Simple vs. complex buffers: Is it practical to incorporate scientific rigour and flexibility into government management systems and on-the-ground implementation?

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This talk will discuss differences in 'simple' and 'complex' buffers in the context of conservation of species at risk lichen and in Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora (ACPF) in Nova Scotia, Canada. In the context of both of these species groups, buffers are used to mitigate human impacts of resource extraction (in the case of lichens) and development (in the case of ACPF). In both cases provincial and municipal governments largely implement 'simple' buffers when managing human effects on natural landscapes. In contrast, the recovery strategies and action plans for these species (developed by and with experts) recommend more complex and rigourous buffers that match with definitions of critical/core habitat. Current management actions (simple buffers) will be even further contrasted with what managing these species could look like in the future where meaningful ecological management is implemented on a case-by-case basis (dynamic buffers). This talk will also discuss what this ecological implementation of dynamic and complex buffers could look like in a variety of government and non-government systems (national parks, provincial protected areas, actively managed provincial land, private woodlots and lakeshore properties).

Keywords: ACPF, buffers, ecosystems, implementation, lichens, scientific rigour, species at risk