

December 20, 2016
Twin Creeks Science Center, Great Smoky Mountains National Park
10:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Attendees

- Andrea Leslie, NCWRC, andrea.leslie@ncwildlife.org
- Pat Rakes, CFI, xenisma@gmail.com
- Gary Peeples, USFWS, gary_peeples@usfws.gov
- Julie DeMeester, TNC/NC, julie.demeester@tnc.org (via phone)
- Emily Granstaff, USFWS, emily_granstaff@fws.gov (via phone)
- Fred Harris, NCWF, fred@ncwf.org
- Janet Mizzi, USFWS, janet_Mizzi@fws.gov
- Kat Dierson, Defenders of Wildlife, KDiersen@defenders.org
- Christian Hunt, Defenders of Wildlife, CHunt@defenders.org
- JR Shute, CFI, jrshute55@gmail.com
- Steve Fraley, NCWRC, stephen.fraley@ncwildlife.org
- Mandi Carringer, American Rivers, mcarringer@americanrivers.org
- Erin McCombs, American Rivers, emccombs@americanrivers.org
- Jim Herring, USFS, jherring@fs.fed.us
- Warren Stiles, USFWS, warren_stiles@fws.gov
- Tom Martin, WCU, tmartin@email.wcu.edu
- Matt Kulp, National Park Service, matt_kulp@nps.gov
- Justin Quick, UT, jquick7@vols.utk.edu
- Shannon O'Quinn, TVA, tsoquinn@tva.gov
- Larry Everett, TDEC, larry.everett@tn.gov
- Jason Meador, Mainspring Conservation Trust, jmeador@mainspringconserves.org
- Brian Alford, UT Knoxville, jalfor12@utk.edu

Welcome

Matt Kulp, GSMNP

Overview of agenda

Andrea Leslie, NCWRC

Conservation Team Reports

Education outreach

- Updated team goals and objectives
- Assist Fred with fundraising
- Divided into task groups – video group
 - Video
 - Jeremy coming back to basin this spring/summer to get additional footage
 - Snorkel and gear sharing
 - Need to be used within the Little TN basin
 - If you want to use the equipment, contact Jason and/or Mike LaVoie
 - Snorkeling and gear sharing group will meet to expand number of events or go beyond simple snorkeling
 - Andrea – limiting factor is staffing
 - Fred – Do we need additional gear for the coming year? AFS NC chapter said we could come back and ask for more.
 - JR – CFI has a number of suits/masks/snorkels – many geared toward kid sizes. Would love to get more use out of them. People can reach out to CFI – CFI staffer needs to go along

- Action item – Develop standards for use and liability forms – Steve, Warren, Gary, Pat
- Action item - Jim H. has a liability form example that he will share
 - Jim – Develop a liability form that everyone signs, including for just loaning
 - Make certain someone is tasked as lifeguard – head above water at all time
 - Fraley – Do we want to market its availability?
 - Shannon – TVA’s experience – care was better with TVA staff on sites; oft times waders took Keavy damage
 - Fraley – maybe place a deposit
- Signage – nothing to report
- Fish migration and similar events
 - Jim Herrig will continue announcements
 - If he can’t maybe someone in our group can take the baton
 - Other migrations – Ocoee and Hiwassee have them, but others in Little TN. Need to identify other Little TN events
- Adult education – nothing to report

Assessment and implementation – Janet and Shannon

- Implementation and assessment teams merged - Combined team met in February
- Group applied and received Duke funding for web mapping tool that will bring assessment data to table
- Andrea, Erin, Emily, Stephanie, Fred, Gillian Bee, Kat Hoenke, Rich Cochran, and Kirk Fessenmeyer (TU) were the sub-team for the web mapper
- Shannon asked TVA for Shade Your Stream program – TVA provided about \$90,000
- TVA will probably have another round of funding

Communication

- Helped organize steering committee meetings
- Helped organize many executive committee calls
- Maintained website
 - Luke (NCWRC) will help with website
- Action item – Gary will link existing river access information to our website
- Year-end partnership accomplishment summary out soon

Fundraising

- Loose commitment from AFS to provide a little more money for snorkeling stuff
- Attended Duke announcement event

Web Mapping Project

Update

- \$32,000 (maybe \$6,000 from Fisheries Conservation Foundation) for web mapping from Duke. Money must be spent in coming year.
- 15 contractor applications reviewed. *Downstream Strategies* (Morgantown, WV) chosen
- Project will house biological/physical data and display interactive map to prioritize conservation areas, show historic and current projects on the ground.
- Mapper will be constructed in ArcGIS and made available through ArcGIS online app.

Steering Committee Discussion

- Partnership is primary audience
- Need to map each species’ site occupancy (like museum distribution datasets) by stream segment within the basin
- Identify datasets and acquire them

- Will the mapper be able to do predictive modeling (like species niche modeling with Maxent)? No. They will be able to synthesize the raw data to show priority areas based on current levels of urbanization for particular sites, for example. Data will be summarized and made available to partners for modeling and other uses in ArcGIS.
- Work will be done by contractor by end of October 2017. Contractor will keep in touch periodically with implementation team members to ensure work is being done based on partnerships needs/goals.
- Do we also need a public-facing webmapper, or does storymap cover it?
- Need to identify people/groups that will serve on this implementation team to oversee web mapper construction, communicate with contractor.
- Partnership will provide data
- What modeling would we like incorporated? Depends on costs. Land use impacts and water quality?
- Will it provide tools, plug-in, etc.

Goals for Web Mapper

- Partners are primary audience
- Needs species distribution and extent of occurrence
- House data and make it available to GIS users
- Start with compiling a ton of data
- Want to capture recreation info that could facilitate river recreation
- Need to ensure any sensitive data is safeguarded
- Look at ease of getting data in and out of the site
- Capture recreation info from local entities, businesses (e.g., blue way trails)
- Create story map (e.g., GSMNP story map)?

Process for developing the web mapper

- Working through October
- We'll have a web mapper workgroup
- Assessment and implementation team will dig deeper into what we want, including key goals and outcomes, at Jan. 25th meeting
- Iterative process – Development, feedback, then repeat
- Need to identify and fill data gaps
- **Who else to involve? Coweeta Lab researchers; Jason Love; GSMNP GIS analyst; TVA communications/public interface folks; Susan Sachs (GSMNP), Tanya Poole (NCWRC) to provide feedback on data helpful for outreach and any public interface questions; USFWS Mark Endries; Julie from TNC, Luke from NCWRC**

Videos

- J. Meador will communicate with Jeremy Monroe to get videos done by end of October 2017.
- Should it go on TV (e.g., like Tennessee Wild Side)? Jeremy will need to know ASAP before he shoots, because it will need to be produced/formatted differently.
- Fred Harris: Who is our ultimate audience with videos? They are a means, not an end.
- *Defenders of Wildlife*: Christian involved with grass roots education and outreach (right now Red Wolf issues). Has contacts to produce videos for outreach to small groups (e.g., youth groups). Gear it towards private land owners that we need to contact about *Shade Your Stream*.

Blue Trails - Mandi

- Blue Trails – tool American Rivers uses to help connect people with river in their community
- Goal is to ultimately change perception of river to one as an incredible community asset, including economic driver, source of drinking water, and recreational site
- Voluntary, community-based involvement

- Tuckasegee situation
 - In American Rivers priority basin
 - Home of Jackson County fly fishing trail
 - WCU water supply
 - Rare wildlife
 - Development posing a challenge to the river
 - Poor-technique stream-bank stabilization
 - Few riparian forests
- Next steps
 - Convene stakeholder group
 - Create unified community vision
 - Finalize communications and outreach plans
 - Conservation planning
 - Recreation planning/implementation of plans
 - Create Blue Trail map
 - Celebrate
- Blue Trail map will be a product
- Bluetrailsguide.org website provides resources for developing blue trails
- Looking for ways to bring the Tuck Blue Way into other partnership/partner efforts
- **Reach out to Bart Carter of TWRA to see if TN can work with this framework for TN rivers/streams**

Shade Your Stream update - Jason

- More brochures to be printed, with wider geographic applicability
- Logo and website up now
- Fred - Blend shade your stream with providing pollinator habitat to make it more attractive to farmers and funders
- Effort overall is moving east, but we want to move it west
 - Mainspring limited to NC and GA
 - Big focus will be trying to ID organizations who can do this in TN portion of basin - No TN analog to Mainspring.
 - Shannon – TVA thinking more about how to get word out in TN valley. Interested in getting more word out in TN too. TVA has money to do demonstration project in TN, but need to ID group of people to take it on
 - UT students looking for projects.
 - NRCS?
 - TN Stream Mitigation Program another possibility – at least for reaching people
 - Eric Henry – Blount County-based, but he would be a good person to talk to Eric could help promote idea and help find someone who could go after it
 - **Action item: Larry Everett can talk to Eric Henry**
 - **Action item: Warren Stiles will reach out to Cookeville Partners for Fish and Wildlife program staff**

Funding discussion

- Would benefit from a paid staffer to go after funder – part time or full. Who has time to administer funding and go after new
- NCWF needs staffer to develop WNC chapter –they thought the partnership would be cause around which chapter could be built
 - Opportunity lies with EPA healthy watersheds initiative - Helping organizations develop capacity is one of their priorities
 - Brings benefits to partnership, i.e. pool of volunteers. Would start out as NC because NC chapter
 - Portion of duties would be WNC chapter NCWF, rest of duties would be paid coordinator for the partnership
 - February deadline on that grant – January putting it together
- Do we want to go back to NCAFS for more snorkeling money
 - **Action item - Get input from Jason and Mike**

- *Mapping project – will current money carry us as far as we want to go? CWMTF proposal to expand mapping with Duke as match*
- *Easiest money would probably be the TVA money – no funding of staff person*
- *TVA planning/business cycle starts in February. If they have on-the-ground projects they can propose. TVA could fund on-the-ground project, which could help fund a person for administrative purposes*
- *Shannon has been part of two healthy watershed assessments – Clinch-Powell and one state of TN*
- *After going through process, haven't been successful getting project funding coming out of assessments*
- Clean Water Management Trust Fund planning grant
 - American Rivers lead applicant. Mainspring can provide office space. Staff member or contractor remains to be seen.
 - Funding deadline is February – Erin is planning on moving forward
- **Action item – American Rivers will go after CWMTF funding**
- **Action item - NCWF will go after EPA funding to open western chapter and coordinate partnership**

Leadership for 2017 and changes to conservation teams

Executive Committee

- Chair—Andrea Leslie
- Vice Chair (NC)—Erin McCombs
- Vice Chair (TN)—Brian Alford
- Outreach—Jason Meador
- Assessment & Implementation—Shannon O'Quinn/USFWS staffer to be named later by Janet Mizzi
- Fundraising—Fred Harris
- Communications—Gary Peeples

Conservation Teams

- **Add Kat Diersen to Shade Your Stream and Assessment Team**
- **Add Christian Hunt to Education and Outreach (especially Video workgroup)**
- **Add Julie Demeester, Luke Etchinson, Coweeta (Jason Love??), Mark Endries to Assessment/Implementation Team (Web Mapper). Involve Susan Sachs and Tanya Poole on education end.**
- **Add Steve Fraley, Warren Stiles, Gary Peeples, and Pat Rakes to Education and Outreach's Snorkel subgroup**
- **Add Warren Stiles to Assessment/Implementation Team**

Round robin

- University of Tennessee
 - Helping with sturgeon and buffalo work
- Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
 - Watershed assessment updated
 - Updating fish consumption advisory signs
- Tennessee Valley Authority
 - TVA funding to improve habitat – Shade Your Stream, sicklefin redhorse
 - Another round of TVA funding for upcoming year. Contact Shannon
- Great Smoky Mountains National Park
 - Brook trout restoration in Deep Creek watershed
 - Abrams creek restoration continues – translocations – looking for source stocks
 - Concern about karst topography on edge of park – looking at water quality and route in order to protect cave species
 - 30-stream look at acidity and how to restore streams to historic pH.
- Western Carolina University
 - Bringing elementary school students out to Tuckasegee tribs to look at water quality and macroinvertebrates
 - Monitoring water movement around campus

- New student who will pit tag as many redhorse as possible. New graduate student will be starting a redhorse project in the Okonaluftee in conjunction with the EBCI.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Welcome Warren Stiles, new recovery lead for most of listed fish whose primary range is in Tennessee and state lead listed fish found primarily in other states, but whose range includes Tennessee.
 - Sicklefin redhorse Candidate Conservation Agreement signed this past year
 - Decision made not to list sicklefin redhorse
 - Listing decisions coming up– eastern hellbender in 2018, three TN fish
 - Safe Harbor with North Carolina in the works to facilitate aquatic reintroductions
- Cherokee National Forest
 - Significant drought impacts – trout fisheries; Tellico hatchery had to dump all their fish
 - Citico – snorkeling program as usual this year.
 - Working with TN tech to see if Citico Creek could be source for multiple fishes for Abrams Creek
- American Rivers
 - Working to identify barrier projects to tackle
- N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission
 - Updated status of smoky dace – undescribed native to upper Little T and Hiwassee; no significant trends we can identify; maybe movement on getting species described
 - Sicklefin redhorse work continues; signatory to the Candidate Conservation Agreement; now have sicklefin redhorse committee
 - Blueback herring are in Fontana Reservoir; damage to walleye fishery expected
 - Cheoah River restoration – spotfin chub exceeding expectations
- Conservation Fisheries Inc.
 - Hard time getting broodstock for olive darters - looking in Oconaluftee for Little T, but challenging
 - Spotfin chub, Citico darter, and both spp madtom stocking continues in Tellico R (and work has begun with ashy darters)
 - Drought impacted some snorkel survey sites in Abrams, Tellico, and esp. Citico (later dates)
 - Trying to propagate sickle darter.
- N.C. Wildlife Federation
 - Input into Pisgah-Nantahala forest plan revision
 - AFS meeting next August – symposium on native fish conservation areas – Tampa. **Fred and Andrea will work on paper together on Little Tennessee NFCA**