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NCSCP Steering Committee Meeting Summary December 10, 2014 Weymouth Woods - Sandhills Nature Preserve

Steering Committee Attendance:

Present

Jon Chase	Chair	Fort Bragg/DPTM
Phil Doerr		SEI
Jeff Marcus		TNC
Chris Jordan	(Alternate for Brady Beck)	NCWRC
John Hammond	(Alternate for Pete Benjamin)	USFWS
Jesse Wimberley	(Alternate for Nancy Talton)	SALT
Scott Pohlman		NCDENR/OPCA
Jimmy Dodson	(Alternate for Brian Strong)	NC Parks
Anna Stout	(Alternate for Mark Bost)	NCFS
Dave Heins		Fort Bragg/DPW

Absent

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Other Attendees

Caroline George (USFWS), Ryan Bollinger (USFWS ORISE), Susan Miller (USFWS), Jim Dougherty (RLUAC), Barry Hull (SALT), Hanah Ehrenreich (Sustainable Sandhills), Deanna Rosario (Sustainable Sandhills), Kacy Cook (NCWRC), Brooke Massa (NCWRC), Anna Stout (NCFS), Kacy Cook (NCWRC), Mike Lynch, Laura Fogo (USFWS), Phil Wallace (NCFS), Gabriella Garrison (NCWRC), Jackie Britcher (Ft. Bragg ESB), Kerry Brust (SEI), Landon Russell (Walthour-Moss), Norman Minery (Walthour-Moss/Weymouth), Dominick Pagnotta (Walthour-Moss/Weymouth), Jessie Schillaci (Ft. Bragg ESB), Hervey McIver (TNC), Jay Carter (SEI), Alan Schultz (Ft. Bragg Wildlife), Elisa Cooper (Ft. Bragg Wildlife)

Notes

Longleaf Partnership Council Update: (Susan Miller, Anna Stout, Ryan Bollinger)

- Susan Miller gave brief presentation informing the Steering Committee about the structure of America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative, Goals of America's Longleaf, 2013 Range-Wide Accomplishment Report, and what the NCSCP's responsibilities are for reporting and information sharing.
- Anna Stout provided a brief update on how the NCFS and NC Longleaf Coalition collects information
- Ryan Bollinger gave a presentation on new efforts in Sandhills for conducting Longleaf Pine Maintenance Condition Class Assessments in the field.

Questions and Comments:

-John Chase suggested that Ryan acquires the data they have on FB to put into his maintenance assessment.

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-Laura Fogo asked about wildlife assumptions for this model; Ryan says assumptions are made about wildlife and data collection is based on habitat structure.

-Dave Heins: knows that ground cover is important, but don't know if extensive ground cover information has been collected. Do they need to change what they are collecting or are they collecting what we need?

FB question – Jackie...stand level data needed? Or smaller? We are talking about scaling up, large scale view of the habitat

Dominick Pagnotta asked about data exchange and GIS shapefiles? Ryan informed him that it is based on mapped shapefiles of management units with unique identifiers. Will exchange info with Moss Foundation.

Anna – NCFS has point data on management activities, but they are not digitized. Will provide updates on progress.

Biological Monitoring Plan Year 1 Preliminary Results: (Ryan Bollinger)

- Ryan Bollinger gave a brief update on the biological monitoring plan structure. He discussed the year 1 LLP Mosaic monitoring metrics, prescribed fire, Bachman's Sparrow, RCW, and LL Maintenance Condition Class. Ryan presented 5+ year prescribed fire data, Jeff Marcus presented Bachman's Sparrow data, and Kerry Brust presented RCW PBG trends.
 - Final year 1 report will be completed by January.
 - Jackie B. and Jessie S. say that the larger impact areas have been burned recently...maps need to reflect that.
 - **Need updated information from Bragg on their burning
- Jessie S. says they have the same data there; they generate it every year for the RCW yearly data.

Sandhills Game Land Management Plan Update: (Chris Jordan)

- The Management Plan has made it past their chief, now open to the public...comments in by January 16th. If ideas and comments aren't tied to specific GLs then the comments don't count. After that period the plan will go to the commission then it's up to them. Individuals can comment, but Susan asked whether the NCSCP should comment as a group? Susan and Chris encourage others to comment.
- Update on Brady – bone marrow transplant...living in Chapel Hill until about mid-February...has to stay close to the hospital....please sign the card for him.

RCW Translocation Efforts: (Kerry Brust)

- Kerry gave a presentation on translocation efforts from 2012 to 2014, updating on the status of various translocated birds and clusters.
- The SOPI and Pinehurst central area is of concern. RCW Working Group held a meeting this fall to discuss ways to improve conditions there. Lost some birds in , and had multiple clusters with solitary males before translocations.
- Solitary male in CCNC...there was a female in there from the South Carolina Sandhills refuge....70 miles away!!! That's a heck of a jump!

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- Translocation efforts - MOOR E01/02 are experimental clusters with translocated birds.

WORKING GROUP ANNUAL REPORTS

Resource Management Working Group – Jeff Marcus

- Partnering successes: 10 partnering burns in Sandhills (7 WRC, 3 State Parks, 1 Ft. Bragg) over 2,250 acres. *6 additional burns totaling 826 acres with partners outside NC Sandhills
- TNC burning accomplishments : 1,943 ac. burned on TNC and partner lands
- WRC burning accomplishments: 19,441 acres burned
- SP burning accomplishments: 375 acres total: Carvers Creek 324, Weymouth Woods 51
- Ft. Bragg burning accomplishments: 33,936
- MOU between TNC and Fort Bragg in relation to the Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREC) in February 2014 is in progress. Details to be determined.
- Resource managers working group members planned a meeting / field day set for October 8th, 2014. This meeting had to be cancelled due to scheduling conflicts.
- On October 28th, 2014 TNC met with State Parks and NC Forest Service to discuss collaborative management on Carvers Creek State Park.
- In October 2014 Mike Norris and Chris Jordan met to discuss future management plans on the Sassafras Timber Tract including timber management and prescribed burn planning.

Communications Working Group – Debbie Crane

- State of Sandhills Report Finalized. Awaiting design and printing
- 20th anniversary of Safe Harbor event to be held next June.
- TNC will be hosting a Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREC) in February at 4H Camp Millstone. NPR and local/national press will cover it. Media days are scheduled for the event.
- Question was posed what are we going to do for Safe Harbor celebration?

RCW Working Group – Jay Carter

- **SANDHILLS EAST** PBG --- TOTAL 2013 **486** TOTAL 2014 **501 (2.9% ↑)**
- **SANDHILLS WEST** PBG --- TOTAL 2013 **173** TOTAL 2014 **173**
- **Increase of PBGs within NC Sandhills: 659 (2013) → 674 (2014)**
- **2013 SANDHILLS EAST INTRA-POPULATION TRANSLOCATION RESULTS**
- Four juvenile RCW (2 male / female pairs) were moved from Fort Bragg (3 western Fort Bragg and 1 North East Area (NEA) to recipient Safe Harbor clusters MOOR 1 (McKean) and MOOR E03 (Auman) in December 2013. There was no evidence of the pair introduced to MOOR 1 post translocation, nor throughout the duration of the nesting season. However, the pair within MOOR E03 was observed multiple times following the translocation effort and the NEA male remained on territory. The donor female at MOOR E03 disappeared between the spring and summer and was replaced by a first year female from cluster SGL A-96. PBG numbers increased from 4 to 5 and active clusters increased from 5 to 8 between 2013 and 2014 from within the western MOOR subpopulation.
- Recently established recruitment territories MOOR 5 (Martin) and MOOR 7 (SGL Y-Block) were occupied by the summer of 2014 and the persistence of these groups will facilitate future exchange of RCWs between Sandhills West and Sandhills East. Two additional recruitment

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clusters within Pinewild Golf Club (MOOR E04 and MOOR E05) were established in September 2014.

- **2014 SANDHILLS EAST INTRA-POPULATION TRANSLOCATION SCHEDULED**

As many as 8 juvenile RCW will be moved from Fort Bragg donor groups to Southern Pines/ Pinehurst (SOPI) support population during December 2014. Recipient clusters targeted will be recruitment clusters SOPI 108 within Country Club of North Carolina (CCNC) and SOPI 56 (Doral Woods), each to receive a juvenile pair. Solitary male groups at SOPI E05 (Paint Hill Farm – Ives), SOPI 61 and 100 (CCNC) will have juvenile females translocated to their respective territories.

- Kerry -- regional coordination effort **need to raise awareness about the uniqueness of this area...need to ramp up Safe Harbor education and info about the habitat and RCWs. The SH Anniversary would be a good time to get this done. Jay -need a publication that brings the issue of Red Headed Woodpeckers to light so that folks will know about these challenges.
- Debbie- we can address this issue jointly...TNC has some great models to show people what's cool in their backyard. This would be something to be brought up at the SH celebration in the spring/summer. We need to do something here that ties with the national level...but not necessarily us being involved with the national campaign.

Land Protection Working Group – Jeff Marcus

- 2 tracts/ acres: Gozzi, Hoke Co, 74.4 acres, \$446,160; Day, Scotland Co- Antioch bay, 7.3 acres, \$9,335
- Totals for # acres protected identified by reserve design: 74.4 acres
- Length/acreage of riparian corridor protected conservation focus areas:
 - 0.5 miles
- Conservation easements (1 tract/ 114 acres):
 - TNC: Studenmund easement, Richmond Co 114 acres, \$140,000 donation
- FY14 was a relatively slow year for land acquisition. The reasons included reduced funding in state trust funds, effort restricted within some state agencies by agency leadership, staff turnover, and landowner willingness & timing.

Reserve Design Working Group – Scott Pohlman

- 73 acres of buffer/connector habitat protected (Gozzi), and 1474 acres conserved within Reserve Design priority areas in FY 2014 (Sassafras Timber Acquisition and Studenmund Easement)
- 2 field trips held to conduct potential upland habitat surveys in Winter/Spring 2014.
- 1 meeting held to finalize datasets and Reserve Design Plan and in August 2014.
- Latest Reserve Design Data presented at the Joint NCSCP / Greater Uwharries Conservation Partnership, and NC Longleaf Coalition meeting held in September 2014.
- A Joint meeting between LPWG and RDWG is planned for early Summer 2015
- Working with Ryan to finalize Reserve Design map. Will work to evaluate maintenance condition class on private lands. Need the most up to date data, but will get that within the next several weeks and will send a final Reserve Design Working Group Plan out to the steering committee.

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PARTNER UPDATES

NCFS- Phil Wallace, highlights include:

- Its tree planting season.. NCFS were able to hire Mike Harbison as an outreach coordinator for NRCS to help implement LL practices under EQIP. He is working with Kevin Williams and will be working on mentoring for RX fires, offering a RX course at Jones Lake State Park that will be limited to landowners 30-35 ppl.
- Anna applied for a grant from the forest service for Longleaf Training

AEC- highlights include:

- No update

Natural Heritage- Scott Pohlman, highlights include:

- Looking for people to help test this new way to deliver their information. (a new tool)...looking for beta testers. The secretary of DNR is moving over to the Dept of commerce.

USFWS – John Hammond, highlights included:

- The red knot is going to be listed as threatened. Pete Benjamin is working on red wolves. There should be a determination by next month as to the status of that species. In the spring they will start to look at Critical Habitat for the red knot. Joe Pittman with USFWS is retiring.
- Laura- %5 of some fund is going towards special aquatics projects

SALT – Jessie Wimberley, highlights included:

- SALT was approached by Kevin Williams (Moore County NRCS) regarding a NFWF grant opportunity working with NRCS. The focus would be a 6 county area in the Sandhills. Conducting outreach efforts for landowners. Need the support of the partnership to make it possible. Jeff Marcus is trying to put together a meeting to coordinate efforts and avoid duplication of efforts.

NC Parks – , highlights included:

- Identified the need for an invasive biologist and a biologist to focus on the state parks. They have filled this position, a two-in-one biologist to cover the whole state. There are 3 regional biologists. Lake Wacamaw restoration projects are beginning. These areas will go back to their original habitat and what is appropriate historically. Carvers/Weymouth – TSI work...need to ramp up the Rx fire in these areas. Fire frequencies across the state should be as frequent as here. Hydrilla was found in the Cape Fear River...and at least down to Lillington. Look for it if you are around a body of water. This will be a new ecological challenge coming down the pipe. Goose Creek restoration planning being written.
- SEI- Jay Carter, highlights included:
- Vivian left SEI and is now working at Camp Lejeune. SEI trying to find a replacement, and figure out funding. There are a few more birds to relocate.
- Phil Doerr- referencing the RCW report...locating funding for these activities will continue to become an issue. Asking Chris about the management plan...is there anything we can help advocate for, if there was a need. Engineering and land management...the amount of money is enormous to fix roads...that money could be spent in other areas....too much money budgeted for roads, that \$ could be used to support conservation.
- Phil thanked all the folks that are picking up the work that Brady is unable to perform currently.

TNC – Jeff Marcus, highlights included:

- Katie Sauerbrey was hired this fall as the new ORISE. She will be working on land protection and land management projects.

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- TNC recently hired the Statewide director of science, Dr. Liz Kalies. She has a lot of pine forest experience.
- referencing the RCW report....locating funding for these activities will continue to become an issue. Asking Chris about the management plan...is there anything we can help advocate for, if there was a need. Engineering and land management....the amount of money is enormous to fix roads...that money could be spent in other areas....too much money budgeted for roads, that \$ could be used to support conservation...thanking all the folks that are picking up the work that Brady is unable to perform currently.

Ft. Bragg Wildlife- Alan Shultz:

- Don Cockman from the Sandhills Refuge is retiring. He was the assistant refuge manager.

Ft. Bragg DPTM- Jon Chase:

- Garrison Commander Co. Sandborn is retiring and will be the new city manager in the village of Pinehurst.
- FB military commander's conference is trying to designate airspace as "significant military airspace" and to give the land under it special treatment.
- Needs to give something to the governor to bring to the legislature to show that NC is the most military friendly state in the country.
- Current Chief of Staff of the Army Brian Gossage (??) DEPT of Ag. wants to know what is of interest to Bragg that is of interest to Ag. Bring any issues that would fall under this...there is a friend that can help push these issues. If you are putting in for something with this money, let John know and he will get the garrison commander to send a letter with it for the proposal packet. **the legislature decided not to fund land management plans. How about Bragg shares their land management plans around Bragg? Seemed receptive to that idea of land management plans (Brian) DOA----let him know and he could help.
- Re-doing the TNC and SALT ACUB Agreements. This shows that the army wants to continue their relationship with those two partners. (LL/RCWs)

Ft. Bragg ESB – Dave Heins, highlights included:

- Ft. Bragg facing staffing challenges. Might bring on ORISE folks. The command has changed their approach to contracting to include vehicles and data collection. Folks are getting geared up to burn. Their plans are to burn mostly in the dormant season because of their large fuels loads.

WRC - Chris Jordan, highlights included:

- 75% done with their Forest Stand Inventory...end product in April.
- Getting ready to burn
- WRC has a new shooting range at Camp Millstone.
- They have 2 burn techs now and 2 more in the spring.
- Gabriella – still learning/new. working on the eastern pipeline...trying to minimize the impacts...solar farms seem to be popping up everywhere. They are trying to figure out how to coordinate this since small solar farms are turning up everywhere. Used to be in fields, but now in forested areas...problems is with that some of these properties are so large that from the air the panels can look like water to the birds and then that causes problems...the state needs new

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law and rules...lots in Moore and Scotland county have had a ton of activity recently. John says that RULAC in his area does review solar projects for impacts to military operations. Kacy says there are state development standards that could help minimize impacts for habitat and animals. Gabriella will send NCSCP the map for regional solar issues.

- Brooke Massa- 2 Day shortleaf pine management workshop May 12-13th.

REGIONAL PARTNER UPDATES

Ft. Bragg Regional Alliance:

- No update.

RLUAC: Jim Dougherty

- Jim working on proposed cell towers.
- On RLUAC homepage, a presentation about the tour of Ft. Bragg from September. The presentation has great pictures of Partner folks we can look at.
- RLUAC has elected new officers. Three new folk, chair, co-chair and secretary.
- Water resources issue...plans to take water from the Cape Fear region and put it in the Neuse. Also fracking proposals are occurring. Both are major water quality concerns.
- RLUAC next meeting is in February.

Sustainable Sandhills: Hanah Ehrenreich

- Hanah discussed Climate Solutions University, which is a program that discusses climate and planning process and migratory patterns for people who are displaced from micro climate changes.
- Partnership meeting in early January
- Sustainable Sandhills has a new website (<http://www.sustainablesandhills.org/>).
- A new youth program set up to start soon. Need 5 students, they have 3 so far.
- Update on Green schools program
- State ethics commission new draft rules on hydro fracking

Other News and Points of Discussion

Steering Committee meeting will be March 4, June 3, September 2, and December 2.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:00 PM