

Break-out Group Discussion Guide

We are on the cusp of a new direction – from foundation building to action. To be in this position is not unexpected; it is what we have been working toward! As the group considers options for repositioning to make decisions about direction, priorities, roles and actions, it presents a chance for us to identify some possible topics or themes around which to specifically focus our work. Some examples are below.

Joint Conservation Priorities: This can include conservation opportunities such as aquatic connectivity and coastal resilience, that have already received attention and investments guided by the Steering Committee. Other themes to focus our work, based on feedback we are receiving from you, may merit consideration as areas of directed focus. Examples include young forest/early successional habitat, riparian buffers, saltmarshes and obligate birds (saltmarsh sparrow, black rail, American black duck), at-risk species, and perhaps others.

Place-based Conservation: There are specific places within the Northeast Region where it may make sense to focus our training and coordination efforts. Our Connect the Connecticut work is an example of this. Other geographies, where concentrations of identified habitat and species priorities converge, and where overlapping interests of other large-scale partnerships like JV's, FHP's and National Estuary Programs occur, present opportunities to add LCC value. The Gulf of Maine, Hudson Valley, Long Island Sound/NY Bight, and Chesapeake landscapes are examples of this.

Species-based Conservation: Within your organization, are there specific species, multi-species, or landscape design applications that would help you achieve your conservation mission? For example, could you use the habitat capability models to develop habitat assessments for game and SGCN species, the core-connector pattern to guide acquisitions and land trust efforts, and communicate multiple conservation benefits for grant applications?

For the purposes of this discussion, think about how the tools and context represented by the Regional Conservation Design work can be applied to help you do the priority conservation work of your organization, help us work together to address shared priorities across state boundaries and at larger scales than we usually accustomed to doing on-the-ground conservation work. Regional Conservation Design is a term we interpret broadly to be not only the core-connector networks, but also the restoration tools, the individual species-habitat models and all the data layers.

1. Think about the idea of joint conservation priorities. Should we organize our collective effort to address some of them? Which ones? Are there others you think we should consider?
2. Where should we pool efforts to influence conservation priorities in large landscapes within the NALCC geography? Where are the places where concentrations of our mutual priorities occur, and where the presence of overlapping regional partnerships like JVs and FHPs indicates the availability of capacity to do conservation work to address those priorities?
3. Given what you now know about the science and tools we have available, how could your agency use them to achieve your conservation priorities?
4. What are the challenges facing your organization in terms of using the tools - technical, training needs, etc.? How can those be addressed?
5. How do you see your organization working collaboratively with other organizations to use the tools?