

**New York Habitat and Species Teleconference Workshop**  
**March 24, 2009**  
**Various NYSDEC Locations Across New York**

**Summary Notes**

The New York Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Habitat and Species Workshop was conducted via videoconference, originating from the Buffalo office of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Including Buffalo, six NYSDEC offices from around the state participated in the videoconference workshop. Other locations included:

- State Office: Albany
- Region 5: Warrensburg and Raybrook
- Region 6: Watertown
- Region 7: Syracuse and Cortland
- Region 8: Avon
- Region 9: Allegany

**Tracey Tomajer** of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) welcomed participants of the videoconference from the Albany office. She highlighted the need within the state to work together to prioritize habitat restoration and that engagement with the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) projects database and web tools could help advance this goal. Tomajer indicated that although NYSDEC generally does good habitat and conservation planning, there is not one comprehensive and integrated strategy to meet all interests. Following her introduction, each region participating in the videoconference introduced themselves.

**Roger Gauthier** of the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) reviewed the agenda. He indicated that presenters would be starting out at from a “40,000-foot” perspective and adding more detail until a few site-specific case studies were discussed. He stressed that the web tools described will help identify the status of ongoing projects as well as the most consistent challenges from one jurisdiction to the next. He briefly described current GLC advocacy efforts to support the Administration’s new Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), including \$475 million requested in the fiscal year 2010 budget as a “down payment” to kick start the GLRI.

**Mike Greer** of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Buffalo District, provided an overview of the USACE Great Lakes Habitat Initiative (GLHI), which provided the impetus for the 2007 state habitat workshop series and development of the regional databases of potential habitat restoration and protection projects and funding/technical assistance programs that could support them. The GLHI produced an implementation plan that the USACE has used to inform its resource allocation decisions, which is also available for consideration by other agencies. These products are available online at: <http://gis.glin.net/habitat/>. Greer noted that the GLHI was a two-year project which was completed in 2008. Stakeholders involved in the GLHI have continued to work together and are now part of the Habitat/Species Subcommittee of the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force which is supporting implementation of the GLRC Strategy. Greer completed

this overview with a brief description of recent updates underway to improve and link the habitat and projects databases.

Several questions emerged following Greer's presentation:

- Is the database a living document? Greer replied affirmatively, indicating one of the goals is to update projects in the database and add new ones. He emphasized that the web tools will only be as good as the data in them.
- Is there a screening mechanism used to decide whether projects should be entered in the database? Greer indicated that entries should be habitat projects that protect or restore habitat in the Great Lakes basin. A follow-up question asked whether Canadians are able to enter projects? Greer replied that the database is currently limited to U.S. stakeholders.
- Is there a way to track progress on a specific project? Greer replied this can happen only when project coordinators add information on a project's progress.
- There are many projects not on the list. Is there a possibility of an incentive to enter projects and use the database, such as relating to Corps permit reviews? Greer replied that staff are still working on developing the tools; this issue has come up many times in these workshops. He indicated that web tool developers are working to figure out a method to do make this happen without making it overly burdensome on state agencies.

Participants then heard from a panel of speakers who provided overviews of programs involving habitat protection and restoration from a lake basin and statewide perspective.

**Jeff Herter** of the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) provided an overview of the New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council Draft Report. The Council was created and signed into law in August 2006. It calls for the state to integrate ecosystem-based management (EBM) into its decision-making. EBM is an approach that coordinates the efforts of various state agencies to address issues including land use and water quality, to build coordination capacity and to define research goals and promote their completion. Herter reviewed details and priorities of the report, which calls for immediate action to improve New York's Ocean and Great Lakes ecosystems. It details the numerous challenges facing New York's coastal ecosystems. The report underwent a thorough public review process, including a series of community roundtables early in 2009; the final report will be submitted to the N.Y. Governor and the Legislature later this year. The Draft Report is accessible online at: <http://www.N.Y.oglecc.org/>.

A question was asked regarding what information is available in the N.Y. Coastal Resource Atlas which is described in the report and if it contains a compilation of data files or points of contact for habitat projects. Herter replied that any and all data that was obtainable by the state was included in the Atlas. This includes a comprehensive list of GIS files that can be viewed using Google Earth viewers. He added they are continuously adding new datasets, including data from the Great Lakes region. The Atlas should be a helpful tool for decisionmakers at the regional and local levels. An additional comment noted that EBM methodology is a great tool to consider both environmental and economic benefits – in particular for determining resource valuation.

**David Klein** of The Nature Conservancy provided an overview of the Lake Ontario Biodiversity Conservation Strategy developed under the auspices of the Lake Ontario Lakewide Management Plan (LaMP). About 150 people and 45 organizations in New York and Ontario participated through four workshops to develop the Strategy. He indicated the process has been going on for 18 months. Klein reviewed lake ecosystem goals in the Strategy, as well as the project objective and scope of the document. He described eight conservation targets for Lake Ontario. He emphasized the need to consider what strategies and plans will help abate ecosystem degradation. He reviewed the five major threats facing the targets. He then outlined strategies to improve the health of targets and/or reduce threats. Klein described the six conservation goals and strategies in the document and where they need to happen. The Lake Ontario watershed was broken down into the individual eleven-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) watersheds for identification of priority areas. Coastal reaches were also identified to evaluate their condition and prioritize coastal restoration needs. The Strategy also examined critical coastal wetlands and their key attributes, biological significance and condition. A series of GIS maps were developed which show:

- Wetlands in each eleven-digit HUC and coastal reach, including their current condition;
- Percent of impervious cover by watershed using criteria rankings;
- Condition of fish habitat around the lake's watersheds; and
- Proposed action sites under the Lake Ontario Biodiversity Strategy, where actions would have the most positive impact around the lake.

The Strategy is also being used as part of implementing the Canada-Ontario Agreement. Next steps include a final report to the Lake Ontario LaMP Committee which is hoped to strengthen binational, multi-agency approaches to conservation and restoration.

Some participants indicated appreciation for the binational approach of the Strategy and getting the Canadian Conservation Authorities on board. Klein acknowledged the support of the USEPA and Environment Canada in making the Strategy possible. A question arose regarding binational funding of the Strategy. Klein indicated that both the U.S. and Canada funded the work, with significant support being provided from the Lake Ontario LaMP workgroup. He gave special thanks to U.S. EPA Region 2 and TNC Canada's Ontario region office.

Tracey Tomajer of NYSDEC provided an overview of the Northeast Wildlife Habitat Classification and Mapping Project (NWHCMP). Of the 72 proposed regional conservation action items, the highest priority was given to standardized, consistent, and current habitat maps. NWHCMP was funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. It was an 18-month project in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and NatureServe that began in January, 2007. N.Y. led a sister project: the Northeast Monitoring and Performance Reporting Network. Several products were created through this project, including:

- An aquatic habitat classification system;
- Production of GIS datasets to be the basis for aquatic habitat determinations;
- Standardized maps (GIS dataset) of currently protected/conserved areas;
- A terrestrial habitat classification system;
- Plans and partnerships to create a detailed terrestrial habitat GIS dataset;
- Documentation of each state's habitat mapping capabilities and resources; and

- A standing Northeast regional habitat mapping coordinating committee.

The NWHCMP includes four major variables and variable: 1) size class; 2) gradient class; 3) geology class; and 4) temperature. It also includes 100+ other "habitat descriptor" variables such as drainage area, stream order, channel elevation, estimated mean annual flow and velocity, etc. The NWHCMP report can be downloaded from <http://rcngrants.org/node/38> and GIS data from <http://rcngrants.org/spatialData>.

Tomajer also described the USGS Aquatic GAP and how it informs the NE Aquatic Habitat Project. The Aquatic GAP project includes a predictive landscape model of fish abundance/occurrence and a fish-based classification of lotic habitat. The classification framework is available for all of N.Y., not just Great Lakes drainage. Mechanics of an Aquatic GAP Analysis Project include data compilation, species-habitat relationships, model development and model application. Tomajer outlined several applications of Aquatic GAP, which include:

- Survey/study effort allocation;
- Consideration of biodiversity of fisheries;
- Restoration prioritization;
- Potential stocking or exploitation areas; and
- Baseline status for monitoring change
  - Habitat modification
  - Water quality changes
  - Global climate change.

Tomajer also reviewed caveats and limitations of the Aquatic GAP tool, which include:

- Coverage of rivers and streams only;
- Fish only;
- Snapshot in time;
- Predictions are a "benchmark of what could be; and
- The tools are designed to assist managers, researchers, etc.

Lastly, Tomajer reviewed N.Y.'s Secured Lands Database, which includes land permanently secured from conversion to development with specific conservation goals.

A question was asked whether aquatic habitat mapping and modeling variables will be used as an aquatic health index. Tomajer responded affirmatively, indicating that, heretofore, N.Y. State did not have a classification system for aquatic and terrestrial habitat. One commenter indicated that from the standpoint of other indexes, the aquatic health index includes a much broader characterization of streams. TNC received funding for stream condition assessment and the Northeast reporting framework provides condition and assessment measures. A final commenter suggested that Lake Ontario has much more information now to assess areas of highest conservation need and where the best opportunities exist for applying finite resources.

Roger Gauthier presented updates and enhancements underway for the habitat projects database/repository and the funding source / technical assistance database. These enhancements include additional quality control over projects that were previously entered, a more simplified data entry form for habitat projects, a new, more user-

friendly web user interface and linkages with the funding database. Regarding this last point, Gauthier provided examples of how users will be able to query the databases to find potential funding sources that match habitat projects. He indicated that enhancements to the web tools are now fully functional. Gauthier provided a hands-on demonstration of the web tools. He provided details of how to use the web tools to search for potential funding for specific habitat projects. He encouraged participants to register in order to update or add records and asked participants to query the database.

Gauthier provided an estimate of projects with implementation underway or preparations completed: 35 projects were identified requiring \$135 million that are essentially "shovel ready" or, in other terms, all preparations for implementation for these projects are currently complete. NOAA has nearly \$140M from the stimulus appropriations which is currently being competed for habitat restoration activities across the nation. The USACE, the USEPA and the USF&WS all have some allotments under the stimulus package for habitat restoration activities. All agencies are now fully funded and have money they have to obligate and expend in the next 18 months. Add to that \$475 million for restoration in the Great Lakes – a down payment on President Obama's promise of \$5 billion for the region. He added that there is a need for more organizational coordination and collaboration to have projects ready to utilize these dollars.

A question was asked if a focus for a project is a specific AOC, can a user build his own subset of a database customized to their site-specific needs? Gauthier replied affirmatively, citing examples: The St. Louis River Area of Concern (AOC) has 26 total projects. Of the 26, 16 have been entered into the database; the Lake St. Clair Management Plan includes 125 recommendations which are whittled down to 25 specific project locations entered into the database. He demonstrated that, in this case, one can query by AOC or geography. A comment was raised that state people need to enter their own information into their own state databases. Thus, time is a major concern for entering projects in the GLRC database. A question then arose if there are common data fields that can be extrapolated to other project entries. Gauthier replied not at this time; staff are working on enhancements to the web tools and trying to figure out where everyone can get the most return on investment of time. **John Hummer** of the GLC indicated that other states (MN specifically) may be using interns to enter project information into the database; this can be a more cost-effective approach to data entry.

A next commenter noted that there are many projects not in the database and suggested an incentive might be if state agencies could use the database for regulation purposes as well as permitting activities and reviews. A final comment suggested a new field for the database: whether projects are open to new members/partners. Gauthier closed this segment of the meeting indicating that the GLHI web tools need compatibility with other databases/tools. He stated that staff intends to keep a regional view on funding requirements for habitat restoration projects; such information would be invaluable to inform Congress on what the region needs are for appropriations.

John Hummer provided an overview of the Healing Our Waters (HOW) Coalition and described ways HOW can help advance state priorities related to habitat restoration and protection. He reviewed HOW's priorities for Congressional authorization and

appropriations for the next few years. He encouraged that those non-governmental participants who can join HOW to do so. A commenter offered that Sean Mahar of the N.Y. Audubon Society is the state's official HOW representative and that there will be a HOW meeting in N.Y. in September, 2009.

Roger Gauthier made a brief presentation on a Joint Venture (JV) concept that several NGOs were promoting to move GLRC activities forward. A JV method has been developed to successfully implementing the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. In some states, such as Michigan and Wisconsin, a JV-like model is being considered to step down implementation of the GLRC Strategy. In Michigan, action frameworks were developed for each of eight priority areas. Gauthier queried participants on whether the infrastructure is in place to make a similar JV work in N.Y. State. **Don Zelazny** of the NYSDEC responded that JV may be a useful tool for states with a larger percentage of Great Lakes watersheds. In N.Y. they are trying to incorporate elements of the GLRC Strategy into state programs and priorities. The New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Strategy, when it moves toward implementation, will create action zones within N.Y.'s Great Lakes basin with an action agenda tailored to each zone. This effort will closely mirror recommendations the GLRC Strategy. Zelazny concluded his comments stating that N.Y. needs to assess how to move forward within existing authorities in the current economic climate.

A question was asked of Zelazny regarding the status of the N.Y. Great Lakes Basin Advisory Council. Zelazny replied that it's a citizens advisory council, including state agencies as ad hoc members or observers. The Council will have a role in providing recommendations to NYSDEC, the legislature and the governor. Under the New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Strategy, the state is proposing to create a Great Lakes working group involving state agency representatives – a mechanism to allow different agencies to get together on a regular basis to compare notes and advance common priorities. He acknowledged they also need to integrate nongovernmental organizations into this structure.

Next, four local projects were discussed as examples of fostering collaboration to advance restoration projects.

**Jill Spisiak Jedlicka** of the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper (BNR) made a presentation on the Buffalo River Watershed Management project. The Buffalo River Area of Concern (AOC), declared as such in 1987, is the lower 6.2 miles of the Buffalo River; it encompasses 25 municipalities and three counties. The group Friends of the Buffalo River was formed at the same time and evolved into the BNR, becoming the first nonprofit organization to manage a RAP group in the Great Lakes. Ninety-seven percent of shoreline has been altered over the past 100+ years. A lot of sediment loading and contaminated sediments has caused impaired uses. Jedlicka outlined known causes of impairments. She reviewed accomplishments and parallel efforts in the areas of contaminant reduction and remediation, water quality improvements, habitat improvements and public access, and economic revitalization and planning efforts.

Jedlicka discussed past and ongoing challenges, the three primary ones being: 1) finding a clear vision, comprehensive goals and a coherent message for river restoration; 2)

securing local commitments and match to access government-source funding; and 3) overcoming nonprofit credibility issues and building local expertise and capacity.

Jedlicka offered some solutions to these challenges. She outlined four major projects pending as near-term next steps: 1) the Buffalo River contaminated sediment remediation; 2) the Buffalo River greenway implementation; 3) the Buffalo River Brownfield Opportunity Area; and 4) the Cazenovia Creek/Olmsted Park wetland re-creation and stormwater management. Finally, she shared a series of lessons learned from a community-driven process. These include:

- Identify local group, individual, or agency that is unequivocally committed to the restoration of your AOC;
- Leverage that passion and commitment to challenge, inspire, mobilize, and collaborate with others who can support **OR** derail your efforts; consider using the “Team of Rivals” model;
- Have the courage to lead and take risk, others will follow;
- Be creative with in-kind, leverage the hidden existing local investments. (sweat equity can buy you a lot of in-kind); and
- Reach out to and EDUCATE your local elected officials and agency representatives; get them out of their offices and onto the water!

**Samantha Bartling** of the NYSDOS discussed the Sandy Creeks Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) Demonstration. The project’s focus is to advance local conservation goals using an EBM approach. Key considerations include developing partnerships, addressing multiple objectives and obtaining local support. Three overall priority issues of the project is addressing include habitat fragmentation/land use change, invasive species, and water quality. Bartling outlined the various components of the Demonstration project, including:

- Invasive species – inventory mapping and control;
- Tug Hill Aquifer Study – meeting current water demand from municipalities, agriculture, industry, and ecosystems while planning for future changes/development;
- Riparian Habitat Restoration: Skinner Creek – restoring section of stream with public fishing access rights that had been impacted by agricultural activities. North Sandy Creek – exploring innovative streambank stabilization techniques;
- Recreation Management – reducing illegal all-terrain vehicle (ATV) activity in the watershed; keeping ATVs on established trails to improve water quality; and
- Mapping/Locating Biodiversity Hot Spots – generating data on the occurrences of rare, threatened or endangered species and communities and incorporating the data into local, state and regional planning efforts.

Bartling discussed lessons learned from the project. The overall lesson learned is to engage early, often and with all stakeholder groups. She added that projects should establish trust and mutual respect and show accomplishments – “seeing is believing.” A final report on the demonstration project will be in a “workbook” format and released near the end of April, 2009.

Several questions and comments followed:

- Who are the on-the-ground local partners for the project? Bartling replied they are the Tug Hill Commission (an entity of NYSDOS) that works primarily with agricultural interests, The Nature Conservancy, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, marinas and municipalities.
- Was there an overarching organization that provided consistency among all projects? Bartling responded that a Steering Committee has held public meetings and all aspects of the project link to the Steering Committee.
- A commenter indicated that one value of GLRC database to this project is that local Steering Committee members could go into the database and extract out specific information on various aspects of the project.
- Does post-project completion efforts include monitoring? Bartling replied affirmatively, indicating that phase is considered to be primarily for monitoring. Gauthier noted that generally in the Great Lakes region we haven't done enough homework to track progress. We need to be able to identify how much natural resource function has been restored. Another commenter indicated that there are rarely enough funds to include monitoring as part of a project (has been lacking in N.Y. for over 20 years) but that the EBM and adaptive management approaches include solid design, monitoring, tracking and feedback loops. These elements provide "windows" into the near future which allow project personnel to move forward.
- Another comment raised was that we need to consider pre-project monitoring and assessment. This will create baseline information needed to set remedial goals. It was noted that the BNR had received a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to establish baseline information in the Buffalo Niagara watershed. Gauthier noted that a recurring theme has come up at several of the state habitat workshops: monitoring and research have been treated as an after-thought. He pointed to the Lake Ontario St. Lawrence River Study (LOSLRS) where the proposed adaptive management process did not define what monitoring would accomplish as part of the overall project cost. Klein disagreed, indicating the LOSLRS project was uniquely poised for adaptive management including forecasting models with tools such as coastal wetland indicators; that it had fairly well-defined hypotheses in place with monitoring protocols to address them. He added that participating organizations and agencies need to come together, pool resources and start monitoring.
- The Sandy Creeks and Black Creek watersheds need consistent baseline data for upstream conditions which could change causing negative consequences downstream.

**Doug Gorby** of Ducks Unlimited (DU) provided an overview of the Montezuma Wetlands Restoration Program. The Montezuma Wetlands Complex (MWC) is a mosaic of 50,000 acres of federal, state and private lands. The complex is N.Y.'s single most important wetland complex. A National Wildlife Refuge encompasses the southern-most part of the complex. Gorby reviewed DU's long history of restoration work at MWC. The current project is the Northern Montezuma Wetlands Complex Phase IV being accomplished through North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant funding. It includes several hundred acres of wetlands restoration, enhancement and/or acquisition.

Overall, MWC projects have leveraged \$663 million dollars through many partnerships. Progress includes total restoration and protection of 17,000 acres of wetlands – mostly continentally important wetland habitat. Accomplishments also include waterbird and shorebird habitat enhancement, and addressing forested wetlands with an overall biodiversity theme. Projects in the complex also address controlling spread of invasive species. One of the key project challenges is that existing communities of invasive species are impacting which sites are chosen for restoration.

Three questions were raised:

- A reference was made that NYSDEC holds title to property – under what regulatory authority? Gorby indicated that this is spelled out in the Environmental Impact Statement and the project's Management Plan – it allows parcels to be acquired by the state; it also part of the open space plan.
- How can BNR access DU resources? Gorby responded to contact him. He added that the Buffalo Niagara area did not fall into top priority areas for DU. They look at projects on a case-by-case basis.
- How would tax provisions be assessed? Gorby replied this is NYSDEC's responsibility. There is no system in place to reimburse local municipalities.

**Lynn Schnurr** of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation provided an overview of the East River Marsh (ERM) Wetland Enhancement Project at Beaver State Park. A revised site plan for the project was developed in 2001 and implementation occurred in 2003. ERM is part of a 400-acre freshwater system in the Upper Niagara River. It is part of NYSDEC's remedial action plan. The area includes significant coastal and fish habitat, however it has been hampered by deteriorated marina structures and shoreline erosion from boat wakes.

Schnurr reviewed project objectives of which the six principles of EBM were applied. Restoration work included installation of an earthen jetty to protect against erosive forces, water access structures, and creation of off-shore barrier islands and kettle ponds that were dug into the existing marsh and allowed to fill with Niagara River water. The kettle ponds provide valuable habitat for important wetland wildlife and emergent vegetation.

The work focused on a suite of target species, including some that were considered threatened. The project also incorporated installation of new recreational features. Although monitoring was to have taken place annually to determine long-term effects of the restoration work, it was inconsistent due to staff changes, under-staffing and funding issues. Schnurr outlined the challenges and lessons learned from the project.

Challenges were:

- Funding and getting grants for monitoring;
- Project timeline – too lengthy of a process, with significant lead time required for permits;
- Construction in a fast-moving river;
- Need for consistent monitoring; and
- Applying adaptive management approaches.

Some lessons of merit included being persistent, and focusing on collaboration, communication and clarity.

A question and some comments followed on the project's permitting process: Why did it take four years to get permitting done? Schnurr replied this was due to the large amount of stakeholder involvement and numerous public meetings that were held. Zelazny added that permitting is a big unknown – if there is broad community consensus, this shortens the permitting process. He added that permitting processes are improving in N.Y. State. Gauthier indicated that in other states there are internal conflicts; some recognize it's in the public interest to expedite permitting for restoration projects, while others were contending with conflicting missions. A commenter added that design modifications trigger further permit review and that a centralized database could help "the left hand to know what the right hand is doing." A final comment suggested that a valuable resource to use are local citizens to conduct monitoring, such as bird and amphibian monitoring through Bird Studies Canada and their Marsh Monitoring Program.

Federal agency representatives from NOAA, the USACE, the USEPA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service provided brief overviews of their habitat funding programs and pointed participants to relevant web sites.

Zelazny and Herter (with input from other participants) then provided summary points and next steps that they gathered from the workshop, including:

- The next step should be a group effort and follow-up to workshop; the group needs to utilize a number of state mechanisms such as the Wildlife Conservation Strategy and the N.Y. Ocean and Great Lakes report; the challenge is to bring pieces together and coordinate; the GLRC restoration web tools could help accomplish this;
- They heard a lot of information to help N.Y. move forward on restoration efforts;
- The GLRC database will have critical value – it has already helped identify projects for the NOAA RFP (that came out in early 2009);
- There were a lot of commonalities and institutional issues in projects discussed, plus common visions of what lies ahead;
- The Tug Hill project is a good example on how to get stakeholder input and adapt a project vision to other types of projects;
- Biggest challenge is sharing information – getting organizations at all levels to talk to each other; the community needs to find better ways to do this;
- Need to marshal resources to conduct projects and incorporate into project applications – including pre- and post-monitoring and identifying human and financial resources needed;
- To be more effective, project partners need to be more efficient and do the three c's in earnest: coordinate, collaborate and cooperate;
- The GLRC database will help agencies aim at where NYSDEC will work the landscape; investments in these tools can move projects toward implementation;
- A lot of work has gone into developing visions and objectives; we want to be able to apply this to day-to-day work; like focusing on key ecological attributes and targets.

Gauthier asked if this type of forum should be repeated and if this is something that the N.Y. interagency team should continue. Zelazny replied that there are two things that would be helpful to revisit at workshops around the state: 1) an ongoing update on federal funding opportunities and how N.Y. state programs are engaged in these processes; 2) continuing the lessons learned – e.g., where is adaptive management being used and how it's contributing to the process. Gauthier indicated that federal funding program updates can be done via webinars, using the web tools.

Participants indicated they found it very helpful in hearing about programs from around the state from various agencies and stakeholders. An idea was brought forth to hold an annual gathering or webinar on federal and state funding sources and sharing lessons learned. Such a gathering could also be a time to update project information in the GLRC database. Gauthier concluded that technology will allow us to continue to move forward in a more efficient manner.