

Ecologic Function

Fine Scale Habitat Target –Ecologic Function

The value and targets in this category address individual species and their habitat needs. The fine level of detail ensures that species specific habitat requirements are represented in the preferred scenario.

In context to our study, these are habitat needs for indicator plant and animal species or known important (i.e. at risk) species habitat areas to ensure that we are including the fullest representation in absence of complete species specific data.

Dataset

The following datasets were considered as potential sources with which to facilitate potential target development for this ecological objective:

1. NPCA NAI ELC Community Series Mapping
2. NHIC Element Occurrence Database
3. MNR Species at Risk (SAR) Database
4. Old Growth Forest Survey of Niagara – Bert Miller Nature Club/ B. Kershner (2004)

Discussion

The discussion for this target centered on the accuracy of the available data in application to fine scale habitat identification and whether the observation data would even be available for use given the sensitive nature of it as it relates to species of conservation concern.

Given the lack of comprehensive data, the Scenario Development Team (SDT) decided not to set species specific habitat targets but rather capture the majority of the species through targets related to more general and coarser habitat targets. The SDT did however agree on preparing a list identifying species well recognized within the Niagara watershed. Hopefully, this list can be used to fill critical data gaps in the future.

Data Gap

There is a lack of species specific habitat data available across the watershed.

Decision

Date: May 5, 2011

No target set on this value.

Representation in the Learning Scenarios

Due to the fact that no target was set for this value, there is nothing to report in relation to their performance in the Learning Scenarios.

Representation in the Final Scenarios

Due to the fact that no target was set for this value, there is nothing to report in relation to their performance in the Final Scenarios.

Recommendations

Suggestions based on what has been done in the other projects (S. Voros):

-list the species of concern (endangered, threatened, species of special concern, S1 to S3 provincially ranked species) within our study area and;

- list the keystone species within the study area (other important species), (Carolinian species, birds of prey) and;
- then recognize that there are inherent biases and limitations to the available data;
- identify species specific habitat mapping as a critical data gap for NHS design and assessment;
- assume a large majority of species specific habitats are captured through implementation of the coarse scale habitat and ecological function targets;
- overlay the flora and fauna Element Occurrence data and Guelph District Observation data on the preferred scenario as a bookkeeping exercise.