

## **Focus Area Conference Call**

### **August 11, 2014, 2-3 PM**

Participants: Bethany Atkins, Andy Cutko, Phillip DeMaynadier, Sarah Demers, Bill Hancock, Liz Hertz, Don Katnik, Amanda Shearin, Sally Stockwell, Charlie Todd, Steve Walker, Barbara Vickery.

#### *General Discussion:*

- The Focus Area ‘Analysis’ and ‘Updates’ sub-committees have been merged because of significant overlap in content and participants. There was some discussion regarding the overall scope of our charge and time frame – that is, what do we need to accomplish and by when? We will need to set some milestones relative to upcoming SWAP stakeholder meetings.

#### *Review of Focus Areas relative to Criteria:*

- Most Focus Areas meet multiple criteria. However, four Focus Areas meet none of our stated criteria (‘spokes on the wheel’), and fourteen meet just one criteria. Several of these Focus Areas were added because they have coastal features that were not part of our original criteria (e.g., horseshoe crab breeding, important estuarine fisheries). The inclusion of these coastal Focus Areas highlights the need to more clearly articulate the coastal criteria. Others Focus Areas meeting no or just one criteria should be reviewed further to determine if they are redundant with others.
- We need to make a determination on a few other ‘second tier’ Focus Areas (Otter Pond, Upper Sheepscot Wetlands).
- All criteria were relied on numerous times for Focus Areas. That is, none of the criteria were cited just once or a few times.

#### *Review of Focus Areas and Macrogroups:*

- Most habitat macrogroups (17 of 21) are at least as well represented in Focus Areas as they are on the Maine landscape on the whole. Several macrogroups (e.g. alpine) are more than four times as abundant in Focus Areas relative to their overall state abundance.
- The ‘Northern Hardwoods & Conifer’ group is not as well represented in Focus Areas relative to its abundance across the state. However, there are still more than 650,000 acres of this type represented in Focus Areas.
- There was some discussion about the dispersion of habitats across Focus Areas – that is, are the many acres of ‘over-represented’ types clustered in just a few Focus Areas? We will add a column to this table indicating the number of Focus Areas in which each macrogroup occurs.
- Additional prioritization of habitats will likely occur after the SGCN have been linked to habitats.

#### *Other Tasks Identified in Prior Meetings:*

- The current emphasis within IFW staff is to finalize the list of SGCN and then link species to habitats. IFW aims to complete this by the end of August.

- Don indicated that it will not be too difficult to create a Focus Area database to store and track Focus Area information. However, if we decide this would be useful, any work on such as database will likely need to wait until the SGCN and habitat database is functional and populated.
- IFW has had a few discussions about more clearly articulating the concept of ‘high value habitats’ (rather than simply regulated habitats) for inclusion in Focus Areas, but further discussion likely wait until after SCGN are lined to habitats.
- We need further discussion about incorporating climate change concepts (connectivity, multiple biophysical settings) in Focus Areas. TNC (Barbara and Dan) will hopefully provide us with guidance.

**Next Steps:**

1. Andy will check with Mark Stadler regarding the deadline for completing the review of Focus Areas and progress milestones this fall.
2. Andy will draft a summary of the overall tasks and expectations, to be reviewed at the outset of the next meeting on September 5.
3. Andy will create a spreadsheet of Focus Areas with either no or one criteria. This spreadsheet will be circulated to the group for further review. At our next meeting we need to discuss the processes for adding and deleting Focus Areas.
4. Andy will add a column to the Focus Areas by habitat macrogroup spreadsheet indicating the number of Focus Areas in which each macrogroup occurs.

**Next Meeting: September 5, 1-4 PM. MNAP Office.**