



2015

Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative

Meeting Agendas and Minutes

Wednesday Feb. 4, 2015 - Monongahela National Forest Office - 9 a.m.

AGENDA

Call in: 888-844-9904, pass code 9171244#

9:00 – 9:15a

Introductions and update on status of group coordination (Kent Karriker)

9:15 – 9:25a

Introduction of Highlands Conservancy Intern (Dave Saville)

9:25 – 10:20a

2014 Accomplishment Reporting (All)

- Go through draft report and make note of additional items to include

Break – 10 minutes

10:30 – 10:40a

Spruce restoration as a hemlock wooly adelgid mitigation strategy (Amy Hill)

10:40 - 11:00a

2015 Work Plan

- Go through draft and make note of additional items to include

11:00 – 11:15a

Results of Spruce Release Research (Jim Rentch)

11:15a – 12:05p

Status of ongoing/upcoming projects

- WVRV (Stephanie Connolly)
- Volunteer plantings/events (all)
- Upper Greenbrier North commercial spruce restoration (Shane Jones)
- Avian monitoring and habitat assessment in spruce restoration areas (Ashley Akers)
- Spruce release monitoring (Ben Rhodes)
- Spruce conference (Jim Rentch et al.)
- Other?

Wrap-up and schedule next meeting

MINUTES

Meeting began at 9:00 A.M.

- Introductions
 - Dawn McCarthy has returned to the Wayne NF.
 - Kent Karriker, Andrea Brandon, Whitney, and Kristin Stockton are currently splitting coordinator duties. Help is welcome.
 - New coordinator for CASRI and CWPMA is being sought. Active CASRI member are encouraged to support the position.
- Matt is a senior at the University of Nairobi and is currently interning with the Highlands Conservancy. He is a Political Science major and has an interest in forestry. Back home, he is involved in with the Friends of the Karura Forest, a group dedicated to preserving an urban forest that has been frequently targeted for development.
 - Matt will be working with Dawn and Chris at CVNWR and is available to work with other agencies. He will be here until the end of May.
- 2014 Accomplishment Reporting
 - Intro and Spotlight Projects to be chosen. What should be included?
 - What should be included in the 1 page report?
 - Preliminary final draft will go out in the next week or so
 - The CASRI report is a calendar report, not a FY report.
 - The next time that the strategic plan is being revised, we should remove some redundancies.
- If you have a project involving seed gathering/propagation and want to be engaged, contact Shane.
- Forest Service anticipates push to increase local native seed efforts as part of President's pollination initiatives (multi-agency effort).
 - What can we do in the Central Apps? Expecting RSP. There will most likely be a call for local proposals. Expect email from Whitney and be thinking about proposals. If you want to brainstorm, contact Whitney.

-Stephanie has 2 sites (Quarter H and pipeline excavation) for soil disturbance; opportunity to go from experimental/local to commercial. Get Dominion to help pay for native seed technologies?

-Steve Keller- genetic work, Frostburg (already in)

- Mitzy Schaney from WVU's geology department is working with radio carbon dating and pollen records in the peatlands at Canaan. One hypothesis is that the peatlands may have been spruce forest at one point. If you know grad students who might want to get involved, let them know. Contact Dawn Washington and Jason Teets for further info.

- Accomplishment Report Deadlines:

- Get known info to Kristin Stockton (kristinastockton@fs.fed.us) by Friday Feb. 13th.
- Pre-final draft will be ready by February 25th.

- Amy Hill: Spruce restoration as hemlock wooly adelgid mitigation strategy

- Study conducted at Blackwater Falls State Park. 38 cells surveyed physically, 3 visually. Looked at status of hemlock and recorded any other vegetation present within the cells. 87% of hemlock was declining. The visual grid cells matched what was being found on the ground. Other species present were 20% spruce, 30% maple, 28% birch, 2% beech (much of it with beech bark disease); 30% of survey blocks had no regeneration. Lots of red maple seedlings present in the understory.

-Plans to keep hemlocks around the lodge, cabins, and overlook healthy with treatments. Want to maintain canopy structure. Use hemlock wooly adelgid to release spruce by allowing some hemlock to die.

- How can spruce in understory be encouraged?
- Should some hemlocks be treated and others not, in order to thin and promote spruce, or should manual thinning be implemented?
- In places of no regen should spruce understory be planted?
- Is there an abiotic or biotic explanation for total lack of regen?
- Soil profile - What would you find?
- How might spruce seedling respond to dense hemlock O-horizons?
- What is the status of fungal communities?

-WV Dept. of Ag could help secure funding for within state forest. Amy would like contacts and input. (Kris Kelley, NCRC)

-The best opportunity to plant is before hemlocks die, while soil is still moist and sheltered; however, need some sunlight. Might try planting as hemlocks first begin to decline, so that the spruce will hopefully be established by the time the tree is completely dead.

-Good opportunity for Tygart Co. HS. Need to pay for bus.

- Jim Rentch: Results of Spruce Release Research

- 6 year results of release treatments
- High value was the only statistically significant scenario.
- Optimum light level = 50% open sky, Gap size = 20'
- Need for further experimentation.
- Direct light vs. Diffused light

Status of Ongoing and Upcoming Projects

- WVRV

- Requested 1.5 million dollars, received 1.3 million
- Removed portion of NRCS about only treating NNIS once
- Projects have been selected.
- Trying to get more focused in priority watersheds.
- Currently appears to be funding for a third year.
- Direct questions to Stephanie Connolly.
- Huge success thus far. Received the greatest amount of money possible.

- Volunteer Plantings and Events
 - CVNWR Spring Planting, Apr. 18, 2015
 - Dr. Patch Adams is planning an event Apr. 15-17 with 50 volunteers, 3 days – all day, will be planting on refuge lands.
 - He would like to organize a large, multiple week annual event in the future.
 - He will pay for lodging, plants, etc.
 - Upper GB N. commercial spruce restoration
 - Signed 4th and final NEPA decision, 863 acres of commercial restoration, will range from working with timber program to doing stewardship contracting with TNC.
 - Legal advertisement in Pocahontas Times advertising NEPA process (Shane)
 - Canaan Spruce release
 - Cherry site with amazing spruce, bottom of valley coming from Bearden Knob.

- Ashley Akers, AmeriCorps with TNC: Avian monitoring and habitat assessment in spruce restoration areas
 - Upper GB release sites; girdling, hack and squirt
 - Will establish 15 control plots and 15 release plots for point count survey (10 min.) and habitat assessments (will use CASRI monitoring spruce release form)
 - Will establish baseline data on birds
 - Data regarding red spruce stand structure, health, negative or positive impact on birds
 - Accompanying poster.

- Ben Rhodes: Spruce release monitoring
 - Nicole Wyatt is returning to the TNC field crew to do baseline spruce release monitoring.
 - Want to establish long-term plots in high priority units and monitor as many as possible
 - Data will be used to revise protocols to expedite future monitoring.

- Jim Rentch et al.: Spruce Conference
 - Andrea prepared a memo, which was sent to SASRI
 - Aiming for Spring 2016, somewhere in NC
 - Will have webinar with SASRI to figure out more details.
 - Stephanie can potentially rope in some N. Easterners if we want to target them.

- Kristin Stockton: CASRI education trunk
 - Put together an educational trunk and activities booklet to teach people about the red spruce ecosystem.
 - Targeted towards use in classrooms, but can also be used for interpretation at festivals/events
 - If you have contacts in any of the local schools who might be interested or want to use the trunk, contact Kristin.

- Research Subcommittee Dynamic Map
 - Kristin will be covering the research catalogue and map. She will be sending out emails asking for any related research.
 - TNC will have the restoration aspect. Spatially defining areas of restoration, focusing in on aspects of restoration that have been done. Defining areas of conservation and acquisition.
 - How will the map be distributed? Appalachian LCC site? Only broad details on map, specifics on companion document? Historic and current.
 - Old photographs, geo-references. Google Earth historic photos.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15.

Next meeting: Thursday, May 21, 2015, 9:00 A.M. at the SO

Send Work Plan comments, in addition to Accomplishments, to Kristin Stockton (kristinastockton@fs.fed.us). Deadline Feb. 13th.

Thursday May 21, 2015 - Monongahela National Forest Office - 9 a.m.

AGENDA

Call in: 888-844-9904, passcode 7620832#

9:00 – 9:15a

Introductions and update on status of group coordination (Kent Karriker)

9:15 – 9:50a

Discuss Accomplishments Report and Work Plan (All)

- What projects should serve as highlights?
- Can we begin sending in accomplishments as they happen?
- Do we still want a work plan?

9:50 – 10:05a

Spruce Conference Updates (Jim Rentch et al.)

10:05 – 10:35a

Commercial Spruce Release and Research Opportunities on Kumbrabow (Travis Miller)

10 Minute Break

10:45 - 11:15a

WVNFS genetics work (Melissa Thomas-Van Gundy et al.)

11:15 – 11:30a

Map of Red Spruce Priority Areas with Private Landowner Info (Mike Powell)

11:30 – 11:40a

Overview of Red Spruce Ecosystem Educational Trunk (Kristin Stockton)

11:40a – 12:00p

Status of ongoing/upcoming projects

- Volunteer plantings/events (all)
- Avian monitoring and habitat assessment in spruce restoration areas (Ashley Akers)
- Other?

Wrap-up and schedule next meeting

MINUTES

Meeting began at 9:15.

Introductions

- Status of group coordinator.
 - TNC looking to increase stake.
 - Dual or shared position; between offices but still federal and through USFS.
 - Kent working with HR to get announcement going; should be out soon. Will be advertised internally and externally.
 - Coordinator will work to expand and develop CASRI, CWPMA, WVRV, etc.
 - The coordinator will have an AmeriCorps who will focus on outreach and education. In the future might expand AmeriCorps capacity or create position under coordinator.
 - The coordinator position is currently funded by USFS and TNC. Other organizations are welcome to fund/have stake.
- CASRI would benefit from DNR involvement
 - non-game diversity side
 - Kent Karriker and Whitney Bailey met with Scott Warner, who is interested.
 - Sent representative to last PHCWPMMA meeting, but have not yet committed.

Work Report & Accomplishments Report

- Work Report – Do we want it?
 - The calendar year is already halfway over.
 - The Work Report might have worked better when CASRI was young. Now, everyone has their own work report.
 - The Work Report generally focuses on larger collaborative plans. Now, that CASRI has more momentum, it can be difficult to keep up with what all of the partners are doing.
 - This year, we will skip the Work Plan. Maybe at the fall meeting we can look at what's going on next year and how closely it follows the strategic plan.

- Accomplishments Report
 - Problems:
 - Redundant and tedious
 - Difficult to recall all accomplishments of the calendar year
 - Solutions:
 - Start newsletter of accomplishments (nothing fancy, just bullets or short summaries). Ask monthly with email blast and send out quarterly before meeting.
 - Reorganize report so that items are sorted by agency or broader category and reference the strategic plan. Example: USFS planted ___ spruce seedlings over ___ acres within a riparian corridor that enhanced connectivity. (See II.B.2, II.B.3, IV.A.2)
 - Benefits:
 - Accomplishments Report is more comprehensible and concise.
 - More accurate, comprehensive accomplishments.
 - Partners are more aware of who is doing what.
 - We still need a highlights page for the Acc. Report
 - Quick 2-page report with pictures
 - Easy to read; Answers “What does CASRI do?”
 - Proposed topics:
 - Spruce release Kumbrabow and ERT GBRD
 - Planting (CVNWR)
 - Holistic restoration at Mower* drop if out of space
 - Research/Science/Climate Change or Soil Carbon
 - Gandy Ranch/ Conservation Highlight
 - Strategic Plan
 - Are we approaching a revision period?
 - Should we review and see if we want to make any changes/streamline it?
 - We are doing a lot of things that are touched on, but upon which could be elaborated (i.e. spruce release).
 - Demographic of group has changed. A lot of the original group has moved on.
 - Job for new coordinator. Will help familiarize them with CASRI.

- Spruce Conference Updates
 - Four Committees
 - Communications: put together mailing list, prepare call for interest and later a formal call for papers and posters, set up website
 - Conference: venue (Appalachian State?), arrangements for rooms, meals, lodging, potential field trips, etc.
 - Sponsors/Finance: determine fee, manage funds
 - Proceedings: review submitted abstracts, prep conference schedule, arrange publishing.
 - Chosen Name: **Restoring High Elevation Forest Ecosystems of the Southern and Central Appalachians**

- Commercial Spruce Release and Research Opportunities on Kumbrabow (Travis Miller)
 - Opportunities on Kumbrabow to do commercial spruce release. Would like to do research and get baseline data to incorporate into commercial spruce release
 - 50-80 acres near Whitman Ridge
 - Understory at site is full of spruce, but not much in overstory, so disturbance is not a big issue
 - No set timeframe, Travis is flexible; next five years
 - Open ridge and building an access road that bypasses area; Rob Tommen involved.
 - Making wildlife cuts, vernal pools, and hiking trails. Trail will intersect project area, so good opportunity for interpretation.
 - Travis can invest some time and help, but someone needs to take charge; collect and process data.
 - Ideas
 - Get NRCS involved, soil/leaf stuff
 - Could be connected to Jim and Tom's spruce release work.
 - Shane has NEPA decision for Upper GB that includes release zone (check name) loop Research Area
 - This should be a high priority for CASRI. Kumbrabow is more similar to the conditions on the Forest. Should examine vegetation response.
 - Good leverage for CASRI to get partners involved (even on an industrial level)
 - This could tie into climate change; need to go about funding in the right way; N. Research Station might be interested.
 - Related Update:
 - Jason and Travis established plots on a clearcut at Morgan Camp. Area not identified as high priority on the priority spruce map. Pockets/islands of spruce and overstory trees left. Gps and photos plots with soil date
 - Jason - LGS (little green stuff) Travis- BGS
 - Travis is going to collect more photos. Before-during-after of spruce; will go back and do plots. Shane will help by sending someone.
 - Hoping to get some data on spruce response. Magnolia already coming in.
- Nick Millett has plants. Alder, aspen, silky willow, white pine, etc. Contact if interested.
- WV Northern Flying Squirrel Genetics Work
 - Deahn Donner-Wright, landscape ecologist; Elizabeth Flaherty, Purdue (dispersal and diet work in Alaska); Donald Brown, NRCS
 - Looking at genetics of WVNFS. Is island biogeography in play in these relict populations? How should patches be connected or prioritized? How are patches being connected naturally?
 - Background and Purpose:
 - Using approach of non-invasively collected hair samples from which to identify DNA and identify unique individuals; marking individuals.
 - This approach has been used with American marten and black-tailed deer. Recent advances.

- Brian Arbores (UNC) sequencing NFS to describe Appalachian populations of NFS. This is a relatively new approach and has not been used in this context before. Will be used as both research and monitoring to look at population response of NFS to management and disturbance. Also used to identify population attributes to estimate population dynamics. May be able to get population density estimate using Bayesian statistics.
 - Mike Schwartz (Missoula) developed protocol to estimate population dynamic of black-tailed deer in Alaska.
 - This method can be used to monitor population response on Forest but could also be used elsewhere and by other agencies. Collect here, send to Missoula lab, will identify unique individuals, identify breeding females, resident males and females, population estimate, population density, and how they are responding.
 - Winston Smith did 20 years of research on northern flying squirrel at Pacific Northwest Research Station. Tongass NF had old growth reserves. Looked at viability of reserves to maintain population. Looked at density and relationship to habitat. How populations were connected across managed landscapes; how were they functioning as a connected population? The Appalachians are similar since there are fragmented populations.
 - American martens were used to see how medium sized old growth reserves were functioning.
 - Collaboration between lab and Purdue. Short term response to how squirrel is affected by restoration work/mngt. Article in BioScience 2012.
 - Can determine diet by keratin. Nitrogen and carbon isotopes isolated in keratin.
 - Method
 - Snares are cheaper than live traps because you only have to check them bimonthly.
 - DNR has collected blood in past.
 - Since Fall of 2013, Friends of the Blackwater have been working with Prof. Flaherty to convert traps to hair snares and place 2-3 places at Blackwater State Park and Canaan Loop. Hired field biologist to check every few days and send to Purdue for isotope analysis of diet. Will do April-Fall. Have 40 good samples. All future samples will go to Purdue then Missoula.
 - Buy wire brushes that are attached to door of trap; baited with molasses, oatmeal, and pb. Plate is stepped on; door closes. When animal goes to get out, it touches the brush. Field tech collects brush which is held on with zip tie. Places in toothbrush tube and labels. Traps in groups of 10. Also using tape on dowel. Might be future modification. Once the squirrel leaves, the door is shut behind it preventing passage by another squirrel. Single sample and individual.
 - Others welcome to join training. May 28th, meet at FoB office at 9:30, will look at how traps are placed on Canaan Loop and then put together traps.
- Red Spruce Restoration Priority Map with Private Landowner Info (Mike Powell, Victoria Woltz)
 - Overlaid E. Byers Restoration Priority Map with private landowners.
 - Victoria Woltz has prepared a letter asking landowners to work with spruce conservation.
 - Currently on hiatus until we know how to back up claims. Victoria can discuss her map further at the next meeting.

- If we connect with landowners, who will go out and look at properties. Consider NRCS costshare. Get amount established for spruce release on private lands. DoF could possibly work with landowners.
 - Restoration Priority Map Updates
 - Can discuss adjusting map at next meeting. Gandy Ranch, Thunderstruck, and Kumbrabow are not marked on map.
 - Mike and Jason have discussed updated priorities.
 - We can tweak data to provide better view of connectivity. Future AmeriCorps might be able to adjust map looking at landowners and connectivity.
- Red Spruce Ecosystem Educational Trunk (Kristin Stockton)
 - The red spruce trunk is up and functional.
 - Meets WV educational standards
 - Games and activities focused on broader ecosystem concepts.
 - Can be used for both interpretation and education
 - 230 students taught so far, plus interpretive presence at Discover Nature Day and Endangered Species Day.
 - If you want to use the trunk or have a lesson taught, contact Kristin Stockton (kristinastockton@fs.fed.us)
- Other
 - TNC finished planting at High Mountain (10000 trees) and Gandy Ranch.
 - Dave Saville planted floodplain at GR.
 - Spruce release stopped around Nov.
 - ERT is busy doing NNIS work. Will be starting spruce release soon.

Next meeting: August 12th, 9:00 A.M. at the Forest Service Supervisor's Office in Elkins.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05.

Wednesday August 12, 2015 - Monongahela National Forest Office - 9 a.m.

AGENDA

Call in: 888-844-9904, passcode 7620832#

9:00 – 9:15a

Introductions and update on status of group coordination (Kent Karriker)

9:15 – 9:55a

Strategic Plan Update and Changes to Reporting (All)

9:55 – 10:25

Subcommittee Updates

- Committees: Priority Mapping Project, Monitoring, Communication & Outreach, Research, Restoration Approach, Reference Conditions, Implementation
- Do we need to update existing committees?
- Who will replace Kris and Andrea as committee heads?

10 Minute Break

10:35 – 10:55a

Forest Festival preliminary planning (Kristin Stockton)

10:55 – 11:05a

Updates on spruce conference (Jim Rentch)

11:05 – 12:00p

Status of ongoing/upcoming projects, field restoration, and plantings

- Status of WVNFS genetic analysis (Anna Branduzzi)
- Status of DoF and Kumbrabow Projects (Travis Miller)
- Balsam fir cone collecting (Dave Saville)
- Priority restoration map of private lands (Victoria Woltz)
- Avian Monitoring for Red Spruce Release Sites in the Upper Greenbriar Watershed (Ashley Akers)
- Other?

Wrap-up and schedule next meeting

MINUTES

Meeting began at 9:05

- Status of group coordinator
 - Interviewing this week. Should be hired early this fall.
 - Expect to be contacted by new coordinator between now and the next CASRI meeting.
 - We should think about what we want CASRI to do for us in the future.
 - Funding for the coordinator comes from USFS and TNC; we are totally open to contributions from other agencies.
 - Position will be responsible for CASRI, PHCWPMMA, and to some extent WVRV.
 - There is a need to explore ecosystem services more fully as a source of funding and as restoration benefits.
 - Need to assess how groups and partnerships fit together.
- Action Plan Revisions

- The accomplishments report will be reorganized so that items are sorted by agency or broader category and reference the strategic plan. Example: USFS planted ___ spruce seedlings over ___ acres within a riparian corridor that enhanced connectivity. (See II.B.2, II.B.3, IV.A.2)
- The Action Plan has not been updated since 2010.
 - Could revision be worked into the spruce conference?
- Does the MOU need updated? (2007)
 - The MOU might be expired by USFS terms.
 - Could we update the MOU in a way that makes it easier to share money between agencies for collective spruce restoration? It would be nice to have a mechanism to allow for easier sharing of resources/funding.
 - Do we need participating agreements and the MOU?
 - The MOU is not a fund-trading document. Still need cost-share agreement or Good Neighbor. The MOU will still be useful as a source of clarification of roles.
 - If someone else developed the MOU, could the USFS sign on for longer than 5 years?
- Would we ever want a more formal steering committee like the PHCWPMMA?
 - Should we formalize our relationship with SASRI?
 - CASRI is very efficient as an interpretive vehicle and representative entity.
- It would be good to have more state presence, chiefly DNR.
 - Kent has spoken with Scott Warner, head of diversity at DNR, and he is interested in participating.
- In the past we have discussed using NRCS grants for spruce restoration on private lands as a part of WVRV.
 - Difficult to assess needs and programs on private lands.
- Further Suggestions:
 - More of a landscape focus; mention Appalachian LCC – Dawn
 - Trim redundancy; Add updates – Whitney
 - Maybe have a steering committee – Melissa
 - Better integrate soils, especially as a way of identifying restoration priority areas – Shane, Whitney
- The potential formation of a steering committee and the revision of the MOU should precede the revision of the action plan.
 - **Each member of CASRI should discuss the proposed changes (updating the MOU, adding more structure) with the head of their agency, taking into consideration that greater time commitment might be required. Steering committee members would need to attend meetings. Kent will speak to DNR. Let's do this by next meeting.**
 - Rob Tolmen and those who are actually working within the spruce might be good candidates.
- Subcommittees
 - Most of the subcommittees have been dormant for a while.

- Priority Mapping Project (E. Byers)
 - This could be a potential focus area for soils and ESD's.
 - A lot of places that should be priority restoration sites (CVNWR, Thunderstruck, Gandy Ranch) do not show up on the map.
 - Good for outreach to show a focused, unified effort. Way to reexamine the area that we are choosing to restore. Why does soil not match the map?
 - Former members: Amy Cimarolli, Kent Karriker
 - Instead of choosing individuals, agencies can consider the need for involvement and discuss with boss and coworkers. **Consider by next meeting. Should we have an interim conference call?**
 - There is still potential work for this subcommittee.
 - Interest: MNF, CVNWR, NRCS/DoF, TNC, Northern Research Station
- Monitoring (D. Washington)
 - So far, the rapid assessment monitoring protocol has worked well.
 - The ERT says that it takes about 15-20 minutes per plot, but that is with 5 people. A 1-2 person team might take an hour.
 - We need to consider the long term – What will happen with the data? How many total plots will accumulate?
 - We can report monitoring quarterly and annually.
 - We need to compile data in Access, and then export to Excel.
 - We need a point person to compile data. Write into MOU?
 - Ben Rhodes has been editing the protocol as he goes.
 - This committee should continue to exist.
 - Interest: MNF, CVNWR, DoF, TNC/Ben Rhodes; Melissa Thomas Van-Gundy/NRS; Dave Saville/WVHC
- Communication and Outreach (A. Brandon)
 - You should all like the CASRI facebook page! Send any cool stuff to Dave, Mike, Victoria, or Kristin.
(<https://www.facebook.com/CentralAppalachianSpruceRestorationInitiative>)
 - Should we create a more formal newsletter? Post minutes, reports, etc. to website, then facebook.
 - The partnership coordinator can meet with Dave Saville, Kristin Stockton, and any other interested parties to discuss these ideas further. Potential meeting date TBD.
- Research (Kris Hennig)
 - Kris compiled a lot of researchers.
 - There was talk of a research database that would cross-reference a map.
 - We should use academia to help us make better-informed management and implementation decisions.
 - A steering committee could help guide decisions in a direction that is supported by the existing research.

- Should we consolidate research, monitoring, reference, implementation, and restoration? Reference was originally an offshoot of Restoration. Still need to examine restoration in different, non-spodosol soil types.
 - Should we designate a research contact to find spruce articles and connect with researchers on CASRI's behalf?
 - Those doing on-the-ground work can reach out to researchers for project advice. Researchers can use sites for publications, while giving insights on management.
 - Combine remaining committees. Have meeting before next CASRI meeting. Dawn will be temporary head. Meet in late October/early November. Should there be different heads within the greater committee?
 - **Email Dawn with interest in committee.**
- Forest Festival
 - The upcoming Forest Fest conservation village theme is Red Spruce and High Elevation Ecosystems. This is a great opportunity to outreach for CASRI.
 - Dates: 9/30 – setup, 10/1 – Kids Day, 10/2 – general attendance, 10/3 – some general attendance and take-down.
 - Currently Kate Goodrich-Arling and Kristin Stockton are organizing things for the Forest Service. They are hoping to meet with representatives from other participating agencies and coordinate displays and interpretive materials. **Let Kristin know if you will be participating, so that she can coordinate with you on a meeting date.**
 - Current ideas for posters: Restoration in Action (a look at projects like the Mower Tract and the CVNWR plantings), Ecosystem Services (focus on soil/carbon storage and watershed benefits), Uses of Red Spruce. We already have a general CASRI poster and some remaining general and Mower Tract rack cards. A map of the historic range of red spruce vs. the present range will also be included.
- Conference
 - The current conference committees, their heads, and their tasks are as follows:
 - A communications committee which will handle pre-conference publicity, call for papers, etc. This group, along with the conference committee, will also set up a conference website. Jim Rentch agreed to serve as coordinator of this group.
 - A conference committee which will find a venue and propose a date. Katherine Medlock of the Tennessee Nature Conservancy is heading up this group.
 - A sponsors/finance committee. This group will seek sponsors and operating funds to keep conference attendees costs to a minimum. Kent Karriker is the go-to person here.
 - A proceedings committee to review submitted abstracts, prepare a speaker/session schedule, and deal with post conference publication(s). John Brown is the leader of this group.

- Several locations in North Carolina are being considered. (Lake Junaluska, Warren Wilson College, Crowne Plaza Resort, and UNCA)
- There should be a call for papers soon. We are in line with our projected deadlines.
- Should we discuss MOU and Action Plan changes at the conference?
- Project Update
 - WVNFS Genetic Work – Anna Branduzzi
 - Hair snares samples are being sent to Purdue for genetic ,dietary, and stress analysis based on cortisol in hair
 - Working with Judy Rodd of Friends of Blackwater and Winston Smith, who has worked with similar monitoring before.
 - Monitoring is taking place near Blackwater, as well as in and around the Upper GB commercial spruce project area.
 - Equipped 100 live traps with hair snares and installed 87 in Upper GB spruce release areas. (Burner Mtn., Middle Mtn., Pig’s Ear, etc.)
 - 324 staff hours so far.
 - 25 samples so far. 3 northern flying squirrels, 3 southern flying squirrels, 5 red squirrels, 3 bear.
 - Shane met with Dr. Flaherty. The hope is that monitoring will continue after management to examine levels of stress before/after management.
 - This monitoring could be combined with other efforts in the area.
 - Need to determine the ultimate goals and level of future effort. Incorporate mycology?
 - DoF/Kumbrabow Updates – Travis Miller
 - Active harvest on Morgan Camp site; 40 acres spruce release and clear cut
 - Working with Jamie Schuler to get a grad student to do work on plots; examine commercial release.
 - Travis has replaced Barb Breshock as state lands manager of DoF; there will be a new forester on Kumbrabow. Barb is now asst. state forester of stewardship.
 - NRS has money for joint venture.
 - Balsam Fir Cone Collecting – Dave Saville
 - There is a cone crop on the Balsam fir in CVNWR and Blister Run. Will check Blister Swamp.
 - Shane is planning to plant more fir at Mower Tract.
 - V. Woltz
 - Victoria has created a landowner database and a map of private lands that are located in high priority red spruce restoration areas.
 - She has also drafted a letter explaining the resource to landowners and encouraging them to manage their property with red spruce in mind.
 - Currently, TNC does not have the resources to move forward in contacting private landowners; however, in the future, the project could be used to coordinate with NRCS.
 - There is definitely value to informing a landowner of the ecological value of their land, even if implementation cannot be offered at this point.

- A. Akers
 - Ashley adapted an avian monitoring protocol for red spruce release sites and created an interpretive poster to guide the protocol.
 - Due to medical and volunteer issues, she was unable to survey at all of her sites. Listening surveys require an excellent knowledge of bird calls, so volunteers are more difficult to recruit.
 - She detected 30+ species at the sites that she did survey.
 - Potentially incorporate avian monitoring into planting and release sites?
- Other
 - Refuge planting- 2000-3000 trees- Sept. 19th. Dawn is trying to focus fall plantings closer to water.
 - B. Rhodes – ERT has completed 4 units in UGB and has baseline monitoring in 6 units; will continue monitoring into future. Adapting monitoring and strategies for next year.
 - N. Millett – working with NRCS for equip; fencing wooded area on the Sinks of Gandy; should finish in late autumn/early winter.
 - W. Bailey – Shane, Dave, and Whitney looked at spruce release sites near Blister Swamp and on FR 35. Good, consistent basal spray treatment results. Less clear with hack-and-squirt, but still seeing understory response. Spruce Knob grouse management area is being considered for spruce release and management.
 - S. Jones – Will do NEPA for rest of the Mower Tract in the next few months. Will be running out of area as far as mine reclamation. Interest at district area in controlling recreation and looking at future use. Commercial and noncommercial spruce release, mine bench reclamation, trail creation.
 - M. Powell – Has funds through plantability and trees campaign. Can be used for public lands or private lands with a conservation easement. Money is for buying and planting of trees; can cover planting contract.

The next meeting will take place November 19th, 2015. 9:00 A.M. SO.

Dawn's Super Committee will meet October 22nd, 2015 9:00, CVNWR. All day w/ field trip.

Meeting adjourned at 12:01.

In attendance:

Melissa Thomas-Van Gundy, Kristin Stockton, Kent Karriker, Amy Cimarolli, Dawn Washington, Mike Powell, Sandra Farkas, Travis Miller, Shane Jones, Anna Branduzzi, Robert Orr, Dave Saville, Paul Schmidt, Ashley Akers, Victoria Woltz, Whitney Bailey, Ben Rhodes, Nick Millett

Wednesday, November 19, 2015 - Monongahela National Forest Office - 9 a.m.

AGENDA

9:00 – 9:15a

Introduction of new Partnership Coordinator, Darrin Kelly

9:15 – 9:45a

WVRV 2015 and 2016, soils, and red spruce research update (Stephanie Connolly)

9:45 – 10:30

Overview of DSC meeting and Strategic Action Plan edits (All)

- New subcommittees – Coordination & Outreach, Research & Reference, Restoration & Implementation
- Do we want to reorganize the SAP to compliment the new subcommittees and make the plan more cohesive/less redundant?
- 2015 Accomplishments Report – timeline and structure

Break – 10 minutes

10:45 – 11:15a

MOU Revisions

- Do we want a more formal steering committee?

11:15 – 11:35a

Updates and discussion of Spruce Conference

11:35 – 11:50a

State Wildlife Action Plan and preview of upland red spruce forest fact sheets (Jim Vanderhorst)

11:50 – 12:15p

Status of ongoing/upcoming projects

- Update on WVNFS hair snare analysis (Anna Branduzzi)
- Opportunities for partnerships with high elevation ski resort landowners (Darrin Kelley)

Wrap-up and schedule next meeting

MINUTES

Meeting began at 9:05.

- Introductions
 - Darrin Kelly is the new Partnership Coordinator. He comes from Tongass NF. Darrin will be splitting his time between USFS and TNC.

- WVRV Overview
 - Joint Chiefs partnership. WVRV has had great success in gaining momentum and partners. Intent is to draw seed money to expand partnership and restoration efforts in four target watersheds.
 - \$1.275 million in funds for 2016. \$10 million in 3 yrs including federal funds and match.
 - Projects for 2016 approved by NRCS and FS. NRCS works through EQIP with private landowners.
 - DoF is also involved. Doing spruce release.
 - Mini soil monolith. Shows red spruce soil horizons. Taken from Barton Knob in Cheat Mountain salamander habitat. Made to fit in red spruce educational trunk and will include pull up with further information.
 - Maps of soil types nearly complete. Travis Nauman has completed publication.
 - Future ESDs on Pottsville will also be done in collaboration with Travis.
 - Climate change through soil climate and air temperature study being done by Adrian Nottingham. Picking up Snorting Lick work (26 sites) where Travis left off. Will result in predictive model for carbon and atmospheric warming for the Central Apps.
 - Red spruce recession is predicted; however, that is not what we are seeing. Soils data from original model may be bad.
 - Just hired a third soil scientist Stephanie Skagline on the Monongahela. From WVU. Working with sedimentation and erosion control.
 - Could plan a future soils tour if there is interest. Will probably involve Jason Teets, Skip Bell (NRCS).
 - Last year updated 136,000 acres of soil profiles on Mon.
- Strategic Action Plan
 - Structure of goals, key actions, etc. Topic for subcommittees.
 - I will send out lists of subcommittees, edited SAP, and minutes.
 - Darrin will facilitate discussion about how to organize action plan.
 - Due in Feb. Accomplishments shortly after.
- MOU Revisions
 - The MOU has a smaller amount of signatories than what CASRI has become.
 - MOUs are never necessary; however, it would clearly communicate our message and keep focus on our mission.
 - Our current MOU does have a great foundation; tells a good story. Can be expanded to reflect our current work.
 - Original MOU is from 2007.
 - Darrin will make contact with organizations that have been involved with CASRI and get a sense of their interest in the MOU. Check original MOU.
 - It's great that we have a brand new Partnership Coordinator to work on this.
 - Do we want a formal steering committee?
 - It would allow CASRI to decide what direction it wants to go.
 - It might compel the signatories to be present at more meetings.

- Sets up a formal point of contact for each agency.
 - CASRI has pretty consistent attendance and the nature of our group does not involve joint legal or financial decisions, so a steering committee is not essential.
 - The group votes to hold off on the formation of a steering committee.
- Spruce Conference
 - We could potentially have CASRI plan, but still host in SASRI territory.
 - Possible to have a webinar.
 - We should check with Katherine Medlock and Bent Creek about hosting down south.
 - Someone will need to confirm that WVU will serve as official planner and holder of funds.
 - Mike can contact Katherine and Marquette. Tom Schuler will contact SRS.
 - Need to find a southern contact for field trip.
- State Wildlife Action Plan
 - Updated state habitat map. Will be available on the WV GIS data clearing house by Dec. 1. Looking for comments to improve in the future.
 - Conservation Focus Areas for state. High Alleghenies focus area has the majority of the spruce.
 - Aquatic habitats map will also be released.
 - Nice description for each CFA. CASRI is mentioned.
 - Includes information on rare plants and high priority species. Contains stats on areas. Broad synopsis of area, threats, species, issues, and partners.
 - 21 Conservation Focus Areas in state.
 - CASRI will be integral in implementing conservation actions.
 - Collaboration emphasized over regulation.
 - CASRI SAP can be used to inform.
 - Factsheet – general descriptions of ecosystem and vegetative communities. Wants to include links to places to visit.
- WVNFS Hair Snare analysis
 - Upper GB North commercial and noncommercial spruce release project. Chose 8 sites with best conditions for WVNFS. 85 converted hair snares. Have been checking them for the whole field season. 61 samples – 9 WVNFS
 - MNF partnered with FoB to do WVNFS surveys. NEPA decision broken into 4 smaller decisions. 4th decision was commercial spruce release. Judy Rodd objected, but agreed to revoke objection if more monitoring is done. Judy has hired Winston Smith to enforce more stringent monitoring beyond the proposed acoustic survey. NRS and Purdue involved. Hair snares may be used in the future as they are more efficient and lower maintenance than live traps. Plan to formalize and update agreement with FoB. Judy is currently supportive of the efforts.
 - Samples can be used for stable isotope analysis for diet and can show changes in diet in regards to changes in management to determine stress level. Hair samples can also be used to determine population levels.

- A publication from Purdue detailing differences in northern and southern flying squirrels will be released soon. Mike Schwartz and Missoula may become involved in the future.
- Partnerships
 - Potential old growth ecotourism
 - Potential demonstration with signs along ski slopes.
 - Timberline has a special use permit with the Forest.
- WV Ecological Restoration Core Team – Tom Schuler
 - Evaluating work from a lessons learned perspective to apply knowledge moving forward. Interviews are complete. Expect report in 2 or 3 months.
 - WVRV interviews have resulted in a lot of great insights.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00.