

## **Restoring the Land and its Resources**

### **Cherokee National Forest Restoration Initiative**

Representatives of the *Cherokee National Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative Steering Committee* recently presented Forest Supervisor, Tom Speaks with a report highlighting recommendations supporting forest restoration opportunities in the northern portion of the Cherokee National Forest.

In December 2009 The Nature Conservancy convened a diverse group of stakeholders with the purpose of developing a set of collaborative and ecologically sound restoration recommendations to restore the land and its resources to a healthier and more natural condition in the Cherokee National Forest.

The Steering Committee represented a diverse cross-section of stakeholder interests, including affected conservation groups, wildlife/hunting organizations, forest product businesses, concerned residents, national forest users, state and local governments, and others. The Committee worked collaboratively with the Forest Service for over two years to identify and prioritize the needs for restoration management efforts. The Restoration Initiative's approach emphasized public participation and information sharing in order to reach consensus, using science-based methods for forest management and implementing ecological restoration on the ground.

Cherokee National Forest Supervisor, Tom Speaks said, "This was a unique opportunity to observe a diverse group of individuals and organizations work together to define a common vision for ecological restoration in the Cherokee National Forest. Many groups and individuals put considerable time and effort into this worthwhile process. The land and its resources, as well as surrounding communities will benefit from our restoration efforts for generations to come."

Although the Steering Committees' recommendations are being carefully considered by the Forest Service, no management decisions will be made without site specific analysis and further public involvement as required by law and Agency guideline. This Committee's efforts are emblematic of the collaborative, community-based forest restoration work that will achieve integrated resource restoration outcomes for more resilient forest landscapes.

#### **Cherokee National Forest Restoration Initiative *Steering* Committee Participants:**

US Fish and Wildlife Service  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency  
Southern Appalachian Multiple Use Council  
At Large-Environmental Community  
Sullivan County Commissioner/Logger  
USDA Forest Service  
Cherokee Forest Voices  
TN Dept. of Agriculture, Div. of Forestry  
Tennessee Forestry Association  
Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition  
Ruffed Grouse Society



**Representatives of the *Cherokee NF Landscape Restoration Initiative Steering Committee* present recommendations report to Forest Supervisor Tom Speaks. (L to R – Joe McGuinness, Catherine Murray, Tom Speaks, Mark Shelly, Katherine Medlock, Parker Street, Dwight King)**