

## NLMI Collaborative Landscape Level Planning Subcommittee Meeting – Draft Notes

07/12/2016 6:00-9:00PM

### Peaine Township Hall

Attendees: Phil Wyckoff, Don Tritsch, Bill Parsons, Wes Andrews, Noah Jansen, Archie Kiogima, Ed Leuck, Pam Grassmick, Beth Leuck, Seamus Norgaard, Eric Meyers, John Paskus (MNFI).

We should focus on what we agree on:

It was mentioned that there was an Influx of tourists over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Would like to repeat that over the course of the summer. Need to utilize the state land to help bring in more tourists throughout the year.

Overall goal of community– Create and maintain a sustainable natural resource-based economy

#### Conservation Action Planning Presentation by John Paskus

John Paskus: The NLMI Plan has goals and objectives that are similar to the steps found in Conservation Action Planning Process (CAP). So if the group follows the recommendations in the NLMI plan, we will be working on some form of a CAP to implement the goals, objectives, and strategies in the plan (ecological and cultural targets, threats assessment, strategy development).

In order to complete a successful CAP it requires input from a variety of stakeholders, which we have already in the Collaborative.

#### CAP Process overview

What is CAP? 1. A structured decision making process, 2. designed to help groups move from disagreement to agreement, 3. using an evidence-based approach to landscape planning

First, we need to define the geographic area we are focusing on - Beaver Island proper, NLMI, forests, state lands only, all lands? This is not necessarily clear to an outside observer.

Second, we need to determine what we care most about, i.e., what are the conservation targets and values? Targets can be ecological, cultural, social and/or economic.

Third, determine how the conservation targets and values are doing/what is the health of each? Based on that information, what are the goals for each target?

Fourth, determine what's causing the most problems? Identifying, evaluating, and prioritizing stressors.

Fifth, determine what we can do to improve health of each target/value: Understand the situation by developing a situation diagram that connects the dots. Identify the top strategies to improve health of the targets and values, based on a series of criteria agreed upon by the group. Test the efficacy of each

top strategy, document key assumptions, and then develop specific objectives, when, who, how will the work get done, as well as indicators for measuring success. Essentially create mini action plans.

End Result:

- Shared set of targets/values
- Understanding of current state of health (indicators)
- Desired future condition and goals
- Highest priority stressors (threats)
- Set of most effective strategies including detailed implementation plans

Q: What is an example timeline for a CAP plan? – the example of Monroe County I75 corridor project took 2 years, most take one year, but it's up to participants. How often they can meet and expedite the process. The goal is 6 months but it often takes longer due to schedules of participants. Also, you must make sure the right people are in the room to make sure you are collecting the right information and making the best decisions.

Q: What happens if you don't have all the information? A: This is a common issue. If there is lack of evidence, you can document the information gap and move on to the next step. CAP was designed to be an iterative process that can change with new information.

Drummond Island went through a similar plan, but John was not involved.

Q: Do you get information from others or do you have an advisory committee? A: A little of both. You identify and invite in experts based on the topic being covered.

By being science based, CAP helps moves people from the subjective (we all have our own biases and experiences) to a more objective place.

Q: Would this result in a detailed action plan? Something where we can get boots on the ground doing work? A: A key outcome of CAP is concrete detailed plans, and people/entities tied to implementing activities on the ground.

Who is going to pay? DNR?, Tribes?, Others?? We would have to query the Collaborative to find out what funds may be available and when. Having funds from multiple sources might be a good goal.

Cost and time to complete the project would also depend on what kind of an end product the group would want and expect.

Q: Is John aware of the NRESC plan? A. Yes. Lots of good strategies, very well written, however he's not sure how the strategies are connected. Not a good sense of priority like a CAP plan can provide.

Q: What are some examples of indicators? A. Depends on the target. If the target is healthy Mesic Northern forests, you might look at forest structure, plant diversity, disturbance, coarse woody debris, basal area, impacts from diseases, animal species (could be a sub-target too), etc.

## Community inventory

Josh Cohen is going to do community inventory to update older data. They are working on a contract with Little Traverse Bay Band.

Q: If we have Josh's inventory of natural communities on Beaver Island, does that give us enough to get started? Or do we need to do a CAP study? A. Josh's information would help inform the CAP process

Comment: Need someone to take control and make something happen. John can do the CAP process but funding would have to come from multiple places. State, Tribes, CD, County, Townships, etc.

Wes – after attending both cultural subcommittee and this one, he sees a disconnect of understanding between the two subcommittees, he will discuss with the cultural subcommittee.

What are people's feelings about pursuing a CAP process through MNFI?

Consensus to recommend adopting CAP to the rest of the collaborative for their input. The subcommittee agrees there is value to this process.

**Action item –The Landscape Planning subcommittee will provide a recommendation to the collaborative to develop a CAP. Need to determine scope (NLMI, Beaver only, etc.). John will provide a draft proposal for a CAP plan to the larger collaborative for the August 2 meeting.**

Q: we want to continue moving forward without spinning our wheels - what can we do in the meantime? A: Continue to gather spatial data that we have.

VISTA is a geospatial analysis tool designed to help groups meet their goals.

In order for VISTA to be most useful, you will need 1) good spatial data of your conservation priorities, eg., high use migratory bird areas, forest inventory assessment data, accurate locations of unique features, etc., as well as spatial scenarios (land use map, forest management plan, infrastructure (roads and trails, campgrounds)

We need to get everyone's goals on the map at the same time.

Progress of cultural subcommittee – Wes has shifted his focus solely to the islands to identify all cultural resources on the islands and will have a report by the August 2. Scale will have to be at the section level due to sensitivity of the data. There will be a designated gatekeeper to handle the release of cultural information.

It should be clear that we need to be talking about more than just forests when discussing landscape level plan. We should also be including things like dunes, bogs, fens, etc.

Comment: Little Traverse Conservancy lands should also be included – it is included on maps that LTBB produced.

Definition of Core Wild Areas (CWA) – Closed canopy with with lack of edge, including interior forests. It is an area where we let nature take it's course.

For example in a management strategy, a CWA would have 100% retention, buffer areas have 66-90% retention, managed areas have less retention.

Coastal fen and open dune are the rarest communities on the islands

How far off of private property would you have to set an interior forest since there is no guarantee private land will continue to be forest? CWAs – do a buffer around the private land – what is the distance?

Comment: Urban sprawl was used to develop CWAs but we are not urban. Response: there are many examples of CWAs on both private and public land nowhere near urban areas such as out west on large federally owned landscapes.

A CWA must be large enough to allow natural processes to occur. It is not an isolated 40 acre forest. Examples of forest types that occur on Beaver Island that could be included in a CWA are boreal forest, northern hardwood, wet hardwoods, wet conifers, dry-mesic northern forest. The size of potential natural disturbance (wind-throw, ice storm, flooding) helps dictate how large of a block is needed to sustain that system over time. Each natural community can be tied to a different disturbance type and therefore minimum viable size. There is quite a bit of scientific literature on this subject. **We should look at MNFI abstracts to see if there are those definitions included.**

Again, it needs to be said that we are not just talking about upland forests but also bogs, dunes, swamps, fens, emergent wetlands, etc.

**ACTION ITEM - We should use the terms Special Conservation Areas and High Conservation Value Areas to be consistent with work being done at the state level by the DNR and to leverage funds. Jennifer –get definitions of SCAs and HCVAs Get maps of aspen to others in the group,**

Q:What are some options for habitat work while these processes are ongoing? If completing a CAP will take 2 years, the Wildlife Club is not comfortable waiting until then to do habitat work. A: We could look at some of the fields that are covered in knapweed to restore. We could also leverage funding for work on private lands, or attempt to identify the least sensitive areas on state lands. This conversation needs to be had at a higher Collaborative level.

Q: What about planting trees to replace mast lost by beech decline. Discussion: concerns over oak wilt – shouldn't bring foreign oak stock to the island. (Jennifer's comment after the meeting: What about shrub species like hawthorn? Other native mast-bearing shrubs?)

There may be more resistant beech than expected on the island. Beth has quantitative data to look at from past hardwood surveys and could revisit those sites to determine the current status of those areas.

Recreation sites need maintenance at township sites, Jennifer needs to work with the twp.

How many different data layers do we need to conduct a sound geospatial analysis?

Bring in technical experts as needed to the subcommittee in order to complete the CAP

Big decisions should be made at the collaborative level. E.g. whether or not to move forward with our recommendation of completing a CAP for the Islands.

It was recommended that this group should use webinars to help share information in the future. This would be particularly helpful during the winter months when participants are more scattered.

Interest in more wildlife surveys on the Island that provide the scientific data needed to make informed decisions. For example, what is the current deer population on Beaver Island? What is the social and ecological carrying capacity for deer on the island?

Meeting adjourned at 9PM.