

**3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Meeting – Cape Fear Arch, Onslow Bight, Longleaf Coalition**  
**21 January 2015 – 10am – 3pm NE New Hanover Regional Library**  
Hervey McIver/Susan Miller – co-chairs Onslow Bight  
Dan Ryan – Cape Fear Arch

**Welcome and Partner Update**

The Nature Conservancy

- Hervey McIver: recent acquisition of 76 acre Godwin Tract – will go to NCWRC Game Lands.
- Applications pending for CWMTF – including Sprunt lands at Orton Plantation (old growth longleaf), & Pioneer tract (connect existing game lands down and upstream).
- Dan Ryan (Wilmington office) – NFWF stewardship grant being prepared to enhance longleaf restoration, engage MOTSU, Bladen Lake State Forest and Orton Plantation in taking restoration to scale.
- Jeff Marcus (restoration of longleaf) – NFWF grants in Cape Fear Arch/Onslow Bight currently funding burning at a greater scale than ever.

Coastal Plain Conservation Group

- Andy Wood: Holly Shelter game lands bullet-ridden trees (RCW habitat), lead contamination-see PowerPoint presentation
- Carson Wood – Implementing Black Rail, Swallow Tail Kites Survey

BHI Conservancy

- Suzanne Dorsey, E.D. We are looking for partners to spearhead research that results in practical solutions for coastal communities.
- Courtney Spears; Conservation Biologist: Deer immuno contraception program continues on BHI. Wildlife projects include: coyotes and foxes, increased shorebird monitoring, USGS partnership for aquifer research, Monitoring for the Terminal groin project
- Emily Harden summer intern and sea turtle coordinator. Just getting started getting started with conservation and education
- Amy Eldredge new Environmental Educator: looking to get people on our island make them aware of our conservation projects and looking for ways to get people to have behavior changes.

NC Forest Service

- Anna Stout- USFS Grant outreach for longleaf pine, longleaf interactive decision support tool. American long leaf annual report coming out soon.
- Jim Slye – forest management plans has been our main focus lately-now charging landowners, prescribed burning season going well
- James West – tree improvement program – massive longleaf crop – highest quality seeds in decades. We also have extensive inventory of major

grasses—seed and seedlings, many might not know this. We are in the crop planting stage so please let us know what you need NOW.

#### North Carolina State Parks- John Blanchard

- Jones Lake preparing site for RCW introductions. Lake Waccamaw – large restoration project, timber sale to get rid of slash/loblolly pine. Bay Tree State Natural area– hardwood removal project. Fort Fisher – predator control for sea turtle nesting. State Natural Areas Biologist/Invasive Species removal – NEW hire

#### Nature Serve – Rickie White

- Ecological integrity assessment – metric space assessments for protocol manual

#### USFWS

- John Hammond: Red Knot – listed as threatened last month; proposed 4D rule on proposal to list northern long-eared bat in response to White Nose disease. Piedmont and coastal plain has some spotty records of WNS in this species. We are looking for more information. 4D gives us flexibility in advising people.
- John Ann Shearer, Partners for Fish and Wildlife program: Working with private landowners. We have projects with TNC and private landowners throughout both partnerships. We continue to get funds for longleaf projects.

#### NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program — Kristen Miguez

- Our project wetland restoration project in BSL is wrapping up. We are ending our monitoring program on that, hoping to have a successful mitigation project there.

#### NCDOT - Dan Thomas

- Will be presenting on long range planning.

#### J Carter and Associates – Jan Goodson

- Work throughout SE, private landowners (big tracts) woodpecker/wetlands/plant surveys, DOT is a big client

#### NC Wildlife Resources Commission

- Jeff Hall: represents NC Herp Society, annual meeting this year at the zoo; also NCPARC who has three working groups (3) that meet throughout year: ncparc.org. Winter amphibian monitoring – gopher frog, salamanders, working with NCAFF (breeding frogs) augmentation of ponds
- John Carpenter: CF Arch executive committee; maintains website (forward events, photos), is collaborating with Univ. Delaware for migratory bird mapping, has a temporary hire to update status of bald eagles nests.

- Richard Clark: central coast biologist – management plans out for review, regulation proposals out for public comment (target shooting on game lands)

#### NRCS –

- Robert Horton: works with private landowners in habitat restoration projects; applications for farm bill now open for CRP (cropland out of production); Environmental Quality Program is reviewing apps and ranking; WRP has received funding.
- Keith Jackson: works primarily with private land owners, focus on professional farmers but also work with LLP. CRP was renewed in the farm bill and we are taking applications for that. If you are dealing with private landowners this might be pretty good options. EQIP: \$17 million for conservation last year in NC, we need more applications for this; Conservation Stewardship Program deadline for applications is Feb 28. Wetland Reserve Program, Coastal NC got 7 million dollars for restoration and enhancement.

#### Environmental Bank and Exchange— Norton Webster

- For profit business focusing on conservation banking, mitigation. Have interest in this area especially

#### USMC New River Air Station – Brian Geller

- Regional storm water project (250 acres of impervious surface) – regional DMP for treatment, looking for funding (several million), first federal project; updating vegetation management plan for aircraft – partner with Army Corps; bald eagle program – 2 more nests (6 total pairs) on Camp Lejeune/Air Station.

#### USMC Camp Lejeune – Tim McCurry

- Met with WRC on Holly Shelter RCW issues and brought that to their attention, currently developing a range on base for personal weapons; continue work on Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (USFWS comments back); RASP program that will encourage private landowners to help recover RCW population has pre-proposals.

#### USACE – Tom Charles (Locks/Dam)

- Lock #1 – 100 year centennial anniversary – need participants from Cape Fear Arch on October 3<sup>rd</sup>; looking for UNCW interns; USACE wants to turn lock and dams over to the state; fish passage at L&D#1 may be tweaked for sturgeon to successfully spawn; still locking fish at #2 and #3; controlled burn planned for hillside; interns have built a rain garden working with boy scouts.

NC Cooperative Extension - Sabrina Woofter, Brunswick Co.

- Backyard naturalist program –goal to convince people that biodiversity is important and there are alternatives to lawns; NCSU – converting old septic tanks (infiltration units for storm water) – Oak Island is funding three

Fort Caswell – Jenny Fuller, Tara Genasy, Haley Gruber?

- Five years into environmental education programs (public, private and homeschool groups).

NC Coastal Federation – Frank Tursey

- Coastal review online – subscribe to source for environmental reporting – coastalreview.org

Fletcher, Toll and Ray Law Firm - Alan Toll

- Attending to network and to see where they can help with anonymous pro-bono work.

National Wild Turkey Federation - Graham Hanson

- Help manage private lands; have project with TNC to sign up strategic landowners with Farm Bill program.

NC Coastal Land Trust — Jessica Blake

- Closed on 670 acres adjacent to Waccamaw State Park; partnering with town of Navassa for a nature park on land we own; still working on advocating NC Tree Farm Program with private landowners; Flytrap Frolic in April open to the public; new interns Carmon and Andrew. They are working on understanding prospects of subdivision within conservation easement portfolio & strategic planning; NCCLT continues to expand partnerships with youth; NCCLT is administering small grant program for pollinator gardens.

NC DENR – Scott Pohlman

- New DENR leadership is coming into place; has become CWMTF field rep for coastal plain.

### Presentations

#### **Susan Miller – NC Longleaf Pine Coalition Overview**

- 2007-2008 momentum building effort for regional longleaf restoration, America’s Longleaf was the catalyst
- 17 local teams across the region for longleaf restoration
- There are overlapping missions of CFA, OBCF, and NC Longleaf Coalition
  - o Longleaf Coalition – started in 2010 – lots of state, private, non-profits, academics involved in steering committee/consulting, want to get everyone on the same page for communication to kick start restoration efforts

- o Goal for longleaf restoration in SE: 3.4 million to 8 million acres by 2025.
- o Current estimate – 4.4 million acres, still need to refine and count acres

**Dan Thomas – NCDOT – Coordinating Transportation with Conservation**

- Transportation planner for 28 years – working on improving transportation planning process particularly pertaining to land use
- Discuss long-range transportation planning in NC and provide knowledge that will help partners become better involved in the planning process
- Transportation plan – series of maps, study report – want to improve documentation
- Goal in transportation planning – understand LOCAL issues, develop better plans, improve coordination (between transportation and land use decisions), identify better projects, use info from planning to make decisions in project development
- Interagency Coordination Protocol – don't have same contacts for long range planning between agencies & other transportation planning efforts
- Long Range Planning Process
  - o Develop plan vision – what they want community to look like in 20-30 years (conservation, etc.)
  - o Conduct Needs Assessment – forecast traffic, environmental/stakeholder data collection, indirect impacts not well planned for (connectivity etc.), somebody at the level of Chief Engineer needs a FT staff person thinking about fragmentation issues (it's a big deal!)
  - o Analyze alternatives – balancing impacts to human and natural environment and meeting community goals and objectives, come up with solution
  - o Develop final plan
  - o Adopt final plan

**Anna Stout – USFS – Longleaf Pine Interactive Decision Support Tool**

- Non-industrial private forest owners owns 78% of NC timberland; ARLI goal of 8 million acres of longleaf range wide.
- Opportunity cost of choosing longleaf – higher establishment expenses, lower economic returns, ongoing cost of prescribed fire
- How to increase longleaf restoration and management on private lands – using GIS decision support tool (National Heritage Program, NRCS Soils Data, USDA, would like more)
  - o Identify areas where growing longleaf is competitive economically compared to other land uses, & less difficult (less competition from loblolly pine and herbaceous species b/c less productive sites
  - o Inputs to model
    - Site index - which species would do best (loblolly v longleaf)

- Capability class – system of grouping soils primarily based on their capability to produce cropland without deteriorating
- Floodplains & Wetlands – longleaf pine doesn't grow well in flooded areas
- o Longleaf site suitability model – used historic range of longleaf + 50 mile buffer
- o Overlaid with National Land cover Dataset with categories from model
- o <http://www.ncmhtd.com/ncfs/longleaf/>

### **Ryan Bollinger – Implementing America's Longleaf LL Pine Maintenance Class Assessments in NC**

- Took 10 Longleaf Pine community types and merged them into one general set of metrics.
- Longleaf maintenance condition class surveying in NC– developed datasheet, created mgmt. units with aerial photography, field visits, met with other stakeholders to align efforts.
- Survey results – test site in Sandhills TNC preserve
- Current strategy
  - o Continue partnerships
  - o Complete TNC preserves
  - o Determine timing of measurements
  - o Developing training and reference materials
  - o Expand surveys to coastal plain

### **Rickie White – NatureServe – Rapid assessment of open pine ecosystems for wildlife habitat and ecological integrity**

- Don't know how much longleaf we have and what are the estimates for high, medium, and low quality are
- Goals – define desired forest condition using metrics, document user friendly protocols for implementing a standard metrics based approach
  - o Targeted community types – open pine stands with a ground cover dominated by native warm-season grasses, and with a diversity of native forbs and low shrubs
  - o Current Metrics – site (structure – canopy, midstory, understory) and landscape level concerns
    - Site/stand metric example – longleaf regeneration evidence
    - Landscape scale metric – percent natural land cover
  - o Next steps – input from team members, develop first draft metrics and values based on input

### **Discussion**

What is the overlap between longleaf metrics (Ryan and Rickie) and decision support tool (Anna)?

NRCS funding longleaf restoration – could there be overlap with Anna’s tool and the conservation management plans? May be some privacy concerns for private landowners

Improve communications – what are the top issues that we (Bight, Arch, etc) can talk about together?

- Boots on the ground doing longleaf surveys – if you see areas for wetland restoration let us know
- Adapting to climate change – how will plant communities change in the coast or inland where rain patterns change, should be taken into account with conservation planning/modeling