

Intertwine Alliance Regional Connectivity Working Group Meeting Notes

Tuesday June 28, 2016 10:30a-noon Metro, Room 401

In attendance: Jim Cathcart, Martin LaFrenz, Tonia Burns, Lori Hennings, Galen Beatty, Ted Labbe, Nicole Ahr, Janelle St. Pierre, Marion Dresner, Mary Bushman, Laura Guderyahn, Curt Zonick, Michael Schindel, Tommy Albo, Brian Shepard, Jim Labbe, Bruce Barbarasch, Jane Rombouts, Louis Macovsky

The meeting began with introductions and a review by Lori of the Intertwine Alliance quarterly forum held on Apr 27, 2016 on connectivity. The history includes: Metropolitan Greenspaces Master Plan, Regional Conservation Strategy, Wildlife Crossings Guidebook, Wildlife Corridors and Connectivity lit review, and more. At the forum Tommy Albo presented info on the challenges of connectivity mapping, PSU researchers presented the draft Habitat Connectivity Toolkit, and Clean Water Services shared their stream reaches connectivity prioritization tool. Others like Tualatin NWR and the Port of Portland are also working on habitat connectivity issues.

Three or four key issues/themes emerged from the April connectivity forum:

- Coordination and collaboration (coordinator, common vision, communication)
- Research and information (PSU toolkit, data compilation, community science...)
- Needs (maps, formal network, info collection/sharing, time/money...)
- Getting the work done (funding, contractors, incorporate connectivity into other work, engage public, advocacy...)

Lori made a request to the group: who else should we be invited to the table?

Mary introduced the vision statement brainstorm and provided a handout (attached below) with examples of vision statements. Next, the group broke into three groups and brainstormed potential vision statements for the RCWG for approximately 30 min. At the end of this period, the meeting reconvened and the three groups shared their ideas about a potential vision statement:

- a) Understand, protect, and create an ecologically viable interconnected system for organisms and people that extends across wildlands, rural areas, urban natural areas and the built environment.
- b) Urban and rural communities collaborating to connect wildlife habitat.
- c) Connections to give diverse wildlife and people what they need from nature.
- d) Most common words: diverse, wildlife, people, connectivity, people, healthy, urban rural communities

- e) Protect the native biodiversity of the Intertwine region through the preservation and reestablishment of habitat connections at multiple landscape scales.
- f) Every red legged frog counts.

The group resolved to ruminate on these potential ideas and to suggest others.

Ted facilitated a discussion of suggested elements for a potential strategic plan to guide the next 10 years of work by the RCWG. Participants made the following suggestions:

- 1) Inventory of what exists - open space, species, what's out there
 - a. Mapping, field work, wildlife tagging...
- 2) Set of standards to evaluate connectivity
 - a. Ex: fish passage assessment in Washington- something similar for wildlife for things like roads that fragment habitat.
- 3) Connect with the people who can impede connectivity: developers, trail builders, road/transportation people - help them do their part to allow wildlife movement.
- 4) Evaluate the goals and aspirations we've already set for connectivity. We're implementing a lot. Where are we? Set next targets/goals.
- 5) Improve habitat... know what else is going on in neighboring habitats. Think about scale issues to connect to other habitats.
- 6) Ecosystem functions. Why do we want to save these pieces? How do they interact to maintain functions/services? What are we missing?
- 7) Define difference between corridors and connectivity. They mean different things. Plants and animals... not just wildlife. They operate at different scales. Patch habitat. Use consistent words.
- 8) Every acre counts. May not be linear connection- how do we capture this? Could be good habitat even if not direct connection.
- 9) Build on riparian network- could get 80% of what's available. Then consider extensions into terrestrial environments.
- 10) Identify or reaffirm focus areas - priorities. Use strategic plan to know where to make investments, prioritize funding.
- 11) A vision defining core native species biodiversity. Preservation of native species (whatever we define that as). Connection may be less important than preservation of species.
- 12) How do we protect really critical corridors before they are lost. Once gone, we can't get back again.

- 13) Education of rural habitat preservationists so they understand the importance of urban conservation work. There shouldn't be a line between the groups.
- 14) Incorporate climate change into the work.
- 15) Prioritize where to do/fund work. Determine thresholds for keystone species needs (such as buffers).
- 16) Could we develop list of critical keystone species that are a good measure to ensure we're succeeding. (Surrogate species in connectivity project.)
- 17) Diverse outreach materials.
- 18) Mapping and identifying key native species- map current connections/populations. Humans- vital ecosystem services, the roles humans play. Shape of habitat is important (core/edge). Geometry counts in sustaining populations. "Action at a distance" research. Disturbance patterns in patches. Causal loop mapping.
- 19) Because there are some areas that are concrete jungles, they shouldn't be wiped off map because of cost.
- 20) Connect BMPs with people who are making decisions- work with planning departments.
- 21) Keep it simple. Let's get to work!

During the meeting wrap up we discussed next steps, and asked folks to consider how we might use products from the RCWG to make decisions. There was considerable interest in the discussion about how a corridors or connectivity map product(s) might drive conservation decision-making. One suggestion was made to have Metro Nature In Neighborhoods, Clean Water Services, and others present to discuss their success or challenges with using existing conservation corridors mapping (like the RCS maps) in decision-making at present. What works and what doesn't?

Lori offered a reminder that we are seeking broad representation in participation. Please suggest others who you think might be interested in this effort. Especially reps from NGOs.

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