

# Quick start guide

## Prioritization Tool

### Description

The Prioritization Tool is a web application for identifying the best opportunities to restore rare and threatened habitats for SGCN and other species in the northeast. The goal underlying the development of the Prioritization Tool was to identify areas of degraded habitat having high restoration potential, which if restored would contribute to the network of connected, intact, and resilient sites for biodiversity conservation mapped by the Nature's Network effort. The tool allows users to (1) display a series of prioritization maps developed for a set of pre-defined "scenarios" (e.g., American woodcock), and (2) create their own scenarios using a catalog of nearly 400 metrics.

The basic unit of analysis is the HUC12 watershed, although stream reach catchments are available for smaller geographies. Output datasets from the other Nature's Network work groups, as well as datasets collected from various other partners, are used to determine which HUC12s rank highest for a given scenario. Users can download a spreadsheet or PDF file that summarizes each result.

### Intended uses

- Identify opportunity-rich watersheds for various scenarios
- Supplement local level planning tools by offering a broader, regional context
- Justify and guide actions for restoring or protecting land in the Northeast.

### Get started

Open the website at this link:

<http://www.naturesnetwork.org/data-tools/prioritization>

Select "Access Tool," then select "Get started" in the "Custom scenario" box.

Once you have opened the Prioritization Tool, you can either explore on your own, or follow the guided tour. If you choose to explore on your own, here is a quick introduction for how to use the tool:

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Zoom in to an area you are familiar with. To do this, you can use your mouse wheel, use the plus (+) and minus (-) buttons, or type an address or place name in the bar at the top left of the map. Select the "imagery" thumbnail at the bottom left to toggle the base layer. Select "Create new model" from the right-hand panel to begin developing a conservation or restoration prioritization scenario.

Under "1. Select geography", there are four categories to choose from: regions, states, watersheds, and species ranges. For each general category, there are specific geographic regions available to select in the menu directly below the buttons. In some cases, you may select multiple geographies, with states or watersheds, for example.

Next, under "2. Select planning unit", you may choose to analyze HUC12 or catchment boundaries. HUC12 boundaries are available for all geographic regions. Catchments, however, are only available for smaller areas, such as HUC6 watersheds.

"3. Select metrics" offers four categories of metrics: ecological, species, land use, and conservation. You may select as many metrics to include in your model as you wish.

For each metric you select, you will notice one box added under the "4. Specify weights" section. In each box, there is the following: (a) metric label; (b) circular red icon with an "i" that can be selected to show additional information about the metric; (c) a toggle switch that allows you to make the weighting positive or negative; (d) a weighting box to type a number between 1 and 10; and (e) a button that allows you to remove the metric from the model.

When you are satisfied with your model, click "Get result" to produce your prioritization map. HUC12 analysis typically takes 10-20 seconds, while catchment analysis typically takes 30-60 seconds.

Once your map appears, you may use the vertical slider marked "Display by percentile rank" to select and view subsets of your results. Click on "Models" to see information about your very first custom model. You may generate more models by returning to "3. Select metrics", then "4. Specify weight(s)". You may add or remove new metrics and get new results. Please create another model.

Now scroll to view "Custom model 1" and "Custom model 2", here you may select which side of the map viewer will display results, and you may download results. You also have the option to use your mouse to slide the vertical line dividing the viewer. This allows you to swipe away the top most of your results to view the results beneath. (Note: It is recommended that you rest the percentile rank option to show 0-100.) Please compare your results.

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Click on an individual HUC12. You will notice that the "Results" section of the control panel will open and display a table of information related to the metric(s) you indicated. You are now ready to explore on your own!

### Background

In order to effectively prioritize watersheds for conservation and restoration opportunities, the tool uses the best available regional datasets, collected from other Nature's Network work groups and contributing partners. Each of these datasets is broken down into one or more metrics. For example, a land cover dataset is separated into its component classes (e.g., vegetation, impervious surface), with each class serving as an individual metric. Each metric is summarized by the unit of analysis, the HUC12 watershed and the summaries are standardized on a common scale so that metrics with different units can still be compared. As a result, any number of available metrics can be combined to create customized prioritization scenarios.

### Known issues and Uncertainties

With nearly 400 metrics for analysis, the Prioritization Tool can be overwhelming for first time users. To ensure results are developed and interpreted properly, documentation is provided for every metric when possible. The number of expert scenarios is also limited; in the future, additional expert scenarios will be incorporated into the tool.