

Natural Environment – Minimum Viable Areas Group Meeting Notes of January 23, 2008, noon, MVC Offices

Present - Members: Tom Chase, Dick Johnson, Matt Pelikan, Brendan O'Neill, and Tim Boland
Present – MVC Staff: Mark London, Jo-Ann Taylor, Chris Seidel

The intent of the MVA is to protect the least amount of land to provide viable populations of all our native species, resident and migratory, and to provide ecosystem services upon which people depend.

3-Tiered Approach:

- Chris showed results of manipulating the connectivity factor, comparing the results of using 100 yards vs. using 50 yards around each dwelling to show connectivity (different color codes for where 10 or more dwellings converge in one of those 100 yard boundary circles, e.g.). She noted that with the 50-yard standard, the human activity zone would decrease, the dark green core would increase and the connectivity zone would increase (compared to the 100-yard boundary tried last).
- The 50-yard standard might convey the impacts of fragmentation better.
- A buffer of 1,000 yards might be used to define the super core; that standard is used recurrently for neotropical birds, etc. The best buffer standard is really defined on a species level. The buffer could be defined as spongy, extensive enough to serve as a corridor without remaining pristine. It would be very important not to introduce barriers to movement of the target species. And the cores must be large enough to send out an excess of offspring.
- Some areas that are not on the NHESP Priority Habitat map are probably core but haven't been investigated because of access issues.
- We could identify 5 super core areas of about 5,000 each for moraine, Squibnocket (not quite 5,000), Chappaquiddick (not quite 5,000) and 10,000 for sandplains grasslands. In those core areas, light green could be promoted to dark green (core) and white promoted to light green; outside of those areas, dark green could be demoted to light green. Each tier must function at the right level. After defining the ecological priority zones (dark green), anything not connected could be light green. The cores would be home to source populations and anything else would host sink populations.

Coordination with Conservation Groups:

There was discussion of outreach to conservation groups prior to completion of the maps.

Next Meeting:

Next Meeting was set for Wednesday, January 30 from 9-10:30 A.M.

The meeting was adjourned at 2 P.M.