

**NCSCP Steering Committee Meeting Summary
June 18, 2014
Weymouth Woods - Sandhills Nature Preserve**

Steering Committee Attendance:

Present

Jon Chase	Chair	Fort Bragg/DPTM
Jay Carter	(Alternate for Phil Doerr)	SEI
Jeff Marcus		TNC
Brady Beck		NCWRC
Pete Benjamin		USFWS
Nancy Talton		SALT
Scott Pohlman		NCDENR/OPCA
Jon Blanchard	(Alternate for Brian Strong)	NC Parks
Mark Bost		NCFS
Dave Heins		Fort Bragg/DPW

Absent

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Other Attendees

Jake Petrosky (Land Design), Neville Handel (TNC), Ryan Bollinger (USFWS ORISE), Susan Miller (USFWS), Jim Dougherty (RLUAC), Barry Hull (SALT), Gretchen Coll (TNC), Hanah Ehrenreich (Sustainable Sandhills), Victoria Vasquez (Sustainable Sandhills), Kacy Cook (NCWRC), Brooke Massa (NCWRC), Anna Stout (NCFS)

Notes

Sustainable Growth Management Strategy Report Presentation: (Jake Petrosky)

- Jake Petrosky gave a presentation on the results of the Ft. Bragg Regional Alliance's Phase II of its Sustainable Growth Management Strategy Report. Jake was one of the facilitators of the steering committee and developer of the report. Jake briefly discussed the history of the Sustainable Growth Management Strategy development, inputs for the growth model, and the creation of a preferred growth scenario. He then provided an overview of implementation strategies to guide growth and development toward the preferred growth scenario.
- Discussion followed Jake's presentation regarding the NCSCP's role and what Ft. Bragg Regional Alliance intends to do with this product.
- Kacy Cook informed the steering committee about new Partners for Green Growth mini-grants administered through NCWRC in support of municipalities and counties implementing green growth elements to land use planning and ordinances.
- Brooke Massa announced a Green Growth Toolbox workshop for Hoke County later this summer.

Biological Monitoring Plan Year 1 Strategy Update: (Ryan Bollinger)

- Ryan Bollinger gave a very brief update on year 1 reporting for the biological monitoring plan. He informed the steering committee that the focus is on longleaf pine mosaic and will be requesting data from partners in the next few weeks.

Longleaf Stewardship Fund Grant Opportunity: (Susan Miller, Jeff Marcus, Ryan Bollinger)

- Susan Miller presented an opportunity that may affect the NCSCP regarding funding for landowner technical assistance and outreach. Local Implementation Teams (NCSCP is an LIT) are being asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding our ability to utilize \$435,000 or more for technical assistance and outreach to landowners. We are being asked to describe the impact of potential funding for helping landowners burn and plant trees, and impacts to NCRS programs such as EQIP.
- A conversation was started about how the money may be utilized in the Sandhills, what match requirements would be, where the best place would be to house a potential LIT coordinator or management team. There was discussion of Invasive Species work, and whether additional partner programs such as Youth Forestry Corps could be a good fit.
- The short turn-around for the questionnaire is Friday the 27th. A consensus was met that the partnership has the capacity and interest in this funding. Jeff, Susan, and Ryan were to move forward with the questionnaire.

Fall Joint GUCP, NCLC, NCSCP Meeting Update: (Susan Miller)

- Susan Miller updated the steering committee on the fall joint meeting with the Greater Uwharries Partnership and the NC Longleaf Coalition to be held on September 10th at the Carthage Ag Center from 10AM – 3PM. The focus of the meeting will be to discuss opportunities for working together and connecting longleaf habitat between the NC Sandhills and Uwharries landscapes.

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Resource Management Working Group – Ryan Bollinger

- A resource managers working group meeting has been scheduled for October 8th. Be expecting a Save the Date email and tentative agenda soon. Goals for the meeting will be to discuss different partner's firing operations techniques, identify partnering opportunities, and discuss lessons learned from this past fire season.

Communications Working Group – Susan Miller

- The CWG has not met recently. However, Debbie asked the Steering Committee to weigh in on the State of the Sandhills report – specifically do we want to produce a document based on a calendar year or fiscal year (and if fiscal, which one). The responses from the steering committee overwhelmingly supported the idea of producing a calendar year report. The State

of the Sandhills report will have two primary audiences (and will be tailored for each), partners within the conservation partnership and the general public.

- As reported at our last meeting, we have content for the report but we need to get it laid out and posted to the website. To do it right, Debbie suggested that we have a graphic designer produce the report. Cost estimates for designing an online publication could cost between \$550 - \$825. The Partnership does not have any operating funds – is there a partner that has capabilities in-house that could do this work?

RCW Working Group – Jay Carter

- 2014 RCW population monitoring activities within SANDHILLS EAST and SANDHILLS WEST are ongoing. Similar to 2013, first nest initiations around the region were late this season.
- Artificial cavity provisioning and intra-population translocation efforts have been conducted within the Moore (MOOR) County focal area 3E within clusters on Safe Harbor in recent years to enhance connectivity between the Sandhills Game Land (SGL) A-Block, western MOOR and Southern Pines/ Pinehurst (SOPI). Recruitment clusters have been established within MOOR 1 and MOOR E02 (McKean), MOOR E01, MOOR E03 and MOOR 21 (Auman), MOOR 7 (SGL) and MOOR 5 (Martin) since 2011. Four juvenile pairs and 2 juvenile females were moved from Fort Bragg donor groups to MOOR focal area during 2 translocation events in 2012 and 2013.
- Potential breeding groups (PBG) have been documented at MOOR 35, MOOR 50, MOOR E01, MOOR E02; the same 4 territories that were occupied by PBGs in 2013. Specific cluster activity and group status data have yet to be determined for all territories.
- Recruitment cluster creation and translocation potential will be pursued at Pinewild Golf Club in late summer / early fall.
- The RCW group found at SOPI Cluster 50 nested within a cavity tree in close proximity to the 4th hole at Pinehurst No. 2. The pair successfully fledged one female young the week of June 9th during the Men's U.S. Open.

Land Protection Working Group – Neville Handel

- TNC is under contract for the 74.4 acre Gozzi Tract in Hoke County, located in the Partnership's Gap focus area.
- TNC is working with three landowners in Hoke County to buy lands that will support the buffering and connectivity strategies of TNC's ACUB agreement. These are the 45 acre Hawkes tract, the 36 acre Danny Downing tract, and the 85 acre Martens tract.
- TNC is working to acquire approximately 7 acres of an inholding (Wesley Day tract) at Antioch Bay in Hoke County, NC.
- TNC is swapping a narrow swath (15.2 ac) of land along the boundary of TNC's Lafayette tract, including a wildlife fence, for the 15.2 acre McCormick Farms "Arrowhead Tract".
- The NC DOT is working with McCormick Farms to potentially swap the 112 acre Marshbanks Tract, acquired by DOT in 2006 for RCW mitigation, for a 91 acre parcel of McCormick Farms.

- TNC and WRC are working together to acquire the 1358 acre Sassafras Timber lands and the 336 acre Catherine Gibson Farm in Scotland County. These properties will become part of the Sandhills Game Lands, and they will help bridge the gap between Blocks B and C.
- WRC is pursuing the 450 acre James Sisters tracts in Scotland County to add to Sandhills Game Lands.

Reserve Design Working Group – Scott Pohlman

- The RDWG last met on January 7. A final draft of the Reserve Design Plan has been completed and will be reviewed at a Reserve Design meeting this summer (date TBD). At the meeting, reserve design datasets will be reviewed and finalized in preparation for the Fall Joint Meeting.

PARTNER UPDATES

NCFS- highlights include:

- No update

AEC- highlights include:

- No update

Natural Heritage- Scott Pohlman, highlights include:

- Clean Water Trust Fund has received 58 million in applications this grant cycle. Unfortunately, only 8 million is available and many good projects will not be funded this round.

USFWS – Pete Benjamin, highlights included:

- Caroline George is a new USFWS employee in Sandhills office. She transferred from the Panama City office, and has an official start date in July. She will be supporting Susan and Partnership related activities.

SALT – Nancy Talton, highlights included:

- SALT is actively pursuing properties in Northern Moore County. Native American settlements and champion trees have recently been found on SALT protected lands.

NC Parks – , highlights included:

- No update

SEI- Jay Carter, highlights included:

- No update

TNC – Jeff Marcus, highlights included:

- Jeff is the new Longleaf Restoration Director for TNC.
- This has been a successful burn season. All seasonal fire crew members have left, but we are hoping to get a few more burns in before season is over.

Ft. Bragg DPTM- Jon Chase:

- Camp Lejeune is working on mapping for air space protection in NC. The Military Advisory Council and Governors Council are working on this and folks are partnering with Dept. of Ag.
- Jon recommended the partnership taking a stand on fracking. He suggested using the state of the Sandhills as a good avenue. Jon will communicate with Debbie Crane regarding this topic.

Ft. Bragg ESB – Dave Heins, highlights included:

- Joe Stancar has recently retired. Rod Fleming is currently acting Forestry Branch Chief.
- Beth Evans has been detailed to the contract service branch.

WRC- Brady Beck, highlights included:

- Jeff Marcus has left his position at WRC for TNC.
- Brady's old position has been back-filled.
- WRC is meeting/exceeding is fire expectations for the season with over 16-17,000 acres burned this year.
- The Sandhills Land Management Plan is pending.
- Kacy thanked NCSCP Partners for the information they provided for the Section 6 Grant applications.

REGIONAL PARTNER UPDATES

Ft. Bragg Regional Alliance:

- No update. Folks were unsure of the funding status of the Alliance.

RLUAC: Jim Dougherty

- RLUAC has been busy reviewing proposed subdivisions (729 reviews in 5 mile area). Subdivision requests are identified as critical to preserve more and more often. Areas that were previously forested, but clear-cuts have been occurring before local zoning regulations take effect.
- Mike Lynch is now serving on Board of Directors for RLUAC
- A robust discussion was initiated from Jim's updates regarding the clear-cutting activities on smaller developments in Sandhills. A project on Midland Roads was described as an example of what is happening. Folks recommended a potential GGT Case Study on development trends in Sandhills.
- Perhaps at a future RLUAC meeting a presentation on development trends, or State of Sandhills update.
- Also an Exemplary Development Award administered through NCSCP as a Partnership stamp of Approval for developments we consider to be compatible with our mission.

Sustainable Sandhills: Hanah Ehrenreich

- Hanah is current Interim Executive Director. SS is focused on Air Quality and Business Credential Programs.
- Hosting farm tours with Parks and Rec. – 750 kids this summer. Experiential learning of sustainable farming
- Fracking and WQ Issues in Cape Fear River
- SS has rights to show "Rooted Land" and looking for locations to show the film.
- Green Schools Program. Have an individual through Keenan Fellowship that has developed a middle-school learning project for hydro-fracking

Other News and Points of Discussion

- Next Steering Committee meeting will be September 10 from 10-3 in Carthage. December meeting to be held in afternoon from 1-4.
- Review and approval of the last meeting's minutes.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:00 PM