



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Jackson, Mississippi 39213

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### Memorandum

To: All Members (~100, via e-mail), Southern Range Translocation Cooperative

From: Will McDearman, RCW Recovery Coordinator

Subject: 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Southern Range (FL-GA-AL-MS-NC-SC) Red-cockaded Woodpecker Translocation Cooperative Strategy Meeting, August 2-3, 2012, Tallahassee, FL and Summary of 2011 SRTC Meeting

Once again, it is my pleasure to announce and provide additional information for the annual Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) Southern Range Translocation Cooperative (SRTC) meeting scheduled Thursday and Friday, August 2 – 3, at the Betty Easley Conference Center, Room 152, 4075 Esplanade Way in Tallahassee. This memo follows the earlier May 29 email notice. Our 2012 meeting will start Thursday at 1:00 PM and conclude by early afternoon Friday. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Cabot Lodge, for which additional information is provided below. A draft agenda also is included. Please be sure to review the 2012 and 2013 allocation schedule for any errors. As always, we will adjust the allocation of RCWs to recipients depending on RCW donors and the status or availability of normally scheduled 2012 recipients. Additional RCWs may be available this year due to the schedules of some recipients that will be temporarily offline. Opportunities should be available for normally scheduled recipients to receive additional RCW pairs, as well as for recipients normally scheduled for 2013 to potentially receive RCWs this year.

Our primary objectives are to: (1) identify recipient populations, (2) list recipient population bird needs, (3) tally total number of birds available from donor populations, (4) pair donor and recipient populations, (5) prioritize recipient populations, (6) allocate birds to recipient populations, and (7) determine a tentative translocation schedule. A draft agenda is included.

### **SRTC 2012**

#### *2012 Donor Populations*

Donors currently estimate about 118 subadults for 59 RCW pairs will be available in 2012 (Table 1). The largest single source will be from Apalachicola National Forest (20 pairs). As always, we have been fortunate to benefit from the RCWs routinely provided over many years by

Fort Stewart, Fort Benning, and the 10 RCW pairs from the U.S. Forest Service Apalachicola Ranger District. Furthermore, the continued funding and other support from Department of Defense, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Southern Company, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability, U.S. Forest Service, Eglin Air Force Base, University of Georgia, Clemson University, and Ralph Costa's Woodpecker Outfit will provide RCWs from biologists at Apalachicola National Forest, Osceola National Forest, and Eglin Air Force Base.

**Table 1.** Donor population status and estimated number of subadult pairs for 2012 recipients, depending on final bird availability and other factors.

Donor	Active Clusters <sup>a</sup>	Pairs
Apalachicola RD	545	20
Ft. Stewart	338	10
Eglin AFB	443	10
Osceola NF	142	10
Fort Benning	354	6
Camp Blanding	29	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1849</b>	<b>59</b>

<sup>a</sup>Data reported for 2011.

**Table 2.** Proposed and normally scheduled 2012 recipient populations and allocation.

Population	Pairs
Chickasawhay RD-East, DeSoto NF	3
Conecuh National Forest-East	3
Conecuh National Forest-West	3
DeSoto RD Black Creek, DeSoto NF	5
Disney Wilderness Preserve	5
Dupuis WEA	5
Fort Gordon	3
Fort Jackson	3
Goethe State Forest – North	3
Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park	3
Okefenokee NWR – South	3
Picayune Strand State Forest – South	3
Sehoy Plantation	3
Shoal Creek RD, Talladega NF	3
Talladega RD, Talladega NF	5
Withlacoochee State Forest - Croom	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>

**Table 3.** Proposed and normally scheduled 2013 recipient populations and allocation.

Population	RCW Pairs
Avon Park Air Force Range	3
Blackwater State Forest – Hurricane	5
Bull Creek-Triple N Ranch WMA	3
DeSoto NF, DeSoto RD – Black Creek	5
Disney Wilderness Preserve	5
Dupuis WEA	5
Enon Plantation	3
Goethe State Forest – South	3
Jones Ecological Research Center	3
J.W. Corbett WMA	3
Picayune Strand State Forest – North	3
Savannah River Site	3
Silver Lake WMA	3
St. Marks NWR	3
St. Sebastian River Preserve	3
Talladega National Forest, Talladega RD	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>

#### *2012 Recipient Populations*

Seventeen properties with populations or subpopulations are normally scheduled as recipients this year (Table 2). J.W. Corbett WMA agreed last year to change from the even-year to the odd-year recipient rotation cycle to produce a better balance between donor supply and recipient demand. Thus, Corbett WMA is no longer normally scheduled as a recipient this year.

#### *2013 Recipient Populations*

Normally scheduled recipient populations for 2013 now include the addition of the Department Energy Savannah River Site, managed by U.S. Forest Service, and Silver Lake WMA (GADNR) (Table 3).

#### *Donor and Recipient Population Presentations*

Standard SRTC presentations, as in the past, will be presented by donors and recipients. Additional information and data of interest is always welcome, but please remember our full agenda and limit your presentation to 10 minutes. Managers reporting the status of 2 recipient subpopulations on a single property will have 15 minutes scheduled for both, which usually takes less than a total of 20 minutes.

Donors should minimally provide the following slides: (1) cluster status map (do not include cavity trees), (2) active cluster status and trend graph, (3) PBG status and trend graph, (4) table with number of PBGs, active clusters, and birds translocated (inter-population) by year for as many years as you have data, and (5) fire history map.

Recipient presentations should provide information on status as a continuing SRTC recipient, particularly for populations approaching either 30 potential breeding groups (PBGs) or a smaller number for your management objective. As recipients shift offline after attaining the SRTC objective (e.g. 30 PBGs) or your management objective, we need to plan and adjust the annual relationships between donor supply and recipient demand accordingly.

In addition to the normal recipient slides, please report the success of RCW translocations. SRTC translocation success is the status of each translocated RCW, as either a PBG, helper, single, floater, or missing/unknown or known dead. A translocated RCW is reported as a PBG if it remains paired on a territory through the breeding season, regardless of actual nesting or reproductive success.

Recipients should present the following 7 slides in the order listed. Examples of these slides can be viewed on the RCW website at <http://www.fws.gov/rcwrecovery/srtc.html>. Also, please list your respective property, population, or subpopulation management goal for the number of active clusters, preferably in slide 3.

1. Cluster status map.

Include and distinguish active clusters, all recruitment clusters available by this fall, and recruitment/recipient clusters for the next translocation effort. It is not necessary to include cavity trees. Indicate subpopulations as necessary.

2. Active cluster status and trend graph.

Include a graph for each subpopulation, when relevant, and a graph for the overall combined trend.

3. PBG status and trend graph

Some participants prefer to combine the active cluster and PBG trend graph, which is fine. Include a graph for each subpopulation, when relevant, and a graph for the overall combined trend.

4. Table with number of PBGs, solitary bird groups, number of fledglings, and number translocated.

Include data for as many years available.

5. Fire history map.

Distinguish growing and dormant season prescribed fire, with fire interval (years between burns). Include active, inactive, and recruitment clusters. This can be a difficult single slide to prepare depending on fire history, data, and management complexity. Use more than one slide if necessary.

6. Translocation results table.

Translocation results categories are potential breeder (PBG), solitary (defending a territory), helper, floater, or missing. It does not matter whether a bird remains in

the territory where released. At a minimum, tabulate results of the most recent translocation. Distinguish years if more than one translocation year is included.

7. Translocation map.

### **2012 Meeting and Lodging Logistics**

The meeting will be at the Betty Easley Conference Center at the Capitol Office Circle Center located just off Capitol Circle Southeast, Building 4075 on Esplanade Way, Room 152 – as in previous years. Our appreciation once again is extended to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for making this room available. We'll start at 1 PM on Thursday August 2, and adjourn by early afternoon Friday August 3. Please contact me if you need more information.

A block of rooms has been reserved for your convenience at Cabot Lodge just off Thomasville Road (850-386-7500), 1653 Raymond Diehl Road, at a group rate of \$85/night group rate. Rooms are available Wednesday and Thursday night (August 1 – 2). For reservations, the group name and rate are under “Florida Fish and Wildlife.” Rooms at this rate are available for reservation until July 18. There are many other hotels in the area as well. Please join us for an informal social at the Cabot Lodge following the Thursday session.

St. Marks NWR has graciously offered their bunkhouse (6295 Coastal Hwy, Crawfordville, FL 32327, 30.169089, -84.248614) at no charge to SRTC participants with difficulties making travel arrangements, or for other reasons. The bunkhouse is 0.5 miles west of the Wakulla River on the south side of U.S. 98, about 19 miles or 30 minutes south of the Betty Easley Conference Center. There are 2 bedrooms with 10 beds (one 4 bed, one 6 bed), 2 bathrooms with separate sink areas, a large kitchen, a large living area, and a laundry room. Sheets and pillows are provided. A phone is available (850-925-7850) and cell phone coverage is available, but no internet. The bunkhouse is periodically used by St. Marks NWR for visiting interns, volunteers, and scientists. Please contact Mike Keys (850-925-6121, [Michael.Keys@fws.gov](mailto:Michael.Keys@fws.gov)) if interested or for a reservation, preferably by July 12.

## **2012 Southern Range Translocation Cooperative Meeting Agenda**

The draft agenda will be modified as needed at the meeting.

### **Thursday, August 2**

1:00 Welcome, introductions, SRTC business, and other issues. Will McDearman, USFWS.

#### Donor Population Reports

1:20 Apalachicola NF  
1:40 Osceola NF  
2:00 Fort Stewart  
2:10 Fort Benning  
2:20 Eglin AFB  
2:30 Camp Blanding

#### Recipient Population Reports

2:40 Jones Ecological Center  
2:50 Disney Wilderness Preserve  
  
3:00 Break  
  
3:20 Bull Creek-Triple N WMAs  
3:30 Enon and Sehoy Plantations  
3:45 St. Sebastian River Bluff Preserve  
3:55 Hal Scott Regional Preserve  
4:05 J.W. Corbett WMA  
4:15 Dupuis WEA  
4:25 Babcock/Webb WMA  
4:35 Withlacoochee State Forest-Croom  
4:45 Picayune State Forest – North and South  
5:00 Adjourn

### **Friday, August 3**

8:00 Status of Funding and Partnerships for RCW Translocation Biologists, Ralph Costa.

#### Recipient Population Reports

8:10 Goethe State Forest – North and South  
8:25 St. Marks NWR  
8:35 Okefenokee NWR – South  
8:45 Wetappo Creek and Lathrop Bayou

9:00 Talladega NF, Talladega RD  
9:10 Talladega NF, Shoal Creek RD  
  
9:20 Break  
  
9:35 Conecuh NF – East and West  
9:50 DeSoto NF, Chickasawhay RD - East  
10:00 DeSoto NF, DeSoto (Black Creek) RD  
10:10 Fort Jackson  
10:20 Fort Gordon  
10:30 Avon Park Air Force Range  
10:40 Tall Timbers  
10:50 Silver Lake WMA  
11:00 Savannah River Site  
11:10 Blackwater River State Forest  
11:20 Other recipients

Allocate RCWs from donor to recipient populations

Adjourn

## **Summary of 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Southern Range Translocation Cooperative Meeting, August 10-11, 2011, Tallahassee, FL**

The 2011 annual Southern Range Translocation Cooperative Meeting (SRTC) was attended by over 70 participants representing more than 40 federal, state, and nongovernmental organizations and management units stationed or operating in AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, SC, and VA. SRTC reports were presented for 6 donor populations and 33 recipient populations and subpopulations.

### *Allocation*

The SRTC allocated 124 subadult RCWs as 62 pairs from 6 donor populations to 15 recipient populations or subpopulations (Table 4). The actual allocation may have been modified following the SRTC meeting in response to subsequent RCW availability, for which such data will be reported during 2012 SRTC meeting. Several changes to the normally scheduled recipients were made in response to recipient population status and management achievements.

Avon Park Air Force Range did not request RCWs because available habitat for recruitment clusters was nearly saturated and the population attained 30 potential breeding groups (PBGs) in 2011. At this level, Avon Park is unlikely to be a continued or regular SRTC recipient, although their program of restoration and RCW recovery management will continue. Avon Park represents the Avon Park Essential Support RCW recovery population.

Managers for the Goethe State Forest South subpopulation, another normally scheduled 2011 recipient, did not request RCWs in response to having achieved 29 PBGs. Although the SRTC does not provide RCWs for translocation to recipient populations/subpopulations of 30 or more PBGs, the Goethe South subpopulation is at this population threshold. The South subpopulation has increased from 11 PBGs in 2000. The management focus at Goethe State Forest now will shift to the smaller North subpopulation that will remain a SRTC RCW recipient.

RCWs were not requested for the Disney Wilderness Preserve population, which was established in 2008 following a successful 2007 translocation and reintroduction. The Disney population objective is 10 PBGs, for which 9 PBGs and 10 active clusters were present in 2011. This SRTC recipient is anticipated to move to offline status following this accomplishment. However, continued population monitoring is needed to annually evaluate cluster status, group size and reproductive success. There still may be a need for future translocation as this small population becomes established.

The Enon Plantation in Alabama did not request RCWs in response to a potential change in management, although the population has continued to grow from 3 active clusters in 2006 to 10 active clusters.

Four recipients normally scheduled for the even-year rotation were able to receive RCWs from donors in 2011: Fort Gordon, Hal Scott Regional Preserve, J.W. Corbett WMA, and Talladega National Forest – Shoal Creek Ranger District. Two other properties and populations became regular SRTC recipients for the 2011 and subsequent odd-year rotations: the Department of

**Table 4.** SRTC 2011 allocation of RCW pairs from donor to recipient populations.

Recipient	RCWs from Donor Populations					
	ANF	Stewart	Osceola	Eglin	Benning	Blanding
Blackwater River State Forest				5		
Bull Creek-Triple N WMA						3
DeSoto NF, DeSoto RD	6					
Dupuis WEA			5			
Fort Gordon		3				
Hal Scott Preserve		1				
J.W. Corbett WMA			5			
Jones Ecological Research Ctr	3					
Picayune Strand SF – North	5					
Savannah River Site		2				
Silver Lake	3					
St. Marks NWR	5					
St. Sebastian River Preserve		5				
Talladega NF, Shoal Creek RD					6	
Talladega NF, Talladega RD				5		
<b>Total</b>	22	11	10	10	6	3

ANF – Apalachicola National Forest, Apalachicola Ranger District; Stewart – Fort Stewart, Osceola – Osceola National Forest, Eglin – Eglin Air Force Base, Benning – Fort Benning, Blanding – Camp Blanding.

Energy Savannah River Site, a designated Secondary Core RCW recovery population, and the Silver Lake WMA (GADNR).

*Status and Other Reports*

Camp Blanding, a RCW recovery Essential Support Population and former SRTC recipient, became a SRTC RCW donor after achieving its recovery population size and management objective.

Success also was reported by Ocala National Forest for the Paisley Woods subpopulation that has increased from 7 potential breeding groups (PBGs) in 2004 to 30 PBGs in 2011 in response to habitat restoration, RCW management and recruitment clusters, and RCW translocation. The Paisley Woods subpopulation now will go offline as a SRTC recipient, but will continue to be managed for RCW recovery. The Ocala National Forest is an Essential Support RCW recovery population, consisting of the Paisley Woods and Riverside Island subpopulations.

The Withlacoochee State Forest Croom subpopulation was reported to consist of 31 active clusters and 23 PBGs. Given the number of active clusters with solitary RCWs, continued PBG growth was expected without future translocation to achieve the SRTC objective of 30 PBGs. The Croom subpopulation is not expected to continue as a regular SRTC recipient in response to this achievement, but will be evaluated annually.

Ralph Costa reviewed the history and status of current funding to support biologists on the Osceola National Forest (Sarah Lauerman), Apalachicola National Forest (Joel Casto), and Eglin Air Force Base (Kristina Witter) who monitor and provide RCWs to the SRTC donor pool. Funding for the Osceola National Forest and Apalachicola National Forest biologists was provided by the Department of Defense and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Southern Company funded the Apalachicola National Forest biologist. Other support, whether direct or indirect, for these translocation biologists was provided by the U.S. Forest Service, Eglin Air Force Base, University of Georgia, Clemson University, and the Southeastern Regional Partnership for Planning and Stability. Grant funds for the Osceola National Forest and Eglin Air Force Base translocation biologists remained uncertain for 2012, although efforts were underway to secure supporting resources. We appreciate and thank these organizations and staff for supporting the SRTC, RCW translocation, and RCW recovery programs – including Ralph who has continued to solicit, secure, and manage these grant resources. During 2011, 31 RCW pairs were provided to the SRTC translocation pool by these biologists from the Apalachicola National Forest, Osceola National Forest, and Eglin Air Force Base. This has almost doubled the number of RCWs annually available for translocation, with subsequent benefits accelerating recipient population size and growth.

Lauren Gilson, Archbold Biological Station, presented data from various SRTC and other sources describing 17 long distance RCW dispersal records from 2011 in Florida. Dispersal distances ranged from 6.3 km to 163 km among various RCW populations. These included immigration from Avon Park Air Force Base (APAFR) to Disney Wilderness Preserve (DWP), DWP to Three Lakes WMA, Dupuis WEA to J.W. Corbett WMA, Withlacoochee State Forest Citrus (WSFC) to APAFR, Ocala National Forest to WSFC, and Okefenokee NWR to Osceola National Forest.

Roy Delotelle, with Bob Epting and Ralph Costa, summarized 31 years of field data and observations on RCW response to hawks and snakes. Of the raptor events, about 84 percent occurred in the fall/winter, mostly by accipters. Cooper's and Sharp-shinned hawks were the predominate predators. Of the RCW responses, most (43%) RCWs froze in trees, 20.9% flew, and 12% took cavity refuge. Most attacks by raptors came from behind screening vegetation, which could be reduced by habitat restoration to establish open pine. Of the broods lost to snake predation, losses were estimated as high as 18 – 35% in some populations some years.

Sarah Lauerman and Kristina Witter presented photos of RCW nestlings for a friendly quiz among SRTC participants to age each nestling. The objective was to generally review age characters of nestlings, particularly for the 5-10 day interval for capture and banding. The general response among participants often was variable. Because all SRTC participants do not exclusively engage in aging nestlings for actual capture and banding, age classification responses when variable did not necessarily reflect actual differences among field biologists engaged in these activities. However, an updated and accessible guide with photographs and character descriptions would benefit training and management.

## *2010 Translocation Success*

Recipient population data reported at the 2011 SRTC meeting were sufficient to estimate translocation success rates for 19 of the 20 property-population recipients during 2010. These data for each recipient property-population were the number of RCW subadult pairs received from the donor and the number of translocated birds that became either a PBG, helper, single-bird on a territory, floater, unknown/missing, or dead through the first breeding season. A successfully translocated RCW was considered a PBG if it paired with another potential breeder, whether a resident or translocated bird, on any territory during the following breeding season. For each recipient property-population, the overall translocation success rate is the proportion of translocated RCWs that remained in the population through the first breeding season. The overall success rate for all recipients is the proportion of all RCWs translocated during 2010 that remained in designated property-populations. RCWs remaining in the recipient property-population as either solitary, helpers, or floaters were combined in a single other (non-PBG) category of translocation success.

Of the 157 RCWs translocated in 2010 as 77 pairs and 1 single, overall translocation success was 0.47 (Table 5). The median property-population success ( $n = 19$ ) was 0.50. Disney Wilderness Preserve had the greatest overall success (0.88) and DeSoto National Forest-Chickasawhay District the least (0.00). Of the all RCWs translocated, 51 (0.32) remained as PBGs, 22 (0.14) were residents with other status (e.g. helper, single, or floater), and 84 (0.54) were unknown or missing. Disney Wilderness Preserve also had the greatest proportion remain as a PBG (0.625). Overall, SRTC RCW translocation success rates were similar to those estimated and reported since 2007, including highly variable rates within and among recipient populations.

**Table 5.** RCW translocation success, 2010.

Southern Range Translocation Cooperative 2010 Translocation Success Results														
Recipient	Translocated		Translocation Success - Number of Birds and Rate											Overall Success Rate
			PBGs		Other Present				Missing					
	Pairs	Birds	No.	Rate	Helper	Solitary	Floater	Total	Rate	Unknown	Dead	Total	Rate	Rate
Chickasawhay RD-East, DeSoto NF	5	10	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0.00	10	0	10	1.00	0.00
Concechuh NF West	6	12	3	0.25	0	0	0	0	0.00	9	0	9	0.75	0.25
DeSoto NF, DeSoto RD-Black Creek	6	12	5	0.42	1	0	0	1	0.08	6	0	6	0.50	0.50
Disney Wilderness Preserve	4	8	5	0.63	0	2	0	2	0.25	1	0	1	0.13	0.88
Dupuis WEA	5	11	4	0.36	0	1	0	1	0.09	6	0	6	0.55	0.45
Fort Jackson	6	12	4	0.33	1	0	1	2	0.17	6	0	6	0.50	0.50
Hal Scott	3	6	3	0.50	0	1	0	1	0.17	2	0	2	0.33	0.67
J.W. Corbett WMA	6	12	6	0.50	0	0	3	3	0.25	3	0	3	0.25	0.75
Okefenokee NWR - South	3	6	2	0.33	0	0	0	0	0.00	4	0	4	0.67	0.33
Picayune Strand SF - North	3	6	1	0.17	0	0	0	0	0.00	5	0	5	0.83	0.17
Picayune Strand SF - South	2	4	0	0.00	0	1	0	1	0.25	3	0	3	0.75	0.25
Poinsett Electronic Combat Range	2	4	1	0.25	0	0	0	0	0.00	3	0	3	0.75	0.25
Savannah River - North	2	4	2	0.50	0	0	0	0	0.00	2	0	2	0.50	0.50
Sehoy Plantation	3	6	2	0.33	0	1	1	2	0.33	2	0	2	0.33	0.67
Shoal Creek RD - Talladega NF	5	10	2	0.20	0	1	1	2	0.20	6	0	6	0.60	0.40
Silver Lake	4	8	4	0.50	0	0	1	1	0.13	3	0	3	0.38	0.63
St. Marks NWR	5	10	4	0.40	0	2	0	2	0.20	4	0	4	0.40	0.60
Talladega RD - Talladega NF	6	12	2	0.17	0	2	0	2	0.17	8	0	8	0.67	0.33
Tall Timbers	2	4	1	0.25	2	0	0	2	0.50	1	0	1	0.25	0.75
<b>Overall for property-populations</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>0.46</b>
<b>Median property/pop success</b>				<b>0.33</b>					<b>0.17</b>				<b>0.50</b>	<b>0.50</b>