

Sandy Mush Forest Restoration Coalition

October 10, 2019, 6 to 8 p.m.
Sandy Mush Community Center

NOTES

Notetaker: Emily Anderson

6:00 Welcome/Introductions

Recap the Coalition's progress to-date

Nick Beimiller's (Forest Stewards Guild) recap of last meeting:

- Increase capacity of Eco-Foresters invasive plant removal crew
- Previously outlined goals for the Sandy Mush Restoration Coalition:
 - Understand the scope and feasibility of controlling invasive plant species
 - Promote and Practice responsible forestry and restoration activities
- Coalition members discussed their hopes and fears regarding the formation of the coalition
- Beginning of an invasive plant mapping project, spearheaded by Wade from Ecoforesters
- Touched on the reasons for forming a coalition such as increasing resources like time, money, and people.

6:15 Review & Revise the Coalition's Purpose Statements

- An explicit action plan was created to address the issues in Sandy Mush
- A desire was expressed to have knowledgeable speakers come to meetings, and for coalition members to travel to successfully restored sites
 - Educational opportunities will provide a space for landowners to learn from each other and from professionals
 - A full-day forest restoration outing planned for early-to-mid January (the 11th or 25th?)
 - We hope to provide lunch at this educational outing
- Questions posed by Tracy Kunkler (Circle Forward)
 - What is the purpose of this coalition? What are the goals?
 - Who else needs to be here at these meetings?
 - Why do you (the community members) value the forests in Sandy Mush?
 - Answers from the first meeting: because it is home, because we appreciate the land, the beauty, and the functionality of the land (that is , timber, its function as a carbon sink, wildlife, water, recreation, family heritage, and the income it provides
 - Does the restoration mission encompass all of the community's goals?
 - Agreement that invasive plant control should be a goal of the Coalition, but not the mission
 - A community member asked "is this project invasive plant removal or does it go beyond just invasive removal?"
 - Another individual brought up that landowners from the first

coalition meeting didn't return to the second meeting because they were alienated or disappointed by the focus of the first meeting, ie they thought the coalition would go beyond just invasive species removal

- The need to address water resources in the mission was agreed upon
- Title of Coalition changed to “Sandy Mush Land & Forest Restoration Coalition”
- Current Vision and Mission Statements can be found [here](#)

6:25 Results of the Invasive Plant Mapping group

Wade Johnston, director of mapping at Eco Foresters, gave a presentation on the invasive plant map advancements since the first meeting

- Data provided by community members in Sandy Mush will be used to create a real-time model of invasive plants in the area
 - Data can be quantified by location, species, ground coverage, a brief description, and a photo
- The goal of the model is to identify locations where invasives are prevalent and come up with a strategic plan to efficiently address the issue
- Wade is going to add county and property boundaries to map, as well as update the species list to include things such as Japanese stilt grass
- Link to map will be provided soon

6:40 Controlling Invasive Plants on your Land

Bob Gale (Mountain True) gave a presentation on the identification and control of invasives plant species

- Big Takeaway: invasives are always going to be present in the world, though they can be controlled and managed, or even eradicated, in small areas.
- Controlling invasives:
 - Manual control
 - Chemical control
 - Herbicides become the desired method of control when invasive plants cover a larger area, or are present on public lands or in a large monoculture.
 - You can also use herbicides when you are physically or financially unable to do manual removal though should be a last resort tactic.
 - Two most common herbicides: Triclopyr (used on woody vegetation, hack-and-squirt method) and Glyphosate (used on herbaceous vegetation, foliar spray method)
 - **Please contact Bob Gale or other qualified professionals for more information on herbicide application and plant identification.** If you fail to follow the directions on herbicides, you are violating federal and state regulations.

7:00 Exploring Resources for Landowners: the NRCS Application Process

Clint Barden (EcoForesters) discusses how community members can receive funding for land restoration

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
 - A USDA program designed to financially help landowners do conservation work
 - Most of the program's funding is intended for agricultural practices, though there is a separate pool of funding for forestry and wildlife work such as tree thinning, planting, and prescribed burning.
 - **The deadline is in early to mid-November and the link for more information can be found [here](#)**

7:20 Moving Forward

Nick translated goals from the first meeting into target categories such as conservation and human well-being

- At the first meeting, a list of threats and goals were created
- At the second and following meetings, we plan to unpack all of goals, threats, and contributing factors.
- Documents from the first meeting can be found [here](#), documents from the second meeting can be found [here](#)

Identified Targets

1) Healthy and Resilient Forests

- a) Threats: Climate change
 - i) Extreme weather patterns (eg heavy rain- affect planting)
 - ii) Thriving invasives

2) Economic Prosperity

- a) Threats: developers moving to the area, lack of land management
- b) Goals: Increasing diversity of land use and management

3) Wildlife Conservation

- a) Threats: habitat loss and degradation, change in land use, lack of early successional habitats, influx of invasive plants

4) Community Vitality

- a) Threats: cost of living, land use change

5) Healthy Watershed

- a) Threats: manipulation, pollution, lack of buffers and protected areas

6) Preservation of Cultural Heritage

- a) Threats: Climate change, lack of education/ awareness (of the importance of preserving and recognizing past), commercial development (eg 4 lane highway or dollar general), time - old barns/ houses rot to the ground over time, lack of vision - see value of preserving the past - esp difficult if you cannot attach concrete dollar value, lack of political support / leadership
- b) Goals: Incentivise people within the community to be able to preserve cultural artifacts on their properties. Example: expand land use construct to include something beyond agriculture and finding value within traditional cultural activities

7:50 Next Steps and Closing

- Nick will group things together and consolidate our efforts to create a model. He will also build out the conceptual model into indirect threats and other factors.
- After the model has been created we can begin to think of strategies to tackle these issues.