

Maine Wildlife Action Plan Steering Committee  
December 16, 2014  
0900 - 1200  
MDIFW, Augusta

Present: Barry Bergason (MFPC), Judy Camuso (MDIFW), Phillip deMaynadier (MDIFW), Tom Doak (SWOAM), Molly Docherty (MNAP), Don Katnik (MDIFW), Jeff Norment (NRCS), Amanda Shearin (MDIFW), Mark Stadler (MDIFW), Sally Stockwell (Maine Audubon), Charlie Todd (MDIFW), Angela Twitchell (BTLT), Barbara Vickery (TNC), Nate Webb (MDIFW), Chandler Woodcock (MDIFW), Jed Wright (USFWS)

**Bold** = action item

~Welcome by Commissioner Woodcock

~Minutes of 11/20/14 Meeting: Approved as written

~Additional members

Tribes: MDIFW had a conference call with D.J. Monette, USFWS tribal liaison in the Northeast Region to discuss a process to integrate the tribes in to Maine's action plan update. D.J. suggested that Maine meet with the tribes as a group to 1) introduce them to the update process, 2) discuss how the tribes can be involved in the update, and 3) consider how the Maine and tribal action plans can be integrated. Sherri Venno is currently coordinating this event which is tentatively scheduled for February. D.J. will come to Maine to attend and facilitate discussion. Next steps for **MDIFW**: follow-up call with D.J. to prepare for the February meeting. Molly suggested that Maine's update should assess the contribution that tribal lands provide for the conservation of SGCN.

DMR: The committee would like to invite Claire Enterline, DMR, to serve on the committee. Both time commitment and funding are likely complications for Claire's involvement. MDIFW and DNR are developing an MOU for Claire's time and financial support with funding from the SWG planning grant. Judy is exploring how to obtain the required match. Molly indicated that Maine Natural Areas Program [MNAP] may be able to help leverage match.

Northern Maine: MDIFW invited Rich Hoppe and Amanda Demusz [MDIFW Region G] to participate.

Sportsmen: Judy talked with Dave Trahan, Sportsmen's Alliance of Maine, regarding involvement of sportsmen and women in the action plan update. He indicated that Gary Corson is SAM's representative for fisheries consideration; Dave said that he or his designee may attend the next partner meeting to represent SAM's wildlife interests.

~Updates

MNAP has completed entry of plant data [and taxonomy] in the fauna/flora database, including linkages to habitat types. Not sure if reporting functions are complete yet.

Posting online: MDIFW has posted steering committee minutes. **MDIFW and MNAP** are preparing subcommittee minutes for posting. The steering committee requested that **MDIFW**

post habitat types, SGCN habitat associations, and SGCN / habitat stressor assessment on the action plan website for additional partner and public review. MDIFW plans to post ~370 reports by the end of December or early January. Marine habitat associations are being completed this week and next. Terrestrial associations are finished (in draft form). Fisheries / freshwater information is ready for posting; MDIFW will notify Gary Corson and Jeff Reardon when posted. DMR is continuing to develop the applicable marine information. MDIFW will send email to partners and taxa specialists when posted. Upon conclusion of review, MDIFW will post any changes with responses as appropriate. MDIFW will notify partners via email when changes are posted.

The steering committee suggested that MDIFW / MNAP consider developing a brief "users guide" to the posted data to facilitate partner and public review.

~Regional Conservation Opportunity Areas [RCOAs] – Phillip

An effort of the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative [NALCC] with NE Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee to identify regional "focus areas" for the conservation of NE biodiversity – the focus is the conservation of SGCN, especially regional SGCN. Regional SGCN are those for which the NE has a high regional responsibility and those species with high vulnerability in the NE. Steve Fuller, USFWS, leads the effort; the first meeting was 12/15. There are ~20 representatives across NE. Phillip, Barbara, and Andy are the Maine representatives.

Regional SGCN list based on regional responsibility and regional vulnerability (how many states in NE included it as an SGCN). Based on 2005 SGCN lists. Does not include invertebrates. Includes a high % of our 2005 SGCN. Not a regulatory program or requirement of our Action Plan.

How will RCOAs interface with Maine's focus areas? Yet to be determined.

~SGCN habitat distribution – Don Katnik

MDIFW, MNAP, DMR are reconciling the NEHTCS and the NALCC regional GIS habitat map and finalizing identification / classification of habitats and SGCN habitat associations. Necessary to accomplish this prior to mapping distribution. Mapping SGCN distribution and their habitats; what part of Maine does each SGCN inhabit; identify by towns and sub-watersheds [HUC12]. Generating maps via observational data, GAP distribution data, and looking at habitat types that biologists have associated with each SGCN and the habitat type occurrence in Maine. Randy Boone's GAP data thorough and intensive, but dated. Concern about observational data bias --> considering just geographic spread of the observations helps to reduce this. These maps are "living documents" that can / will be modified as better data becomes available.

Maine's habitat classification will be slightly out of synch with other NE states, but Maine will be able to cross-walk back to NE "standard" habitat types. NALCC has released a revised/updated habitat map; they have renamed some habitats.

Steering Committee requested that the marine habitat classification system be circulated for broader review [DMR]. Partners will have a chance to review distribution maps. Initial posting will consist of PDFs, but in the future, data will be accessible via an online viewer. The distribution maps are color-ramped.

Other discussion:

Compiling individual species maps into a multi-species assessment.

Build in expected changes in distribution caused by climate change - perhaps this can be accomplished as a conservation action item.

Archiving process is important to store data so changes in species distribution through time can be tracked.

~Reporting on elements 1-3 / deferred

~Next conservation partner meeting

01/20/15 at Maple Hill Farm. An email notification will go out to partners in the next day or two.

The steering committee discussed the objectives, format, and agenda for the 4<sup>th</sup> conservation partner meeting. It desired to move forward with the completion of elements 1-3 and to begin the consideration of conservation actions, element 4.

Agenda for 01/20/2015 partner meeting:

~Overview of public outreach and communication, element 8

Stakeholders, targeted surveys, focus groups, and analysis.

~Prioritization of SGCN habitats, element 2 [brief overview to prepare for breakout group discussion]

~Update on the process for identifying distribution of SGCN

~Overview of the threat assessment process and results, element 3

~Break-out groups

1] SGCN / habitat stressor assessment

2] Possibilities for habitat prioritization\*

3] Public communication and outreach

~Break-out group reports

~Introduction to conservation actions, element 4\*\*

\*The committee suggested the need to run through several of the habitat prioritization options and present these for discussion in the break-out groups.

\*\***MDIFW** should present options for organizing sub-groups to develop conservation actions, and conclude the next partner meeting with an agreed upon process.

Of particular interest was the process to be used to develop conservation actions; the committee desires to consider spend much of 01/08/2015 meeting discussing possible approaches to developing conservation actions. The committee requested that **MDIFW** prepare a menu of approaches that it could consider; and it requested that **MDIFW** prepare a list of possible conservation actions. The committee discussed the development of a guidance document to set the tone for conservation action development. The group decided that the operational charter, approved at the last committee meeting, serves that function.

The committee requested that **MDIFW** prepare an assessment / review of 2005 conservation actions to determine progress and success for previous conservation actions. It also requested that **MDIFW** prepare a summary of Maine's on-going collaborative conservation actions.

The discussion turned briefly to element 5, monitoring. This topic will receive greater consideration at subsequent steering committee meetings.

~Public Outreach: Will be addressed at the 01/20/2015 partner meeting as part of the morning plenary and as an afternoon break-out group discussion.

~Wrap-up thoughts, suggestions

Barry: was spruce budworm considered during the assessment and identification of SGCN?  
MDIFW: no, but budworm should be considered a stressor when applicable. [NOTE: did MNAP consider budworm as a habitat threat? It seems to fit under the 'invasive and other problematic species' category.]

Barry asked about the possibility of setting up a public outreach display at the 01/20/15 partners meeting to inform the partners of the anticipated outbreak. [NOTE: it does not appear that the steering committee made a formal decision on Barry's request. Would the committee recommend allowing partners to set up information displays at partner meetings? If so, should we build time into the agenda for partners to explore the displays, e.g., like a poster session at a conference or provide that opportunity during the lunch break?]

Next steering committee 01/08/2015, 0900-1200, MDIFW, Augusta