**NE-SE Mapping Resolution – Conf Call sponsored by Region 5**

**April 3, 2013**

**Attendees:** BJ Anderson, Ken Elowe, Tim Jones, Jean Brennan, Andrew Milliken, Lori Pelech, Mike Slattery, Rick Bennett, Paul Leonard, Bridgett Costanzo, Kirsten Luke

BJ - Reconciliation of what’s been mapped; predicted or observed is major difference between 2 maps. No way to crosswalk them.

Ken wants to know how to integrate these; can we separate technical difficulties from “I want these classifications” difficulties – similar to when we did NE mapping; it became more philosophical. Purely “what did people want represented”and not so much technical. Can the habitat types be crosswalked is his basic question.

Tim says both were done to NatureServe’s ecoclassif level. One issue is they are restricted by range; some have analogs but are not named same. Currently we have no way to crosswalk other than taking “up” to NLCD class range. Some have no analog – eg northern hardwoods; distinct codes but there is a hierarchy within 6-digit codes/modifiers. NE is a mid-level hierarchy between NatureS and NLD, but that does not exist in SE.

Jean – third issue beyond technical and agreement issues is foundational issue of definitional/standardization that defined technical. Reservations seem to be regarding modifying definitions. Definitional/standards are an impediment.

Tim/BJ, yes the NE data does not have same definitional resolution as SE because NE classification system lumped a lot. But depending where you are in NE, we came away from our last call to use the data “as is” that DOES NOT extend into the Appalachians. I know that’s an issue for AppLCC, but for rest of NE it is technical issues easy to resolve. Use NE data except for Piedmont region. For NALCC it’s easy way forward. For AppLCC, entire geography would have to be treated differently. Multiple technical issues for AppLCC geography; “big list.” Also, piece of AppLCC (WV?) with no data.

Rick – are technical difficulties something that can be overcome? Is it a money thing? Can any of it be achieved through USGS?

Lori - NatureServe land classification covers entire US (Gap and LandFire where they exist); draws upon both datasets to create map for whole US. They are interested in incorporating terrestrial data (TNC’s NE dataset); two dif methods would help with validation – national comparison vs TNC’s.

Tim Jones - NatureServe data already incorporated SE data. If they incorporate TNC’s in NE, then…

BJ – Scott says NOAA has similar project that will bring together maps??? Funded by NE CSC; includes some of SE but not all AND all of Region 5

Jean – All of Region 5, but not WV/VA areas AND according to Jean those 2 states do not buy in to that mapping convention. Also, issue of LandFire – when SE was developing that as part of Atlas project, they specifically discarded LandFire data.

Lori - Landfire shortcomings are in aquatic.

Jean – SE already ID’s constraints and resolutions so we should get whole picture from them; need to regroup with them (FWS SE folks) before we move forward to make sure our strategy is based on all information and options.

Ken – Yes, so there are both technical and collaborative issues to be addressed.

BJ – sounds like Lori’s conversations with NatureServe need to be vetted through SE staff then.

Tim – there are still outstanding technical issues in NatureServe data/metadata that have not been resolved; woefully lacking in technical details despite 3 years of attempted coordination.

Ken – We have to be comfortable with their transparency; build trust/credibility with State partners on this issue.

BJ – who should we talk to in SE?

Jean – John Tirpak, Jason Duke, other new staff? (Re: LandFire and SE Atlas issues.) The fuzzy band in middle is where there is difficulty in getting agreement/technical resolution.

Lori – NatureServe uses SE Gap, except where it does not exist – and that’s “fuzzy band” in VA/WV area.

BJ – why can’t they adopt NE Gap for those areas?

Andrew – that was intent, but pending decision.

Tim – LandFire is modification of NLCD not originating at NatureS; was designed to target forest fire issues/grassland fires. Combo of USGS/USDA needs. Hence, does not do a good job with aquatic systems.

BJ – what does AppLCC want to use map for?

Jean – motivation of data/maps created to date gives entirely dif map/classification. For habitat-based analysis for species, NE TNC is at such high resolution that the classification types are enormous. For systems we anticipate managing for – less fine resolution. Can we marry for terrestrial, set aquatic aside. Can we get agreement in areas of controversy (WV/VA). From my end, it’s not just here’s the data and what do you want it to do but that the discussions across organizations need to occur to get metadata transparency, definitions for resources we want to manage for. You have this for NE Region; trying to move past impediments; multiple other mapping efforts and definitions which would trigger possible resistance including funding impediments. We need to be at same point. Need to coordinate with other parties that were involved in earlier debates of this nature.

BJ – Help me understand what problem is? VA/WV band was redone by TNC later?

Lori – NatureServe provided reconciliation done to date for SWAPs.

Tim – Wasn’t VA the lead on contract with TNC afterwards? Are they still unhappy?

Milliken – TNC did not do parts of piedmont/mountains in those states – TNC decided that consistency across ecosystems more important that across states. So, we now have both in those states. Not sure that they are still unhappy?

Tim – Mark does not place a lot of faith in what was done.

Ken – Do we have consistency? That’s where we are now. To paraphrase Jean, we need to be able to look at species-habitat relationships in consistent manner across our entire geography of interest. What do we need to do to get there.

BJ – NatureServe’s is consistent, despite its problems. My recommendation is that AppLCC take this map which has no gaps and is consistent nationally for now – may later plug in better maps as they become available.

Ken – We are talking about data and classification. With your recommendation, can those NS classifications crosswalk to NE?

BJ - No. They are different. Consistency would be within AppLCC.

Tim – Ecological classification system is same – it’s a national system.

Mike – What Ken is asking for is NatureS’s aspiration; support interoperability using most stable and comprehensive data/architecture to support SWAPs.

Ken – Q for today is whether it’s better to contract TNC to fully expand to AppLCC – or use NatureServe.

Kirsten – in using NatureS’s , we’re saying we won’t use Anderson’s product?

Tim – we had a reconciliation resolved with Anderson on last call. We’ll use NE, SE and then NatureS for AppLCC?

BJ – Grant through NE CSC to map is on-going for NE (Ken) but only includes VA, not rest of AppLCC.

Ken – to Tim/Kirsten – resolution…

Tim - SE Gap folks felt their methodology didn’t work as well in mountains, but Mark did not map all ecoregions in southern AppLCC. Still a gap that was not mapped by either NE or SE. There is some duplication of effort with NE CSC funded project.

BJ – they are doing through this grant what we want done

Tim – but they are not reaching out to partners; we have not heard from them.

BJ – first phase will begin in Sept; BJ will send around the cooperators contact info

Andrew – What Lori was describing for NE TNC/NatureS – how does that relate to this project?

Ken – We need to get NatureServe in room!

Mike – They are coming in Sept to give a presentation.

BJ – We’ve been having conf calls; talked to them yesterday.

Jean – if there is an opportunity to participate in implementation of this grant, can we suggest that they start with end-user stock-taking before-hand.

Ken – Yes, even if the project is technically valid, it’s important to start with assessing end-user needs and issues. Help end-users make good decisions with technical support.

BJ - Tim – revisit decisions made on recent NE-SE call? Includes VA? (yes) [Someone later noted – Milliken? – that the resolution proposed on that earlier call was exactly what VA did not want?]

Andrew – They definitely need to be involved (VA folks especially). And, western NC/SC. Short-term action item to clean up piedmont mapping in a way that everyone agrees.

Jean – We need to get past legacies, determine what is negotiable.

Andrew – It’s NOT part of WV in AppLCC that is not mapped – it’s parts of OH, KY? [group said yes]

Paul – I would touch on one thing; regarding nationwide NatureS as immediate solution - this involves specific issues, in particular because it does not include information needs for habitat suitability, etc. Could plug hole now but won’t meet our needs; resolving NE-SE is better solution.

Tim – right kind of classification depends on species/taxa; would rather have something too detailed and dumb it down

Jean – I’m happy with NE level of detail. AppLCC needs more agreement/negotiation to move use forward.

Andrew – I have an action item that does not help AppLCC, do want to follow up on VA issue to make whole NE a better map. [will work with Tim to make that happen]

Mike – For Chesapeake region, LandScope Chesapeake (rolls us State portal LandScopes) does not currently include fish and wildlife habitat data layers (except VA) and I don’t know how to move forward with that.

Andrew – We‘re working on that now.

Mike – I know.

Andrew – NALCC is investing in info mgt system; combining web portal with LCMap/DataBasin. LandScope Chesapeake can access/link to this.

Kirsten – So what datasets are we deciding to use? Anderson’s product in NE and then figure out where VA stands?

Tim - For NALCC will use TNC/Anderson mapping; working out issues in VA. For remainder of Region 5 FWS, would use NatureServe?

Andrew - NE states have all agreed to use TNC’s system in SWAPs and NALCC using for DSL. Still issues within AppLCC remaining geography.

BJ- AppLCC is left with using NatureS for now; or finding way to get full coverage with new data that satisfies everyone. NatureServe will absolutely be incorporating TNC’s mapping for NE.

Milliken – We need to think about what our advise is to Elowe and Uihleen. NE CSC project will incorporate all available datasets – but NOT reconciliation?

BJ– yes, it will include several reconciliations.

Tim – but that NE CSC project may not include VA, southern states – we need to find out

BJ – not a problem; I can find out.