

NORTHEAST TEXAS

Conservation Delivery Network

March 3, 2015

TPWD Nature Center, Tyler Texas

The Northeast Texas Conservation Delivery Network (NETX CDN) held its spring meeting on 3 March 2015 at the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Nature Center in Tyler. Forty-three conservation delivery professionals attended the meeting.

Agencies and organizations represented were the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, Hancock Forestry, USDA Natural

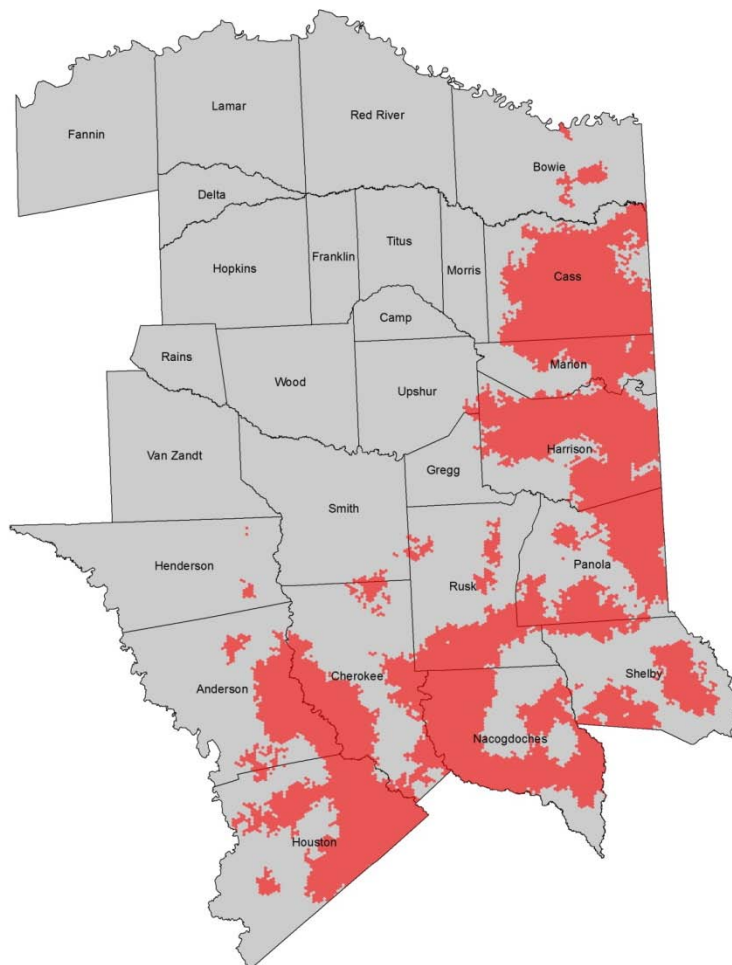
Resources Conservation Service, East Texas Black Bear Taskforce, Shortleaf Pine Initiative, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M Forest Service, Texas Longleaf Implementation Team,

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and staff of the LMVJV.



The primary item on the morning agenda was a report and recommendation from the Delivery Prioritization Tool (DPT) Working Group. The presentation was made by Jason Estrella (TPWD) who chaired the Working Group. The Working Group was composed of Allen Smith (TFS), Jim Rogers (NRCS), Jason Hardin (TPWD) and Craig Bonds (TPWD). The DPT Working Group was established to develop a decision support tool that identified focal and/or priority areas within the NETX CDN service area. After evaluating many of the conservation issues, habitats, and available data sets, the Working Group chose to focus on open pine habitats and riparian habitats; and those areas where the two appeared to be spatially significant. The recommended tool utilizes two wildlife habitat models and two vegetation suitability indices, one of each for the two habitats, in a weighted sum analysis to establish an overall suitability index. Models and datasets utilized in the recommended tool were: 1) LMVJV Open Pine Landbird Model; 2) Shortleaf Pine Suitability Index; 3) TPWD Eastern Wild Turkey Habitat Suitability Index; and 4)

the TPWD Ecological Mapping Systems' Riparian/Wet Forest Vegetation Types. Using a focal area model the Working Group located areas with a concentration of high suitability to statistically identify the recommended focal areas displayed below.



The CDN member discussion included questions regarding protected conservation areas outside the proposed focal areas and recognition of other initiatives and opportunities outside the focal areas. Jason Hohlt (NRCS) made a brief presentation regarding the NRCS National Water Quality Initiative Focus Area which lies just outside the CDN focal areas in Titus, Morris, Camp and Upshur counties.

Following the discussion regarding the CDN Focal Areas Jared Laing (TPWD), Vice Chair, gave a presentation and recommendation on how the CDN might develop a list of priority conservation needs and projects in the identified Focal Areas. It was agreed that Jared would coordinate the request for and compile proposed priority projects sent in by the membership on the Project Proposal form that he distributed at the meeting. He will also distribute the form electronically to

everyone on the CDN mailing list. After compiling the list the Steering Committee will schedule a special meeting to work through the compiled list and develop a priority project list for the CDN which can be posted on the CDN webpage and distributed as appropriate.

There were four informative afternoon presentations all well received by the membership and providing valuable insights to help the CDN be successful in its mission.

Kent Evans, Coordinator for the Texas Longleaf Implementation Team (TLIT), gave a presentation highlighting the process and benefits of partnerships in securing funding for longleaf pine restoration projects in Texas. Two TLIT partners (The Nature Conservancy and Texas A&M Forest Service) have been awarded National Fish & Wildlife Foundation grants for building capacity (a Coordinator position), outreach & technical assistance and most importantly on-the-ground project funding.

Laura Speight (TPWD) presented a project proposal for invasive species detection using dogs specifically trained for this purpose. Information about these dogs can be found at www.workingdogsforconservation.org. Laura emphasized the primary value of this project is to increase public awareness of the negative impact invasive plant and animal species have on both our environment and our lives. The dogs will leave a lasting impression and attract media attention which will further spread the message. Laura asked that any CDN members interested in helping with the project contact her directly.

Mike Black, Director of the Shortleaf Pine Initiative, gave a presentation on the current status of Shortleaf Pine ecosystems and an update on the range-wide Shortleaf Pine Plan that has just been completed. He reported that the plan would be available for review within the next couple of months. Mike highlighted the significant loss of this ecosystem across its historical range and the magnitude of the effort it will take to reverse that loss. Mike noted that the CDN service area includes historically important shortleaf sites and that the CDN in partnership with the Shortleaf Pine Initiative can be a valuable asset to the long-term shortleaf ecosystem restoration goal.

Doyle Shook (LMVJV), informed the CDN of the availability of CDN documents and meeting reports on the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture website; www.lmvjv.org.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

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Agenda:

9:00-9:10	Opening Remarks	Corey Mason
	-Summary of ongoing CDN activities and purpose of today's meeting	
9:10-9:30	Partner Introductions	
9:30-10:45	CDN Delivery Priority Tool Working Group Report	Jason Estrella
	-Q&A/Discussion	
10:45-11:00	Break	
11:00-12:00	CDN Project Identification	Jared Laing
	- Discussion	
12:00-1:00	Lunch	
1:00-1:30	Texas Longleaf Implementation Team	Kent Evans
1:30-1:45	Detection of Invasives Species Pilot Project	Laura Speight
1:45-2:00	Break	
2:00-2:30	Shortleaf Pine Initiative	Mike Black
2:30-2:45	CDN Information on LMVJV Website Update	Doyle Shook
2:45-3:00	Review & Finalize Action Items	Laura Speight
	-Any Working Group Action Items	
	-Next Meeting	

The Steering Committee will meet briefly following the general meeting.