

Southern Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative

Meeting Notes

October 28, 2015

Bent Creek Experimental Forest—Southern Research Station

1577 Brevard Road
Asheville, NC 28806

10:00-10:20 Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements

Please see sign-in sheet listed below for list of participants

Announcements:

- If you are interested in helping with planting, or re-potting spruce, please contact Kelly Holdbrooks or Chris Kelly (contact information contained in sign-in sheet below).
- Due to lack of leadership, we have decided to postpone the Spruce conference originally scheduled for 2016. Folks agreed that we would be more prepared in 2017 to host this conference in the Southern Apps. Kurt Johnsen volunteered to lead the effort.

10:20-11:00 Planting and Propagation report (Chris Kelly, NC Wildlife Commission and Kelly Holdbrooks, Southern Highlands Reserve)

Chris reviewed the spruce plantings they have done in the Unicoi mountains. These are not restoration efforts, but, they are designed to augment habitat for northern flying squirrel. Approximately 1100 trees were planted in 2013 and 500 in 2015. These are underplantings with 1 gallon pots. They plan to monitor growth and survival.

Kelly reviewed the operations at SHR and the way that they propagate spruce for planting. Please see the powerpoint presentations for more information.

11:00-11:30 Plans for cone collections and future research (Kurt Johnsen, SRS)

Kurt gave an overview of the type of research he plans to do on red spruce in the Southern Appalachians. His research will have two prongs 1) intensive local studies and 2) extensive range-wide studies. He made some observations/recommendations about Seed collections suggesting that they be strategically collected using GIS including location, elevation, aspect, etc. Please see the powerpoint presentation for more information.

11:30-12:00 TACCIMO resources (Lisa Jennings, USFS)

Lisa currently works for the Grandfather Ranger District as the CFLRP coordinator. We were pleased to have her stand in for Emrys Treasure at TACCIMO to give a great presentation about how TACCIMO can be used. She also covered the summary findings and report that TACCIMO created for the Spruce Restoration Plan.

12:00-12:45 Lunch

We had a demonstration of the cone collecting techniques beings used by the SRS. John Butnor demonstrated the slingshot method for getting ropes into the canopy to either shake or saw down a branch.



12:45-2:00 Spruce Restoration Plan and Mapping Review and discussion (Katherine Medlock, TNC)

Katherine gave an overview of the Southern Appalachian Spruce Restoration Plan and requested that everyone who was interested review the document and provide feedback (no later than November 20th, 2015). Please see powerpoint for more details on the plan components. Katherine will send out a link to the plan document.

2:00-3:30 SASRI Business and future structure presentation and discussion (Jay Martin, USFS and Katherine Medlock, TNC)

Jay gave a presentation about the benefits of entering into a partner agreement. He gave an overview of the types of agreements that the FS uses and suggested that we consider either a MOU or a Non-funded Participating Agreement. Everyone agreed that it was a valuable idea to pursue. Katherine will convene the Steering Committee to help determine the details and next steps for this process. The group created a list of potential signatories and also determined the need to establish co-chairs to lead the effort (each serving two years and overlapping by one year).

3:30-4:00 Spruce NEPA work—sharing ideas and updates from around the region (Chris Kelly facilitating)

Chris facilitated a discussion of the efforts around the region to get spruce NEPA completed. Katherine explained recent efforts to pursue the idea of doing a regional spruce EA/EIS. Forest Service staff capacity is the limiting factor. Barb Crane has agreed to ask her colleagues in the regional office if they would be able to assist. The group agreed that we should proceed with a two pronged approach 1) continue to do small projects via CE or whatever appropriate NEPA is needed 2) pursue large-scale NEPA for the long-term.

Carol Croy gave an update regarding spruce restoration in Wilderness areas. She gave an overview of the 2020 Vision (Interagency stewardship priorities for America's National Wilderness Preservation System). This document was signed by all the agencies that manage Wilderness areas and is readily available with a google search. It calls for the need to do some restoration within Wilderness areas and suggests that completing a minimum requirements assessment at the Forest level is the next appropriate step. Carol suggested that we need to continue to show a compelling need to do this work especially in Wilderness areas and that we continue to demonstrate success at a small scale wherever we can.

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Sign-in Sheet

	Name	Organization	Email
1	Tom Blevis	USFS - MRNKA	tblevis@fs.fed.us
2	Sarah Meier	USFS - Mt. Rogers	smeyer@fs.fed.us
3	DAVE JORDAN	PRIVATE	lakenky@citiemi.net
4	Michael Cheek	NCFS	michael.cheek@ncagr.gov
5	Kurt Johnson	USFS SRS	kjohnsen@fs.fed.us
6	John Butnor	USFS SRS	jbutnor@fs.fed.us
7	Bo Dossert	Warren Wilson College	bdossert@warren-wilson.edu
8	Chris Kelly	NCWRC	christine.kelly@ncwildlife.org
9	Bob Lewis	Cherokee NF	rbflewis@fs.fed.us
10	Kelly Holdbrooks	STR	kholdbrooks@southwestern.edu
11	Andy Whittier	NCM	wwhittie@ncsu.edu
12	Joe McGuinness	Cherokee NF	jmcguinness@fs.fed.us
13	St. Apolonia	Warren Wilson College	stapolonia@warren-wilson.edu
14	Bill Jackson	USDA Forest Service	bjackson02@fs.fed.us
15	Kendrick Weeks	NCWRC	kendrickweeks@ncwildlife.org
16	Jay Martin	USFS Mt Rogers	ymartin@fs.fed.us
17	Sue Cameron	USFWS	sueclicameron@gmail.com
18	Sue Fruchey	USFS	sfruchey@fs.fed.us
19	Lisa Jennings	USFS	lisajennings@fs.fed.us
20	Mara Alexander	FWS	maraalexander@fws.gov
21	Becky Keller	AMJV	bkeller@abcbirds.org
22	Jean Brown	FS - Nantahala NF	jbrown01@fs.fed.us
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24	Marquette Crockett	SAHC	marquette@appalachian.org
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