

Natural Environment – Minimum Viable Areas Group Meeting Notes of January 8, 2008, noon, MVC Offices

Present - Members: Tom Chase, Dick Johnson, Matt Pelikan, 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:

- Matt and Mark reviewed the results of their collaboration, noting that defining the boundary between the moraine and the sandplain geology was helpful in determining the Ecological Priority Zone (EPZ) for the sandplain grasslands system. There was discussion of what to do with incongruous "islands" of development in sensitive areas, both from a regulatory standpoint and for planning such as mitigation or undevelopment. There was discussion of the complexity of identifying and separately treating development that is peripheral to EPZ land and development that is surrounded by EPZ land.
- Chris showed results of using GIS to define their findings by numeric standards such as using a boundary of 100 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 GIS can identify a number of layers by their attributes and then show where they converge as one layer for display, for example displaying layers where Priority Habitat and existing conservation lands overlap, areas of only existing conservation lands, and areas of only Priority Habitat all as the one category Ecological Priority Zones. The maps were very helpful in visualizing the land areas of each category and stimulated discussion about management strategies also. There was discussion of investigating using different density and connectivity number standards and of adding in buildout dots (potential development possible under existing regulations).
- Tom Chase suggested that we need to identify what we want from each land area (e.g. sustain resident and migrant species and provide ecosystem services to humans) and what strategies will achieve those results.
- Strategies discussed included prevention of development, mitigation, reversal or restoration (undevelopment) and best practices to manage those areas already protected.
- Mark London suggested identifying connectors and using a broader vision to determine core areas that stand out, then narrowing the focus in.

Coordination with Other Subtopics:

There was discussion of the need to develop maps for the other subtopics of recreation, natural character and working landscapes. Dick and Tim agreed to look at the first draft presented by Chris and to work on it. Other subtopics of recreation and natural character will also need to be developed

and those who have been working on those subtopics will be invited in to start looking at mapping, prior to a meeting of the Core in February to put everything together (map layers).

Next Meeting:

Next Meeting was set for Wednesday, January 23 at noon.

A meeting of the Natural Environment Core was also set for Friday, February 8 at 1:00 P.M.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:54 P.M.

Notes prepared by Jo-Ann Taylor