

Focus Area Review Conference Call Notes

October 20, 2014

Participants: Bethany Atkins (IFW), Andy Cutko (MNAP), Phillip DeMaynadier (IFW), Molly Docherty (MNAP), Bill Hancock (IFW), Don Katnik (IFW), Justin Schlawin (MNAP), Barbara Vickery (TNC)

1. Species/habitat linkages and implications for Focus Area analysis

Based on feedback from the September stakeholders meeting and habitat revisions necessitated by issues in the NE Terrestrial Habitat Classification, IFW staff have been revising the SGCN/habitat linkages. The revisions are scheduled to be done by the end of October, so in early November we should be able to move forward with assessments of which SGCN have habitats captured and/or missed by Focus Areas.

2. Coastal Focus Areas

A meeting was held on October 15 to discuss review of Coastal Focus Areas. The group of MNAP, IFW, DMR, and Coastal Program staff reviewed data and maps from the previous iteration of this review process (2007) and developed a scope of work to complete review by the end of January. Separate notes from that meeting are being compiled and will be distributed shortly.

3. Aquatic issues

Andy described the assessment of Class AA waters (DEP standard) in Focus Areas. Key points include:

- roughly 3% of the Maine's stream miles are considered class AA
- more than 35% of the class AA waters in the state are captured within Focus Areas (which account for 12% of the state's area).
- key Focus Areas in terms of class AA waters include the St. John River, Baxter Region, Cold Stream/West Forks, and the East Branch of the Penobscot River.
- the class AA distinction is a very high bar, and we should expand our analysis to Class A waters.

Bethany discussed a process for assessing aquatic data (review by TNC and IFW staff) and garnering input from regional fisheries biologists. To maximize efficiency, we will wait to solicit input from IFW regional staff (wildlife and fisheries biologists) until other elements of Focus Area analysis are concluded.

4. Resilience Analysis (complexity and connectivity)

Based on the CC resilience work plan outlined at a prior meeting by Barbara, Justin described components of the analysis conducted to date. Key points include:

- The network of Focus Areas is generally *more resilient than comparable landscapes across the northeast region* (ME to VA). This is primarily driven by *higher local connectivity* across Maine than the rest of the northeast region.

- *Median local connectivity was slightly higher in Focus Areas than statewide, and connectivity was most notably higher in Focus Areas within the more developed ecoregions of Maine (southern and coastal).*
- *Landscape complexity was not a driver for higher resilience scores. LC is only slightly higher in focus areas compared to the median for the state, and for some geophysical settings and some biophysical sections LC was lower or below average.*
- 5. *Low elevation calcareous was the only geophysical setting type that was under-represented in both conserved lands and in focus areas.*

6. Next steps and time frame

We will schedule a check-in conference call or meeting toward the end of November. Focus Areas are not anticipated to be a significant component of the November stakeholders meeting but will likely be addressed in some capacity at the January meeting.

- **Andy** will expand the assessment of Class AA waters to include Class A waters.
- In light of new work plans for coastal and aquatic features, **Andy** will check in with Mark Stadler regarding the overall timeline for Focus Areas work.
- **Bethany** will set up a meeting or conference call among TNC, IFW, and MNAP to discuss aquatic data.
- **Andy** will draft meeting minutes and circulate them and will also send out a Doodle poll to pick upcoming dates for a conference call and next meeting.