

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Restoration on Pisgah National Forest

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Nearly 6,000 acres of Pisgah National Forest's Grandfather Ranger District were restored this past year, thanks to the help of numerous partners.

The Grandfather district is a 192,000-acre portion of the forest, stretching from Old Fort to Blowing Rock. The 6,000-acre effort is part of the 10-year restoration effort that will touch 40,000 acres. The project is restoring fire-adapted ecosystems, increasing stream health, controlling non-native species and protecting hemlocks against hemlock woolly adelgids. Key to the effort were numerous partners.

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission improved young forests by mowing 648 acres, treating 44 acres of invasive species; conducted 13 different animal surveys, cleared 1.5 miles of fire break, performing prescribed burning on adjacent lands, and collected data on black bears.

The Wilderness Society provided 672 hours studying the Linville Gorge fire ecology, 20 hours on shortleaf pine restoration, and 651 hours on trail work.

The Nature Conservancy spent 26 hours assisting prescribed burns, 40 hours on public outreach, and 97 hours on shortleaf pine restoration.

Wild South volunteers spent 600 hours removing non-native species in the Linville Gorge Wilderness.

Monitoring following prescribed burns show a 90-percent reduction in hazardous fuels, as well as an increase in wildlife use and diversity. Invasive species monitoring shows 70 percent average effectiveness in killing target species during initial treatments.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.