



2013

Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative

Meeting Agendas and Minutes

Tuesday Feb. 5, 2013 - Monongahela National Forest Office - 9 a.m.

9:00 – 9:10

Introductions/Welcome

9:10 – 10:00

2013 CASRI Work Plan

- Review final draft of work plan
- Update on Mon soils activities for 2013 (Stephanie Connolly)
- Set date for revisions and finalizing

10:00 – 10:10

2012 Report

- Check-in on outreach of our report

10:10 – 10:20

New CASRI Short Film Project

- Overview and background (Marquette Crockett)
- Planning to capture footage for movies

10:20 – 10:35

SASRI Update

- Report from SASRI Conference (Evan Burks)

10:45 – 12:00

Spring Project Updates

- Lambert
- Pharis Knob
- Canaan Valley
- Thunderstruck
- UGN
- Others?

In attendance (*attending via conference phone)

Melissa Thomas-VanGundy, USFS
Evan Burks, USFS
Jason Reed, USFS
Jack Tribble, USFS
Kent Karriker, USFS
Marquette Crockett, CVNWR
Travis Miller, WVDOF
Amy Cimarolli, TNC

Kris Hennig, USFS AmeriCorps
Shane Jones, USFS
Cathy Johnson, USFS
Jason Teets, NRCS
John Schmidt, USFWS
Stephanie Connolly*, USFS
Steve Ritz*, NRCS
Dawn Washington*, CVNWR

2013 CASRI Work Plan Review

A draft 2013 work plan was reviewed with the following comments:

- Add Jason Teets, Amy Cimarolli, Kent Karriker, Shane Jones, and Melissa Thomas-VanGundy to Cordie's subcommittee for historic reference condition clarification
- By the end of FY13 NRCS will have data for ESD in some spruce areas complete
- Add Stephanie Connolly and TNC to Jason's subcommittee on adding ESD work to Restoration Approach document
- Keep Kate Goodrich-Arling in the loop on any communication pieces that are created with work plan
- Dave Saville gave spruce seed to TCHS greenhouse and they are still working to do something with it. High tunnel is not built yet. Dawn will work to schedule a field trip to Alderson PMC
- Kent may have a seasonal tech that could have rainy day time to help complete spruce map polygon validation
- Mapping effort has been put on hold until spruce polygons are validated
- Add Cathy Johnson to review team for the monitoring plan
- Kent is currently working on monitoring protocol for spruce release in UGN
- Refuge, TNC, and CVNWR will work to revisit some restoration sites and collect photo points this summer while making edits to the monitoring protocol. This will hopefully give some feedback into the restoration approach
- On the ground actions need to be added to the work plan. Evan will do this and send out a final draft

Stephanie gave an update on MNF Soils Program FY13 work plan and opportunities for CASRI members to obtain some OJT in soil science for high elevation ecosystems:

- May 27-31 Dr. Jim Thompson's Agronomy 552 class will be on Forest digging several soil pits in the Red Spruce Ecosystem. Lecture type information will be available during these digs and CASRI is welcome to attend.
- This late spring (May) or early Fall (October) Dr. John Galbraith and the Virginia Tech Soil Judging Team have tentatively planned to schedule a weekend field trip to dig several soil pits in the Red Spruce Ecosystem. Dates are to be determined.
- NRCS is under agreement with USFS in FY13 to continue to update soil survey information in the high elevation ecosystems of Randolph and Tucker Counties. USFS has tentatively scheduled a technical data collection field week June 10th with NRCS. This effort will focus on Mountain and north of Shavers.
- If CASRI is interested in a "learning field trip" to look at "Spodic Dystrudepts" let Evan know, and he will work with the MNF Soils Program and Jason to scheduling something in late summer after the primary field season.

Space is limited for attendees at these events. *Please contact Stephanie Connolly, MNF Forest Soil Scientist to participate.*

Any additional comments on Work Plan are due to Evan by February 25th.

2012 Year-End Report

- Kent sent the report to the RO which was emailed around and got good exposure including CASRI being touted as a model landscape scale project for R9. If funding becomes available, CASRI is now on the landscape scale project list
- Dawn sent the report to USFWS RO
- John believes the report will make it to the Secretary of Interior
- Travis Miller sent the report to Barb Breshock
- TNC State Director has seen the report
- The report was sent to S. Apps and is now available on restoreredspruce.org website

New CASRI Short Film Project

- Marquette has been working with USFWS Videographer, Ryan Hagerty. He is interested in making a short film or series of short films related to spruce restoration. These videos can be posted on the website and used during volunteer tree plantings. They will also be used as training material for restoration courses at NCTC
- Highlands Conservancy and CVNWR applied for a minigrant from WV Humanities Council to fund some travel time and production of the video on the website
- Ryan will need to be onsite when active restoration is taking place. He is also looking for professionals to interview. If you know of times when active restoration is happening, please contact Marquette to schedule Ryan's time. Projects to film include: tree plantings, Lambert mine work, release work, timber harvest, etc. If you want to be interviewed for the video, contact Marquette

SASRI Update

- Evan and Andrea attended the first S. Apps Spruce Restoration meeting in early December. The meeting was very well attended and results indicate that the S. Apps will soon be forming a spruce restoration initiative
- Notes and presentations from the meeting will be posted on the restoreredspruce.org website until SASRI is up and running with their own website
- Integrating SASRI into CASRI work plans will be very important for securing larger funding and working across state lines at a landscape scale. It has been suggested that a joint committee between CASRI and SASRI be formed
- Currently, TNC TN Chapter is leading the initiative in the south and the first steering committee meeting is being scheduled

Spring Project Update

Lambert

- Lambert restoration has been divided into two separate projects. Lambert Northwest is being funded by the EPA (American Rivers) grant. This work will be very similar to Barton Bench and is expected to begin late April with deep ripping
- A tentative volunteer planting event has been scheduled with ARRI and partners for May 25th. Evan will work to recruit some volunteers, but anyone who is able should attend
- Lambert Northeast is a separate project aimed at holistic restoration. Currently the district is working to get this funded by leftover DEP funds from Barton Bench with CVI contracts. This

project will involve a small component of woody debris additions and native fungal inoculations. There are plans to begin inoculating red spruce seedlings this spring to be planted in the fall

Thunderstruck

- Tree planting will be conducted at Thunderstruck this spring. The property will be transferred to the USFS at some point and Andrea is taking the lead to ensure coordination between USFS and TNC for any necessary NEPA
- Cordie Diggins and Mark Ford will be setting up research plots on site
- Currently TNC is reviewing planting plans and making arrangements with planting contractors
- Stephanie Connolly has a detailed soil assessment on Thunderstruck that could be made available to TNC to develop a planting prescription

Pharis Knob

- Amy is working to establish historic reference conditions for the site to develop a planting plan
- After a planting plan is developed, a plan for monitoring and research plots will be developed
- TNC will need to coordinate with USFS on Range NEPA to make sure grazing allotment is covered before fencing begins

Canaan Spring Planting

- CVNWR will plant 5k spruce on the lower section of the Caldwell Tract. This project will be funded by a grant from the Arbor Day Foundation
- Planting will be on **April 20th and 21st**
- AmeriCorps will assist with planning of the planting, but more involvement from CASRI members is requested during the volunteer event. Please make plans to attend if you can

UGN

- USFS re-released EA as a three part project. Watershed, rec and fire section was not appealed
- Spruce restoration section was appealed by Friends of Blackwater. Appeal team will start their review on Monday. Jack will keep the group informed of the results
- The timber decision is expected to be signed in the next month
- Shane Jones will coordinate all WCS grant work with UGN

Other Updates

- Dave Saville has plans to plant red spruce in Cranesville Swamp this spring
- John Schmidt will be the new acting USFWS WV Field Office Director

Wednesday June 8, 2013 - Monongahela National Forest Office - 9 a.m.

AGENDA

9:00 – 9:10

Introductions/Welcome

9:10 – 10:00

Report from Reference Conditions Subcommittee

- Review draft reference conditions framework (Cordie)
- Plan for next steps incorporating HRCs into Restoration Approach

10:00 – 10:15

Spruce Mapping Update

- Spruce cover map completed (Kristin)
- Progress report on overall mapping effort

10:15 – 10:35

CASRI Communication Planning

- Update on planning process (Andrea)
- Next steps and implementation

10:35 – 10:45

Monitoring Protocol Update

- Progress report on Rapid Assessment Monitoring (Marquette)

-Ten Minute Break-

10:45 – 11:00

Spruce Strike Team

- Utilizing a strike team approach for spruce restoration

11:00 – 12:00

Project Updates/Plans for Fall

- Lambert
- UGN
- Canaan Valley
- Thunderstruck
- Pharis
- Others?

In attendance

Evan Burks, USFS
 Jack Tribble, USFS
 Kent Karriker, USFS
 Marquette Crockett, CVNWR
 Amy Cimarolli
 Dave Saville, WVHC
 Andrea Brandon, TNC
 Paulita Cousin, BWFSF

Shane Jones, USFS
 Jason Teets, NRCS
 Barb Douglas, USFWS ES
 Kristin Haider, USFWS ES AmeriCorps
 Cordie Diggins, VT
 Kevin Parker, VT
 Dawn Washington, CVNWR
 Annie Harmon, BWFSF

Spruce Mapping Update

Kristin Haider presented the completed spruce cover map:

- This map has been 3 years or more worth of work to take air photo interpretation, habitat suitability modeling, data mining, ground truth data, and attribution of conifer-cover polygons to red spruce. It is now completed and available for download at the WVUGIS site (<http://wvugis.wvu.edu/data/dataset.php?ID=455>)

- Kristin presented beautiful large laminated maps created at WVDNR and the metadata written by Elizabeth. Elizabeth has been getting good feedback on the map and is still taking ground truth points to improve the map when she can. Everyone should continue to contribute ground truth data to make the map even better.
- Kent mentioned a lot of the area is in the medium or trace cover category showing a lot of potential for restoration.

Evan covered the next steps:

- The mapping subcommittee met and came up with a list of datasets that would be needed to piece together the best locations for restoration. It was decided the group would wait until the cover map was completed. We can now move forward.
- Ruth Thornton (TNC) will be helping the group compile these datasets now and the group will meet in the near future. We are on track to have a solid map that targets restoration areas by the end of the year.

Reference Conditions Update

Cordie covered the progress from the reference conditions subcommittee:

- The subcommittee has a very good working draft of historic reference conditions complete with a literature library. A few more comments need to be addressed before this can be incorporated into the Restoration Approach. This will clearly show reasons & thought process for restoration as well as relate to potential prescriptions through the Restoration Approach.
- Kent mentioned needing to look at coarse woody debris and structure quantification.
- Another committee meeting or series of emailing will be needed. The committee is on track to have this completed by the end of year to meet the goals outlined in the 2013 work plan.

Communication Planning Update

Andrea gave an update on the status of a coordinated communication effort:

- Recently there have been several media pieces including a press release for Thunderstruck, Kristin Haider's spruce article, and a USFS People, Places, Things blurb. TNC hopes to feature CASRI in the national magazine sometime next year. Rick Steelhammer will also be touring UGN soon.
- Evan mentioned that the CASRI website is now linked as a feature page on the Appalachian LCC website. This will draw more traffic to restoredspruce.org and help solidify our working relationship with the LCC.
- The idea for the coordinated communication plan came from multiple things that have drawn greater attention to the group recently. The goal is to get everyone on the same page about some key messages and audiences so we are prepared in the future when things pop up. Evan and Andrea have worked on a skeleton framework and are now combining efforts with a spruce research communication document that is being created by the Northern Research Station.
- Barb agreed with each individual partner group contributing to the key messages and mentioned that the 40th Anniversary of the ESA is coming up and they would like to feature high elevation habitats in several media pieces. Kristin said they are also looking for podcasts which would be easy to put together.
- Andrea expressed a need to be able to track media attention and have a central repository for photos and text that each partner could have access to. A good place for this could be a dropbox or Facebook page. The group agreed that a Facebook page was needed with multiple administrators for different partners to add content.
- Dave gave an update on the restoredspruce.org website noting that it is a collection of information representing a politically neutral stance. Dave was open to any suggestions on how

to make the website better. Marquette thought Matt from the LCC could help with website design and outreach.

- Marquette gave an update on the restoration video project. Ryan Haggerty was not able to come this spring, but video footage was taken by Grant (AmeriCorps). This footage will be edited by Ryan and made into a short video clip. Ryan also plans to come out for some of the bigger restoration project work like Lambert later in the summer.
- Evan thought it would also be a good idea to collaborate with all of the agencies for the Conservation Village at Forest Festival to have a high elevation ecosystem theme in 2014. The group agreed and Evan will follow up with individuals.

Andrea and Evan will continue to develop the communication strategy and bring in each partner for comments on the text over the next few months.

Monitoring Plan Update

Evan and Marquette had not been able to get together to tackle the monitoring protocol yet. Marquette looked at different protocols to see which ones we could use. It might be beneficial for volunteers to use something as easy as photopoints.

- Kent suggested a tiered monitoring approach with levels of complexity making some data easy to collect with volunteers and other data requiring staff time. The group agreed on this approach. All agreed baseline data was the most important.
- Kent gave an update on the spruce release monitoring protocol being developed as part of the UGN project. Two people could complete a plot in 1.5 hours and it seems to be fairly quick for getting structure and composition data without having to measure a lot of diameters or heights.

Evan will send out a note to schedule a meeting in the near future to jumpstart this subcommittee.

Strike Team Conversation:

The idea of a spruce strike team was brought up by several partners and discussed at the meeting.

- Because of our on-the-ground project workload and the difficulty in developing specific contracts that are non-traditional, a seasonal spruce crew may be beneficial. Similar to the CWPMA, a seasonal crew could be hired and shared between all of the partners conducting spruce work. The crew could be used for planting, release, and monitoring among other things.
- Jack discussed the complicated nature of setting up and managing contracts for spruce release in UGN. This approach would give us more flexibility. A crew leader could be hired through a non-profit or potentially through an agency with a crew coming from YCC, WVCCC or an SCA type group. The difficulty comes in trying to keep the crew funded every year.
- Andrea was unsure if TNC would be able to take on an additional seasonal at the moment. However, the WCS grant has not been matched yet and there is potential to find funding for a crew.
- Jack thought if we get one more grant for UGN we might be able to work out a seasonal crew.
- Dave mentioned Appalachian Stewardship Foundation as a potential funding source.
- Kent mentioned the R9 Landscape Scale Conservation Team that has been looking at CASRI as a model. Although no funding has been made available yet, there is potential and this will be discussed during an upcoming meeting.

The group agreed to keep the option on the table if funding were to come available for a strike team.

Project Updates

Canaan Valley: Planted 5k spruce trees on 31 acres this spring near the Beardon Knob development area. They had a total of 86 volunteers. The Refuge gave 500 trees to TCHS Greenhouse, several

hundred to Timberline for the Conservancy area, and will replant an area to achieve different age classes along the Blackwater River for a total of 6,700 trees. Rob Gilligan was very supportive in the spring planting by helping the WVU students get a cabin at Blackwater Falls when the Laneville cabin was unavailable.

Blackwater Falls State Park: Dave helped plant roughly 500 trees on the road to lodge underneath dying hemlock. Dave noticed some areas of incredible spruce regeneration between the general trail and the stables.

Thunderstruck: TNC worked with Dave and a crew to plant 34,000 trees in 3 weeks on 250 acres between Mt. Porte Crayon and Buffalo Lick Knob. Dave had a 6-12 person crew that used 2 augers and dibble bars. On their best day they planted 2,700 trees and went through 6 auger bits. The property was transferred to the USFS immediately after the planting. This was the largest planting ever conducted by CASRI partners to date!

Greenbrier District: Planted 7,500 trees on decommissioned roads, at Barton Bench, and underneath dying hemlock in UGN.

- Lambert: Lambert North (AmericanRivers) is scheduled to be ripped this summer in partnership with ARRI and UK. Approximately 30,000 spruce trees will be planted there in the spring of 2014. The project will involve incorporating woodchips secured from DOH contracts and inoculating trees with mycorrhizal fungi. Lambert South work is being mostly done by CVI through leftover DEP money transferred from Barton Bench. CVI will do mostly road decommissioning and some deep ripping. The USFS and CVI intend to apply for an additional 50k from Appalachian Stewardship Foundation for more ripping and planting on Lambert Strip. Stewardship funds have also been transferred from Desert Branch for additional wetland work.
- UGN: WCS grant is helping fund spruce release on 295 acres in the UGN. Amy, Shane, Kent, and Andrea will be touring the area to look at different implementation options. Andrea mentioned that there may be some leftover money from WCS Thunderstruck that could be used in UGN but she needed to confirm with WCS. CVI and TU have been working on road decommissioning and under planting with spruce. Burner Mountain will be packaged for timber sale this fall and put out for bid next year. Two WVNFS were collared in UGN, but were lost shortly after.

Rusty Morgan: Planted another 5k trees on his property.

Pharis Knob: The appraisal for the easement will be done today. TNC is hoping to close on the easement sometime in July to move forward with the rest of the restoration project. The USFS is still working on the range NEPA that will be required to authorize the fencing part of the Pharis project. Roughly 30,000 trees will be planted this fall and next spring.

Other Updates:

- WVDNR's small grant program has funded Dr. Stephen Keller of Appalachian Laboratory to do genetic work on red spruce in West Virginia, and the Natural Heritage program is working with him to identify 30 sampling sites in older stands across the range of red spruce.
- The High Allegheny Wetlands ecological system has been proposed for red-listing by the World Conservation Union. This is one of only eight ecological systems in the United States to be in the first round of red-listing of systems. It was chosen because of its unusually high conservation value and robust documentation.

- Mitzy Schaney, a new Ph.D. student with geology professor Steve Kite, is developing a doctoral proposal focused on West Virginia peatlands. Elizabeth will be helping her with ideas and she would welcome suggestions from the CASRI group. Her background is in geomorphology and wetland soils.
- Dave mentioned that the spruce seed is now separated by the location it was collected and wanted to know if the group thought it would be good to keep them separated when growing so we know exactly where they came from. The group thought it was a good idea as long as it didn't impede on-the-ground work or create logistical difficulties.

The next CASRI meeting was scheduled for September 18th. Meeting ended at approximately 11:30AM

Wednesday September 18, 2013 - Monongahela National Forest Office - 9 a.m.

AGENDA

9:00 – 9:10

Introductions/Welcome

9:10 – 9:25

LCC Work Space

9:25 – 10:30

Selection of Interim Executive Committee

- Strategize for moving forward

-Ten Minute Break-

10:40 – 11:30

Updates from the Subcommittees/Work Plan Check-in

- Reference Conditions
- Mapping
- Communications
- Monitoring

11:30 – 12:00

Project Updates/Plans for fall

- Lambert
- UGN
- Canaan Valley
- Thunderstruck
- Pharis

Appalachian LCC Workspace

- Evan described the new CASRI workspace on the LCC site. This has been set up to house important files for the group. Files can be made private or public and can be edited collaboratively without multiple copies being emailed around. To access the site go to www.applcc.org Click on workspace, taxa or systems, then CASRI. You will need to register with the LCC website by creating a profile. To gain access to the CASRI workspace, send Matt Cimitile an email by clicking “Request A Group.” Evan has started to add some files to the site. A logical file structure will need to be set up and maintained by a single person or small group. We will also be able to add photos with metadata to the site for press releases. There is also an ability to have a group calendar and send group emails through the workspace. This will assist in keeping everything organized and available to the public.

SASRI Update

- SASRI is up and running. They are currently conducting spruce plantings and have plans to collect more cones this fall. The group has established what they are calling an Executive Committee to lead the group. Katherine Medlock, TNC TN, is the unofficial coordinator for the time being. They are struggling with many of the same restoration questions we are, but making progress quickly. As the group grows with more successes, it will be important to maintain communication and begin to look at larger funding proposals for the entire ecosystem. Andrea will maintain contact with SASRI and keep CASRI updated on their progress.

Interim Coordination of CASRI

- Thomas Minney provided an overview of how CASRI evolved into what it is today.
- The group discussed strategies for moving forward as Evan transitions out of the coordinator role.
 - It was suggested that a smaller “executive committee” be formed to take care of coordination. This group would be representative of all the key partners (possibly the signatories to the MOU) and have “as needed” meetings in addition to the regular larger CASRI group meetings.
 - A short list of potential “executive committee” members was drafted and included:
 - Dawn Washington or Marquette Crockett
 - Jack Tribble
 - Kent Karriker
 - Elizabeth Byers
 - Andrea Brandon
 - Dave Saville
 - Dave Saville suggested that maybe the larger group could meet less often and the meetings could be conducted as mini-conferences. The smaller “executive committee” group could meet in between and communicate with the larger group.
 - The issue of FACA was brought up. While the “executive committee” may not actually be a decision making group, there will be a need to address FACA with agency employees. Cindy Sandeno suggested CASRI contact Kate Goodrich-Arling for FACA regulations. Evan suggested the group contact the USFS National Partnership Office.
- An additional meeting will be held in the near future with the partners that are interested in providing cash support for a coordinator position. The results of this meeting will be communicated to the larger group at the next CASRI meeting. There was a brief discussion on what the position will look like moving forward and where it will be housed. The conversation was tabled until the next CASRI meeting.

- All agreed that there was still a need for immediate emergency coordination of the group until the details can be ironed out. It was suggested that we look to an AmeriCorps to at least create meeting agendas and take minutes.
 - Shane offered the help of Kris Hennig (AmeriCorps) to assist with coordinating the group until we could make a more permanent decision.
 - Dave Saville offered to volunteer as a coordinator as well. It was decided that Dave Saville would take on coordination first and pass the responsibilities on to Kris at some point.

Soils Update

- Stephanie Connolly gave a soils update. Jeff Skousen is interested in doing soil quality function studies on the Mower Tract and looking into plant/soil relations. We have seen very different soils at Lambert compared to Barton. This work will help move the group forward on some of the larger soil questions that are asked in the action plan.

Work Plan Update

- Evan reported that nearly everything that was outlined on the 2013 workplan for the group is completed. There are a few remaining items that will likely be completed by the end of the year.

Subcommittee Update

- Monitoring Plan
 - Evan and Marquette never got together to create a scaled-down version of the monitoring plan. However, Andrea, Dave and others created a simple 1 page monitoring plan. Mike Powell tested it and said it was easy for students to use. Marquette intends to work on the monitoring plan this fall. Andrea will coordinate with her and others interested to finalize a simple monitoring plan that can be adopted by the entire group.
- Reference Conditions
 - Cordie informed Evan that the document is nearly complete except for minor final edits. The other committee members agreed. Melissa Thomas-VanGundy volunteered to follow-up with Cordie, finalize the document and get it distributed to the larger group. At some point it is still intended to be incorporated into the Restoration Approach Document.
- Mapping
 - The mapping group has compiled all of the relevant data sets to create a map that will help inform decisions about the best places to conduct restoration. The group has not gotten together to finalize the map because Elizabeth has been out of town. The group will get together to look at the different data and decide what is important and how to weight the data. This will be an important working meeting. Andrea will work with Ruth to email out the dataset information prior to the meeting so there is enough time to review everything. Ruth and Andrea will coordinate this.
- Communications Plan
 - The communication plan is complete for now. A copy of it has been sent around the larger group for further comments. It outlines key messages and audiences. This is intended to continually evolve and focus on specific messages that are desired by the partners. It also includes a work table for completing communication pieces. This will need to be updated as it expires.

- Andrea announced other communication news including that CASRI will be featured in the national TNC magazine!!
- Feature videos have been completed by the USFWS on spruce restoration. These video links have been emailed out and are available for use.
- The facebook page is up and running. We have seen very good support and interaction from the public. Please continue to provide facebook content, videos, photos etc.

Fall Planting at the Refuge

- Dawn reported that the planting on 9/21 will include 2,000 trees. A bus from WVU and a bus from WVWC will attend as well as some boy scouts and members of the public. Please try to make it if you can. They will be planting an area along Sand Run and will enter the site through Timberline. Please meet at the Refuge at 8AM to help out. It should be an easy day.

Other Project Updates

- UGN – a pilot unit will be worked on in the next few months. This unit includes non-commercial spruce release mostly through herbiciding beech brush. The WCS grant is paying for this and is 1 of 5 projects that were awarded. WCS is very interested in making this a high profile project. It was suggested that talking points be put together for the entire WCS grant that includes UGN, Thunderstruck, and Gandy.
- Lambert – Shane Jones gave an update on the progress at Lambert. The American Rivers project area has been ripped. As part of the project woody debris is being incorporated by knocking down non-native conifers and spreading mulch provided by Hurricane Sandy.
- Pharis Knob – 4k trees will be planted on 13 acres this fall. The project may be expanded to include up to 300 acres of restoration on the Laurel Fork and Spruce Knob side of the project site. The fence line was discussed and it was suggested that the TNC follow-up with Troy Waskey about the archeological survey. The Cheat-Potomac Range NEPA has been signed.

Odds and Ends

- Dawn Washington suggested we look at the Ohio River Grant for the Cheat and the Elk focal areas. Dawn will email the grant around to the group again.
- Thomas Minney suggested we appoint someone to continue to seek out grant opportunities in the interim.

The next CASRI meeting was set for November 20th

Wednesday November 6, 2013 - Monongahela National Forest Office - 9 a.m.

AGENDA

9:00 – 9:10a

Introductions/Welcome

9:10 - 9:30a

Subcommittee updates

- Communications (Andrea Brandon)
 - TNC Red Spruce article, Journalist/Photographer visit
 - SASRI update

- Monitoring (Andrea Brandon)
- Mapping (Elizabeth Byers)
- Reference Conditions (Cordie Diggins)

9:30 – 10:30a

2013 Annual reporting

- Round-the-table, informal, reporting of 2013 projects
 - Candidates of projects to highlight in Year-End Report
 - Thunderstruck (Andrea Brandon)
 - Lambert Strip Restoration (Shane Jones)
 - Additional projects
 - Reporting of 2013 accomplishments (Send to Kris Hennig by November 20th)
- Annual report fact sheet development

2014 Operating Plan

- 2014 projects

Break – 10 minutes

10:40 – 11:30

Presentations

- Jeff Atkins (University of Virginia)
 - A brief overview of carbon and water cycling in Little Canaan WMA and future research into red spruce establishment
- Melissa Thomas-Van Gundy (USFS)
 - Landscape-scale modeling of spruce restoration alternatives

11:30 - Noon

Spruce conservation/restoration grant opportunities

- Generating soft money for “on-the-ground” efforts
 - Andrea Brandon
 - Shane Jones/Jack Tribble
- Contact Kris with additional grant opportunities to include within list
- Request volunteer to maintain grant list once compiled

Subcommittee Update

- Communications
 - Andrea provided an update the national TNC Magazine Red Spruce article and SASRI.
 - Red Spruce article: A journalist and photographer joined several CASRI members, including Cordie Diggins, Craig Stihler, Shane Jones, Dave Saville, Kris Hennig, Jack Tribble, and Andrea Brandon into the field to develop a story on how CASRI partners are working together toward the goal of increasing the size and scale of spruce restoration in the Central Appalachians and how this work benefits the WV Northing Flying Squirrel. Special thanks to Barb Douglas, Donna Mitchell and those who joined us in the field for meeting with the TNC writer and photographer. The article is set for publication in TNC’s magazine in spring 2014.

- SASRI: SASRI's first tree planting effort was very successful. Partners and volunteers joined together to plant 1,200 red spruce trees in the Unicoi Mountains in September 2013. While this is not a true spruce 'restoration' project, this planting plan was developed as a conservation measure for the Carolina northern flying squirrel, to supplant dying Hemlock to maintain a mixed conifer-northern hardwood forest for CNFS. Additionally, there is wide commitment from partners to process with a long-term strategic planning effort. Through this commitment, the Southern Highlands Reserve and The Nature Conservancy have signed an MOU in collaboration for the conservation of red spruce. Lastly, as there is a good cone crop in the southern Appalachians this year, partners are making a concerted effort to collect cones. Andrea will continue to serve as the liaison between SASRI and CASRI and will inform the group on opportunities to collaborate across the Central and Southern Apps.
 - Shane Jones recommended we begin planning for a Central/Southern Appalachians Spruce Conference. Jim Rentch, Shane Jones, Andrea Brandon, and Cordie Diggins agreed to meet in the coming months to further flesh out this idea.
 - The CASRI Partnership has been highlighted this past Quarter through several conferences. Notably, Elizabeth Byers presented at two conferences on climate change vulnerability in which she spoke of the CASRI Partnership.
- Monitoring Plan
 - Partners are close to developing a final cut of the Rapid Assessment Monitoring Protocol. Andrea will work with those in the Monitoring subcommittee to finalize. Kris Hennig has already used this protocol while monitoring at Lambert Run and has provided additional suggestions to strengthen the protocol based upon field use. Andrea will send out the final version for review by the entire group.
- Reference Conditions
 - Reference conditions document is nearly completed. Kent suggested this document connect reference conditions to management actions. Cordie will follow up with Kent, Melissa Thomas-Van Gundy, and Jason Teets to discuss incorporating how we can develop treatment recommendations from reference conditions. Kent also suggested making a deeper investment in collecting tree core data to inform reference conditions. Jason suggested there is a developing opportunity for dendrochronology training and asked if this might be something Greg Nowacki and Amy Hessel could help with. Lastly, Elizabeth Byers would like to review the reference conditions document.
 - Kent Karriker said the Monongahela recently received a substantial amount of historical vegetation information and asked if we have a student or volunteer that might be interested in scanning and organizing these documents. Barb said Alyssa might be able to help.
- Mapping
 - The mapping group is continuing toward the goal of developing a "Master Conservation Action Map" that may be used by partners and stakeholders for identifying and prioritizing restoration and protection projects. A Meeting is set for Nov 20th at WVDNR Offices. Elizabeth Byers will send out additional information and an agenda to CASRI Partners prior to the meeting. All are welcome to participate.

Coordination of CASRI

- This short discussion consisted of Kent offering that all options are currently on the table for determining next steps on CASRI coordination, including back filling the Partnership Liaison

position or potentially hiring a full-time permanent USFS employee (with cost-share funds from partner organizations such as TNC and WVDNR) at a leadership level.

2013 Annual Reporting and 2014 Operating Plan

- Kris sent out the Annual Operating Plan template and requested all partners submit year-end updates and 2014 project lists to him no later than Nov 20, 2013 so that he may develop the year-end report.
- Kris recommended including how CASRI partners are making use of recent research and data to inform strategic directions as a highlight in the report. Other highlighted stories will include TNC's Thunderstruck tree planting, USFS's Lambert Run project, and CVNWR's volunteer engagement. Please submit additional suggestions to Kris. For those projects highlighted a short 2-3 paragraph write up on the project is due to Kris by Nov 20.
- Andrea recommended developing a 1-page fact sheet that pulls from the year-end report and showcases/highlights 2013 successes. Barb Douglas recommended using the CASRI poster as a template. Andrea will send poster to Kris for review.

Jeff Atkins, University of Virginia

- Jeff is currently doing research on carbon and water cycling in the Little Canaan WMA and presented on current finding. See Presentation

Melissa Thomas Van-Gundy, US Forest Service

- Melissa presented on a Landis-II scenario modeling effort she is currently engaging in to inform spruce restoration options on the Monongahela National Forest. See Presentation.

Spruce conservation/restoration grant opportunities

- Kent and Kris initiated a discussion on how CASRI Partners can generate funding for 'less flashy' projects, such as spruce release in hardwood dominated stands. Kris passed out a list of current funding opportunities and is developing a grants matrix table and encompasses future funding opportunities.
- The NFWF Hurricane Sandy RFP was discussed with high interest from several partners to look into this opportunity further and see if a project incorporating CASRI outcomes can be developed. Andrea agreed to coordinate a follow-up discussion with Dawn Washington, Elizabeth Byers, Kent Karriker, Kris Hennig, and Eric Rusenger.
- Contact Kris with additional grant opportunities.

The next CASRI meeting was set for February 12, 2014