Notes on Science & Strategic Conservation Planning
Session 1: Overview of the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (NALCC) Datasets

Steven G. Fuller, Ph.D., NALCC and USFWS; Andrew Milliken, NALCC and USFWS; Brian Hall, Harvard Forest

Prepared by Steve Falivene

Andrew Milliken

Begins with explanation of scale for the NALCC - 13 states, diverse jurisdiction etc.
How to match the spatial scales to the decision making coincides with datasets / research that are truly helpful providing regional context to operate on multiple scales across the region.

The importance and relative value of each ecological system- it is important to be consistent and scalable to different extents. Resolution is variable between regional and local scale: 30 meter resolution is working well as a "standard." Planning and design at multiple scales is important to putting all the pieces together – foundational data layers put together in meaningful ways.

Steven Fuller: Overview of Science Delivery

How to make the data available in real applications? Taking conservation designs with complex spatial results and getting people to adopt them and put them to use.

Central question: How to manage getting these data sets out to the people who will put it to use. Adoption is difficult- the data is not very intrinsic. Smart phones are valuable tools which was demonstrated in the room. Just navigating the websites is to be worked through. There is always so much information to plow through. Map form may allow simple GIS data which is available right on your phone! Another challenge is actually reaching the staff that will put it to use but really it is a matter of multiyear workshops and follow up. The importance of partner networks (RCPs for example). Demonstration projects help people adopt data set use. The Chesapeake Conservancy is a great example of data analysis used to reach community leaders to get buy-in given larger scale watershed understanding. As an example, the Wildlife Conservation Society is looking at how their data intersects with towns that might adopt conservation efforts that are called for in the conservation designs.

Brian Hall: Selected NALCC Datasets Useful to RCPs (Among Others)

Why new and revised datasets are important. Different grant funders offer opportunities and require more/more valuable data. A great way to avoid getting lost in the data is to have data champions that herd the data and effect compatibilities. A new threat, for example, is found in climate change issues. Brian spoke of how particular species may respond (meaning what is the latest understanding of each of many settings and resiliency found there). Complexity, permeability, and other elements make up resiliency and GIS layer files can delineate specific resilience levels. GIS is far beyond land cover data nowadays. Brian spoke about what GIS used to be attending to and how now there is a LOT more resolution for better and more specific understanding of specific habitats or habitat modeling. He used the example of land use decision making, going between course and fine detail depending on specific precision required. Individual land trusts have particular needs for scaled data sets which can help with focusing research and identification. The data can model the future of impacts and stresses that affect resiliency given foreseeable connectivity. Also to be considered is the ecological integrity of different landscape blocks. He recommends TNC SA listing all protected areas and also Wildlife Landscape capability models for specific species.

Q&A:

Please contact these presenters to arrange for dataset training / workshops.

How do you get people who could use datasets make time for it?
Push the relevance and usefulness. Arm them with dataset tools! Make it valuable and adjust knowledge transfer to specific users. Say… if they only want to see "outcomes" for example.

Isn't it a matter of understanding datasets and use?
The GIS data and other datasets really arms anyone with constantly updating dataset information/understanding which is by its nature fluid and evolving. This is the only way to truly understand datasets. New England/ the Northeast is one of the most researched regions while developing its own regional set of conservation designs.

How do you recommend gathering and combining datasets?
There are software packages to work through depending on how you want to combine data gathering capability. Speak with data people who are more than willing to help with proper use and application of data. They are invested in making sure the data is used properly and effectively. Learn from conservation design that has been done already.

How do you coordinate with agencies that may have the ability to add to datasets?
There is much work to be done in this area. Ultimately you want the data to be seamless. Ongoing efforts will continue to bring together all the sources of data for a unified system. The past emphasis has been involved with site specific efforts. We can always use the state and regional data as a foundation for cross referencing and planning processes.