

CSC Project Synopsis -- 2012

Project Title: Rhode Island Ecological Community Classification (RIECC) Online Guide and Atlas

Goals: One of the core pieces of information land trusts need for the baseline documentation of their properties are the ecological communities on each parcel. With CSC funding, Rick Enser has completed a classification system to use in identifying and describing ecological communities. There are 85 different ecological community types in the Rhode Island Ecological Community Classification (RIECC).

We would like to extend this work to include representative photos of each community type. This will be an aid for land trusts and other conservation organizations as they prepare baseline documentation reports or for anyone interpreting future state maps made using RIECC to make conservation decisions.

1. Promote the use of RIECC by agencies and groups throughout Rhode Island
2. Support the use of RIECC in Baseline Documentation activities of land trusts
3. Support the understanding of maps made using RIECC for conservation and stewardship

Brief Description:

This project will create a website or section of a website devoted to promulgation and use of RIECC. The site will include a download of the RIECC, a guide based on questions asked during its development, and a photographic guide to the ecological communities, including photos of typical examples of each community, photos of important diagnostic plants or other features in each community, and a feedback button that will allow users to ask questions.

The work flow will proceed as follows:

Set up datasheet or simple database (in spreadsheet, MS Access, or other format to be determined) and break down RIECC community information into suitable fields (e.g. name, parent name, diagnostic plants, animals, features) and minimal metadata for images/maps (photographer, location, community represented, date).

Photo Inventory and Reviews – Review available images including from R. Enser, RINHS, and other collections. Engage L. Gould to inventory promising photos from Gould/Stuckey slide collection.

Filling Photo Gaps – Search for images to fill gaps from local naturalists, or obtain new photographs of ecological communities that are not represented in the image inventory. RINHS digital cameras will be used for this part of the project.

Image Scanning and Editing – Prepare high resolution digital image for all chosen images, including as necessary scanning/re-scanning, cropping away distracting elements, color/light balance, and retouching. RINHS slide scanner is available for this part of the project.

Datasheet/database – Fill out all slots in database/datasheet.

Web Site Development and Hosting – A simple web site will be developed that allows the user to navigate the RIECC classification and link to the assembled photographs and other information. This image atlas will be accessible through the RINHS, CSC, and the Land and Water Partnership web sites. A host for the site will be determined based on the architecture of the web page (html versus content

management system). Rupert Friday will notify the land trust community of the availability of the site using the communication systems of the RI Land Trust Council.

Deliverables: The deliverables for this project are:

1. RIECC photo database
2. RIECC photo atlas web site

Timetable and Benchmarks:

Jan-Feb 2012	Set up datasheet and break down RIECC into fields
Feb 2012	Contract with web developer
Feb-April 2012	Collect all available existing images
Mar-July 2012	Field collect additional images as needed
Apr-July 2012	Fill in datasheets, develop web page/site
Aug 2012	Review draft web page/site
Sept 2012	Roll out web page/site

Budget:

Amount	Purpose
\$1750	Contract web developer
\$1500	Student summer stipend (additional time on project in spring will be for class credit supervised by Peter August)
\$1500	To Rick Enser for participation, incl. help with datasheet development and imagery
\$750	To L. Gould to catalog and digitize images of natural communities in the Gould/Stuckey archive
\$500	mileage
in-kind	scanner and cameras from RINHS
\$1000	RINHS administration

Total \$ 7,000

Payment attn to:

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Project oversight will be done by:
Peter August, Professor, Natural Resources Science, URI
David W. Gregg, Executive Director, RINHS.