

Appendix E. Group Ranking of Table Discussion Priorities

Table Discussion Priorities are presented in order by Average Rating, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree (number in front signifies the mean) with table number in parenthesis and original number on TurningPoint® slides in session polling.

Note that items in Session #2 were grouped by the facilitators into issue areas for group ranking. Items in all other sessions were rated verbatim as they were provided from the table discussion notes.

The Planning Team selected items with group ratings above 3.85 to forward for consideration by group polling in the final session on Highest Priorities.

Session 2 Habitat Mapping

Table priorities were not ranked as verbatim items. Group polling was conducted on categories summarizing these items (see below).

- Data needs: Finish mapping all the systems
- Additional Habitat Maps Needed
- Ensure accuracy of maps: ground truth maps at a minimal level.
- Accessibility / usability
- Completing the package for terrestrial, freshwater and marine -- and add lakes
- A product can be used by or target users and partners.
- QA/QC that is adequate (a continuous process)
- Communication of Results
- Tools, Service, Support Programs
- Validation or verification of existing (not quite out or peer-reviewed yet) maps
- Providing easy online interface
- Communication, provide products, users guide, tool kit
- Identify priority focus areas for conservation (habitat) implementing the use of the mapping efforts
- Fill Gaps Marine/estuarine, Lakes, and Canada (in priority order)
- Accuracy assessment/ demo overlays/scale validation
- Accuracy Assessment
- Threats and refugia
- Land Use / successional state if not already in data
- Need to know the audience/need/purpose
- Accuracy - field checking accuracy – groundtruthing
- Need to go into Canada, and south and west
- Need habitat age and structure database
- How do invasive species play out in this - iMap, prediction of vulnerability
- Can we link to FIA data in ongoing basis for age data

- Roadmap for what to do with the habitat mapping effort: communication with public, awareness, availability of data, maintenance of data, who should do the work.
- Continued model validation is needed for terrestrial maps.
- FHAP and bird joint ventures need to be part of the key audience
- Academic community is another key audience
- How the data can/would be used and identify expectations/limitations

Categories and mean rating (1 to 5) from group polling
(Sub-points are the original items from table discussions.)

Habitat Mapping Priority Categories (with contributing priorities)	Mean^a	% Agree/ Strongly Agree
g) Communications, tool kits, user guides - 8 Communication of Results - 12 Communication, provide products, users guide, tool kit - 25 Roadmap for what to do with the habitat mapping effort: communication with public, awareness, availability of data, maintenance of data, who should do the work.	4.23	82%
i) Add layers (land use, threats, refugia, exotics) - 2 Additional Habitat Maps Needed - 18 Land Use / successional state if not already in data - 22 Need habitat age and structure database - 24 Can we link to FIA data in ongoing basis for age data	4.21	77%
d) Finish mapping all systems (Canada, lakes) - 1 Data needs: Finish mapping all the systems - 5 Completing the package for terrestrial, freshwater and marine -- and add lakes - 14 Fill Gaps Marine/estuarine, Lakes, and Canada (in priority order) - 21 Need to go into Canada, and south and west	3.82	66%
Priority Habitat Mapping e) Usable product (expectations, limits) - 4 Accessibility / usability - 6 A product can be used by or target users and partners. - 9 Tools, Service, Support Programs - 11 Providing easy online interface	3.68	61%
h) Priority focus areas using map output	3.68	60%
c) Linkages to other databases	3.54	54%
a) Accuracy (QA/QC)	3.42	53%
b) Model validation	3.30	50%
f) Define audiences (JV, FHP, academia)	2.76	26%

a. Scale is 1 to 5; the higher the mean, the higher the priority.

Session 3 Biological Assessments and Goal-setting

For this session and the following ones Table Discussion Priorities are presented in order by Average Rating (Mean), ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The priority descriptions are followed by the nominating table number in parentheses and the original number on TurningPoint® slides in session polling.

The Planning Team selected items with mean group ratings above 3.85 to forward for consideration by group polling in the final session on Highest Priorities.

Biological Assessment Priorities	Mean^a	% Agree/ Strongly Agree
Deliver the results (synthesis) of the projects (products) in a meaningful way to on-the-ground managers at state/local levels and provide commitment of resources to accomplish (people and funds). Start with RCN Conservation Status Report. (T5) 1	4.30	89%
Develop a process to develop regional representative species goals (numbers and distribution) to allow development of landscape-scale habitat design and conservation. (T4) 11	4.07	76%
In the new SWAPs recommend adopting a consistent format/template which will allow for a region wide roll up (including population targets) for establishing goals, perhaps a consistent summary or appendix. (T7) 15	4.00	71%
Create distribution maps for regional responsibility/high concern species - overlay on NE habitat maps. (T8) 3	3.97	74%
Development of habitat focus areas and corridors (T5) 2	3.95	73%
An SGCN analysis for preparing WAP revisions - SGCN criteria, scope of taxonomic species included, consistency to threats and conservation action nomenclature so that State plans can be rolled up regionally in a consistent manner. (T9) 17	3.89	68%
Marine, aquatic, plants data gaps and representative species for marine and aquatic systems. (T4) 12.	3.79	62%
Try to come to consensus on a pilot process to develop regional population goals which would draw from existing plans to the extent possible. (T7) 16.	3.79	60%
Immediate needs for emerging impacts: assessing biological impacts of SCGN to renewable energy (e.g. wind power, water turbines, biofuels), invasive species (e.g. didymo, Asian Long-horn beetle, woolly adelgid), or disease (e.g. White-nose). (T3) 14.	3.78	71%

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Assessment of the completeness/representativeness of current/existing data (i.e., gap analysis for source data used in regional assessments). What we have and don't have. Need to think about the application of the data before the assessments begin/are designed. Density analysis of existing data (heritage programs). Private lands are not well surveyed. SWAPs are a starting point for identifying these needs. Representative species might be another tool. (T1) 9.	3.74	62%
Development and evaluating models to identify adequate streamflow to support biological processes and communities such as the ELOHA or CT and MA streamflow monitoring projects, and including other factors such as landscape change and social needs.(T3) 13.	3.70	54%
Cross-cutting understanding of aquatic habitat changes associated with climate change to include hydrology and geology (T2) 8.	3.63	56%
Identify focal areas that represent the best examples of ecosystem types that allow us to define ecosystem function and integrity. (T6) 5.	3.56	49%
Expand surveys for regionally important species, especially with co-dependence and association with communities; coordinated and collaborative among partners. (T6) 6.	3.53	55%
A pilot(s) goal setting exercise for either species of suites of species and habitats; incorporating society's expectations. (T9) 18.	3.48	49%
Capacity of species to adapt to habitat change and/or other stressors (T2) 7.	3.25	43%
Upon completion of species distribution maps, conduct Structured Decision Making Workshop for those species in NE with mandated listing decision. Add high priority SGCN (upon completion of regional review by NEFWDTC) into the SDM process. (T8) 4	3.10	30%
More complete vulnerability/threat analysis done for disease). Focusing on critical communities and groups that we don't know a lot about. (T1) 10.	3.04	29%

a. Scale is 1 to 5; the higher the mean, the higher the priority.

Session 4 Conservation Design to Delivery

Conservation Design and Delivery Priorities	Mean^a	% Agree/ Strongly Agree
Working with implementers/users, translate the information into usable tools in order to convince them that it's useful to them and what they are doing (cottontail as a model.) Always have specific implementation examples using the results of these projects for both buy-in and delivery. Develop a marketing, training, and capacity building strategy targeted to specific needs. (T7) 8.	4.26	88%
Provide information on landscapes of regional significance to conservation partners, big (e.g. NRCS) and small (e.g. local land trusts) to implement specific conservation actions. (T8) 14.	4.23	86%
Identification of habitat focus areas with a step up step down (Regional to local) process to implement on the ground habitat conservation, restoration, and management. (T5) 3.	4.12	75%
Provide cookbook or catalog of on-the-ground implementation details that translate conservation design results into practical actions or projects. The regional-scale focal areas are a logical starting point for this. (T6) 12.	3.96	70%
Develop conservation designs for multiple representative species, with consideration that actions will happen by private landowners and with consideration of a changing climate and other threats and translated into a format for those who do conservation on the ground can understand and implement. (T4) 18.	3.94	67%
Take existing RCN products and fund a communication specialist to repackage and deliver information to pre-defined user groups (i.e., public, resource managers, stakeholders) with associated effectiveness measures. (T1) 6.	3.88	71%
Overlay and integrate existing datasets to delineate landscapes of regional significance (focal areas and connectivity). (T8) 13.	3.87	67%
An information delivery mechanism should be a requirement of every future RCN product to deliver information to pre-defined user groups (i.e., public, resource managers, stakeholders) with associated effectiveness measures. (T1) 5.	3.86	69%
A framework for building and aligning conservation capacity to address shared habitat objectives at multiple spatial scales (e.g. tools, standard guidelines for small-scale road crossings like culverts, shared Farm Bill stewardship biologists/technical service providers, trainings for habitat restoration project managers like a coastal conservation corps). (T9) 15.	3.83	66%
Target science translation (outreach) efforts to areas/species that are of widespread distributed and highest responsibility. (T3) 9.	3.80	66%
Develop set of examples or demonstration projects to illustrate how conservation design tool can lead to adaptive management on the ground. The regional-scale focal areas are a logical starting point for this. (T6) 11.	3.77	65%
Develop comprehensive toolbox of financial tools, vehicles, and approaches to local conservation that includes federal, state, local, NGO partners. (T4) 17.	3.73	64%

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Need to engage society and major stakeholders beyond the typical conservation community in entire framework process to get their buy-in, consent, perspective and get them to be part of the engine for implementation. Consider incorporating this priority into entire conservation framework (in center or overlaying whole). (T9) 16.	3.67	57%
Good analysis on opportunities to influence other agencies to better incentivize conservation on a local level. e.g. a town could be doing good conservation planning, and would therefore be more eligible for further funds. Need financial hook to incentivize. See what is out there for existing grants to determine ability to incentivize. E.g. conservation easements. Inventory existing funds being distributed either at federal or state level; then determine which ones would be most easily modified to incentivize local conservation. (T2) 1.	3.65	64%
Expand streamflow predictive model from CT river basin to the Region (Archfield RCN 2007 #6). (T5) 4.	3.46	46%
Next generation of habitat connectivity work is to be more explicit about providing something that defines what the ecological purpose (what population/species) of that corridor is and that would force conversations on how that corridor would be used. (T7) 7.	3.38	46%
Where are opportunities to manage for species of economic concern or constituent importance AND SGCN. Tools to help that, as well as communicate that to the public. BMPs for agencies that integrate both types of species. (T2) 2.	3.35	43%
Develop suite of regionally standard Best Management Practices to be implemented to reduce the spread of invasives (incl. aquatics), and share with all groups. (T3) 10.	3.34	49%

a. Scale is 1 to 5; the higher the mean, the higher the priority.

Session 5 Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

Monitoring Priorities	Mean^a	% Agree/ Strongly Agree
Immediate need for reporting on success of SWG grant-funded work. (PA example - 10 fish species taken off state list) Need to package our project information as success stories that ordinary people/Congressional can read and understand. (T8)	4.42	87%
Establish Uniform Monitoring Practices that can be applied across large geographic areas for multi-jurisdictional resources (e.g., habitats for species that occur across geopolitical boundaries). These need to be relevant and applicable to inform current management decision-making. Need a consistent framework for states to implement monitoring so that we can roll up data. [Vote #5 and table 9 will buy you a drink]. (T9)	4.16	79%
Long term monitoring and performance evaluation to feed into the conservation framework. Fund the implementation of the NE Regional Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework. (T8)	4.07	72%

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Identify and leverage existing federal monitoring programs and develop state/tribal/ngo surveys to complement the federal surveys to provide regional status. (T1)	4.06	77%
Ensure accurate monitoring of representative species to support biological assessment and conservation design. (T7)	4.03	77%
Specific performance criteria and reporting must be a required part of all RCN projects -- best if they are standardized. (T7)	3.97	73%
Implement the NE Monitoring and Performance Framework and National effectiveness measures (prioritize staff and funds to implement). (T5)	3.90	69%
Ensure that relationship(s) between representative (i.e., indicator, umbrella) species and "target" species are established (i.e., assumptions or key thresholds are tested). (T6)	3.77	62%
Need to design and implement a monitoring system to inform management at multiple scales as well as provide status/trends information. (T6)	3.74	64%
Develop a shared regional database to be able to combine and analyze data on a regional perspective, but make flexible to allow for individual needs or species groups or guilds to be included. Examples include: Monitoring of native pollinators (could also link to economic impacts), or freshwater mussel species, could also include current RCN invertebrate monitoring (RCN 11), like DiscoverLife website. (T3)	3.72	62%
Identify surrogates (e.g., habitats, species groups) to monitor challenging priority species. (T1)	3.69	66%
Design metrics to assess effectiveness of technical assistance. (T4)	3.60	53%
Inventory of monitoring efforts - all organizations, including citizen science. (T2)	3.48	55%
Conduct an analysis of expected outcomes of specific management actions and identify an accepted surrogate outcome in place of monitoring every action to be more cost effective and reduce endless monitoring expenditure. Could develop standard low level spot check monitoring program...i.e. removal of a dam that restores 2 miles of habitat will result in an increase of 1 mile of accessible spawning habitat for Atlantic salmon and 30 adult Atlantic salmon, and an increase to the adult population in the river of 15%. (T3)	3.46	52%
Monitoring protocol for wetland and terrestrial habitat quality and degradation and investigate whether trends can be detected using remote sensing techniques for enhancing SGCNs. (T5)	3.43	53%
Link species numbers to habitat acreage (or integrity); may use or start with representative species. (T4)	3.38	47%
Develop a decision matrix to determine when to monitor and when it is not useful. Apply to response of certain actions at a specific site. (T9)	3.35	42%
Monitoring response of target spp or habitat changes that occur as a result of NRCS (Farm Bill) funded projects. (T2)	3.27	48%

a. Scale is 1 to 5; the higher the mean, the higher the priority.

Session 6 Information Management

Information Management Priorities	Mean ^a	% Agree/ Strongly Agree
Develop a way for states, LCCs and other partners to immediately access the habitat mapping and geospatial condition analysis products coming out of the RCN process. (T9) 20	4.46	93%
Support and engage in the forthcoming regional information management needs assessment that was identified as a top priority LCC science need. Engage all the conservation community in this process, with the goal of making better decisions. (T8) 17	4.25	81%
Support development of SWAP database to promote consistency in next generation of SWAPs, allow easy State rollup, guide revisions and improve accessibility. (T4) 9	4.19	78%
Easy access to information for policy makers in Congress - outreach and advocacy for that audience, e.g. Value of basic monitoring data is not always known until there is a problem - translation of value of basic science for lay audience. (T2) 4	4.13	79%
Create data sharing agreements between all members of NE conservation community - state, federal, ngo - AND get their data. (T8) 18	4.09	77%
Conduct a information needs assessment based on the Northeast Conservation Framework information needs and data flow (as illustrated by framework diagram with data flow) focused on regional scale needs, building off what exists already; includes a metadata analysis that catalogs and organizes what is available and is realistic based on agency capacity (assessment guided by steering committee) (T7) 15	4.09	76%
Create regional geospatial database that can be shared and used among all partners (states, ACOE, USGS, USDA, FWS, NGOs...) to integrate existing databases (states, NatureServe...) to identify activities on the ground. Include terrestrial, aquatics, and marine species linked with habitat. Goal of action and set of target species for action should also be included. Not meant to be fully inclusive of all data, but is targeted to habitat management. (T3) 6	4.08	80%
Institutionalize long term datasets on a Regional cooperative basis (security, access, data sharing, maintenance, transferable data technology). (T5) 11	4.00	75%
Support an urgent needs assessment process to advance regional conservation data management and analysis. We need to include folks from other regional conservation efforts (e.g., NFHAP, NOAA, Gulf of Maine Council, Canada) to bring in additional datasets and data needs. (T9) 19	3.97	74%
Regional habitat management database that includes spatial and tabular data on habitats being managed on both public and private lands, type of management, target species; consider pilot on one type of habitat. (T7) 16	3.94	80%
Establish a module in TRACS to better capture SWAP success from partners = conservation outcomes. (T4) 8	3.71	62%
Develop a managed lands database to document various management activities on private and public lands. This will include appropriate privacy and securities measures. (T6) 14	3.70	67%

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Leadership commit funding and staff to evaluate, analyze, and interpret existing and future datasets. (T5) 10	3.69	57%
Tie in data on species monitoring to quickly assess regional status of species = outcome. (T4) 7	3.69	63%
SWAP database development that also links to TRACS - needs funding to populate SWAP database. (T2) 3	3.66	62%
Ensure that all spatial databases are designed to interface with all other existing or proposed spatial databases. (T6) 13	3.60	56%
Provide workshops to improve collaboration between state natural heritage programs and state fish and wildlife agencies to achieve appropriate data access for regional conservation applications. (T1) 1	3.60	66%
Provide appropriate counseling services to overcome dysfunctional data sharing relationships. (Free seven step process to those that vote "5" for this one!) (T1) 2	3.60	58%
Integrate regional habitat classification into MoveBank database. (T3) 5	3.27	35%
Require data analysis for funded projects. (T5) 12	3.11	43%

a. Scale is 1 to 5; the higher the mean, the higher the priority.

Session 7 – Highest Priority Ranking

Using TurningPoint® polling, the participants identified the most important priorities to focus on over the next two years from among the 32 highest priorities from tables (all items rated 3.85 or higher). The table number of the original priority is noted in parentheses, followed by its original voting number.

Most important 2-yr priorities	Mean^a	% Scored 4 & 5
Immediate need for reporting on success of SWG grant-funded work. (PA example - 10 fish species taken off state list) Need to package our project information as success stories that ordinary people/Congressionals can read and understand. (T8) Session 5 - Monitoring, Evaluation and Research	4.44	85%
Deliver the results (synthesis) of the projects (products) in a meaningful way to on-the-ground managers at state/local levels and provide commitment of resources to accomplish (people and funds). Start with RCN Conservation Status Report. (T5) 1. Session 3 - Biological Assessments and Goal-setting	4.31	87%
Communications, tool kit, users guide Session 2 - Habitat Mapping	4.19	78%
Support and engage in the forthcoming regional information management needs assessment that was identified as a top priority LCC science need. Engage all the conservation community in this process, with the goal of making better decisions. (T8) 17 Session 6 - Information Management	4.05	76%
Develop a way for states, LCCs and other partners to immediately access the habitat mapping and geospatial condition analysis products coming out of the RCN process. (T9) 20 Session 6 - Information Management	3.89	66%
Long term monitoring and performance evaluation to feed into the conservation framework. Fund the implementation of the NE Regional Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework. (T8) Session 5 - Monitoring, Evaluation and Research	3.87	69%
Identify and leverage existing federal monitoring programs and develop state/tribal/ngo surveys to complement the federal surveys to provide regional status. (T1) Session 5 - Monitoring, Evaluation and Research	3.80	65%
Support development of SWAP database to promote consistency in next generation of SWAPs, allow easy State rollup, guide revisions and improve accessibility. (T4) 9 Session 6 - Information Management	3.80	67%
Working with implementers/users, translate the information into usable tools in order to convince them that it's useful to them and what they are doing (cottontail as a model.) Always have specific implementation examples using the results of these projects for both buy-in and delivery. Develop a marketing, training, and capacity building strategy targeted to specific needs. (T7) 8. Session 4 - Conservation Design to Delivery	3.77	63%
Create distribution maps for regional responsibility/high concern species - overlay on NE habitat maps. (T8) 3. (Also T9, 17.) Session 3 - Biological Assessments and Goal-setting	3.77	66%
Finish mapping all systems (Canada, lakes) Session 2 - Habitat Mapping	3.76	58%
Provide information on landscapes of regional significance to conservation partners, big (e.g. NRCS) and small (e.g. local land trusts) to implement specific conservation actions. (T8) 14. Session 4 - Conservation Design to Delivery	3.72	61%
Usable product (expectations, limits) Session 2 - Habitat Mapping	3.71	66%

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Identification of habitat focus areas with a step up step down (Regional to local) process to implement on the ground habitat conservation, restoration, and management. (T5) 3. Session 4 - Conservation Design to Delivery	3.69	53%
Development of habitat focus areas and corridors. (T5) 2. Session 3 - Biological Assessments and Goal-setting	3.62	59%
Overlay and integrate existing datasets to delineate landscapes of regional significance (focal areas and connectivity). (T8) 13. Session 4 - Conservation Design to Delivery	3.60	57%
Develop a process to develop regional representative species goals (numbers and distribution) to allow development of landscape-scale habitat design and conservation. (T4) 11. Session 3 - Biological Assessments and Goal-setting	3.60	58%
In the new SWAPs recommend adopting a consistent format/template which will allow for a region wide roll up (including population targets) for establishing goals, perhaps a consistent summary or appendix. (T7) 15. Session 3 - Biological Assessments and Goal-setting	3.54	61%
Establish Uniform Monitoring Practices that can be applied across large geographic areas for multi-jurisdictional resources (e.g., habitats for species that occur across geopolitical boundaries). These need to be relevant and applicable to inform current management decision-making. Need a consistent framework for states to implement monitoring so that we can roll up data. [Vote #5 and table 9 will buy you a drink]. (T9) Session 5 - Monitoring, Evaluation and Research	3.51	59%
Develop conservation designs for multiple representative species, with consideration that actions will happen by private landowners and with consideration of a changing climate and other threats and translated into a format for those who do conservation on the ground can understand and implement. (T4) 18. Session 4 - Conservation Design to Delivery	3.48	43%
Easy access to information for policy makers in Congress - outreach and advocacy for that audience, e.g. Value of basic monitoring data is not always known until there is a problem - translation of value of basic science for lay audience. (T2) 4 Session 6 - Information Management	3.48	55%
Mapping, accuracy and validation Session 2 - Habitat Mapping	3.41	51%
Create regional geospatial database that can be shared and used among all partners (states, ACOE, USGS, USDA, FWS, NGOs...) to integrate existing databases (states, NatureServe...) to identify activities on the ground. Include terrestrial, aquatics, and marine species linked with habitat. Goal of action and set of target species for action should also be included. Not meant to be fully inclusive of all data, but is targeted to habitat management. (T3) 6 Session 6 - Information Management	3.37	52%
Layers (land use, threats, refugia, invasives) Session 2 - Habitat Mapping	3.34	42%
Regional habitat management database that includes spatial and tabular data on habitats being managed on both public and private lands, type of management, target species; consider pilot on one type of habitat. (T7) 16 Session 6 - Information Management	3.34	50%
Take existing RCN products and fund a communication specialist to repackage and deliver information to pre-defined user groups (i.e., public, resource managers, stakeholders) with associated effectiveness measures. (T1) 6. Session 4 - Conservation Design to Delivery	3.30	51%
Provide cookbook or catalog of on-the-ground implementation details that translate conservation design results into practical actions or projects. The regional-scale focal areas are a logical starting point for this. (T6) 12. Session 4 - Conservation Design to Delivery	3.23	44%

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Ensure accurate monitoring of representative species to support biological assessment and conservation design. (T7) Session 5 - Monitoring, Evaluation and Research	3.23	44%
Specific performance criteria and reporting must be a required part of all RCN projects -- best if they are standardized. (T7) Session 5 - Monitoring, Evaluation and Research	3.13	47%
Institutionalize long term datasets on a Regional cooperative basis (security, access, data sharing, maintenance, transferable data technology). (T5) 11 Session 6 - Information Management	3.05	36%
An information delivery mechanism should be a requirement of every future RCN product to deliver information to pre-defined user groups (i.e., public, resource managers, stakeholders) with associated effectiveness measures. (T1) 5. Session 4 - Conservation Design to Delivery	3.05	42%
Create data sharing agreements between all members of NE conservation community - state, federal, ngo - AND get their data. (T8) 18 Session 6 - Information Management	3.02	42%

a. Scale is 1 to 5; the higher the mean, the higher the priority.