

NETX Steering Committee Notes

The NETX Steering Committee met and has the following recommendations and actions:

- Search Committee (Andersen, Farrell, and Bartush) will seek SC recommendations for Chair, and submit proposed action on or before July 16, 2021.
- Proposed Face-to-Face All Hands CDN meeting on September 7, 2021 (alt date 9/14).
- All SC members will review Working Group Leads and SC membership; seek new members as needed, and alternates, to assure continuity of leadership.
- Projected May/June RFP; expected CDN SC Meeting for RFP review in mid-July 2021.

0930 ZOOM meeting opened to 34 participants (see attachment to Notes for names of attendees).

NOTE - the meeting was recorded; for ease of review, segments on the recording will be listed in the Notes with start/stop times.

This virtual meeting included all Steering Committee (SC) members (except Brian Pope), and was an effort to get the NETX leadership back on track with an overview of roles and responsibilities, and planned 2021 activities.

Welcome (0-5 min) - Lee Andersen, Chair and Annie Farrell, Administrator, introduced the meeting and provided an Agenda Review and SC Roll Call.

CDN Overview (5-30 min) - Keith McKnight described the origin of the CDN concept within the Joint Venture (JV) partnership. It is all about working together better, to leverage additional conservation funds and ensure better coordinated conservation actions. At the same time, the CDN is more than project funding for conservation incentives; it is about coordinated conservation – building a Shared Vision for East Texas – as described on our NETX Strategic Plan <https://www.lmvjv.org/ne-texas-cdn>. *The Northeast Texas Conservation Delivery Network (NETX CDN) has been organized in an effort to more strategically meet the wildlife and landscape restoration and management; the cornerstone of NETX CDN is communication and collaboration through networking...setting priorities for projects related to focal species by watershed ... to include priority species in "Open Pine" as well as Bottomland Hardwood ... for Migratory Birds & freshwater Fish & Mussels...*

Leadership and Work Groups (30-45 min) - Lee Andersen and Bill Bartush initiated discussion on leadership at all levels of the CDN. Discussion included avenues to revitalize CDN efforts post-COVID (as we build on previous CDN overview), reminding SC members of their responsibilities – you are here to lead and speak up. If you have questions or concerns, “say something.” Your leadership and oversight is essential. Also, help us assure successional planning and CDN continuity; we need all of the SC members to offer suggestions for membership and build future leaders. Marcos DeJesus suggested we continue to find ways to integrate riparian and water quality efforts, perhaps by incorporating Fisheries funds on public waters. Laura-Ashley Overdyke identified a landowner on Little Cypress in Marion County, with significant cut grass problems and tallow. Let’s find avenues to support projects to remove those invasive species, and continue DFCW discussions with NCRS for improved bottomland

hardwoods, and restored areas through replanting. We need future NCRS participation for forestry opportunities, not just for pine, but hardwoods as well.

OPJV-GRIP (45-49 min) - Derek Wiley provided the current status of personnel, and progress in seeking a new OPJV coordinator.

HIP Progress Report (49-59 min) - Annie Farrell provided a summary of funds and projects, especially as related to considerations for project extension requests. Our funds are time-sensitive, and this fact needs to be firmly impressed on project managers and landowners. Emphasis needs to be placed on Project Managers to ensure the projects are completed on time; in the future consider penalties, ie if a landowner/manager is tabbed with late or incomplete projects, perhaps their future proposal requests should be penalized through denial or reduced cost-share.

Hip Support 2021-22 (1.1-1.13min) - Jeff Raasch described statewide landowner recognition, and specifically HIP-related signs for a landowner's participation in conservation. The sign was displayed for review, and will be produced for delivery to existing cooperating landowners. Also, the funds for HIP do not have to be "open pine," but could include wetlands and bottomland hardwoods. Lee Andersen addressed Winter 2020-21 RFP; the delay status was due to funds still in process, and we cannot allocate project funds until money is received by NWTF. A lesson learned – we probably should not make announcement until the funds are in hand.

Alternative Funding Opportunities (1.13-1.21 min) - Will Newman covered farm bill opportunities to supplement HIP, such as RCPP or the Working Lands program for partners.

Jenny Sanders 1.21-1.22) - Jenny Sanders described TLIT connection to NETX, and expects news regarding TX by Nature application. A TLIT 4/15 RFP is being planned.

Partner News (1.24-1.30) - **TPWD** news on potential new "large-property" project funding was described by Steve Lange. Carbon Sequestration on public lands is also a possible opportunity, depending on proximity to power plants (example used was Reliant Energy and Old Sabine WMA). **TNC** David Bezanson appreciated participation with Brandon Belcher. **TFS** updates Lee Andersen introduced Jake Donellan, East Texas Operations, who stated Chris Kirby is taking over duties from Lee Andersen; Jake wants to ensure to continue TFS's close working relationship with TLIT and CDN. **CLI** - Lara Ashley Overdyke encouraged continued discussion about wetlands and hardwood riparian conservation efforts, and would like to see those elements amplified and be a greater part of the CDN.

Closeout - Lee Andersen thanked the group and encouraged all to stay in touch – email or call to make recommendations or offer ideas. The meeting has been recorded and will be posted soon.

Attendance

Lee Andersen (Chair)

Annie Farrell (Vice Chair – Administrator)

Steering Committee

Caddo Lake Institute/Cypress Basin

USDA – NRCS

National Wild Turkey Federation

The Nature Conservancy

Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.

Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.

USFWS (Partners)

USFWS (Refuges)

Laura Ashley Overdyke

Rigoberto Lopez

Annie Farrell

David Bezanson

Stephen Lange

Marcos DeJesus

Steve Arey

Erik Duerkop

Working Group Leads

Robert Speight NETMWD

Jeff Reid – USFWS

Reuben Gay - TPWD District Biologist

Penny Wilkerson, TPWD Wildlife Biologist

Jamie Hooker, NWTF Forester

Caddo Lake-Big Cypress Bayou Priority Area

Neches River Working Group Lead

Trinity River Working Group Lead

Sulphur River Working Group Lead

Open Pine Working Group Lead

Derek Wiley TPWD Delivery Coordinator – OPJV

Timothy Bister TPWD Fisheries Biologist Caddo WG

Roger Wolfe TPWD District Leader

Rusty Wood TPWD District Leader

Will Newman TPWD farm Bill Liaison

Brandon Belcher The Nature Conservancy

Jamie Hooker NWTF Forester

Clay Shipes TPWD Migratory Game Bird Biologist

Alan Shadow NRCS Pinewoods PMC

Frank Baca NRCS Zone Wildlife Biologist

Jason Villwock NRCS Zone Forester

Brian Townsend NRCS State Forester

Andy McCrady TFS Fire Program

Jake Donellan TFS East TX Operations Head

Thomas Janke QF/OPJV - Coordinating Wildlife Biologist and Rx Fire Coordinator

Jenny Sanders TLIT Coordinitor

Jeff Raasch TPWD

Keith McKnight USFWS and Coordinator LMVJV

Bill Bartush Partnership Coordinator LMVJV