Ecosystem Task Force

Dimond 343 March 21, 2013 12:30-2 p.m.

Participants
Tom Ballestero, Doug Bencks, Paul Chamberlain, Dave Cedarholm, El Farrell, Jackie Furlone, Jim Haney, Tom Kelly, Tom Lee, Mike Palace

Meeting Agenda
Welcome

Update on biodiversity subcommittee: Mike Palace

Sustainable Campus Events Recommendation: EcoTF considerations

Updates from task force members and next steps

Adjourn

Next Steps

Sending out Jim Haney’s link: Jim send to El to distribute

“Google” campus biodiversity action plans: task force members should do a quick search to see what exists and how other plans might influence ours

• Draft a set of questions to bring to next meeting
  o Why is Biodiversity important to us?
  o What are we going to focus on?
  o Are we focusing on the impact of the biodiversity?
  o What steps and goals would lend themselves to managing for the whole ecosystem?
  o Per group’s mission, what are target groups?
Discussion

Biodiversity subcommittee discussion: Mike Palace update

• What schools/towns have biodiversity plans?
• What does World Wildlife Fund do for biodiversity?
• Mike talked to Mark Ducey and Jim Haney about a subcommittee
  o First assess college woods
  o Specific species – perhaps breeding birds
• Question – funding?
  o Are there funds for Mike’s colleague to head project?
    ▪ Proposal together on project, labor, what needs to get it started/organized
• Have to be careful to not collect data for sake of collecting
  o ID objectives and narrow down to end goals and why we want to do this
  o What do we want to do with the data?
  o What do we want to do with college woods?
  o What’s it costing to use it as it is currently?
    ▪ dogs, people etc. at least on outskirts
• Jim Haney’s student - video of wildlife out in college woods
  o Lots of variety from just a few days of taping in one spot
  o Tie this into campus planning with more of a landscape ecology view
    ▪ consider the major components to include
• First clarifying that it’s of value to manage biological diversity
  o What’s needed to find out what is there and what we’re managing
    ▪ Next, what are we managing towards/for?
  o If we know the absence of a species or many species will effect environment, can move forward on decisions of how to manage land
    ▪ Getting students involved in project to help them learn as well
      • Don’t want them to only collect data, want it to be part of a larger integrated system
• Bio-timber framework has been used, not comprehensive
  o Need to go over options and make sure everyone has buy-in
    ▪ Make sure it’s collected properly and can be stored properly
  o Student involvement could be a capstone project for Environmental student
• Had in the past discussed ID’ing key markers that can be consistently measured over time
  o High priority/low priority targets
  o Large predators, invasive species, not characterizing everything in College Woods
• As it relates to the campus master plan:
  o Overlying reasons to want to do inventory, not a static system
Knowing what we have and how it’s changing through time
Goal of every five/ten years to reassess the same things, if there’s not too many it would be possible.

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UNH become model community in its practices of managing its landscape
- What info already exists about what used to be here? Can see where we’ve been?
  - At that point look at trajectories
- Don’t yet have whole picture of the history and narrative of CW
  - Core samplings to show history of area
  - Spruce hole bog one possibility of water body to study
- Species management, large herd of deer – possibly introducing predators to cycle and area
- New private housing out by west edge will have students taking a straight shot through College Woods to get to main campus

Update on Town/Gown water (Dave Cedarholm)
- Watershed plan relayed to congressional government affairs committee of NE Water and Environment Association
- Multiple speakers and representatives
- A lot of discussion about country’s water infrastructure
- Spoke with Shaheen’s environmental advisor on Tuesday
- Also with Anne Kuster’s and Ayotte’s
- Dems trying to incorporate $100,000 for NH water/highway infrastructure
- Ayotte fighting hard to keep money in budget for NH
- Michael Capuano from MA had great presentation – pipe that’s been eroded and destroyed
- Made two major points
  - Argued for more funding for Great Bay
    - Proposing state of the art water quality monitoring system
    - 3 instrument sets
    - Numerous other data collectors collecting at the same time
    - One buoy in Great Bay monitoring on that same level
  - Trying to do a nutrient trading program in Oyster River watershed
    - Upgrade treatment plant to below EPA level
    - Take difference and find other places to remove it
    - Trading has to be done localized in a watershed
- New Model from DES
48% of nonpoint source nitrogen coming from agriculture and animal waste, mostly horses/cows
  should be able to start working there without retrofitting urban area at higher costs

• Southeast watershed alliance (SWA) could take role of monitoring Great Bay
  o Harry Stuart, dir. Of water division of DES, agrees
  o 2/3 of watershed not involved
  o active people in organization are in the regulated communities

• Testified on SB 110
  o Insert language in SWA legislation in 485 E to require DES to do a peer review on science that’s been done to date

Events planning brief overview
• Brainstorming ecosystem-related issues for big events on campus
• Water issues – would bottled water be included?
  o Via private vs. public ownership of public water supplies
    ▪ Raises some interesting questions about entire beverage industry
    ▪ Not all bottled water comes from companies that have privatized their water supply
    ▪ Some beer makers have privatized.
  o On behalf of our own watershed, do we want to be using bottled water?
  o Do we know what commencement has for water on the day of the event?
  o Impacts of parking on soil – parking in fields
    ▪ Counting cars parked on soils
      • Do we measure fields that are used for football anyway?