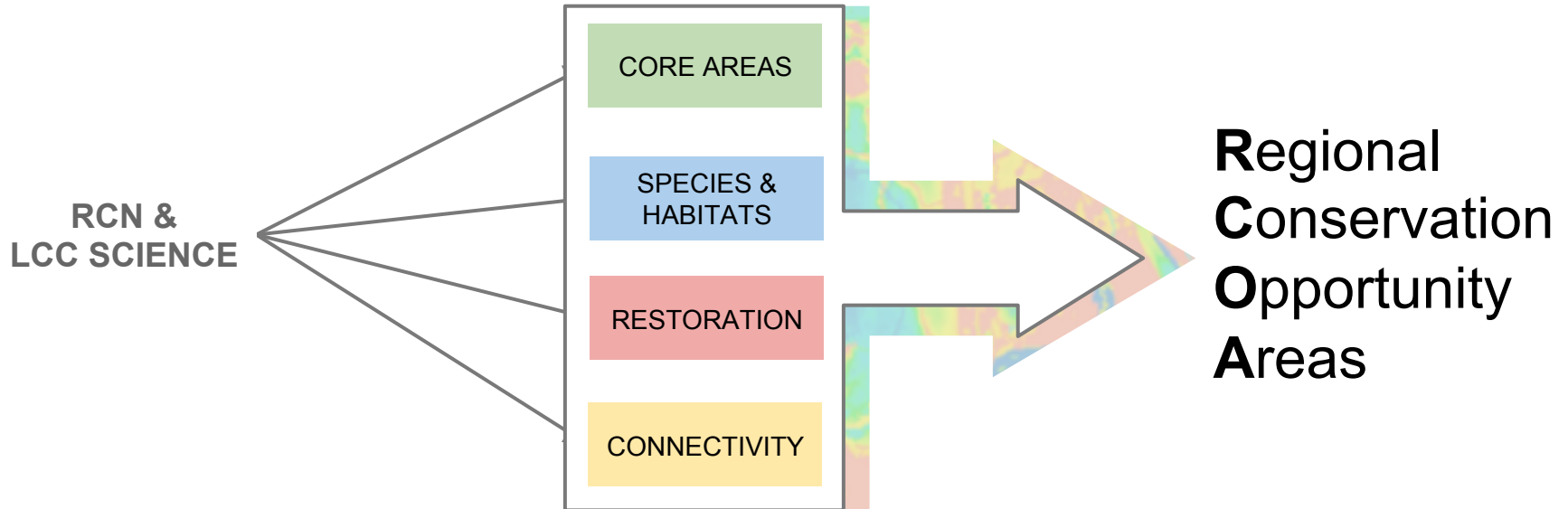# Regional Conservation Opportunity Areas Version 1.0

Overview

Vision

A **connected** network of **resilient** and **ecologically intact** habitats that will support **biodiversity** under changing conditions
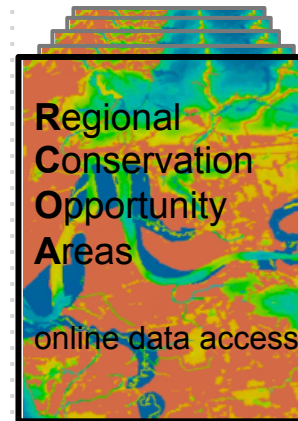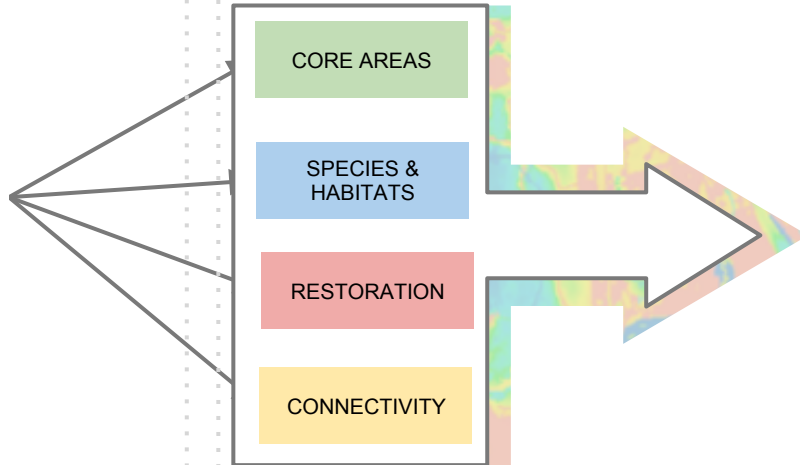
Overview

Leveraging investments

Inclusive collaboration

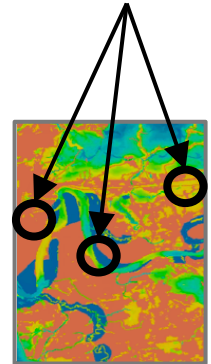**Relevant science**

Better implementation

RCN & LCC SCIENCE

CORE AREAS

SPECIES & HABITATS

RESTORATION

CONNECTIVITY

Regional **C**onservation **O**pportunity **A**reas

online data access

Coordinate partners for on-the-ground success

Leveraging investments

$$$ **LCC products** INTEGRITY | CONNECTIVITY MODELS | RSGCN HABITAT ASSOCIATIONS

$$$ **RCN products** HABITAT MAPS | RESILIENCE | SWAP SYNTHESIS
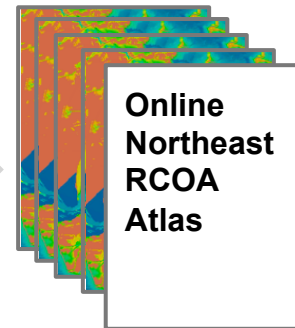
$$$ **Bear, moose and other representative species**

$$$ **Natural heritage** SPECIES DATA | SPECIES RANKS

$$$ **Land management priorities**

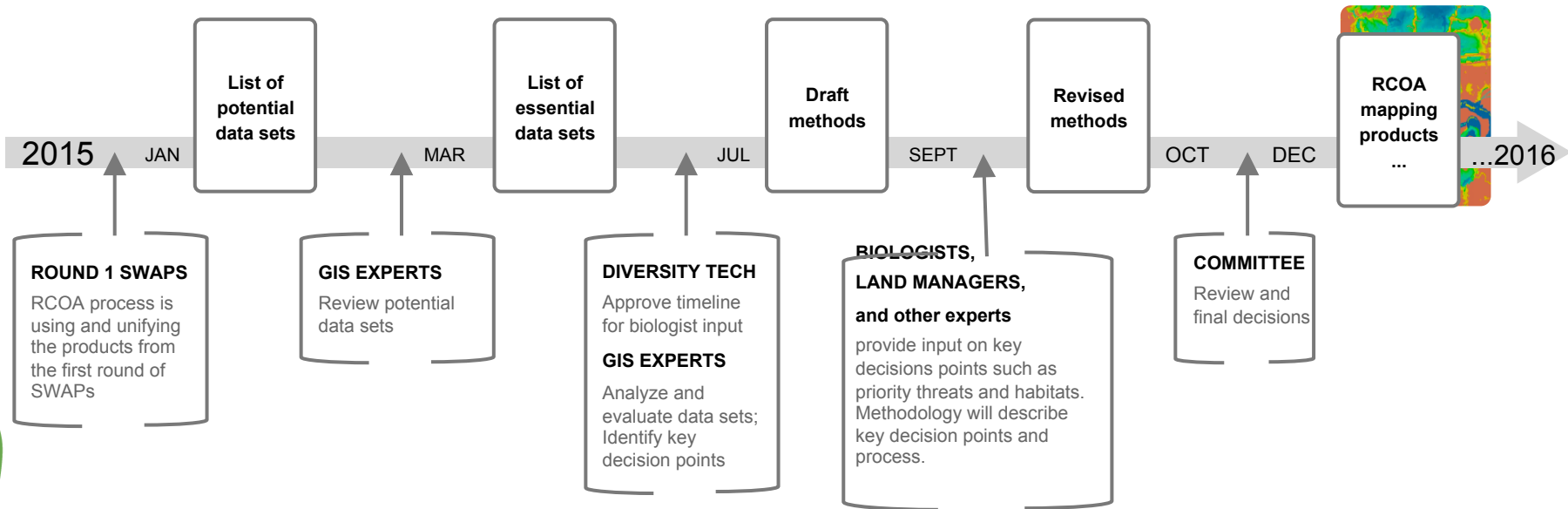$$$ **Cultural resources**

$$$ **Partner products**

RCOA process
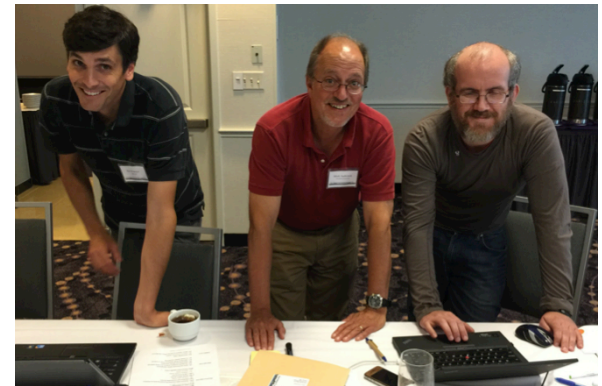
Online Northeast RCOA Atlas

Inclusive process

Key decision points for biologists and diversity tech committee

List of potential data sets

List of essential data sets

Draft methods

Revised methods

RCOA mapping products ...

2015   JAN   MAR   JUL   SEPT   OCT   DEC   ...2016

ROUND 1 SWAPS

RCOA process is using and unifying the products from the first round of SWAPs

GIS EXPERTS

Review potential data sets

DIVERSITY TECH

Approve timeline for biologist input

GIS EXPERTS

Analyze and evaluate data sets; Identify key decision points

BIOLOGISTS,

LAND MANAGERS,

and other experts

provide input on key decisions points such as priority threats and habitats. Methodology will describe key decision points and process.

COMMITTEE

Review and final decisions

Serious collaboration

Through the RCOA process the workgroup agrees...

- team members are exploring and teaching each other about RCN & LCC science

- RCN & LCC science is more accessible when staff are engaged in developing applications

- collaboration is making RCN & LCC science relevant to states for on the ground work

- GIS staff bring learning back to agencies for day to day use

- experts and research PIs are working side by side with end users of GIS data

Better implementation

Through the RCOA process the workgroup agrees...

- <u>methodology</u> will be referenced in SWAPs, <u>maps</u> will become available in 2016

- opportunity areas are efficient "no regrets" targets for voluntary action on the ground

- plan in place to make best use of occurrence data and resolve known issues

- new approaches find best habitat for RSGCN
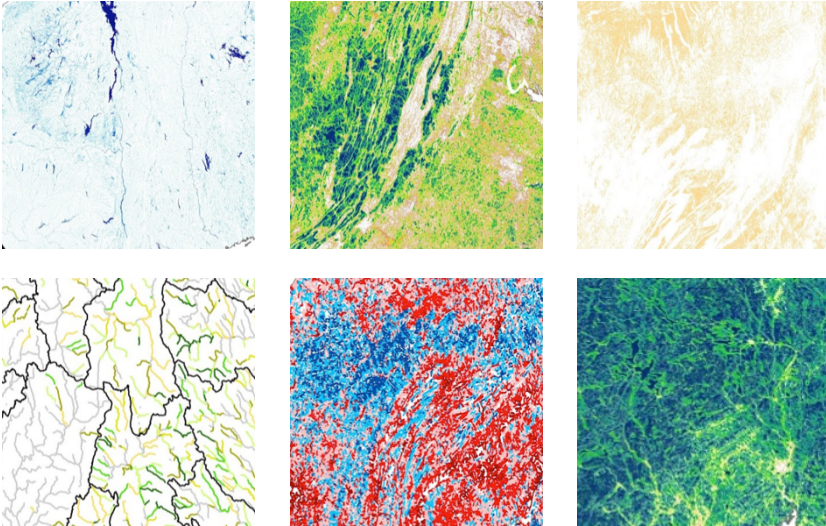
  ...and could help pre-empt the need to list

- regional context complements state COAs

- data is good!

Products and Uses

Products

An atlas with methodology documentation

Uses

Restoration & land management

Inform land protection

Find core areas for all species

Complement/Confirm state priority areas

Regional context for state decisions

Monitor changes in landscape over time

Inform policy and listing decisions

Grant applications

Guide SWAP implementation and RCNs

Comparison with Other Projects

RCOAs & COAs	CT River Pilot	DSL	Conservation Blueprint
States are developing Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) as part of their SWAPs. **Regional Conservation Opportunity Areas (RCOAs) will help put local priorities in a regional context by using regional data from RCN & LCC projects. RCOAs will complement COAs.**	The CT River Pilot **tested applications of RCN and LCC science** and has provided **lessons and insight** to applications for RCOAs. The pilot draws on data from the the UMASS Designing Sustainable Landscapes project, which is built upon RCN habitat maps.	The UMass Designing Sustainable Landscapes Project assesses the capability of current and future landscapes. **Core areas** for conservation are in part derived from the **Index of Ecological Integrity**, measuring the relative condition of each type of habitat mapped by the **Northeast Terrestrial Habitat Classification** developed with RCN funds.	A collaboratively designed **spatial plan for the South Atlantic similar to RCOAs,** responding to potential future changes, including sea level rise and climate change, and created to help inform and prioritize conservation decisions and actions in the South Atlantic.