

Wildlife Habitat Restoration Working Group  
Ecological Restoration Project  
Nantahala – Pisgah National Forests

7 December, 2010

Attendees: Marisue Hilliard, Katie Greenberg, Sue Cameron, Chris Kelly, Carolyn Wells, Hugh Irwin, Kendrick Weeks, Steve Henson, Sheryl Bryan, and Gordon Warburton.

Gordon began the meeting by reviewing the proposed golden-winged warbler (gwwa) project that the wildlife habitat restoration working group decided to pursue in concept at the last meeting. He showed a power point that outlined the history of the ecological restoration steering committee and specifically the activities of the habitat restoration work group.

Gordon, Sue, Chris, and Kendrick attended a technical committee meeting of the Appalachian Joint Ventures and reported to the group about that meeting. The AMJV has been focusing on the gwwa as well as the cerulean warbler because of their vulnerability and conservation important in the Appalachian Mountains. The AMJV has been meeting to develop conservation goals and focal areas for gwwa's and they presented their efforts at the meeting. In NC there are 4 gwwa focal areas. The AMJV also funded the development of best management practices for gwwa's in forested areas in the northeast. The need stressed at the meeting was to get gwwa habitat out on the ground in the focal areas to begin a process of reversing significant population declines.

The habitat restoration work group decided at its last meeting that we would continue to pursue the possibility of focusing our restoration efforts on one of the focal areas and use this project to benefit and restore gwwa populations and habitat. To prepare information for our meeting, Kendrick Weeks, Chris Kelly (NCWRC) and Gordon formed a NC gwwa technical group consisting of biologists with expertise on the gwwa (see list) and met with this group prior to this meeting. The technical group thought our idea of "adopting" a focal area for gwwa was a good one, and they provided some initial guidance on the types of habitat needed by the bird. In addition, the group discussed the potential of using the Frank's Creek AA as potential for creating demonstration sites for gwwa habitat restoration.

Kendrick and Gordon presented information from the technical meeting to the wildlife habitat restoration working group. After much discussion, the group decided that it would like to pursue the idea of restoring gwwa habitat on a focal area. Specifically, the focal area selected was the southern most area in NC (Southern Appalachian 2 (SA2)). This area was selected because it contains a large amount of USFS land on which we could have an impact, because it ranked high in importance from the AMJV and because Audubon also selected this as an area of global conservation significance for the gwwa. The focal area is large and one of the suggestions from the technical group was to select a

smaller area and make this a demonstration area for gwwa habitat. The AMJV would like these demonstration areas in each of the focal areas. We looked at several possibilities for a demonstration area, and the Frank's Creek Analysis Area was selected by the group. This area is currently being analyzed for projects and there are gwwa's nearby to colonize the area. We agreed we need to look more closely at this area. Carolyn suggested that coordinating with the Fire Learning Network may also provide other demonstration sites within the chosen focal area.

Marisue and Sheryl thought it would be a good idea to have the wildlife habitat restoration working group attend the ID team meeting for the Franks Creek Project so that we could begin the process of integrating gwwa habitat goals and BMPs early in the process. They are going to coordinate that for the group. Chris Kelly was also going to talk with Dave Casey (USFS) to let him know what we were thinking about doing.

Also, the group would like maps with important layers to help us evaluate the area and its potential more thoroughly. We need to look at road access, forest types, current age structure and soils to name a few layers. Sheryl was going to coordinate with Holly Hixson to obtain layers for the group's use. We also talked about using Lidar to examine the area currently.

Once we have a clear idea of habitat needs on the area, Marisue proposed that we consider using a stewardship contract/agreement approach to completing the work.

The next group meeting will be at the ID team meeting. This has not been announced yet. The technical group will continue to adapt BMPs for the focal area based on local research.

**Agenda – Golden-winged warbler meeting  
Habitat restoration on USFS Lands in Western NC**

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Bent Creek Experimental Forest Research Lab

- Purpose/Proposed Project
  - Background
  - GWWA – Trends
  - Study (Klause)
  
- Objectives
  - Review info from WNC GWWA technical group and AMJV
  - Application to NC
  - Getting GWWA habitat on the ground
  
- Review of GWWA work group
  
- Focal Area – IBA Global priority areas
  - Concentration area within focal area
  - Demonstration Area concept
  - Fine tuning the area selected
  - What does the group think?
  
- BMPs
  - Suitable vs unsuitable
  - Incorporation of BMPs on existing sales
  
- Monitoring – Adaptive management approach
  
- Next steps
  - Begin layout process
  - Site visits
  - Occupied site visits in spring
  - Coordination with RD staff, GWWA tech group

## GWWA Tech Group – NC

- Dr. Dave Buehler, UT
- Curtis Smalling, Audubon Society
- Nora Schubert, SAHC
- Dr. Scott Pearson, Mars Hill
- Dr. Todd Fearer, AMJV, ABC
- Doreen Miller, USFS
- Chris Kelly, Scott Anderson, Kendrick Weeks, Gordon Warburton (NCWRC)