

Natural Environment Work Group
Meeting Notes of April 5, 2011 12:00 P.M., MVC Offices

Present – Work Group Members: Tom Chase, Megan Ottens-Sargent and Bob Woodruff
Present – MVC Staff: Jo-Ann Taylor, Mark London, Bill Veno

Mark London noted the light turnout and suggested a more aggressive approach to setting up sessions for the remaining Work Groups.

1. **Comments** from the work group about the final version of the Island Plan, and especially the Natural Environment section.

All comments were favorable. Work Group members appeared satisfied with the outcome and have heard similar feedback from the community.

2. **Updates** from work group members about efforts currently underway to implement any of the recommended strategies. This will be used in the first annual Island Plan “report card” allowing the Islanders to track progress in achieving the community’s objectives as summarized in the Island Plan.

- Include in the “report card” new situations and strategies which come up, rather than waiting 5 years to update the plan.
- There was a suggestion to add “kayaks” to Objective N-3.
- Regarding strategy N2-2, The Nature Conservancy is creating a private land management registry to encourage suburban residents to manage their properties for biodiversity.
- Regarding strategy N2-3, The Nature Conservancy and others have pursued clearing and burning at least 300 acres of State Forest land.
- Regarding N1-8 Create a culture of Stewardship, The Nature Conservancy has begun “Biodiversity Works”, a program of research, monitoring and mentoring, to engage people in the fun part of conservation.
- Regarding 10-2, off-Island TNC has been working to modify FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program to revise the cost ratio to make funding more reliable. A single donor here on Martha’s Vineyard has provided funding. Martha’s Vineyard is a test community.
- Regarding all of section 10, the MVC is cooperating with FEMA’s consultant to update the FIRM maps and will seek PDM planning grant assistance to update the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan for Dukes County. The Benefit Cost Analysis has kept Vineyard towns from applying for funding so far. The training may now be available on-line.

3. **Identify priorities** for the coming year. Which proposed strategies are the most promising/important to work on? Who could help move the strategies forward?

- There was suggestion that N10-1 through 5 should all be a priority, planning for climate change and sea level rise, particularly N10-5 Minimize shoreline armoring.
- There was a suggestion to prioritize N1-1 *Increase the rate of acquisition...*, N1-2 *Establish clear standards...*, N1-3 *Work with property owners...*, N1-4 *Give predictable tax abatements...*, N1-7 *Define and adopt performance standards for Nearshore ocean developments*, and N2-1 *Identify and adopt performance standards for habitat protection and restoration*.
- There was some discussion of options for moving the strategies forward, with no clear consensus:
 - A new umbrella organization to monitor and advocate for all the Natural Environment strategies
 - Ask an existing organization such as the Conservation Partnership to monitor and promote the Natural Environment strategies.
 - With more staffing and funding, the MVC could monitor and promote the strategies.

Notes by Jo-Ann Taylor 4/11/11