it can't be a responsibility that just landowners take on if it's if the benefits of conserved land are so much larger than just the one piece of land.

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social bonds It's nice to see the hawks circling. I think of my dad watching over me. And my brother will be watching over before too much longer. Um, but it's [a little choked up], so you try to, eh! It's all intermingled.

social bonds	<p>We've got children here who's parents met here, and some of whom even got married here, who were brought here by their parents when they were little munchkins. How does that change our life? It just adds to the fabric of it, they're part of the fabric of our life. One couple wanted to be married on the top of Goose Hill. Another wanted to be married on the flank there where the 540 foot elevation of the sea of Champlain was. Others have asked to be married in the meadow out here. I think that's how important it is to them, but again, that's how important it is to us. That's part of our fabric of us. That's how it's changed our lives.</p>
spiritual connection	<p>Um... why do I care about other organisms? Cuz I think that every organism is like a story of, you know I mean I can try to explain like spiritual things that I don't even know how to explain, but beyond that, like every organisms is like this unbroken line back to however and whenever life started. It's like this collection of stories, you know, of how it got to be there. And its genes and it's ancestors and it's evolution. And like, you know, if we decide to remove some tiny species that noone seems to care about then it's like that whole story's gone and we can't get it back. And even if we dug up its genes and cloned it we can't really get it back because you're losing a whole bunch of other...behavioral and habitat and everything else, and its relationship with microorganisms and everything else. So I guess it's, you know, I think it's broader than just one given thing. And like, I guess part of why I try to do with this what I do is this idea that it just builds resiliency, so that these species, these fireflies that are here aren't just something cool for our kid to see, they're also like this amazing story...this amazing thing. And like, if a plant, that maple tells you that... it tells you something really interesting, it tells you that for whatever, I don't think it's a hundred years old, for like the last 80 years a maple can survive there. Because if for one minute it would have been enough to kill a maple it would have been dead. So like, every plant that's been there awhile has this really interesting story, especially when you gather them all together. So...</p>
spiritual connection	<p>He doesn't unfortunately know the Abenaki words because my father passed away. He would have taught them to him, because that was his plan. But he does say thank you, so we still have taught him that the English version of that is that you're thanking that animal for having given its life for you to live and to have, you know, and so he does he does at least say thank you. He, but he doesn't know the Abenaki words, which is, that's also sad.</p>
spiritual connection	<p>But that sense of awe, that went away for me for a while. I think that when you get really busy, especially if you go through like, my dad died in a helicopter crash, and I got divorced, and I was super depressed and I'm finally pulling out of that, but that sense of awe can go away as you get older. And I'm realizing that I was really missing that. I don't know if that's just part of the depressed mentality or what but, these places, particularly when it's nice out, you know, it's easier for me, these remind me that everything is ok. You know. But also too to be like, 'oh yeah', just get out of your thinking mind sometimes. Just be like, bleah, what is that? Isn't that weird. It's just off a tree here. Your hands are all sticky. What's that? It's like, oh, this is the universe talking to me.</p>
spiritual connection	<p>Well, as I said we, we grew up with it. This is crazy [tearing up a little]. Anyway, I grew up with it. Oh, 1797. Bought my brother out. Now I raise christmas trees [sniff, laugh]. So, really enjoy it. It's a good pastime. Getting me out of the house. I get a chance to, ah, some say this is your church. And, it is in a way. I never thought I'd be, be so emotional about it. But being on the property, you know, it makes a difference. That's what it's all about.</p>

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- stewardship  
(care for) This particular site? Um, I have a long history with this particular site. I've been bringing students here for about 20 years. Um, it's the first and the last trip that I do with students. Um, and they come here a couple of times in between during the school year too. I like that this is a rare floodplain forest. I like that this place is ever changing, just because of what the water does. How it really sculpts the land. Um, this place is unique in that we can see bald eagles, and we can see um, rare migratory songbirds in May that use this floodplain as a stopover point. Uh, we've also seen otter and mink and beaver and all kinds of really interesting animal evidence here in, in our trips here as well. So, um, and there's lots of really cool edibles at this site too, so it's just so interesting. Sort of a package deal, in that um, it sort of, I introduce this place in terms of our watershed, but it's a place that we come to to look at wildlife in winter, and migratory birds in spring, and my team has been responsible for getting rid of the vast majority of the knotweed here along this stretch here, all the way to the round church. Over the past, I'd say, fifteen years. We've been removing barberry and knotweed here. And recently honeysuckle?
- stewardship  
(care for) I'm frustrated with a lot of things about how the world is, or at least how whatever our Colonial, broken, feudal society, whatever you want to call it is, and so like, just trying to both heal something in a very small sense with like this land, which we have, which is only been recent, and then in a more broader sense, i'm really interested in just kind of witnessing, or, um, documenting what's here because even if I can't you know solve certain problems, then I can at least document what was here so that if someone else you know wants to change or fix things after I'm gone, then it'll still be there.
- stewardship  
(care for) Oh, a lot of insects are really really cool! Yeah, yeah. I recently um, created multiple pollinator gardens on my own landscape at my own house, and I've had to really develop an appreciation of wasps. Building wasp houses and, you know, plants for wasps, and things like that. That's been a leap for me. So. I think they can do it too. Yeah.
- stewardship  
(care for) So, this is a little brook, that, I diverged. I split it. And some of it goes to the, uh, south, and into what I, is a restored wetland that we developed. And we're now naturalizing that. And you can see, this is a good example of that three dimensional structure of the landscape, and these big broken tree that came down. And that, for decades and decades, if a tree like fell on this land it would be removed. And... that's not wrong from the farm's point of view, but, it's not as good from the wildlife's point of view. And so, what we're trying to do here is to say, well, what's, where's the balance? You know, what can I do that would be responsible to the agricultural interests of the farm and its food production values, but also responsible to wildlife. And so this is a wetland that, my guess, was diverted. You know, right now it runs along the edge of this field. And there's a hill right here, with a wooded hill. And, in the reading I've been doing on beaver and the effects of beaver, and beaver dams and ponds, um, parti..., and what the landscape was like before the Europeans came and, uh, trapped them out, largely, is that, little streams like this probably didn't go along the edge of the field. You know, it spread out, and that, this whole farm could have been beaver meadows and beaver ponds, and a series of beaver ponds. And, so, the aquatic conditions were very very different. And the habitat conditions were very different than what we have think of now as normal. And so one of my interests here is, well, can we create more, uh, wetland habitat on the farm, to restore some of what was lost. And so that was the work that was happening there, and it's about allowing this to spread out and, you know, giving it the space that it needs to, to develop as it can.

- stewardship  
(care for) Absolutely, um, you know, I have a, the only economically valuable stand of trees I have is an ash, a group of ash trees that, um, you know, maybe they're not ready for timbering for five years or so but they could be taken out now, and I'm not going to take them out for exactly that... you know, because I have um, what's, that beech tree disease? So I have this huge beech tree up by the vernal pool that I have that's maybe a quarter of a mile up that way, that um, I was walking up there with someone from the state when I was working on an Equip Program, and um, and they said whatever you do don't take this tree out because it was perfectly healthy, and all around it were these dying beech trees. And you never know which tree it's going to be, like in terms of the ash borer, yeah.
- stewardship  
(care for) You know it's good that we're banning plastic bags but, yeah? Like, I don't, I don't know. It's um, it's the kind of cause I would have been very involved in forty years ago, fifty years ago, and the old lady feels like she's paid her dues in some ways and doesn't have the energy to do much more than little things around the edges. I mean I'm on the conservation commission, I work for, I work for preserving our town forest and helped buy the land that we just bought to increase the size of our town forest. I mean those are, but those are like matchstick things to do, they're not, they're not going to change our carbon footprint very much. But they might help people who use the town forest bring their kids and have their kids care about the land a little more. Which, I think is important.
- stewardship  
(care for) I grew up on this land, so, you know, there's deep roots. So I love my land, if that's what you're asking. And, as far as, um, you know, it's all pasture and grass. So I know I'm not a polluter. Um, you know, so, um, in my job, I can, I see a lot of different land and landowners and see what is out there, and when I compare my own farm and forest, I know, like I say, I'm not a polluter. And I, I've been doing different things to enhance wildlife on my property. That's important to me. So, um, that's, you know, it's like, I know my land like the back of my hand. You know, that kind of thing. I'm a hunter, so I hunt my land. I make maple syrup. So I'm, you know, so I'm using it in those ways.
- stewardship  
(care for) I like watching things happen over time. We sugar a little bit. We used to cut firewood here. I haven't, my, we haven't, my idea of owning land is to not do anything to it. You know, just let it grow. When I hear people talking about 'oh you need to thin your woods, oh you need to manage that place.' I'm thinking well, it manages itself pretty well [laugh]! So, I like watching just what happens. So it's worth having just to protect it. I'd like that, that to go on forever. Nobody doing anything. But, I don't know what will happen.

stewardship  
(care for)

It takes care of itself. It knows what it's doing. There's a lot going on there, and, and we don't know half of it. We don't know a tenth of it! It's so complex. The minute you start, you know, you find a bug, and you start figuring out how that bug lives. And it ends up being connected to everything. I didn't understand, when I was just, when I was mostly looking at plants, um, that it all depends on the geology. And if, and how the water works. You know, and how, you know, where the water is. And what the bedrock is like. And how the soils are, and you can't, you know, those things, uh, they make for, and just the fact that it's been woods, except for a very brief period of farming, um, since glaciation it's been woods, it's, and so there's, there's the ecosystem within ecosystem within ecosystem, and um, connected in ways that we have no idea of. So I think that's just important, a good reason to leave it alone. If you don't know what's going on and it seems to be working you need to let it be. It drives me crazy when people start talking about management [laughter].

stewardship  
(care for)

I mean I think just sort of what I was talking about earlier with you know ultimately biodiversity is not something that has an economic value. Which is sort of our, you know in our current economic system, is the way that we, for things that are not widely held morals, moral values or ethics in our community, you like, economics is the way that we promote things we like, and get rid of the things we don't like as a society, and so because there's not because it's not valued economically, in order to really manage for biodiversity and promote biodiversity you need to do it from a moral, essentially a moral perspective. You just have to you just have to understand why it's important, and like it, and want to do it. And it in some ways forgo economic opportunity in the promotion of biodiversity because the promotion of biodiversity will necessarily, probably entail that you don't manage ecosystems entirely as assets. That you're managing for this other stuff, which is which is not valued. And so that's another really important part of my job is helping people, so talking about internalizing all those other non non commercial values, and essentially fixing that in people as morals you know. And then with those more with those morals or that ethic intact they will then make decisions on their land. You know. And and hopefully be willing to say okay well this isn't the most economically fruitful decision but it's one that is the best decision for me when I internalize all this the other components of this ethic that I felt. So you know until we get like some sort of like public payment for biodiversity process, the promotion of biodiversity will be strictly essentially moral or ethical.

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general  
relational  
satisfaction

I don't know if I really have any words that are sort of adequate to describe it. You know a place, like you know the corners and you know the trees and you know the rocks that stick out, and you can kind of picture all of it. But I don't really, you know I do come back to it being kind of scrappy land. You know, things tilted all over. Rocks sticking out. That's kind of the charm of it to me, too. I think that one of the things that's cool about land and being a land owner is that you know this place is super special to [my wife] and me, but you know someone else might come here and say, 'really? This is what you think is so cool?' And it's partly because you grow to know it and appreciate it, and see the things that change on it.

general  
relational  
satisfaction

I think it's more personal than that. In some ways biodiversity is something I know we need, and it's a professional sort of charge, and this place, I mean I think [my wife] and I own it and love it because of it's feel in the woods. And we recognize biodiversity as being part of that, but it's not the day to day feeling. The day to day feeling is 'oh did you know that the pine fell down up there,' or 'did you hear the red eyed vireo singing,' or 'did you see the broad winged hawk nest?' That kind of thing. This is that stretch where this was sort of dense mature sugar maple and cherry and ash, up to the top of the hill, and a lot of it blew down in that event. Still working on stuff, some more logs to lug.

general  
relational  
satisfaction

Uh, cuz like I told you, it's the center of life [laugh], for me. It's why I'm so stuck here. Cuz I don't know of any place else that I love as much as this pond. It's um, it's just a good place to be. There's lots to see. Lot's to learn about. We're kind of stuck in the middle of the lily pads, I'm paddling really slowly because there's just enough friction so it slows us down a little bit. And, one of the things I'm noticing is that there's been something in the pond, probably a muskrat, because we don't have beavers right now, who's been eating some water li... some of the water lily roots, so you see long stems and leaves just floating loose.

general  
relational  
satisfaction

Well, it's one of those places I think that, um [pause] exemplifies an opportunity that we have, or not exemplifies, but embodies an opportunity. It's an opportunity to, you know, let nature be the infrastructure here. Let nature manage herself here. Let, you know, ah, let nature, ah, enjoy the quietude of the remoteness of this place. I guess - I guess that's it. You know, that doesn't say someone couldn't come here, much as we're doing today. But, I mean, for this to suddenly be developed with loop trails, and all this and that, would ruin it. You know, those guys [motioning to the herons] wouldn't like, be happy with it. [little chuckle]. They're wondering what we're doin'. [another chuckle]. I've never seen that. Never. But then, I've never seen two lodges.

general  
relational  
satisfaction

This little spot here doesn't look that special, you know, a few beech and sugar maple and there's a black cherry in here somewhere. When [my wife] and I first came here and we were thinking about - friends owned the property and let us know that they were going to leave and wanted to know if we were interested. And when we first came here and I think [my wife's] first reaction was when she drove down the road was something like 'no way in hell am I going to live here,' and then we came out and this little patch was one of the first places we walked in the woods and it was covered in spring beauty and we both said 'yup, we want to live here.' And we bought it. We bought it for the spring beauty, not for the road.

general  
relational  
satisfaction

So um, I can't think of any other thing I want to say about that except the white tail deer is such an awesome animal. You know, just the, the um, the will to survive. And the um, the challenge to even see them in the woods while you're hunting. Um, they're just such a smart animal. So.

general  
relational  
satisfaction

Um, I've seen hawk. There's a hawk that lives here, I haven't seen him this fall, and I know he's the same hawk, but he hangs out on these powerlines year round. And he's been in my, people that live in my development have seen him too, but it's kind of cool to know a hawk lives here year round and he's been hanging out for three or four years. So those are kind of cool things.

general  
relational  
satisfaction

I mean, that's a great, if you take time, you know that's why my greatest sadness is I don't spend enough time up here. If you take time to wander around you just see all kinds of things.

general  
relational  
satisfaction

Um, well, it's, it's what's really special is the wonderful vernal pool. I mean it is deafening when you come near here. But what's interesting about the frogs making all their noise: you get within about 200 feet, they all stop. I mean, one must see you and tells everybody [laugh]!

general  
relational  
satisfaction

Um, there's just something about it, um, you know, maybe because it's a flat spot with lots of pretty trees and stuff. Maybe because it's got the ditch, so to speak, the wetlands and so forth behind it. Um, but we always just find peaceful. And maybe because it's almost pure hemlock. And I don't know why that would make me happy [laugh] but... And it seems to be, you know, another healthy place. Hey, look at that, a purple mushroom.

general  
relational  
satisfaction

And mostly in the fall, not so much in the spring I don't know why, not so much in the spring but in the fall that can literally have 75% of the surface area covered with canada geese. And it's awesome hearing them come in. Early morning down there talking about "is it time to take off yet, or not. Or did you get enough to eat? Or wake up, damnit, we gotta get moving," or who knows.

general  
relational  
satisfaction

They'll use that, but if they can, my research has taught me that they do a lot of precision jumping, and vertical precision jumping from ledge to ledge, catwalks, jump. And they get to a place where nothing can get to. So they're safe. They're safe from their enemies, which include coyotes and fishers, primarily. Dogs and people, secondarily. So if they can get to a place like that, in the winter, when it's 35 below, facing the south-southwest, the sun can warm them, save energy. They're not gonna hunt under conditions like that. They can't. So the best way to save energy is not use it. But to do so and be safe, they've gotta get in a habitat where they're 1) safe, and 2) because they're cats, comfortable [chuckles]. You know. [chuckles]

general  
relational  
satisfaction

The best way to see otters and take their pictures, even, ah, is, ah, get in a maze of beaver flowages and slow-moving beav--streams that beavers are bank-beaving [??] within. Ah, as well as maybe creating ponded habitats in parts of them. And you can just float along in a canoe and become part of the landscape. You could even drape some foliage over the bow, and wear camo, and on and on. And, what you'll see, if you're still enough, and you're playing the wind right -- and I always carry a lighter, 'cause I can light the flame, and if the wind is coming to me, the flames coming to me, I'm good, but if ...[mumbles, bla bla bla]. But I watched a mother the other day repeatedly going out into the water, followed by her three youngsters. And she would herd fish into the shallows, into the rocky shallows, and catch fish. And those kids were saying, 'oh, is that how it's done?' It was really cool. [laughs]. Yeah.

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