



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

2023 Regional Conservation Plan

Regional Conservation Planning Workshop

INTRODUCTION

As part of 2023 Five Rivers' Regional Conservation planning process, a conservation planning workshop was held on June 5th, 2023 to gather stakeholders from local conservation commissions, state agencies, land trusts, and other organizations. The focus of the event was to present the emerging framework for the regional conservation plan, including its holistic analysis of ecological, recreational, and social criteria to help determine future conservation opportunities that benefit both people and nature the most. The information collected at this event directly informed the direction the regional conservation plan took in its development. Approximately 50 people attended the workshop. Small groups discussed a variety of questions related to the emerging framework to shape the conservation plan for the Five Rivers region.

KEY FINDINGS

- All breakout groups supported the holistic conservation framework presented for the Regional Conservation Plan (pictured below). Some reasons provided include:
 - **Democratic process:** Many liked that the criteria for each of the three themes was developed through a voting process by the Five Rivers Board and Land Protection and Stewardship Committee members.
 - **Grant opportunities:** Many could see this as being helpful data to back up grant applications and supports the argument for protecting lands in general.
 - **Compatible with Existing Work:** This framework dovetails with what conservation commissions throughout the region are focusing on.
 - **Comprehensive:** Represents a comprehensive set of data inputs.

Regional Conservation Plan Framework - Holistic Conservation Objectives





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- Each breakout group identified ways that different organizations could utilize the framework to meet their own conservation objectives. This includes:
 - **Data-driven, strategic decision making:** Additional regional conservation data to explore allows communities to make more strategic decisions about future conservation projects and priorities.
 - **Partnership opportunities:** This data allows for new partnership opportunities to be highlighted and identified, especially for resource areas that go beyond municipal boundaries.
- When asked what would help attendees better use the framework or information effectively, the following suggestions were made:
 - **Interactive map:** Many groups indicated it would be helpful to have an interactive map to explore of the data.
 - **Presentation of data:** It would be helpful to spread and present this framework and data widely to community members and local officials.
 - **Collaboration:** Some indicated that Five Rivers could help guide collaboration between communities to accomplish multi-jurisdictional conservation projects.
 - **Access to Funding and Grant Writing:** Understanding the various avenues and opportunities for conservation funding, and increasing capacity for grant administration.
- **Technical support:** Providing technical support to communities on incorporating these conservation objectives into their natural resource inventories.
- Breakout groups discussed how Five Rivers might be able to assist the many partners throughout the region to achieve land protection goals. Some of the following points were discussed:
 - **Enhance connectivity:** Increasing connectivity of protected open space throughout region by having that regional perspective.
 - **Technical assistance to small towns:** Helping smaller communities that are potentially less experienced in managing conservation projects.
 - **Fold holistic conservation objectives into a checklist:** Integrate into checklist criteria to evaluate future projects.
 - **Presentations to boards:** Providing information on this framework, high priority areas, conservation best practices, and tips for landowner outreach through presentations to towns.
 - **Regional gatherings:** Coordinate more regional conservation conversations in the future.