

Technical Oversight Team Reviews

First Quarterly Report – NatureServe, CCVA Project

TOT REVIEWER 1: I believe that Lesley Sneddon is already in contact with the group below, which is developing climate change vulnerability and response guidelines for forests in Central Appalachia (WV, OH, MD). They are currently in the initial stages of information gathering.

Central Appalachians Climate Change Response Framework
<http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/niacs/climate/centralappalachians/>
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Project Summary

The Central Appalachians Climate Change Response Framework covers almost 26 million acres in eastern Ohio, West Virginia, and western Maryland within Ecological Provinces M221 (Central Appalachian Broadleaf Forest) and 221 (Eastern Broadleaf Forest – Oceanic) of the National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units.

Outcomes

- To meet the challenges posed by climate change, a team of federal and state land management agencies, private forest owners, conservation organizations and others have come together to accomplish three objectives:
- Provide a forum in which the experiences and lessons learned of those working across the Central Appalachians can be effectively and efficiently shared with all.
- Develop new user-friendly tools that can help public and private land managers to factor climate change considerations into their decision making, including a forest ecosystem vulnerability assessment and a forest adaptation resources document.
- Support efforts by public land managers, private landowners, and others to implement adaptive responses to climate change impacts in the Central Appalachians.

Collaborators

- Monongahela National Forest
- MTU School of Forest Resources and Environmental Science
- Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- The Nature Conservancy LANDFIRE Team
- USDA Forest Service Eastern Region
- USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry
- USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station
- USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station: Climate, Fire, and Carbon Cycle Sciences
- Wayne National Forest
- West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

TOT REVIEWER 2: I've read over the documents received and found the project to be on schedule with no noticeable issues. The methods for assessment received to date have sufficient differences to support use of multiple methods for comparison of results.

TOT REVIEWER 3: I'm basing these comments on this on the document entitled "*RFA #6 - CLIMATE CHANGE VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT*" that says, "September 30, 2012: Deliverables: 1) Summary table of CCVA methods, authors, comments received, and our initial assessment of strengths and weaknesses for each methodology and 2) Narrative description of existing methods."

a) They provide a diverse 16 item list of past efforts in annotative bibliography format in the file "Narrative description of CCVA methods..." This is number 2 above. I don't see number 1, the integrated table with initial assessment of strengths and weaknesses.

b) Such a table is critical for identifying the commonalities and differences among existing methods, as many of these identified only vary for what they are applied to, not in their fundamentals. They vary in their inclusiveness, their informational scale or resolution, their integration with other threats (both indirect climate effects and non-climate stressors), their dependency on expert opinion and scoring versus formal modeling, their applied purpose, and likely in several other ways. What attributes in (or not in) these current assessments are needed to meaningfully prioritize species and communities for protection or enhancing resilience? That decision requires more than brief descriptions and may not be clear from a rich table either. Therefore the "fields" in a table need to be well thought out and well vetted not just for what an existing assessment does, but how limited the exact way they did something is for future assessments. For example, there is a current limit to climate downscaling that is reasonably available, and there are a range of ways to predict future disturbance that vary tremendously in their accuracy and value.

c) Understanding the limitations of existing assessments requires knowing if these are limits for the narrow purpose of individual efforts or because of the complexity or weakness of the science available. That is, the best assessment may be a hybrid of existing methods or have novel elements.

TOT REVIEWER #4: Unable to participate this Quarter.