

### **RESERVE DESIGN "SOPI" BUFFERS AND CONNECTORS MEETING**

This meeting continues the working group's effort developing detailed site designs for sub-units of the Sandhills. This meeting will focus on the "SoPi" area roughly between West End and the northwest boundary of Ft. Bragg. Activities will include identifying smoke buffers and wildlife connectors specific to our conservation lands and biological targets between and around private and conservation lands.

### **PILOT STUDY FOR CARVER CREEK AREA – (NE FORT BRAGG TO CARVERS FALLS)**

This project arose from the inherent difficulty in "automating" buffers for conservation lands. The intent of the pilot study was to complete the site-specific conservation design in this selected area, and expand the effort across the Sandhills landscape. The Landscape Habitat Indicator Guilds informed the connectors, and ½ mile buffers were the goal for smoke management, with developed areas that would not be suitable buffer removed from the design. Polygons were drawn in GIS based on the group's guidance. The pilot study area provided few connectivity opportunities, and only eight polygons representing connectors and/or buffers were delineated.

Since there was limited apparent opportunity, the group had trouble finding many connectors across uplands), there was some discussion about following riparian corridors as they may be viable connectors. When the group exhausted all potential connectors, the discussion moved to smoke buffers. The group guided completion of the buffers around other conservation lands.

### **RESERVE DESIGN SPECIFIC TO SANDHILLS GAME LANDS –BUFFERS AND CONNECTORS**

The second Reserve Design buffers and connectors meeting focused connecting and buffering blocks of the Sandhills Game Lands. The group started with the area between Blocks B and C. Jeff Marcus commented that it would be advantageous to differentiate buffer vs. connector, so that when we provide information and maps to local governments, we can provide as much specificity as we can. The discussion was prompted by a delineated area that fit both categories. It was resolved that designating as a buffer and connector is not a problem.

The group continued to work around Block C, delineating buffers and connectors, and adding a new potential area as well, where it was noted that west of Block C was some longleaf pine/wiregrass habitat still in decent shape. When Block C was finished, the group worked on Block A.

### **RESERVE DESIGN SPECIFIC TO THE "GAP" –BUFFERS AND CONNECTORS**

The group identified wildlife/habitat connectors and smoke buffers in the Gap and Southern Ft. Bragg. Due to the focus areas being SW of Ft. Bragg, few smoke buffers were identified.