

## WSCC Meeting Minutes

11/09/2015 4:00-6:00 PM

**In attendance:** Al Futterman, Ashley Davies, Beth Rosenblum, Bob Wilber, Carol Gumbart, Chris Pryor, Christa Collins, Dan Stimson, David McKinnon, Don MacIver, Freddie Gillespie, Jacquie Goring, Jeff Collins, Jesse Koyen, Joan Ferguson, Karin Paquin, Laura Mattei, Lisa Vernegaard, Maeghan Walters, Paula Goodwin, Priscilla Ryder, Rick Findlay, Rita Grossman, Rob McArthur Ron Gemma, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Whit Beals

New member(s) in attendance: Paula Goodman, Acton Cons Commission;  
Guests: Jeff Collins, MassAudubon ; Bob Wilber, MassAudubon

### Announcements:

- Members did not inform the group of any relevant announcements

### Deer Management Updates

- SVT just passed a controlled deer management program
  - Good support from neighbors and abutters, driven by an overpopulation and overbrowsing of the understory at Cowassock Woods (Framingham)
  - Need to be in further touch with Ashland Town Forest Committee
- Westford- allows hunting on Town conservation land. It is open to public but regulated once the hunters show interest

---

### Presentations

Preserving & Enhancing Resilience: A Solid Path Forward in a Changing World

Part 1- Bob Wilber, Director of Land Conservation at MassAudubon & Director of Stow Conservation Trust

### Implications for Land Conservationists

- The realizations of climate change affect all conservationists- we're in this together
- It's taken major natural disaster events to build consensus on the issue
- Climate change is anthropogenic and will have a major impact on the land we've worked so hard to protect
- The static approach to land conservation planning is no longer sufficient  
The static approach can be defined as: 1. Finding the "natural heritage" land; 2. resonate conservation with the landowner and protect the property; 3. steward the land

appropriately, and 4. forever enjoy that “blue spotted salamander habitat” (or whatever is being protected)

- With shifts in forest type and other climate changes, this old play book won't allow work
- Some species will survive in these same places, others will not
- Need to move towards a more dynamic planning process
  - We have an important role in the years ahead (No question about it)
- Science conducted by Mark Anderson (of The Nature Conservancy- based in Boston) for the US Northeast- connected the dots between bedrock geology and biodiversity hotspots
  - Sprung new ideas for land conservation planning
  - Key concept is resilience
    - Don't be daunted that the word resilience is being overused, this is really resilience!
    - Provides stability to an uncertain path forward
- Resilience defined: helping nature fair better under the stressful impacts of climate change
  - Use mapping to identify the existing intact and naturally thriving places- these will fair best under current climate change impacts
  - Biggest opportunity- the steps we can take to restore our existing conservations land to make them more resilient
- Check out MassAudubon's Losing Ground 2014 edition to see this practice at play

#### 4 ways of reducing the impact:

1. Reduce stressors: residential development, prevent additional development within a certain buffer of conserved land (fragmentation, chemicals, pets, noise, etc.)
2. Strategic targeting of invasives. It's unrealistic to remove all of the invasives, wisely pick the battles
3. Restoring form and function of natural systems. Example: removing a dam; replanting floodplain forests; creating manmade oyster reef to help dissolve storm surges
4. Connecting and linking other conservation land.
5. Increasing the complexity of the conserved landscape. Have more habitat diversity and more diversity of microclimates

Other ecosystems stressors

Fragmenting roads, large subdivisions, dams, invasives

Example:

**Restoring form and function** (Plymouth, MA) Tidmarsh Farm

- Previously a 600 ac cranberry bog, restored to wetlands habitat. Moving the land use from cranberry bog farming to other coldwater stream channel habitats
- 5 miles downstream, nature is returning in a big way

**Connectivity**

The above example creates a major protected land complex, including Entergy nuclear powerplant (the plant is closing in 2019 and contributing 1600 acres of open space)

**Complexity**

Moving from a monoculture of cranberry to a mosaic of Maple swamp, fens, and other wetlands

**Image/ visual progress**

Cranberry reservoir -> 1 year later to native grassland -> 2 years later to cattail marsh

Resilience offers a solid path forward, to preserve the stages in which identifying the important stages now is very important for the future

Q & A:

1. How is the cranberry industry impacted and influenced by this

- Most prevalent in SE Mass., still some in this region
- The cranberry was referred to as “red gold”
- As the market changes, cranberries have been outsourced to other states and South America (created massive operations with low cost of production)
- Cost of production is taking down the Massachusetts industry, cranberry harvesting is becoming less profitable so this will become a persistent problem here.
- The locations of these cranberry bogs were really important natural settings at one point (spring, peat bogs); so the restoration potential is very appealing.
- 90,000 acres of land total- most is upland, not all wetland and bogs = high development potential.

2. How do you plan a restoration plan without old aerial photos:

Goal is not to create what was there before. UMass Amherst Geology Dept. used LIDAR to target where there were old peat deposits. The design of the coldwater stream will intercept each of the aquifer springs to feed it and keep it colder. The goal is to restore the processes, not necessarily the site.

Alex Hackman is the project manager for this project, his motto: “...remove the stressors, remove the things that are inhibiting nature, then get out of the way...”

---

Preserving & Enhancing Resilience: A Solid Path Forward in a Changing World  
Part 2- Jeff Collins, Director of Ecological Management at MassAudubon

“The MAPPR Tool”: [www.massaudubon.org/mappr](http://www.massaudubon.org/mappr)

- Mass Audubon, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and LandVest, developed Mapping and Prioritizing Parcels for Resilience (MAPPR) to allow Massachusetts conservationists to rapidly identify specific parcels that, if protected, could contribute the most to achieving land protection goals

1/3 of the land in MA is protected, 1/3 protected, 1/3 “up for grabs”

We have all this great data available to combine, now available to use in one tool:

- Rescaled TNC’s Resilience data to Massachusetts from the NE
- All L3 parcel data is available on MassGIS
- TNC’s Resilience data- Under represented analysis: defined as the most resilient land distributed across the geophysical settings that are unprotected

This mapping tool can rank parcels (all over 1 acre that are unprotected)

- By size
- Connectivity
- Adjacency to protected open space; a “block” is defined as the unprotected portion of the block, roadless area
- By data overlay (BioMap2)

Gives you the ability to select the specific study area with select model inputs

Under References: includes sources for datasets

This will be ready to use this week (after 11/10/2015)