

## RPC Fall 2005 Report Julie Judkins

### Open Areas

A meeting was held on 11/10/05 to discuss priorities and recap 2004 field work.

An interagency acquisition agreement was written with the Appalachian Trail Park Office and the USDA Forest Service, Cherokee National Forest.

<u>Priority Areas</u>	<u>Type of work completed</u>	<u>Amount of acreage</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Doll Flats	Mowed	15	\$1552.00
Round Bald	Mowed	20	\$3906.00
Street Gap	Slashdown	10	\$2950.00
Max Patch	Mowed	20	\$4250.00
Wildermine Hollow	Mowed	5	\$1546.00
Weedy Gap	Mowed	2	\$1068.00
Beauty Spot	Mowed	25	\$1550.00
Lick Rock	Slashdown	4	\$2500.00
Pete Creek	Slashdown	33	\$2500.00
Coldspring Mtn.	Mowed	15	\$1917.00
Elk River	Mowed	6	\$1194.00
Senter Tract	Mowed	3	\$689.00
Canute Place	Mowed	3	\$694.00
<b>Subtotal (direct costs)</b>			<b>\$26,316.00</b>
<b>Indirect (National Burden Rate 17.8%)</b>			<b>\$4,684.00</b>
<b>TOTAL Costs</b>			<b>\$31,000.00</b>

### Natural Heritage (NC & TN)

Number volunteer hours: 226

Number of volunteers: 22

Number of sites monitored: 14

Number of sites needing monitor: 10 (\* More than half of these were due to gas price increase, or the volunteer wanting someone else to hike with them)

Number of volunteers who attended the training/appreciation workshop: 14

News for upcoming year: The workshop last year produced 5 new volunteers, and we were able to “appreciate” many of the volunteer veterans. I hope to do more recruiting for the workshop this year and fill some our open sites. I was also able to find a botanist this year who is willing to go out with newer volunteers who are uneasy about identification of the plants on their section. I also hope to start a “partner” program, to encourage two people going to a site and carpooling.



### **Invasive Monitoring and Control**

Number of volunteer hours: 556

Number of volunteers: 43



Number of controlled miles of trail and service roads: 15

Approximate amount of square footage of groundcovers and vines removed: 6,554

Approximate amount of stems of shrubs and trees removed: 455

Over the last three years, Andy Brown of Equinox Environmental in Asheville, NC has coordinated volunteer invasive species survey work for the Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere Foundation along the Appalachian Trail and in the national forests around many significant natural heritage areas.

With the collected data, 3 priority areas were defined and with the help of many partners and volunteers, control was done on all of them.

Over six days in September volunteers met in Hot Springs, received training on identification and control methods of the top 12 plants of concern and followed up with a full day of control work. In addition, 6 monitoring transects to track our progress and evaluate the persistence of these plants and their invasion patterns were installed. Forest Service and volunteers will be back next summer to treat with herbicides.

(Funded by the National Forest Foundation with private matches from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Western NC Alliance, and University of Tennessee.)

#### **Partners included:**

- USDA Forest Service, Appalachian Ranger District of the Pisgah NF
- National Park Service, Southeast Exotic Plant Management Team
- Appalachian Trail Conservancy
- Western North Carolina Alliance
- University of Tennessee
- North Carolina Natural Heritage Program
- North Carolina Exotic Pest Plant Council
- Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere Foundation
- Hot Springs Mountain Club
- Carolina Mountain Club
- Unaffiliated Volunteers
- US Geological Survey National Biological Information Infrastructure-Southern Appalachian Information Node
- Equinox Environmental Consultation and Design, Inc

## **Forest Health Monitoring (FHM)**

Evaluation is underway of this year's pilot project for FHM. Four demonstration plots were installed in the south, and four in the north. The four southern plots were placed:

- 1) in the Smokies off near Clingman's Dome,
- 2) near Max Patch,
- 3) near Tanyard Gap, and
- 4) in Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area

We had a total of 4 different volunteers contributing 63 hours of work. An evaluation document is in the works, and will include:

- Background information on the program, including history, perceived needs and benefits
- Detailed description of the USDA FS-FHM P3 Protocol including plot layout, indicators available for measurement, processes, QA/QC, tools used and needed, trainings needed/required, and sampling design
- Questions lingering such as data relevancy, quality of using the USFS protocol vs others, users of the program (ATC, Forest Land Managers, NPS, Forest Practitioners, academic researchers, general public, etc...)
- Social interactions with gateway communities, universities, general public...
- Fundraising opportunities
- Feasibility and appropriateness of the program
- Recommendations on sampling design, plot layout and indicators, data management, staffing model and program logistics.
- Summary of lessons learned in Pilot Study