

Natural Environment – Minimum Viable Areas Group Meeting Notes of November 28, 2007, 12:30, MVC Offices

Present - Members: Tom Chase, Dick Johnson, Brendan O'Neill, Matt Pelikan, Tim Boland, Debra Swanson

Present – MVC Staff: Mark London, Jo-Ann Taylor, Chris Seidel

The objective is to look at habitat protection as part of identifying natural resource enhancement areas. Habitat preservation is to sustain all native species, resident and migrant, not just rare flora and fauna.

3-Tiered Approach: Matt presented his idea for using a 3-tiered approach to Minimum Viable Areas:

1. Tier I "Ecological Priority Zones" (EPZs) - These are the basic core areas for 3 main systems – Sandplain, Moraine and Squibnocket/Aquinnah Moorlands – where there would be greatest emphasis on preserving and enhancing ecological values and lower human impact
2. Tier II "Local Resource and Connectivity Zones" (LRCZs) – These are ecologically important areas that are too small to function as EPZs but make a significant contribution and should be targeted to support a relatively narrow set of functions and could tolerate a broader range of land uses. Connectivity to other areas is desirable but not essential
3. Tier III "Human Activity Zones" (HAZs) – These are areas that are either irretrievably altered, have little basic ecologic value, or are particularly suitable for one or more human-serving land uses. These are the areas where most of the needs of humans are to be tolerated or even encouraged (housing, commerce, etc.) with sustainable and low-impact development practices. Protected open space would be important but more for scenic and recreational values than for contribution to overall or specific biodiversity.

Reaction to Matt's suggestion was mostly favorable, particularly for the benefit of focusing on functions rather than straight quantitative assessment (how to use land rather than how much land to own or control), and consistency with the whole point of MVA's to keep large enough tracts of land functioning so that multiple uses could be absorbed.

Matt and Mark agreed to get together to start to draw the 3 tiers on maps.

Next Meeting subsequently set for January 8 at noon.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10.

Notes prepared by Jo-Ann Taylor