

**NCSCP Steering Committee Meeting Summary  
September 2, 2015  
Weymouth Woods - Sandhills Nature Preserve**

Steering Committee Attendance:

Present

|                 |                               |             |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Chris Jordan    | (Alternate for Brady Beck)    | NCWRC       |
| Susan Miller    | (Alternate for Pete Benjamin) | USFWS       |
| Jay Carter      | (Alternate for Phil Doerr)    | SEI         |
| Anna Stout      |                               | NCFS        |
| Jeff Marcus     |                               | TNC         |
| Scott Pohlman   |                               | NCDENR/CPCA |
| Jesse Wimberley | (Alternate for Nancy Talton)  | SALT        |

Absent

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| Jon Chase     | Fort Bragg/DPT |
| Dave Heins    | Fort Bragg/DPW |
| Jon Blanchard | NCDPR          |
| Susan James   | USAEC          |

Other Attendees

John Hammond (FWS), Mark Hamlet (NCWRC), Debbie Crane (TNC), Chuck Church, Stephanie Wagner (SALT), Kevin Crawford (Fort Bragg), Gabriella Garrison (NCWRC), Kerry Brust (SEI), Caroline George (USFWS), Ryan Bollinger (LLA), Gretchen Coll (TNC), Barry Hull (Fort Bragg), Kevin Williams (NRCS), Kyle Briggs (NCWRC), Rex Badgett (NCDOT)

**Notes**

**Gary T Myers Bird Conservation Award: (Susan Miller)**

- We received this award in 2013 but it was never sent until recently. This award highlighted our work in the Sandhills that essentially doubled the number of RCWs.
- Additionally, our land protection and restoration efforts were noted in the award letter.

**NFWF 2016 Grant Proposal Update: (Jeff Marcus)**

- TNC is in the process of planning for the 2016 NFWF longleaf grant season.
- These are two year grants that require 50:50 cost sharing.
- TNC has received two of these grants in the past, specifically in 2012 and 2014.
- For the 2016 grant, TNC will be partnering with SALT to reach landowners who may have an interest in managing and/or restoring their properties for longleaf.
- There was some interest in requesting funds for Longleaf Alliance workshops and a fire festival in the Sandhills. Specifically, Jeff wanted to see if a partner would be willing to take the lead on a fire festival.

#### **Prescribed Burn Association in the Sandhills: (Jesse Wimberley & Susan Miller)**

- A survey of private landowners in the Sandhills was conducted to determine whether there is an interest in managing private lands for longleaf.
- Landowners had a high amount of interest in managing their lands for longleaf, but lack a comprehensive management plan.
- Overall, most respondents expressed interest in a prescribed burn association and would like to be contacted by a natural resource professional to discuss their assistance needs.

#### **LIT Coordinators Meeting Summary: (Ryan Bollinger & Susan Miller)**

- America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative identified Significant Geographic Areas in 2008 and there are now 17 Local Implementation Teams (LIT) working in those areas and many more.
- At the end of July, 15 of the 17 LIT coordinators met in Tallahassee to share ideas.
- Major ideas that emerged from the meeting include developing conservation plans and strategic priorities.
- Additionally, there is a need for coordinating LIT efforts with state-wide teams.
- There is also a need for NRCS engagement and the development of tools for LIT information sharing.

#### **Ephemeral Wetland Monitoring: (Matthew Moskwik)**

- The monitoring plan has several objectives. Specifically to inventory, monitor, and assess the habitat quality of wetlands in the Sandhills.
- Additionally, Matthew presented some connectivity models which showed specific wetland and upland areas that were important for maintaining a connected landscape.
- When fully implemented, the plan will help to identify wetlands and upland areas in need of restoration and/or protection.

#### **Sandhills Game Land Road Project Update: (Mark Hamlet & Kyle Briggs)**

- NCWRC stated that they could have done a better job of communicating with the partnership about the road work that was planned for the Game Lands.
- Most of the road work is now complete. The work that was done was based on the SGL management plan (with public input) needs that were previously identified.

#### **Condition Class Assessment: (Matthew Moskwik & Jeff Marcus)**

- The condition class assessment has been completed on all TNC properties in the Sandhills.
- Currently it is being applied to the Moss Foundation and state park lands.
- Future efforts will be on the Sandhills Game Lands.
- A habitat quality index has been created which can be used to rank stands of longleaf. This index is currently in the process of being modified.

#### **WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

**Resource Management Working Group** – Chris Jordan

- . A meeting will be held in a few weeks.

**Communications Working Group** – Debbie Crane

- An event will be held on November 7, 2015 at the Moss Foundation. It will be celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Safe Harbor program.
- There will be displays about red-cockaded woodpeckers, prescribed fire, wildflowers, and wildlife of the Sandhills region.

**RCW Working Group** – Kerry Brust

- Work has continued on recruiting birds into clusters south of Pinehurst with the goal of improving connectivity between RCW sub-populations west and east.
- Data for the 2015 field season is currently being compiled.

**Land Protection Working Group** – Jeff Marcus

- One property has closed since the last partnership meeting (Buckrub).
- There are several properties that are in the process of purchase or being placed in easement.

**Reserve Design Working Group** – Scott Pohlman

- Scott Pohlman, Mike Schafale, and Matthew Moskwik met on August 27 to discuss possible next steps in implementing the conservation plan for the Sandhills.
- A conservation prioritization model was presented as a potential way to begin this process.

**PARTNER UPDATES**

NCFS - highlights include:

- No update

AEC - highlights include:

- Burned close to 4,000 acres this year.

Natural Heritage - highlights include:

- No update

USFWS – highlights included:

- No update

Longleaf Alliance – highlights include

- A longleaf 101 class will be held soon.
- They are mapping longleaf stands throughout the Sandhills.

SALT – , highlights included:

- Landowner outreach has been a major focus recently (see Prescribed Burn Association topic).

NC Parks – highlights included:

- No update

SEL - highlights included:

- No update

TNC – highlights included:

- TNC's burn season has completed. A burn took place at Back Ankle last week.

Ft. Bragg DPTM- highlights included:

- No update

Ft. Bragg ESB – highlights included:

- Growing season burns have been completed.

WRC - highlights included:

- They reached their burn goal of 20,000 acres.

#### **REGIONAL PARTNER UPDATES**

Ft. Bragg Regional Alliance:

- No update

RLUAC:

- No update

Sustainable Sandhills:

- No update

Meeting Adjourned at 4:11 PM