Handout 17: Summary of Northeast Regional Conservation and Next Steps

For Northeast State Wildlife Action Plans

**What we have accomplished since October**

 Reports Completed:

* Taking Action Together: Northeast Regional Synthesis For State Wildlife Action Plans
* The Northeast Lexicon: Terminology Conventions and Data Framework for State Wildlife Action Plans in the Northeast Region

Formal Information Delivery and Training sessions:

* Northeast State Wildlife Action Plan Coordinators Meeting (February 4 - 6 , 2014 – Hadley, MA)
* Demonstration of Applications of Northeast Landscape Science (February 6, 2014 – Hadley, MA)
* Advanced Technical Training on Northeast Landscape Conservation Science for State Wildlife Action Plans (March 10 & 11 – Hadley, MA; March 13 & 14 – NCTC, WV)

Infrastructure Development:

* A nested/sub-website, ‘Northeast Regional Wildlife Action Plan Synthesis’ has been developed and added to the North Atlantic LCC website to support ease of access to data, reports, meeting minutes and notes, calendars, discussion forums and other capacities of interest to partners. It is located here: <http://northatlanticlcc.org/resources/northeast-regional-wildlife-action-plan-synthesis>

Data Processing, Analysis and Delivery:

* Completed compilation and clean-up of occurrence data for 462 Regional Species of Greatest Conservation Need
* Provided financial support to The Nature Conservancy to complete the creation and delivery of several regionally-consistent data layers
* Uploaded roughly 40 regionally consistent data layers with metadata to the North Atlantic LCC’s Conservation Planning Atlas on DataBasin, which are available for viewing in a web map or direct download as image files or data layers. These include datasets created by The Nature Conservancy’s Eastern Division Office in Boston **funded via the Regional Conservation Needs (RCN) program** and the Designing Sustainable Landscapes project out of UMass Amherst’s Landscape Ecology Lab, run by Kevin McGarigal.
* These data layers were also uploaded to the North Atlantic LCC’s Northeast Regional Wildlife Action Plan Synthesis site under the ‘Data’ tab
* Species distribution maps for each of the 462 RSGCN collected are available for download as PDFs at the regional scale under the ‘Data’ tab as well. Note: this will be the only format in which the species data are available for public viewing (zoomed out beyond the 1:1 million scale) as consistent with stated preference by the state partners.
* At the Advanced Technical Training sessions in Hadley and at NCTC for GIS-savvy partners, we delivered 1TB hard drives containing 48 regionally consistent data layers with metadata, the 462 regional species distribution maps, and 10 reference documents to support understanding of several key data layers

Efforts Aimed at Harnessing Expertise:

* A GIS Technical Team has been formed by those who attended the Technical Trainings in March, aimed at sharing GIS knowledge and tools for the betterment of SWAPs and to assist with assessing parameters for developing regional Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs)
* Taxonomic Teams have been formed of biologists from across the region to assess condition of species data, form recommendations about possible species for modeling, advise the North Atlantic LCC on which regionally- consistent environmental variables should be used for individual species models, and to vet outputs of habitat suitability models

Identified Priorities For Moving Forward Together:

* Model habitat suitability for a subset of agreed-upon RSGCN
* Develop regional Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs)
* Establish a Modeling Methods Team to advise on species habitat suitability modeling methodology

**Where we are heading**

Tasks and Goals associated with ‘Moving Forward’:

* Work together to establish parameters and methods for developing regional COAs with guidance from the GIS Technical Team and other interested partners
* Model habitat suitability for a select subset of RSGCN using methods recommended by the forthcoming Modeling Methods Team and environmental variables recommended by the Taxonomic Teams.