

Little Tennessee Native Fish Conservation Partnership

Steering Committee Meeting

June 24, 2016 – Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort, Cherokee, NC

Attendees: Andrea Leslie, Brian Alford, Tom Martin, Jim Herrig, Roger Clapp, Powell Wheeler, Jason Meador, Scott Robinson, Janet Mizzi, Axel Ringe, Bart Carter, Amy Wales, Shannon O'Quinn, Jeremy Monroe (Freshwaters Illustrated), Erin McCombs, Gerrit Jobsis (American Rivers), Mike LaVoie, Mandi Carringer, Kat Diersen, Gary Peeples, Steve Fraley, Stephanie Chance (via phone), JR Shute, Peggy Shute

Note: action items are in **red bold**.

NOTES

-Welcome from Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Russ Townsend, and Mike LaVoie

-Introductions and Review of Agenda – Andrea Leslie

-Conservation Team Reports:

Shannon O'Quinn – Assessment and Implementation Teams--

Held a joint meeting – combined the teams to develop a strategy. Implementation Team – assessing watershed conditions and identifying problem areas may take some time. Hope to further develop priorities and develop a list of low hanging fruit projects to build momentum for the partnership. Need to discuss this today, ID these projects. Assessment Team (Janet Mizzi) – Were hoping for the grant for videos and planning map platform, but were not successful in securing grant money. Has been a setback. Don't have the personnel resources to conduct the work without additional funds. Will be resubmitting proposal for Duke Water Resources Funds. Action item (Fred).

Continuing to work on consolidating information already available. Peggy and Andrea did the first piece of bringing existing reports together into one location. **Next step – we need to compile ongoing efforts. Need to put out a survey for folks to help ID projects and see what people are already working on.**

Erin brought up ARCGIS Platform and database costs. Estimate is \$30k. **Need to put out survey for what activities, low hanging fruit, we want to do next. Action item (Erin).**

Fundraising Committee –

When we can bring priorities to fund raising committee they will work on getting seed money. Fred working on more funding. Will be resubmitting proposal for Duke Water Resources Funds.

Communications Committee –

Updating and maintaining web-site. Gary can update anytime, if folks have things to share. All meeting notes from steering committee and executive committee are on the web-site.

www.littlet.org

Education and outreach Committee - Jason Meador—

Jeremy Monroe working on various video clips, buffalo run this spring, redhorse spawning. We have secured about \$40k for the videos. The more money we can raise, the more videos we can do.

Snorkeling gear – we have secured 30 sets of snorkeling gear and cleaning solution.

-Presentation by Jeremy Monroe- Freshwaters Illustrated

Have worked in region for 5 years doing short format films, with ultimate goal of a full feature film. Have new grants for this summer, hidden rivers short films. Series of short videos to reach multiple audiences, anglers, riparian landowners, etc. Short format is very versatile. Two ideas: introduction to the area, riparian landowners, Shade Your Streams. Have been working on introductory piece to release first – hoping for this time next year. Sicklefin releases, buffalo run, other natural history pieces. Video shared: have a drone now, so can capture different footage. Need to express why the Little T is special, so thinking about filming a canoe trip.

JR - Local tourism seems to really highlight the local streams, we can capitalize on this as an opportunity to highlight the rivers value and reach a broader audience, a new target audience, boaters, anglers. We need people to take the lead on talking to tourism industry in order to educate them about the effort and get funding for Freshwaters Illustrated videos.

- **Andrea, Steve, and Roger will reach out to regional breweries.**

Need to work with the tourism industry. **Scott R, Powell, Mike L., and Jason can work on this.**

- **Mike L. will reach out to Cherokee Chamber of Commerce**
- **Jason M. can reach out to Franklin Chamber of Commerce**
- **Powell, Jason, Mike can reach out to fishing guides.**

Tourism is an important industry for the Cherokee and tribal council. Think about county and other local government leaders. Ecotourism idea – float trips, release fish or mussels, hikes? Can we put together a pamphlet for distribution? **Steve, Gary, Mike, Mandy, Stephanie will work on an ecotourism guide/pamphlet.**

Can we put together a float trip of the Little T for Jeremy and Freshwaters Illustrated? Can the Freshwaters Illustrated video teach about the food web?

-Business

Revisit ExComm positions at the winter steering committee meeting. ExComm to have a 1 year term, with opportunity to renew up to 1 year. Same for the conservation team leads. Currently no treasurer. NC Wildlife Federation (Fred) has been managing finances to date. Andrea's term is up in November.

Grant applications policy: Partnership Identity in grant applications. General support for EXCom approval of proposals to get them out ASAP, due to the often short timelines for grants. Steering committee should be notified also when a grant is sent out.

Roles and Responsibilities: Last meeting in Knoxville was much larger, we considered friends of partnership and discussed field activity every year to invite everyone interested to communicate to a broad audience and celebrate our efforts. Any comments? None.

Roster of Partners/Steering Committee Members: Please review and send changes to ExComm. Need accurate emails to communicate with members. Steering Committee voted last year to include Duke Energy. Discussion of process.

New Steering Committee Member discussion.

Defenders Of Wildlife (Kat Diersen): new RO in Southeast – Asheville, looking to engage with conservation partners, have made the Little T. a priority area, don't have biologists but looking to be advocates. Gaining a stronger sense of what others are doing and see where they can lend value. Welcome ideas for how they can step in and work with us. Expertise in policy for proactive conservation, yes also have a more litigious branch, but that's not the SE/her intention here. Andrea: Legislative issues not a priority for little T; that not her intention. Can work with private landowners has agricultural communication background. Group voted to include DOF in steering committee.

Tom Martin: works with Western Carolina University and would like to participate in the Assessment Team. Group voted to include Tom in steering committee.

Action Item. Erin to find out if Mountain True is interested in joining the partnership.

-American Rivers/Erin proposal

Introduced Mandy as new AR employee. Want to expand efforts on the Little T and develop Tuckaseegee River blue trail for recreation and protection. Looking for 2 years of funding to support blue trail and river restoration. Have started efforts working with WCU with a goal of removing Cullowhee Dam. Will work with WCU on an engineering feasibility analysis. Would like a letter of support from the NFCA Partnership. Partnership voted to support the effort. Action item (Erin). **Will submit a draft letter to ExComm today or Monday, and apply for grant on July 8th.**

-Riparian buffers

Jason Meador: Shade your Streams Presentations Education/Outreach for landowners or anyone on riparian buffers, Mainspring (Formerly LTLT). Talk to community groups, schools. Little T watershed. Where does your water go? Show maps to these groups, talk about biodiversity, free-flowing sections, show pictures of rare species. Share brochures, specific ones for the different counties. School groups then have their own activities to monitor water quality, do clean ups, etc. Partner with Jason to get trees to plant. Billboards to highlight game fishes, BOD improvement thru shade. Tourists, etc can see these signs. Shadeyourstream.org is web-site. Fish biomonitoring each summer – Macon Swain Counties, neighboring GA county also. 2 fulltime staff, 1 summer intern, everyone else is volunteer. Dr. Bill McClarney and Jason. Grade your stream – modified stream visual assessment protocol for all of these groups to use. Develop habitat index, similar to IBI (index

of biotic integrity) for the fishes. Often closely related. Simple method that these groups can use to determine how much shade their stream has. Training volunteers so that folks learn more. Based out of Macon County – city of Franklin.

Call to work with someone in TN, to expand the program. 20 counties represented in W. NC. Program has expanded to GA: 3 projects ready to go in GA, 5 seeking further funding. Have new Shade Your Streams logo. There are many resources that have been developed for this program, and Jason is willing to share with anyone to expand the program in their area. Brainstorm an entity that could take the lead for this initiative in TN.

Shannon mentioned that a “Southeast Conservation Alliance” is interested in Shade Your Streams and has asked TVA for \$90k to fund an expansion of Shade Your Stream beyond Mainspring’s core area for the program.

Defenders suggested they could hold an NRCS “Innovators” grant.

Brian Alford asked for “boots on the ground” projects for UT Student Association

Erin McCombs presented on behalf of Angel Hjarding on the NC Wildlife Federation’s Butterfly Highway program as a potential complement to the Shade your Stream efforts. Can be a helpful way to connect with folks who are interested in other elements of nature like pollinators, flowers, gardening, etc. but can still help to protect/enhance streamside lands. Individuals can register their yards at butterflyhighway.com.