

March 30, 2009

Resource Management Working Group Meeting Summary

Susan Miller reviewed the notes from August 5, 2008 meeting. Currently the MOU for members is being routed through the different agencies, and finalization of signatures is expected soon.

The list of research topics from the August 5 meeting notes was discussed. If members of the group have an interest in any of these projects (or others) they are encouraged to pursue. Mark Bost with NCDFR and Mike Norris with the Nature Conservancy will pair up to work on a couple of the projects. A project to study the impacts of deer populations on rare plants in the Sandhills area was of some interest. Mark Bost referenced the work Duke University had done on their property in Durham/Orange Counties and Pete Campbell mentioned the problem that exists on deer browse on a rare flower at Weymouth Woods State Park.

The need for Certified Burner training was discussed again. Due to budget restrictions, NCDFR will only hold 1 class this year that will be on October 27 and 28 of 2009. Mark Bost will try to encourage DFR to consider Sandhills area as a possible location due to high interest in this area.

A MOU between the Nature Conservancy and NC State Parks for helping each other with prescribed burning was passed around. More opportunities for this type of partnership are needed.

The need for continued efforts to work with private landowners to fend off development pressure was discussed. Setting up landowner tours with partnership from County Cooperative Extension offices was discussed as a way to try to encourage landowners to manage their land. This is already being done in several Counties in the Sandhills area on a limited basis. Recent state budget restrictions may make this effort difficult in the near future.

A.B. Crawford mentioned problems associated with land acquisition with the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Program. The problem of contacting landowners was mentioned and Mark Bost suggested that the Army draft a paragraph that could be included in management plans prepared by NCDFR in the area of interest that would notify LO's of the potential to sell their property to the Army. The problem of excessively high land prices that do not correspond with appraisals was also mentioned by Mr. Crawford as a major obstacle to land acquisition for Ft. Bragg.

Susan Miller mentioned the need for a good person to head the Land Manager's Group. Bill DeMay and Kevin Crawford were mentioned. If members have other good nominations please let Susan know.

Cost Share assistance opportunities were discussed. It appears that due to budget problems the state may not fund the Forest Development Program, which is the primary forest establishment program used. Fortunately, it also appears that there may be cost share assistance opportunities available through the EQIP. NRCS and NCDFR will have a training this week (April 2nd) on the details of the EQIP and how the program relates to forest management cost share assistance opportunities.

The group discussed the need and possibility of setting up a Forest Management "self-guided" tour for private landowners to see management work being done in their area on property similar to theirs. Landowners could be directed to locations where they could see forest management work (Ex. longleaf pine restoration, prescribed burning, thinning, wildlife habitat improvement, etc.). The group discussed associated problems with landowner liability and the need to have the tracts visible from a public road so that landowners would not have to drive or walk on other people's property. A flagship trial may be set up in Hoke County where land owner by Julian Johnson, Nature Conservancy, or Ft. Bragg could be used.

The next meeting will be on July 15th, 2009 (Location and time TBA).