

Landscape Planning Subcommittee meeting minutes  
April 12, 2017

Present:

AM: Bill Parsons, Seamus Norgaard, Wes Andrews, Noah Jansen, Jennifer Kleitch, Phil Wyckoff, Erin Victory, Don Tritsch (Phone)

PM: Bill Parsons, Seamus Norgaard, Wes Andrews, Noah Jansen, Jennifer Kleitch, Phil Wyckoff, Erin Victory, Alan Proctor, Jim Keyser, Don Tritsch (Phone), Pam Grassmick (Phone)

AM

Discussion on minutes from last meeting

Motion to accept minutes as edited on 4/12/2017 (Phil). Second (Jennifer). All in favor

Definitions discussion:

Seamus: There are many interested in being more specific and provided input into some details. For instance Special Conservation Areas (SCAs) as defined by the DNR have the GEMS program in it. That is not the purpose of these SCAs so we would like to be more specific.

Phil: Look at the minutes from March and what Eric Myers submitted via email - they are opposites in terms of details. Somewhere in the middle may be more appropriate. Eric's go into similar to prescriptions, Definitions from minutes go into some policies of DNR. Also, there is no one representing the timber industry.

Don: Need to define the areas as being one area for protection, one for timber, one for wildlife habitat.

Seamus: does not see it that way. Any place harvested on the island should have ecological services in mind – ecological services, timber, and mast.

Don: we need all three areas and some additional activities will be required to make it work.

Erin: The types of areas we are defining are not mutually exclusive. Forest products and ecological services are not mutually exclusive. The framework we have in place to get work done on the ground is compartment review. The three different types represent the spectrum of management possibilities. We seem to have the bases covered. SCA is a forest certification definition that was left by the DNR as intentionally vague. But under the SCAS in DNR framework we have other categories which have more specific definitions. Including what Josh listed as communities. Suggestion: alter SCA name to be more specific and get away from the certification ramifications.

Question: could we use definition from High Conservation Value Area (HCVA) or Ecological Reference Area (ERA) instead?

Wes: Need to define the word conservation. Cultural resources need to be included. Refine the definition of conservation to include cultural resources. Or do we want a different definition?

Erin: SCAS do include cultural resources in the DNR definition. If we alter the name or definition we need to include cultural resources.

Definitions HC VAs looked at on-screen

Seamus: if we identify areas to designate and take the broader definition of HCVA, do we need to break it into the specific types?

Erin: what is the dedicated management areas definition?

Wes: is having trouble seeing how cultural resources fit in. All the areas listed are not culturally important. One of the maps the GIS unit is coming up with is including probability of having cultural resources.

Seamus: interpreting Wes's comments: can we use broader terminology to get started and as our intentions. We are doing it in the framework of the DNR definitions, right?

Erin: that's the question. If we do, we are coming up against limitations. The dedicated management areas could include cultural areas.

Seamus: Wildlife club wants to utilize what exists from the DNR

Phil: yes.

Bill: does it need to go through director's order? Yes. Can we use the SCA definition without the GEMS type of designation.

Erin: SCA was left intentionally broad. If we stick with the SCA, we should identify specific objectives of this SCA.

Bill: part of the SCAs are ERAs defined by Josh

Erin: We could create our own Beaver Island-specific SCA category that incorporates both the cultural and ecological resources

WES: keep in SHPO/state archaeologist in the loop on what we do here and decisions get made. Cultural resource considerations take into account both archaeological sites as well as subsistence activities.

Erin: were cultural areas included in GIS model?

Wes: Not yet.

Erin: that would make a difference in the end map.

Phil: some of the areas are already in the map and were incorporated in previous compartment reviews.

Erin: Since the State information is included is that appropriate?

Wes: yes, and it is included, but other sites on Garden and High islands are not incorporated.

Erin: it sounds like we are on the SCA track but will create our own category. But do we need one or multiple to incorporate all the values that are included?

Bill: glossary of the plan has definitions of many terms we could use.

Erin: for the different areas, one size doesn't fit all. In terms of cultural areas.

Seamus: do we need a special category for cultural areas.

Wes: yes

Bill: if you call them all SCAs you aren't stating why it is special.

Erin: should not pinpoint specific points (eg. Archaeological sites). Creating an SCA category that included ecological and cultural would still be in the first category so we need to make sure a map has both included.

Seamus: Part of the strategy was to make this understandable to the general public. You can have values that include various areas.

Erin: We could have all categories be SCAs with different goals

Seamus: May be a mistake because others will interpret differently.

Don: Go back to Keith Kintigh's three categories. The conservation areas do need some additional definition to make it clearer to the public

Erin: there is an "Other" SCA category that we could define and Keith was asking for additional definitions that were needed recently.

Seamus: is the non-designated natural area an option

Erin: Not a great idea for various reasons, including long, arduous process.

Decision: SCAs will be the term we use for the first tier category of areas

Erin: Create a Beaver Island Ecological SCA but we have not come up with a separate SCA Beaver Island cultural resources category. Need that and to come up with a definition for that as well. Need a definition for SCAs that talks about how that would trigger a review of the methods.

Bill/Phil: Culturally significant areas could be sensitive and should not be pointed out on the map.

Phil can we plug in the cultural definition at a later date?

Wes did draft a definition of Archaeological sensitivity:

“Can be expected to be correlated to the preferred use of elevated well-drained sandy ground adjacent to aquatic resources as the idealized settlement and other land utilization pattern.”

This could be refined. The specification that was given to the GIS department was ¼ mile.

Seamus: it seems like we are back to the three categories.

Bill: we can have Alan and Jim at the May 4 meeting to look at the mapping process and have the NLMIC weigh in as to whether we are on the right path.

Wes: All the different layers may be too cluttered to have cultural included too

Phil: If we use cultural and MNFI layers together does that work to not pinpoint culturally significant areas? Potentially.

We have the first definition term but we need to refine it.

Phil: The second definition needs to include forest products. Ecological services are not absent in managed forests.

Don feels that there are ecological services served even in the harvest areas

Seamus thinks Don is right on. But we need areas with good forestry practices and there is a term used as “ecological forestry” which is used by the federal government and others.

Phil: need input from forest resources groups as to how to improve the areas that have been hi-graded in the past.

Do we need to change “selective management area” to “forest products”?

Seamus – how do we make sure responsible forestry happens in those areas? There are contractors that practice “ecological forestry” that we could hire and you need loggers that follow the rules.

Phil: the old days of management (e.g., hi-grading) is gone

Beaver Island Forest Council (BIFC) would like to use the term “ecological forestry” in the definition.

Beaver Island Wildlife Club (BIWC) would say that the DNR processes include what could be considered ecological forestry. We agree but don’t want to put any terms out there that aren’t already a DNR process.

Seamus: are you satisfied that the mainland processes are appropriate on the island?

Phil: need to use processes in place and not put extra burden of a certified forester costs in place.

Go back to the DNR processes and hold them accountable.

Don: agrees with Phil; there are experts in the field within the DNR.

Erin: explanation of the compartment review process and using BMPs within those processes. Foresters have to go out to harvest sites to determine if there are any violations of the specs and they have latitude to halt the procedure.

Phil: can we re-iterate that the DNR uses best management practices

Erin: is there a way to use another term or definition that we could use instead of the term “ecological forestry”.

Jennifer: can we look up the definition of “ecological forestry” and use terminology that is already in that definition rather than the term itself

Erin: can use our input from today and from previous efforts to word-smith definitions.

Don: concern over “ecological services” being an extension of the SCA category

Bill: the way it’s written may be causing the concerns

Erin: ecological services and forestry practices are not mutually exclusive.

BIFC does not want the second category to only be for forestry only. It’s not the DNR mandate to optimize timber. We are talking about balancing those priorities equally.

Phil: let DNR do their job and come up with prescriptions, and execute them responsibly

Don is ok with definitions from the previous meeting as indicated in an email earlier.

Noah: are we looking at commercial harvests in aspen

Phil: it has to be financially feasible and the BIWC would encourage it, also look at putting down plantings in logging trails

Seamus:

Expand the first definition (Special Conservation Areas); The second definition (Selective Management Areas) is okay as written? But Erin will tune it up; third definition (Habitat Maintenance and Restoration Areas) is ok, but some others would like to include examples beyond the definitions.

Break for Lunch

PM

Pam: Ash is not pulled out and is found primarily on the east side, and she would like to see it worked into a landscape level plan.

Jennifer: the model input used does not split out ash, as it is a component of many stand types. It would be difficult to pull it out specifically.

Pam: There is a need to protect ash on the island as it will be extremely rare in the future. Most ash is found on the east side of the island.

Don: there is a natural community on the east side where it is mostly private

Alan: The natural communities are not limited to state land and there may be private landowners that may be willing to participate in the future as being corridors and connectivity.

Pam: there is a nice sign talking about the natural community on the east side and it is quite unique.

Don: talking about the shoreline

Alan: can create polygons using the highest scoring pixels

Whole group joins

Alan: March 15 version of model was the initial model that was run to locate the best areas for corridors. See handout from March 15 for the first iteration of a model and how it was categorized. 5 initial data sets were included and were categorized and weighted for the GIS model. Layers can be given influence levels that need to add up to 100%. The group gave some input prior to this meeting on additional layers that could be added, weights, and categories to include.

Alan emailed his presentation to Pam and Don.

April 5 we sat down and added some additional layers including Forest Stands, proximity to natural communities, and proposed management layers. These layers were weighted equally for influence.

There were two versions run. One with forest stands, one without forest stands, one including all.

Bill: if we did forest stands similar to how we did the landuse/landcover with hydrology included, would the map look different?

Seamus: when forest stand information was classified, how was it done? This is on page 2 of the handout.

Phil: need to be cognizant that private landowners will be confused if we include it in our map.

Alan: we can pull out public lands, and show this as the product.

Don: could we have a map showing where we could have high potential for habitat work or forest management?

Phil: all the yellow and red (on map shown on screen) are potential habitat areas

Noah: making things with high limitation "nonforested" in the LULC would pull out those areas for habitat management.

Jim: the more layers in there, the more diluted the output. Also, we need to set influences besides equal.

Bill: let's talk about influence of the layers so that we are coming up with the best model

Jim: forest cover type is not an island wide dataset

Bill: we were tasked with state lands

Parcel acreage: dissolve the contiguous parcels into one. Influence: does it need a high influence?

Proximity may take care of this. Make it 5% influence

Public vs private land – remove influence and remove from the model, since we are looking at public land

Roads and trails – may be lower influence... do they matter? Roads and trails will matter for managing land, but not for conservation corridors.

Seamus: needs to leave soon. His input is that proximity to natural communities should have greater influence, roads and trails little to nothing, then forest stand information may not have as much limitation if there is some old aspen. It also seems like proximity to surface water may have higher influence as well. Increasing buffer around natural areas may help with connectivity.

Jennifer: recommends increasing forest stand information influence

Highest should be natural community areas.

Or could we keep natural communities as the darkest color in the map but the model shows the connectivity?

Noah: include the actual natural community in the proximity layer as a zero distance and eliminate MNFI layer.

Jim: good idea because more layers dilutes the model

Phil: BIWC would not want roads or trails blocked off

Bill: that's the tribal perspective as well.

Don: don't want to include private land with the natural communities.

Bill: we should clip to the public land.

Alan: that will be done for May 4

We are trying to use the model to map the three types of areas. And we also talked about deferred areas

Erin: forest stand cover type should have higher weight

Final decisions:

Roads and trails: eliminate from model

Parcel size 5%

Forest Stand 30%

Proximity to water 15%

MNFI proximity 35% potential model, 15% limitation model

Landuse landcover: Omit

Forest stand prescription proximity 15% potential model, 35% limitation model

Can we use the treatment areas the centroids of the forest stand prescription proximity

Forest stand information Potential and limitations discussion for categorizing.

What does having a zero do? Omits it from the model

Pam: Lowland deciduous – ash should be protected. there should be a way to mark the trees

Phil: black ash has not been cut, white ash has been left if it does not influence regeneration.

Do we want to identify areas of ash to leave?

Pam: Ash will be extremely rare in the US and should be protected

Alan put an asterisk by the lowland deciduous in the model, as it is most likely to contain the ash.

Don: where do grasslands come in – Herbaceous openlands. Should pull it out and rank similar to Aspen

Request Keith Kintigh's presence at future meetings.

#### Action items

Provide updated and refined definitions: Erin will work on this

Provide a map from the latest model

Need a placeholder for cultural information – GIS has some maps created with sensitivity areas and cultural resource areas that they are working on with Wes.

Adjourn

