

NCSCP Steering Committee Meeting Summary
March 9, 2016
Weymouth Woods - Sandhills Nature Preserve

Steering Committee Attendance:

Present

Notes

NCSCP Update: (Matthew Moskwik)

- There have been several research projects in the Sandhills, including work on Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and ephemeral associated amphibians.
- A condition class assessment of longleaf pine took place in 2015 with mixed results. A working group has been created to review the results and refine the methodology.
- Over 1700 acres of land were protected in 2015.
- Potential longleaf upland surveys are currently taking place.

GUCP Update: (Brooke Massa)

- Brooke provided an overview of the partnership, because many in the audience may not be familiar with it.
- 11 organizations in the partnership.
- The mission is to work for the long-term conservation and protection of the Greater Uwharrie region.
- GUCP has developed a plan with 6 goals to further their mission.
- There are 4 working groups.

NCLC: (Anna Stout)

- NCLC led the collection of data for the 2015 accomplishment report. It has not been released.
- The coalition has started a website with data and information for land managers.
- Another major goal is public outreach. They have had a number of workshops across the state and are planning to hold some in 2016 in North Carolina and Virginia.
- The organization is undergoing a five-year review to analyze ways to become more effective at implementing their mission.

Military Compatible Land Use Project: (Chuck Church)

- The clean water trust fund has money set aside for military buffers, so an online tool has been developed to display the overlap between conservation and military regions.
- The online tool (NC Land Advantage) examines basic parcel information, military interests, and environmental characteristics of parcels across the state.
- The online tool also has the ability to display the various environmental and military data layers at the state level.

- Future work will involve mapping in several grant program areas. This feature will help conservation efforts locate funds for land protection and/or management.

Green Growth Toolbox: (Kacy Cook, Brooke Massa)

- The toolbox is a non-regulatory guide and technical assistance program for integrating priority wildlife habitat conservation in local government land use and comprehensive planning.
- The online tool provides maps of priority habitat areas.
- The conservation regions are based on the NC Natural Heritage Data.
- There are similar programs across the country.
- A study of the effectiveness of the program has showed positive results with landowners attending workshops and elected officials acknowledging that the program/toolbox is a priority.

Prescribed Burn Association: (Jesse Wimberley)

- An association has recently been organized for the Sandhills and Uwharries to help private landowners obtain training and resources.
- The first meeting took place in early February and approximately 95 people attended, including 75 landowners representing 15,000 acres.
- At the meeting, a steering committee was assembled.

Recent NFWF Accomplishments/Landowner Outreach: (Jeff Marcus)

- The Longleaf Legacy Program provided 8.7 million dollars for stewardship of longleaf pine.
- Previous grants (2014 and 2015) allowed TNC to expand its seasonal fire crew and enter into contracts with private companies for restoration work.
- TNC has partnered with the National Wild Turkey Federation to identify private landowners that need help managing their land for longleaf.
- TNC has put in a NFWF grant proposal for 2016.

Connecting Longleaf across North Carolina (Matthew Moskwik)

- The Nature Conservancy has established a working group which identified stands/blocks of longleaf pine across North Carolina.
- Each block was also categorized by its resiliency and then a connectivity model applied to identify the least cost distance corridors between blocks.

Identification of Restoration Sites for a Fire-dependent Bird in an Urbanizing Environment (Brad Pickens)

- A species distribution model was developed for Bachman's Sparrow.
- Future urban development and fire suppression could lead to a decline of the number of patches that can support Bachman's Sparrow.

PARTNER UPDATES

NC Prescribed Fire Council

- Annual meeting on Aug 16-17 in Plymouth, NC.

Fort Bragg

- Fort Bragg is moving to a more holistic approach to species management. The plan is to increase habitat for game and military training exercises.

TNC

- A group of college students is planting longleaf on conservation properties near Fort Bragg.

WRC

- Good gopher frog reproduction in Sandhills and Camp LeJeune this spring.

US Forest Service

- Currently closing on a new property in the Uwharries. Plans to close on additional properties.
- Southern pine beetle and long-eared bat studies are currently taking place.

NC Forest Service

- Working on a project to quantify the economic and ecological impacts of pine straw racking.
- Conducting a survey of landowners to see whether there has been an increase in ips bark beetle activity due to straw racking.
- Legacy Project proposals will be requested soon.

US Fish and Wildlife Service

- Working on a species status assessment for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers.

Natural Heritage

- Please continue to contribute data.

National Wild Turkey Federation

- A new position is being created and will be filled soon.

Sustainable Sandhills

- Looking for a management film for their series.
- Recently partnered with Green Travel.

South Atlantic LCC

- Conservation Blueprint 2.0 has just been released.

RULAC

- Working on a land-use study.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:30 PM