

NLMIC Landscape Planning Subcommittee meeting
February 23, 2017
LTBB Government Center Harbor Springs

In attendance:

Phil Wyckoff, Bill Parsons, Archie Kiogima, Alan Proctor, Keith Kintigh, Seamus Norgaard, Jennifer Kleitch, Pam Grassmick (on the phone)

Goals of this meeting:

- 1) Discuss Definitions
- 2) Determine goals, definitions, and values of different types of areas
- 3) Schedule and tasks to come up with a product

Bill: We should identify both Core Wild Areas and Core Management Areas (for young succession forests.)

Seamus: Can we get Josh Cohen's further involvement in our mapping process? Don Tritsch and Seamus have asked for this.

Jennifer: Josh is willing to help but his time is not free. His and MNFI's involvement is indirect now through a layer of natural areas that can be included in the final product. It can inform our decisions.

Bill: Has asked for Josh's input regarding buffers around protected communities, and Josh didn't have specific recommendations. LTBB is trying to fund some more MNFI surveys Hog, Garden, Beaver

Jennifer: MNFI surveys will be done this year to update the old forest inventory for state lands.

Alan and Keith: Discussion of weighted GIS modelling to help our mapping process.

Q: Is there an ESRI GIS program to model potential for management, perhaps using pixels?

A: Alan: "Weighted modelling and Qualitative prioritization are possible; complicated though."

Keith: "Path of Least resistance modelling is an option. However, our process may be just as good to come up with a product"

Discussion: We should make a decision that this product (map and definitions) will be a living document that can be updated.

Action item: Need to decide on an interval to update.

Product should include a spectrum of protection and management, considering cultural significance.

Need: Definition for Connectivity? –Bill thought wetland connectivity, e.g. streams. Others could be closed canopy, forest, etc. Discuss deer browse impacts, limited cedar regeneration on the Island.

Action item: Know in advance what to monitor as the product is implemented. For example, is it possible to pull deer out of sensitive areas?

Keith's presentation

STATE FORESTS AREAS MANAGED BY THE DNR MEET 2 TYPES OF FOREST CERTIFICATION:

Information online: http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-30301_30505_33360---,00.html

State of Michigan is dual certified by the two external entities: FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and SFI (Sustainable Forestry Initiative)

Management on State Forest lands is shaped largely by silvicultural criteria. There are many considerations and work instructions for staff have been developed

http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-30301_30505_33360_41834_68707-331517--,00.html

that must be followed for.

The State is audited on many criteria. The certification has resulted in requirements for many aspects of sustainable management including retention (trees left standing within timber harvest areas), Legacy Trees (different from Old Growth, definition here:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/WI_1.4BiodMgt_320943_7.pdf), soil and water Best Management Practices.

What does it mean to have forest certified? Forests are economically, socially, and ecologically more sustainable. Makes forestry more responsible and accountable as well as transparent

Three Wildlife Research Areas are "in scope" – Beaver Island, Dead Stream Swamp, and Cusino
"In Scope" means that the lands are covered by the forest certification standards.

There are several "designations" for special areas on state land that could be used in coming up with our definitions. These are defined in the work instructions (instruction 1.4 at the link above).

Special Conservation Areas: There are different kinds of Special Conservation Areas. Some are static and have the force of law (won't be changed.) Others are reviewable, management can change.

- Non-Dedicated Natural Areas (these areas have been recommended for designation, but NRC has not yet approved them. Beaver Island has Non-Dedicated Natural Area on the S.W. side of Island.
- Natural National Landmark (wetlands west of Houghton Lake)
- Grouse Enhancement Management Areas (GEMs) are designated as SCAs
- HCVA High Conservation Value Areas. Examples:
 - *Ecological Reference Areas (required by FSC standards.) These are defined as areas that are primarily influenced by natural ecological processes rather than by modern anthropogenic disturbances. Beaver Island has ERAs (Dry Mesic Forest, also?)
 - *Critical Dunes
 - *Sand Lakes Quiet Area
 - *Pigeon River Country State Forest

Q: Can conservation designations apply on Beaver Island?

A: Yes, they can be used and are used here (e.g., there are Ecological Reference Areas on Beaver Island for unique natural communities)

“Assessment of manageability” Map as an example of a product we could develop – are there zones of manageability based on certification (Map presented as an example at end of presentation)

Action item: Jennifer will send Keith’s presentation to the Subcommittee (Done)

Alan – GIS and mapping

Maps displayed with an overlay the “assessment of manageability” map presented earlier with previous mapping efforts that we have worked on, including MNFI’s natural communities.

A gap we identified was cultural information. We will need to have Wes’s input and historical society as well.

Currently we have 100% overlap with old growth areas identified by MNFI and late successional management potential on maps that were presented by Keith, as well as DNR forest inventory data.

We have a layer for streams with 300ft buffer is a layer (Jennifer also made contact with the DNR’s local fisheries biologist who is interested in participating in our efforts).

Action items: Jennifer will get Alan a trails layer from last year’s efforts. (Done)

Alan will get with THPO for their concerns

Discussion of how to view all the layers together, what layers are important and available.

We need to include eagle nests with buffers on any final or draft maps and buffer on the ground
Jennifer will sent LTBB eagle guidelines as they relate to forestry on state lands (Done)

The group then discussed the use of other terms for designated management areas that are more understandable to the general public and/or aren’t “hot button” terms. Here are some of the terms we discussed replacing:

- Core wild areas
- Core managed areas
- Management
- Protection
- (Jennifer’s addition after meeting) Monitoring

Terms that could be used for areas on the map (many options were discussed; the ones we are considering are in green below):

- 1) **Special conservation areas** – (will be unmanaged areas, or “Core Wild Areas,” that are not candidates for timber management.) These may include, but are not necessarily limited to Natural Areas, Ecological Reference Areas, Critical Dunes, areas with Unique features, Topographically challenging areas, Stream buffers, Areas of Cultural Significance, etc. Special Conservation Areas may include both late successional forest, and some mid-to-late successional forest that have been designated for restoration.

Goals for these areas: natural processes allowed to occur, goals are similar to those of Ecological Reference Areas and/or MDNR's Natural Areas System goals (e.g., closed canopy forest or wetland areas, dunes)

- 2) **Selective management areas** (Mid-to late successional forest – uneven aged management (e.g. single tree selection), plus mast production
Goals: Managed as “Buffer Areas” or corridors; moving towards mature forest, may also serve as quality timber, limited production areas. Using uneven aged silviculture where appropriate, for example single tree selection. Good areas to manage for Raptor nesting habitat, mast production.
- 3) **Habitat maintenance and restoration areas** includes, but not limited to “young forest” or “Early successional” – Managed to replicate natural disturbance to promote young forests, e.g., aspen, in appropriate/areas places within the areas outlined. Note: not all of the areas can be managed. Need to define in order to target tree species that are considered “early successional” like aspen and birch. Identify early successional area for management over next 20 years
Goals: maintaining deer herd, Improve habitat for snowshoe hare, warblers, woodcock, grouse
- 4) Deferred areas – areas where not enough information is currently available to make an informed decision on management strategy

Discussion of a Schedule and tasks:

Ultimate goal: May 4, 2017 have draft map and definitions with goals ready to present to the full NLMIC

Tasks:

All - Have draft designation map to present to Wes

All - Explain the terms on the map and how we got there

Alan - work on connectivity and roads/trails/streams using the layers we have available

All – Create draft definitions and goals with the above notes that arose from discussion as a starting point (Question from Jennifer: can this be done remotely or do we need a meeting designated to this?)

Action item: Jennifer will send out Doodle poll for next meeting early/mid-March – Harbor springs, make sure Wes is available (Done – next meeting is March 16 at LTBB Government Center in Harbor Springs).