

Joint NCSCP, GUCP, NCLC Meeting Summary
10AM – 3:30PM
September 10, 2014
Moore County Agricultural Center, Carthage

Attendance:

Nearly 60 individuals were in attendance.

Notes

Welcome / Organization Updates (Susan Miller)

- NC Sandhills Conservation Partnership (Susan Miller)
- Greater Uwharries Conservation Partnership (Crystal Cockman)
- NC Longleaf Coalition (Anna Stout)

Connecting GUCP and NCSCP landscapes

Ryan Bollinger presented the NC Sandhills reserve design datasets. The data was presented in two Tiers. Tier 1 data is the most important to conserve and has the most accuracy in mapping. Tier 2 is also important to conserve but contains more generalist species in the longleaf landscape.

Kacy Cook Presented the Greater Uwharries Conservation Landscape data. GUCP used the biodiversity habitat modeling statewide tool. Map priorities are in order of regional significance. GUCP ranked their conservation targets – species and habitats that are significantly more threatened in the range ranked highest. Relatively low rate of development allows for more opportunities for conserving land. GUCP also mapped occurrence of LLP in Uwharries NF – also lots of areas available/appropriate LLP restoration.

Ryan Bollinger then presented longleaf pine associated element occurrences such as recent and historical observations of RCW, Bachman's sparrows, fox squirrel, N. pine snake, pygmy rattlesnakes and pine barren tree frogs in the Uwharries, Sandhills and in the gap.

Jeff Marcus – TNC landscape resilience analysis. Local connectivity i.e. are these places that species could move easily across and what type of habitat is present. Drowning Creek corridor, Peedee River corridor both rank very high as paths for movement. Hwy 220 very difficult to deal with.

Anna Stout presented the Longleaf Pine Suitability Model. Data related to restoration and conservation mgmt. Also identifies areas where LLP is competitive economically. Working forests could provide long term conservation and provide habitat. Sites in Chatham, Randolph and Montgomery counties surprising category 1 sites (good LLP sites). Contact Anna if interested in using the model. Support tool available by end of the year.

Deborah Walker – Uwharries NF Forest Management Plan is complete – restore forest, manage cultural resources, recreation opportunities. Goals: Oak/hickory restoration & LLP restoration. LLP efforts focused on the southeast corner. Fire largest component of restoration work. Future plans – rare species protection, opening stands through fire.

Reaching Private Landowners

John Ann Shearer – Partners for Fish and Wildlife focused on habitat restoration. With 90% of lands in private ownership, Partners for Fish assists private landowners with habitat restoration. Mission aligns with The Longleaf Alliance. Partners work within key focal areas with TNC, private landowners and Safe Harbor.

Laura Fogo – Piedmont LLP important for biodiversity and focus on restoration in the remnant communities. Laura focuses on Partner projects in the Piedmont region. Please reach out to Partners for assistance with any projects.

Kevin Williams (Moore County District Conservationist) discussed the successes of NRCS Farm Bill programs in Moore County. LL in Moore CO \$270k. Requirements to qualify for the program – landowners must have a forestry management plan. Brad Allen writes most of the management plans. Longleaf initiative → pushing folks to Safe Harbor

Jeff Marcus - 300K NFWF grants supporting prescribed burn crew, private landowner outreach. NWTF targeting landowners with LLP and recruit them for restoration, workshops and funding. TNC has this funding and would welcome feedback and advice on how to add value to the work being done in the Sandhills.

NCLC Illustris Palustris Award Presentation

Congratulations to Boon Chesson as recipient of the 2014 Illustris Palustris Award!

Key Note Speaker: Bob Franklin (Longleaf Alliance)

Please submit concerns and lessons learned to the Longleaf Leader newsletter. Lessons learned – 45 yr rotation, 500-600 trees per acre, containerized LLP seedlings, chemical site prep. Do not bury bud with containerized LLP. Fire very important – cannot burn LLP enough. Important to get competition control early in the process. Releasing young LLP 4-5 years from hardwoods can be very difficult. Try to use fire as much as possible early after planting – young LLP will survive the fire more so than heavy chemical spraying. Old fields = very difficult (weeds, competition, spacing and fertility leads to bushy/longer needle LLP that are more susceptible to damage from ice). Get fire in as early and as often as can. If smoke management is going to be an issue may not be worth planting LLP here. Audiences are encouraged to attend 10th Biennial Longleaf Conference in Mobile, AL this October.

Bob takes our questions: What nurse crop to use on old Ag fields? Residual fertility is the problem, might be better to let land lay fallow for several years in order to leach fertility and lower pH. Burning will allow the beneficial groundcover to come back up. Amazing what is still in the seed bank. Try to limit the amount of scalping and furrowing for planting. Get weeds under control before plant. Gary Peters recommends planting warm season grasses and then just burn for several years.

Are landowners interested in rehabilitating stands? Yes they are. Fire suppressed communities can benefit from midstory removal but don't overdue a treatment of chemicals once the young hardwoods come back. Takes time and you will lose mature LLP if put chemicals in too fast.

Janet – old homesteads, farms never really rebound to LLP. Paper by Mattingly (Fort Bragg) discusses management recommendations.

Emphasis on growing season fire for reducing hardwoods – even mature ones.

If you don't do any chemical control – scalping and subsoiling is the way to go if planting LLP. High survival of LLP but will need to burn very soon after planting to control weeds.

Facilitated Open Discussion (Susan Miller and Ryan Bollinger)

- DOT Wildlife Underpass I-73 (Laura)
- Need to create core areas in Uwharries – building outwards from National Forest, Black Ankle Bog and other protected areas (Jeff)
- Create core area before start working in the gap (Jeff)
- Core area of Uwharries needs fire/restoration, Uwharries is lacking funding to involve private landowners (Kacy)
- Military training in Uwharries may provide funding (Kacy, Susan)
- Private land use planning and smart growth may be best strategy for Uwharries region (Jeff)
- Limited by resources and people to burn in the Uwharries (Forest Service)
- Need funding for surveying and restoration and then transition into acquisition (Kacy)
- South Atlantic LCC – Conservation Blueprint tool, want to create forum for partnerships (Louise)
- Find ways to reduce liability for landowners, if we can find ways to make fire more economical and viable, can we turn biomass into a revenue stream for landowners (Jesse)
- Need to get consulting foresters on board, they are not comfortable with burning or with alternatives and innovative ideas to midstory reduction (Forest Service)
- Need more landowner workshops, outreach events (Les)
- Data isn't there regarding where LLP should be or where remnant LLP are located (Gary)
- Longleaf Academies are very helpful, please encourage private consultants to attend (Julie)
- New winter Longleaf Academy this winter in SC on prescribed fire, 3rd week in February (Bob)
- Connectors even with highways through the middle are still important. Be mindful of the developments that spring up around roads. Not all movement will be limited and a corridor is still very important. If you wait too long you will have no chance of connecting in the gap due to development – now is the time to act. (Julie)
- Need wildlife crossing at 211 now before they expand the road. (Nell)
- Lots of landowners on headwaters of Drowning Creek interested in conservation but no funding for SALT to pursue. (Jesse)
- Sandhills partnership, please consider properties in the western portion of range for acquisition as expansion opportunities to help connect landscapes. (Kacy)
- Stevens Amendment for funding to work on private lands surrounding other federal lands. (Roger)

- Is there a corridor already present with Partners projects, NRCS, feds and others? Due to privacy acts we may not even realize that there is a corridor present. (Laura)
- Invite NCDOT to these meetings in order to participate in discussion. Could lead to positive relationship and addition of acreage to conservation areas. (Jay)
- We need to also participate at the county level with DOT planning. (Dan)
- Dan Thomas at DOT in Raleigh is a great contact. (Kacy)

What are our next steps?

- Gary – work with SC LIT, focus on eco-regional rather than only working within state boundaries
- Potentially meet once a year
- Need forum for sharing success stories/lessons learned (Deborah)

Other News and Points of Discussion

- Sept 24-25 SC Rx fire council at Clemson
- 15-28 Feb TREX at Camp Millstone in Richmond Co.
- SALCC - workshops in Raleigh in Feb.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:30 PM