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How information gathered from NETN monitoring programs is used to help guide park management decisions

The I&M Northeast Temperate Network (NETN) collects, stores, and analyzes a wide breadth of natural resource information each and every field season including water quality, forest health dynamics, breeding bird populations, invasive species, and several other monitoring protocols. But does this ever growing mountain of data have any affect on the management decisions that parks need to make from year to year? The short answer is “yes.” This series of briefs explores some of the specific ways NETN aids in the park management decision making process, from providing monitoring data to technical support.

Managing Sustainability.

Unique among the nation’s more than 400 National Parks, part of Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP’s founding mission is to actively manage the park’s forests for timber production and forest health. Not long ago (150 years ago) much of the region was largely deforested, today the Mount Tom Forest is significant as the earliest surviving example of planned and managed reforestation in the country and is a key component of the park’s cultural landscape. It is considered a living exhibit that illustrates the evolution of forest stewardship in America, from the earliest scientific silvicultural practices borrowed from nineteenth-century Europe to contemporary practices of sustainable forest management.

How NETN Helps Inform Park Management

As is common in managed forests, coarse woody debris (CWD) and snag abundance (standing dead trees) are lower than expected for the park’s late-successional hardwood stands. The park also has the lowest density

of trees with cavities in the network, which are important nesting sites for many bird species and provide habitat for some animals as well. The park is actively working to improve these features that NETN monitoring noted as areas of concern, and when possible leaves more snags and CWD on the landscape during and after forestry operations. NETN is also working with the park to merge their ongoing silvicultural inventory efforts with NETN’s forest health monitoring data for the park in part by using NETN monitoring methods to the maximum extent possible. The network is also discussing with the park a “management scorecard” that adjusts forest ecological integrity metrics to reflect progress towards park management goals.

More Information

NETN Forest Health Monitoring web page:
<http://go.nps.gov/forestHealth>

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP 2014 Forest Health Monitoring Resource Brief:
<http://go.nps.gov/MABI-forest>

Park	Structural Stage Distribution	CWD Ratio	Snag Abundance	Invasive Exotic Plants	Deer Browse Indicator Species	Tree Condition/ Forest Pests	Tree Regen	Tree Growth and Mortality
Acadia NP	Caution	Caution	Caution	Good	Good		Good Caution	Good
Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP	Caution	Caution	Caution	Caution	Good			Good
Minute Man NHP	Good	Sign. Conc.	Caution	Sign. Conc.	Good			Caution
Saint-Gaudens NHS	Caution	Caution	Caution	Caution	Good			Caution
Saratoga NHP	Good	Caution	Caution	Caution	Caution			Good

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP uses forest ecosystem health “scorecards” such as the one above to see how it compares regionally and to guide forest management decisions to try to improve habitat and diversity.



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