

Maine Wildlife Action Plan Steering Committee  
November 20, 2014  
0900 - 1200  
MDIFW, Augusta

Minutes of Meeting

~Review and approval of previous minutes:

10/16/2014 meeting minutes, #3, page 2: "The committee requested that **MDIFW** seek outside peer review of habitat associations..." Was revised to read that MDIFW will post the SGCN habitat associations online for public comment and it will notify conservation partners and the taxa specialists via email when the associations are posted.

The steering committee approved the minutes of the 09/18/2014 and the 10/16/2014 meetings.

~Additional members

Tribes

No nexus between tribal grants and state grants; tribal grants are competitive and have no requirement for match. What would be role of tribal rep on the steering committee -- helping to steer the plan itself; will one representative be able to adequately represent all of the tribes?

MDIFW will discuss with D.J. Monette, USFWS tribal liaison in the Northeast Region. Include USFWS liaison in contact w/ tribes.

Other discussion:

Sheri Venno, WAP conversation w/ tribes; she is contacting tribes for a group presentation.

Potential for individual focus groups: tribes, forestry, agriculture?

Roll out WAP to tribal councils. When is the right time to begin contact?

Northern Maine

Steve Young was invited to participate in conservation partner process and accepted. MDIFW will also invite Rich Hoppe and Amanda Demusz into the process.

Marine

The committee would like to invite Claire Enterline, DMR, to serve on the committee. Both time commitment and funding are likely complications for Claire's involvement. Judy will review possible funding via SWG planning grant; this may lead to further discussion with Deputy Commissioner at DMR.

~Updates

ET plants entered in to fauna database: MNAP has access to database; plants still to be entered, but in progress, will commence after 11/18 partner meeting

MDIFW will post Steering Committee minutes and subcommittee minutes on the action plan website. MDIFW and MNAP are preparing subcommittee minutes for posting.

The steering committee decided that Claire's "marine group" would not to be considered a subcommittee, but rather considered review by "outside experts" similar to review of SGCN list by outside taxa experts.

MDIFW will post SGCN habitat associations on the action plan website for additional partner and public review; MDIFW will send email to partners and taxa specialists when posted. MDIFW will wait until stressor assessment is completed and then will post both together. The committee discussed posting format and review process. Upon conclusion of review, MDIFW will post any changes with responses as appropriate. MDIFW will notify partners via email when changes are posed.

~Update from focus area review subcommittee: status report

- analysis
- freshwater aquatics
- coastal / marine

Andy Cutko, MNAP, presented an overview of the current work of the focus area review subcommittee (see presentation slides at the end of this document). History of focus area, focus area selection criteria; under representation of aquatic and marine coastal resources. Holistic review of all existing focus areas; are we missing other high priority areas, also assess redundancy for finer prioritization for conservation action. Angela asked about the ability to assess conservation success within focus areas.

Aquatic subcommittee, coastal subcommittee have been meeting since 07/2014. Have new and better information available. Subcommittee has conducted several rounds of review and assessment of existing focus areas. Able to assess the habitats types [habitat representation] contained across the spectrum of focus areas. Habitats in wildlife management areas. Discussion of criteria to identify focus areas, assess redundancy, consider prioritization mechanism. Discussion of time line for completion. [Andy's PowerPoint is posted on WAP webpage]

~Operational Charter – The steering committee approved the draft of the operational charter. MDIFW will post it on the action plan website.

#### Conservation partners, element 7

~Discussion of 11/18 conservation partner meeting

Stressor ranking matrix for both species and habitats needs further discussion.

IUCN threat characteristic table --> severity, reversibility, [also consider spatial extent, immediacy?]; develop rules-of-thumb about how spatial extent and immediacy will be considered. MDIFW, DMR, MNAP will meet to develop a common approach for the assessment of stressor severity and reversibility.

Discussion of reconciling the action plan's 10-yr horizon with the need to begin addressing stresses and to make progress during the 10-year life of the plan.

Should habitat stressors have modifier to capture seral stage considerations? No, these can be addressed in comments field.

MDIFW, MNAP, and DMR will complete stressor for SGCN P1 and P2 and for habitats. MDIFW will proceed with SGCN P2 threat assessment down to IUCN tier 2 and capture specific concerns

in detailed comments. The committee discussed the need for consistency in the use of the “comments” field of the database; they suggested the use of key words.

~4th conservation partner meeting week of 01/20/2015

Discussion deferred to next steering committee meeting.

Public outreach, element 8

Deferred -- MDIFW presented an overview of the action plan public outreach process at the 11/18/2014 conservation partner meeting in Bangor.

~Other items

- Maine Coast Heritage Trust / The Maine Land Conservation Conference

~Wrap-up thoughts, suggestions / next meeting

Barbara Vickery requested a presentation on regional conservation opportunity areas [RCOAs], conservation opportunity areas [COAs], and their requirement for specific spatial mapping.

Next steering committee 12/16/2014, 0900-1200. MDIFW, Augusta

## Focus Area Review

### Topics to be Covered:

- Origins, and Uses, and Role in SWAP
- Review Process
- Some Initial Results
- Next Steps

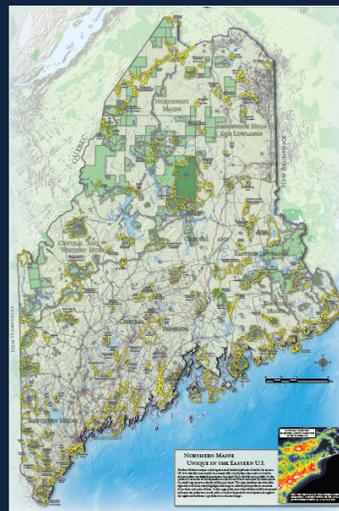
## Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance

### What are they?

- Areas of statewide significance
- Concentrations of at-risk species, habitats, and their supporting landscape
- Non-regulatory

### Why were they designated?

- Initiated 15+ years ago as a result of Ecoregional Surveys
- Communicate conservation priorities to land trusts, towns, cons. groups, others
- Recognized in 2005 SWAP (without map)



# Unity Wetlands

- 10 rare animals
- 5 rare plants
- 3 rare/exemplary natural communities
- 3000+ acres wading bird / waterfowl habitat
- 10,000+ acres deer wintering area

Descriptions for Focus Areas in Organized Towns are available online

**Beginning with HABITAT**

**Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance**

**Unity Wetlands**

**WHY IS THIS AREA SIGNIFICANT?**  
 This large expanse of wetlands and uplands includes a diverse array of natural features, especially of wetland and riparian-associated species and habitats. Several rare plant and animal species, including some of the State's best habitat for rare muskells, have been documented here. In addition, the rivers and tributaries provide spawning and rearing habitat for Atlantic salmon, an Endangered species. Furthermore, the area provides one of the largest remaining unfragmented blocks of land in central Maine, offering a promising opportunity not only for conservation of the state's rarest ecological gems, but also for maintaining wide-ranging common species, from black bear to bobcat, that are becoming increasingly uncommon in more developed landscapes to the south.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION**

- Educate recreational users about the ecological and economic benefits provided by the Focus Area.
- Encourage best management practices for forestry, and soil and vegetation disturbance activities near sensitive features.
- Maintain intact forested buffers along water bodies, wetlands, and important wildlife habitats.
- Monitor and remove invasive plant populations.
- Work with willing landowners to permanently protect undeveloped areas and significant features.

**Rare Animals:** Bald Eagle, Creeper, Wood Turtle, Ribbon Snake, Sedge Wren, Tuckermans Marsh, Yellow Lamprolaim, Coal Titmouse, Great Blue Heron, Atlantic Salmon.

**Rare Plants:** Soft Arrow-head, Water Thyme, Wild Garlic, Wild Lark, MacGregors Rye.

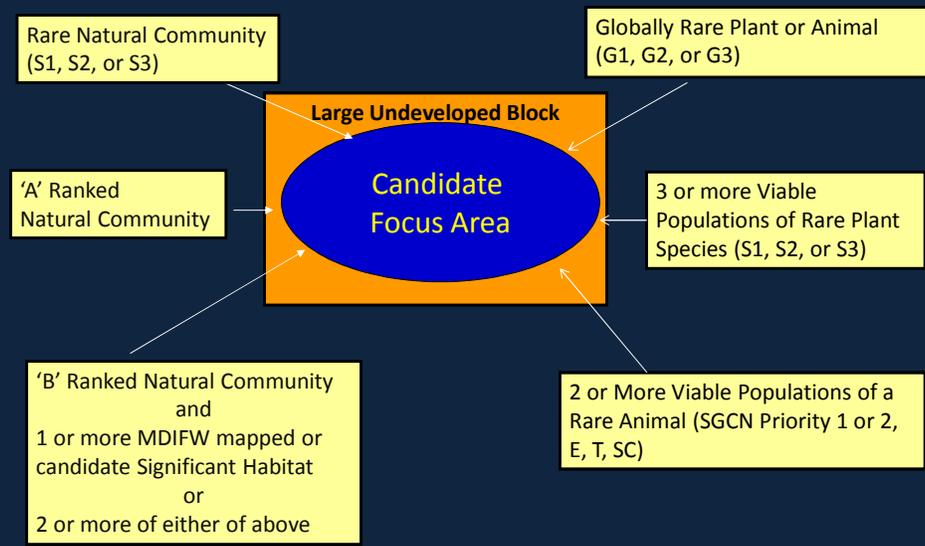
**Rare and Exemplary Natural Communities:** Raised Level Bay Ecosystem, Silver Maple Floodplain Forest, Unfragmented Fen Ecosystem.

**Significant Wildlife Habitats:** Deer Wintering Area, Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat.

**Public Access Opportunities:** Sebasticook Regional Land Trust.

Photo credits, top to bottom: Mike Nelson/Arise Program, Sebasticook Regional Land Trust, Other Wetlands, B.A. Lawrence, Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Wildlife.

# Candidate Focus Area Selection Criteria



## **Focus Area – Uses & Applications**

- **Projects in Focus Areas get ‘points’ through LMF, MOHF, Forest Legacy**
- **Identification of growth vs. rural areas, open space in municipal planning**
- **For wetland mitigation, planning alternative routes (DOT, MNRCP, NRCS)**
- **‘Conservation Opportunity Areas’**

## **Focus Area Review Process**

### **Goals:**

- Using new data, document what’s in Focus Areas
- Identify areas of redundancy
- Identify priority areas that might be missing

### **Focus Area Review Committee**

**(MDIFW, MNAP, USFWS, TNC, ME Audubon)**

- Aquatic Sub-Committee
- Coastal Sub-Committee

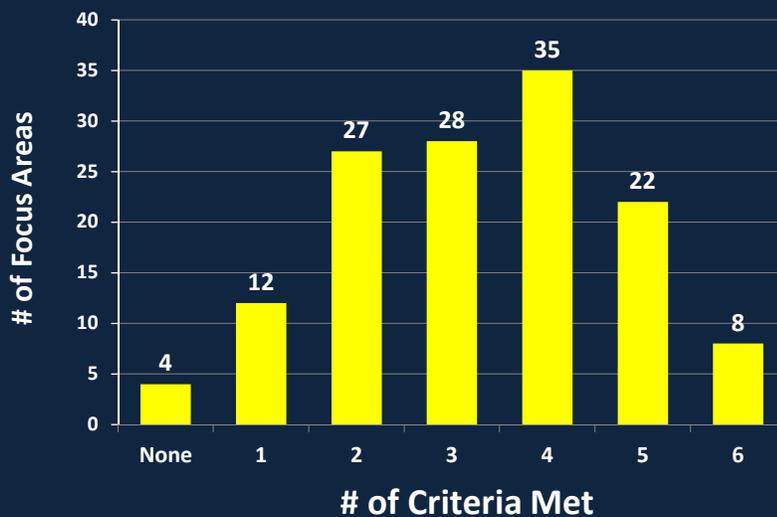
## What's New?

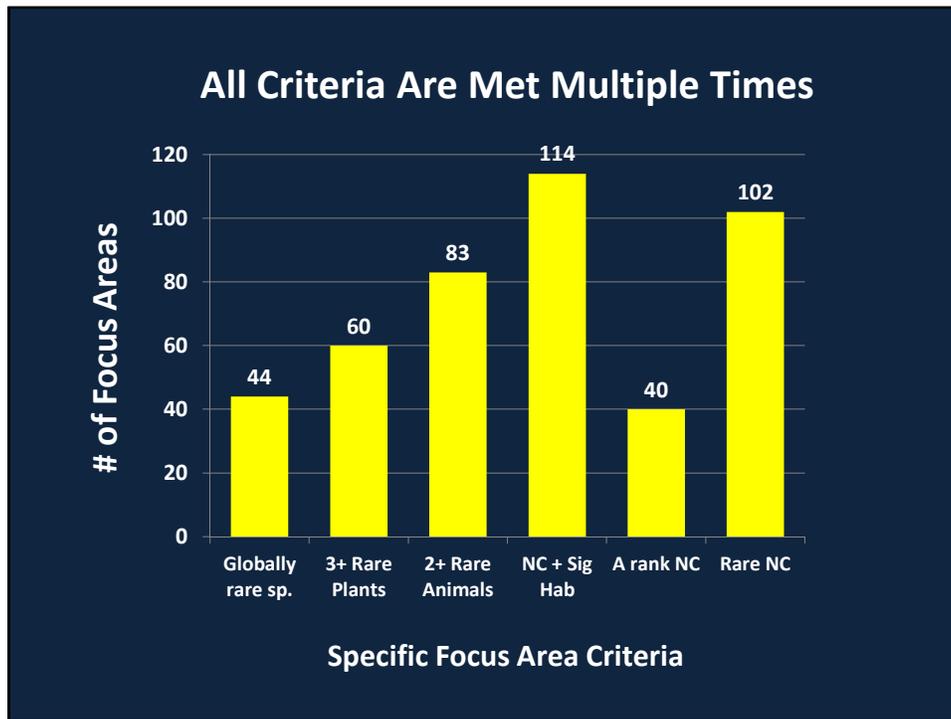
### New & Better Data –

- Rare species & habitats (NETHCS)
- Aquatic resources
- Conserved lands (public and private)
- Habitat connectivity
- Climate change - species and habitat vulnerabilities, resilience



### Most Focus Areas Meet Multiple Criteria





### Habitat Representation in Focus Areas

MacroGroup	% of FAs	% of State	% FA/ % State	% Conserved (Gap 123)	# of Focus Areas
Alpine	0.16%	0.02%	9.6	99.1%	5
Coastal Plain Swamp	0.02%	0.00%	7.5	18.9%	4
Salt Marsh	0.85%	0.12%	7.1	7.1%	13
Coastal Grassland			4.5	11.0%	6
Cliff and Talus			4.2	49.4%	48
Glade and Savanna			3.8	16.4%	38
Central Oak-Pine			2.9	13.3%	31
Northern Peatland			2.8	27.9%	113
Floodplain Forest			2.2	13.8%	3
Outcrop & Summit			2.1	33.5%	38
Rocky Coast			2.1	18.7%	6
Shrubland & Grass			2.0	30.2%	27
Water			1.6	1.9%	126
Wet Meadow / Shrub Marsh	2.35%	1.61%	1.5	19.4%	132
Northern Swamp	8.39%	6.51%	1.3	18.9%	136
Emergent Marsh	2.22%	1.99%	1.1	52.2%	135
Boreal Upland Forest	29.58%	29.77%	1.0	26.0%	102
Urban/Suburban Built	2.59%	3.47%	0.7	4.6%	130
Northern Hardwood & Conifer	28.29%	39.87%	0.7	17.1%	128
Agricultural	1.56%	3.64%	0.4	1.2%	102
Central Hardwood Swamp	0.00%	0.01%	0.4	1.8%	3

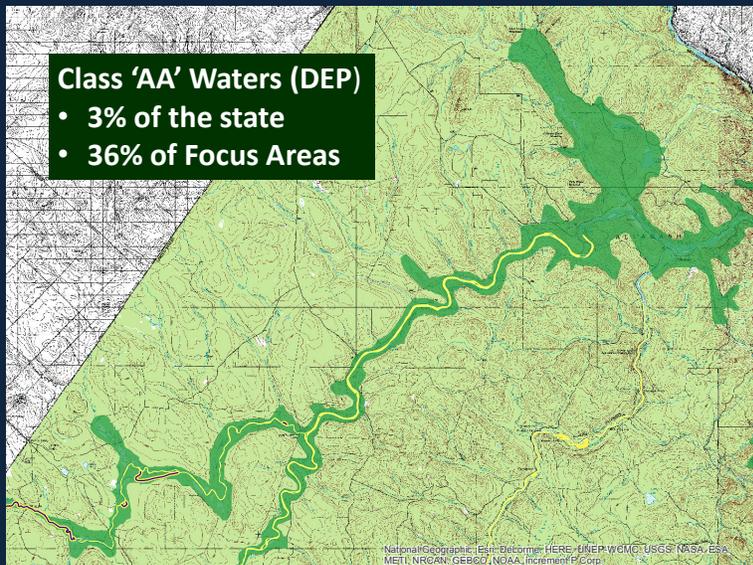
**36 SGCN**

### Habitats in Wildlife Management Areas

Habitat Macrogroup	Acres in WMAs	% of WMAs
Agricultural	1023	1.0%
Alpine	0	0.0%
Boreal Upland Forest	17604	17.6%
Central Hardwood Swamp	10	0.0%
Central Oak-Pine	3270	3.3%
Cliff and Talus	41	0.0%
Coastal Grassland & Shrubland	8	0.0%
Coastal Plain Swamp	4	0.0%
Emergent Marsh	4223	4.2%
Glade and Savanna	0	0.0%
Northeastern Floodplain Forest	967	1.0%
Northern Hardwood & Conifer	38345	38.3%
Northern Peatland	5541	5.5%
Northern Swamp	14665	14.7%
Outcrop & Summit Scrub	79	0.1%
Rocky Coast	66	0.1%
Ruderal Shrubland & Grassland	576	0.6%
Salt Marsh	2704	2.7%
Urban/Suburban Built	1434	1.4%
Water	1909	1.9%
Wet Meadow / Shrub Marsh	7622	7.6%



### Focus Areas Review: Aquatic Resources



## Focus Area Review: Next Steps

- Continue work of Aquatic and Coastal sub-committees Ongoing
- Integrate analysis to date with results of Coastal and Aquatic sub-committees January 1
- Solicit input of regional biologists January 30
- Draft revisions to Focus Areas, present to stakeholders February/March