

# Cunningham Knob Range Allotment Restoration

Through Partners, Range Allotment Management Creates Early Successional Habitat While Improving Riparian Areas

April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015 marked a big day for the Monongahela National Forest in terms of diverse partnerships and inter-office teamwork.



## Plants are staged in the Riparian Zone

Forest Service employees from multiple disciplines came together at the Cunningham Knob Range Allotment with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR), the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), the Ruffed Grouse Society and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to plant 1,700 plants and 800 willow cuttings. Their combined efforts put the finishing touches on projects implemented earlier in the year: pasture reclamation, promotion of wildlife by early successional habitat creation, and riparian protection.



Partners use dibble bars to plant Red Spruce

When a range allotment such as Cunningham Knob, at over 992 acres, becomes overgrown and begins reverting back to forest, it provides for a unique opportunity to make management decisions to benefit not only range, but other disciplines as well. By thinning 204 acres of forest borders with a “feathering” technique, a smooth transition between pasture and forest was created allowing for prime habitat for desired species such as ruffed grouse, wild turkey and other edge species. Additionally, seed mixes to promote wildlife were distributed across the 992 acre allotment, over 50 acres of Hawthorn release was performed and 38 acres of pasture was reclaimed. The watershed was benefitted by fencing out riparian areas from livestock and planting trees along ½ mile of stream. This will reduce sediment and stream health is improved.



## Plants find new homes next to the stream

None of these accomplishments could have been achieved without the hard work of the project partners: WVDNR, NWTF, the Ruffed Grouse Society and the NRCS provided crucial input towards the implementation of the project, Instrumental on the ground assistance and much more.

