

SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE: MULTI-PARTNER SPRUCE RESTORATION IN THE CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS

Jack Tribble, Thomas Minney, Catherine Johnson, and Ken Sturm¹

Habitat-based ecosystem partnerships are necessary for implementing strategic forest restoration plans. Overwhelming environmental threats such as climate change and invasive pests and pathogens could have traumatic and devastating effects to our native forests. Additionally, past land-use history has left existing forests isolated, fragmented and in some cases extirpated from the historic landscape. Effective strategies for dealing with these threats can only be built if they are addressed at a broad spatial scale and across public-private ownerships. Habitat-based conservation requires a cohesive group working across boundaries in order to achieve the scale, connectivity, and coordinated management that lead to a sustainable ecosystem. The multi-partner High Elevation Conservation Working Group strives for the return of a functioning red spruce-northern hardwood forest ecosystem across both public and private lands. Seeking common ground and overlapping perspectives was essential to the proactive group planting more than 35,000 trees last year. This presentation and panel discussion explored successful partnership building and issues for landscape-scale restoration. It focused on building a broad-scale, long-term vision for the resource, and an effective, inclusive partnership, as well as how to move from talk to implementation through cooperation.

¹ Jack Tribble, Thomas Minney, Catherine Johnson and Ken Sturm, Monongahela National Forest. Corresponding author: Jack Tribble, 200 Sycamore St., Elkins, WV 26241, USFS, Monongahela National Forest; 304-639-1800 ext. 206; Email: jtribble@fs.fed.us