

**Lake St. Clair Coastal Habitat Project Management Team Meeting
September 24, 2003
Walpole Island First Nation**

Attendees

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Michigan Natural Features Inventory - GIS Data Compilation and Analysis

MNFI presented a general overview of their digitization and the refining of “element occurrence” (EO) data through minimizing and eliminating geographic buffers. This process

was completed for Jackson County, Michigan where county level and township/range level data has been refined to the quarter-quarter section (40-acre) level. This data is then assigned values based upon a defined “importance” of the EO and a Biodiversity Value Layer for the county is produced, highlighting priority areas. With this data in hand, an ecological analysis for potential conservation areas coupled with prescribed landscape characteristics can be developed.

MNFI is currently working to merge U.S. and Canadian data. It is a more involved process than originally envisioned by MNFI. The Ontario Heritage Centre data is in tabular format, contains multiple entries for the same EO identification number, and this results in approximately 4,000 records on the Canadian side from 400-500 distinct EOs compared with the U.S. side of 100 EOs and 200 records. The data available for Walpole Island from Ontario Heritage Centre is currently only to the 1980s. Dave White stated that Walpole Island First Nation has much more current and accurate data available, however it is mostly handwritten at this point. Additionally, a complete circa 1800s landcover is available for Michigan but in Ontario only the prairie/savanna covers have been similarly mapped.

As for the presentation of the data, MNFI believes that the universal ranking system originally developed by the Association for Biodiversity Information should be utilized to equate species on each side of the border. For instance some species listed as rare on the Canadian side (*i.e.*, Kentucky Coffee Tree and Buckeye) are common on the U.S. side and the use of a G(Global)RANK and S(State/Provincial)RANK will help delineate locational uniqueness of species on each side of the border. See **Attachment 1** for a delineation of GRANK and SRANK. MNFI will also prepare abstracts for EOs identified as having a shared interest on each side of the border.

Overview of Expanded Project Boundary

Victoria Pebbles explained that due to increased coverage of data collection on the Canadian side of the border by contractors for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center (CSC) the project study area has expanded from a 1-mile buffer shoreward of the lake to 10-miles shoreward. This represents a 6-fold increase in area coverage for the project and should yield a more detailed analysis.

Habitat Classification Scheme for the Project

The habitat classification scheme for the project will be based upon the NOAA CSC Coastal-Change Analysis Program (C-CAP) data. The three major classes (Tier I) are Upland, Wetland, and Water/Submerged Lands. Tier I and Tier II levels of classification will be described on the project web site, made locally specific to the project area, and will be expanded in detail within the Draft Report. Community types specific to Lake St. Clair identified by MNFI and other project partners will be integrated within this classification scheme.

Anchor Bay Watershed Project

Gerald Santoro of Macomb County and Geoff Donaldson of St. Clair County presented the Anchor Bay Watershed Project. This project is an amalgamation of two initiatives: a Blue Ribbon Panel from Macomb County and the Blue Water Task Force from St. Clair County. Understanding that they had common processes and goals, Macomb and St. Clair established the Intercounty Watershed Commission. The Commission noted that there was no comprehensive plan to address water quality issues. They looked to the State of Michigan's Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) funds for financial assistance in planning for the Anchor Bay Watershed. In addition, the Commission applied and received Section 319 funds in the sum of \$92,000 with a local match in staff time of \$105,000. Subsequent to this initial preparation, the Phase II Stormwater rules came into effect. This impacted the 17 communities within the Anchor Bay Watershed. Planning proceeded under the assumption that planned actions would be refined during the planning process to account for the individual community's abilities to initiate.

The process noted that currently water quality is good but that indicators suggest this is changing due to soil erosion, algal blooms, and beach closings. Four priority issues were identified to be addressed at the watershed level:

- Bacteria - from agriculture and failing septic systems
- Sediments - due to high stream velocities and construction erosion
- Nutrient - from over-fertilization (not known whether home or agricultural use is the primary culprit)
- Excessive flows - from the lack of retention and detention facilities and this also results in a change in water temperatures

The effort also identified knowledge and information gaps for each of the pollutants and related stressors.

Long-term goals with short-term objects were identified by the Anchor Bay Commission:

1. Restore and enhance recreational uses.
2. Restore and protect aquatic life, wildlife, and habitat.
3. Protect public health.
4. Reduce impacts from peak flows.

This resulted in the identification of 48 recommended Best management Practices for the Anchor Bay Watershed. A draft of the Anchor Bay Watershed Management Plan is expected to be available for public review in December, 2003.

Web Site Home Page

The existing project web site housed at www.glc.org/habitat is a "working web site" to distribute information to project partners and interested parties and a distribution point for interim

products. The final envisioned web site will feature project products linking commonalities and verbiage from both sides of the border. The draft final project home page, and a limited number of representative internal pages, is available for review at www.glc.org/habitat/index2.html. Victoria Pebbles requested that the group please review these pages in detail and provide comments back to her as soon as possible. Additional comments received during the meeting include:

- Providing the Draft Plan online.
- Providing a site map for more web page details
- Including a “Links” page and links within the pages to assist the user in navigation and providing additional information resources

Online Data Delivery

The GLC is currently compiling additional data to accompany the Draft Plan, Decision Support System, and priority conservation area data and also to assist the user of the web site in support of planning needs. This data is being gathered for the entire Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River watersheds on both sides of the border. Basic data layers include:

- Political Jurisdictions
- Transportation
- Population
- Watersheds at the sub-basin level
- Land Use
- Land Cover
- Topography
- Hydrography
- Aerial photography

The data will be served on the final project web site in a Java-scripted format to allow ease of data accessibility for download and navigation.

Integrated Coastal Management Tool

NOAA CSC presented the preliminary mock interface for the Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) Tool. This interface was developed based upon Workgroup input over the course of the project and PMT feedback from the previous face-to-face meeting in Ann Arbor. The tool utilizes ArcGIS 8.3 and its component Spatial Analyst to run. Since not all organizations have access or the ability to have ArcGIS 8.3 on their computers, the Core Group is exploring options to serve the ICM Tool online so that more groups will be able to access it. Additionally, it is believed that although townships and smaller/lower tier municipalities may not have GIS capabilities or the ability to run the ICM Tool, often their contracted Planning Consultants or the county/upper tier municipalities will have those abilities so that as addition data is gathered at the local level this can still be integrated into the ICM Tool. The DSS Workgroup and project

Core Group will continue to pursue work-arounds and alternatives for this very important aspect of the overall project.

Alyssa Olson Callahan provide a demo of the ICM Tool with datae input from Ira Township, Michigan. Outputs included: landscape statistics, habitat class statistics, selected habitat types, input parameters and a series of maps based upon the C-CAP data.

It was requested that as the process of developing the ICM Tool moves along, greater support from participating agencies is needed to ensure that this product is moving in the direction required by the intended user audience. NOAA CSC will send out a new general call for participation in the DSS Workgroup. GLC will follow-up with the potential user groups to identify needs and internal/external capabilities to access the tool.

Draft Conservation and Restoration Plan

In response to the outline distributed for the Draft Conservation and Restoration Plan, the following comments were noted:

- In Section III, System Stressors - Invasive Species should be added.
- Population and Growth, currently in Section II, Characteristics, should be moved under the Socio-Economic subsection of Section I, Introduction and Background.
- Section III, System Stressors should be realigned along the structure of the Anchor Bay Watershed Plan, or at least made more compatible.
- Add to the discussion in Section IV, Response to Stressors, current and proposed initiatives.
- Wastewater discharges, water demands, point and non-point sources of pollution, and stormwater discussion should be added to the document.
- Education and Stewardship Programs in Section IV should be discussed separately.
- It was thought that perhaps the Stewardship Councils on the Canadian side might be another appropriate entity to bring to the table in the development of this plan and project.
- It was suggested that maybe potential funding sources might be included in the document for planning and restoration projects. It was felt that the web page might be a more appropriate place for this information.

Summary of Actions and Next Steps

1. Amend the Draft Plan outline in accordance with PMT review comments; circulate revised outline to PMT and begin developing sections.
2. Explore an online method to serve the ICM Tool to the user community.
3. Increase participation on the DSS Workgroup to ensure needs of the user community are being addressed.
4. Provide comments to GLC on the draft web page layout.
5. Delineate data compilation and electronic entry effort required for Walpole Island data.
6. Contact Stewardship Councils to bring into the project process.

Attachment 1 Element Occurrence Ranking

GRANK

The priority assigned by The Association for Biodiversity Information's national office for data collection and protection based upon the element's status throughout its entire world-wide range. Criteria not based only on number of occurrences; other critical factors also apply. Note that ranks are frequently combined.

- G1 - critically imperiled globally because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences range-wide or very few remaining individuals or acres) or because of some factor(s) making it especially vulnerable to extinction.
- G2 - imperiled globally because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of some factor(s) making it very vulnerable to extinction throughout its range.
- G - either very rare and local throughout its range or found locally (even abundantly at some of its locations) in a restricted range (*e.g.*, a single western state, a physiographic region in the East) or because of other factor(s) making it vulnerable to extinction throughout its range; in terms of occurrences, in the range of 21 to 100.
- G4 - apparently secure globally, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.
- G5 - demonstrably secure globally, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.
- GH - of historical occurrence throughout its range (*i.e.*, formerly part of the established biota) with the expectation that it may be rediscovered (*e.g.*, Bachman's Warbler).
- GU - possibly in peril range-wide, but status uncertain; need more information.
- GX - believed to be extinct throughout its range (*e.g.*, Passenger Pigeon with virtually no likelihood that it will be rediscovered).
- G? - incomplete data.
- Q - taxonomy uncertain.
- T - subspecies.
- U - unmappable throughout the global geographic extent
- ? - questionable

SRANK

The priority assigned by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory for data collection and protection based upon the element's status within the state. Criteria not based only on number of occurrences; other critical factors also apply. Note that ranks are frequently combined.

- S1 - critically imperiled in the state because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres) or because of some factor(s) making it especially vulnerable to extirpation in the state.

- S2 - imperiled in state because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of some factor(s) making it very vulnerable to extirpation from the state.
- S3 - rare or uncommon in state (on the order of 21 to 100 occurrences).
- S4 - apparently secure in state, with many occurrences.
- S5 - demonstrably secure in state and essentially ineradicable under present conditions.
- SA - accidental in state, including species (usually birds or butterflies) recorded once or twice or only at very great intervals, hundreds or even thousands of miles outside their usual range.
- SE - an exotic established in the state; may be native elsewhere in North America (*e.g.*, house finch or catalpa in eastern states).
- SH - of historical occurrence in state and suspected to be still extant.
- SN - regularly occurring, usually migratory and typically nonbreeding species.
- SR - reported from state, but without persuasive documentation which would provide a basis for either accepting or rejecting the report.
- SRF - reported falsely (in error) from state but this error persisting in the literature.
- SU - possibly in peril in state, but status uncertain; need more information.
- SX - apparently extirpated from state.