

Natural Environment – Minimum Viable Areas Group Meeting Notes of January 30, 2008, 9:00 A.M., MVC Offices

Present - Members: Tom Chase, Dick Johnson, Matt Pelikan, and Brendan O'Neill

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.

Report from visit to Land Bank:

- Mark, Chris, Tom and Dick visited the Land Bank offices on January 29 and presented the mapping methodology with Director James Lengyel. They found a favorable response.

3-Tiered Approach:

- There was further discussion of promoting some areas in the Ecological Priority Zones and demoting some areas outside, in a non-judgmental way, perhaps calling the demoted areas something like “non-core priority habitat”, in the same light green color but with different shading. Each of those areas will have specific management recommendations attached, such as focus on recreation or on reducing Nitrogen input in a sensitive watershed. The desired level of protection or management would not be as comprehensive as in the (darkest green) core.
- It's OK to diverge from the NHESP Priority Habitat map; some areas are probably core but haven't been investigated because of access issues.
- As suggested at the last meeting, Chris presented a map with a buffer of 1,000 yards for possible use to define the super core; that standard is used recurrently for neotropical birds, etc. The map showed extremely little land with such a buffer, and the 1,000-yard buffer was dropped.
- Criteria were discussed for definition of boundaries for the main core areas; species needs, ecosystem services for the human population, geological and geographic factors such as soil types, slope gradient, salt spray influence, temperature differences affecting growing season (particularly the dates of the first and last frosts). Ecoregions could be mapped and overlain on a map of soils and geology. There was discussion of including Chappaquiddick with the Sengekontacket area and Aquinnah with the western moraine but a slightly different color. The sandplain core should show the frost bottoms as a different color, to illustrate relief. An estuarine system, including beaches and marshes, could be marked off as separate.
- After identifying the cores, based on use, geology and soils, and topography, the connectors will be identified. A narrative will be prepared describing the methodology.

Next Meeting:

No new meeting was scheduled. Participants were reminded of a meeting of the Natural Environment Core on Friday, February 8 at 1:00 P.M.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 A.M.