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Community-Owned Forests: Possibilities,
Experiences, and Lessons Learned (June 16-19)

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SLIDES: Palmetto-Peartree Preserve: Community Forestry in Eastern North Carolina

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*Palmetto-Peartree Preserve:
Community Forestry in
Eastern North Carolina*

Community-Owned Forests Conference

Missoula, MT

June 16-19, 2005

Mikki Sager, NC Representative

The Conservation Fund

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The Conservation Fund

- National, nonprofit land and water conservation organization
- Chartered in 1985 to promote environmental protection that is economically-viable
- 18 offices throughout the country
- 134 employees





TCF Programs

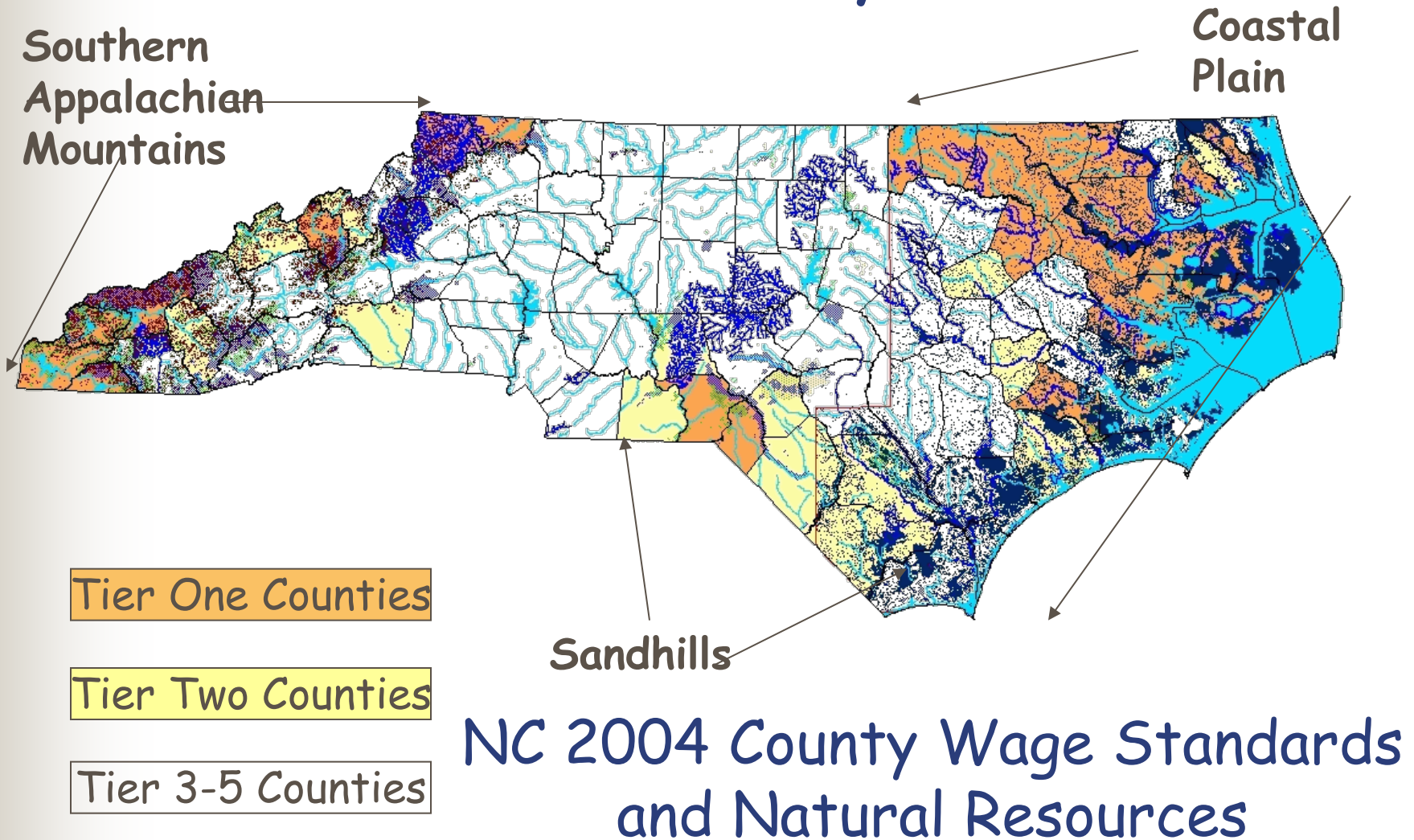
- **Land Protection**
program purchases & receives donations of fee simple and conservation easement interests on natural and "working" lands (farms, ranches, forests)
 - Over 4 million acres protected since 1985
 - Lands valued at \$2.6 billion have been protected for \$1.9 billion (73%)
- **Sustainable Communities Program** develops market-based approaches to conserve land and water resources and promote sustainable economic development
- **Freshwater Institute**
- **Conservation Leadership Network**
- **Resourceful Communities Program**



Natural Resources & Poverty

- Direct correlation, geographically, between important natural areas and socio-economic distress in North Carolina and throughout the Southeast
- The greater the economic or social distress, the greater the threat of environmental degradation

Natural Resources and Poverty



Resourceful Communities Program

- People and communities are part of the ecosystem
- Builds on assets: natural, cultural, historic, human
- Works with rural residents to help “create new economies” that protect those resources
- Have helped create or strengthen 29 community-based groups and helped raise over \$75 million to help partners carry out their missions



Ownership/Management Structure

- TCF owns the Preserve
- Staff: Preserve Manager and Eco-Tourism Coordinator
- Consultants: Forester and Biologists
- Management Committee
- Eco-Tourism Committee
- TCF Advisory Committee
- Alligator Community Association and residents



Governance

- Management Committee includes:
- Conservation entities:
The Conservation Fund,
US Fish & Wildlife
Service, NC Division of
Forest Resources
- County agencies are
represented, community
members are being
added



Acquisition



- Acquired in 1999 as endangered species mitigation bank for NC Department of Transportation
- Estimated 26 active clusters - largest known population on private land in NC
- Unique location in swamps & wetland forests, usually found in open forests further south

Long Term Management



- TCF to transfer ownership to US Fish & Wildlife Service in January 2008
- Completed timber inventory and preparing long-term business plan
- Working to build local capacity and engage youth and adults in management activities to ensure long-term engagement of community members

Funding

- NCDOT provided \$16.5 million to purchase
- Established \$1.2 million endowment for management costs and to pay taxes
- Selective timber harvest revenues for RCW habitat management
- Hunting and fishing lease revenues



Community Goals

- Create jobs and small business opportunities for local residents
- Develop eco-tourism infrastructure to attract birdwatchers and nature tourists
- Develop small business infrastructure / support network - recently completed natural resource-based entrepreneurship training in 5 counties



Community Goals

- Build on local assets - including the people!
- Engage young people in training and leadership development to ensure a new generation of economic and entrepreneurial leaders
- Continue partnership with Tyrrell County Community Development Corporation and Youth Conservation Corps



Lessons Learned

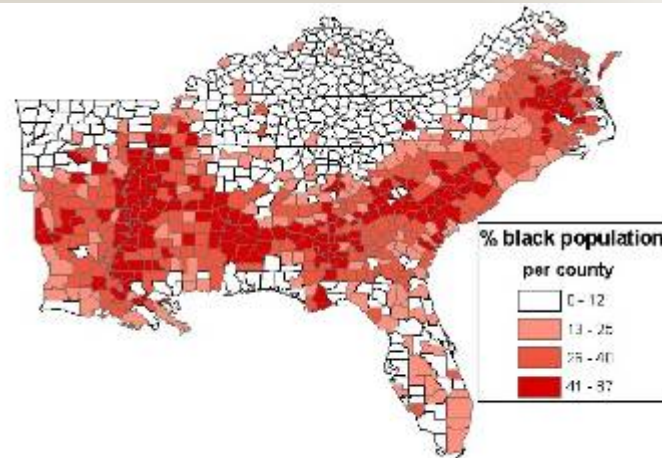
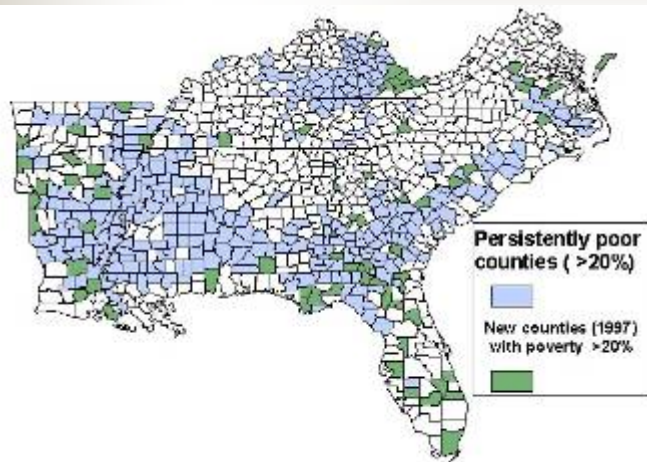


- Community forestry provides important opportunities for rural communities to protect the environment while promoting economic vitality and social justice
- This work takes time, perseverance and the willingness to work together across traditional comfort zones

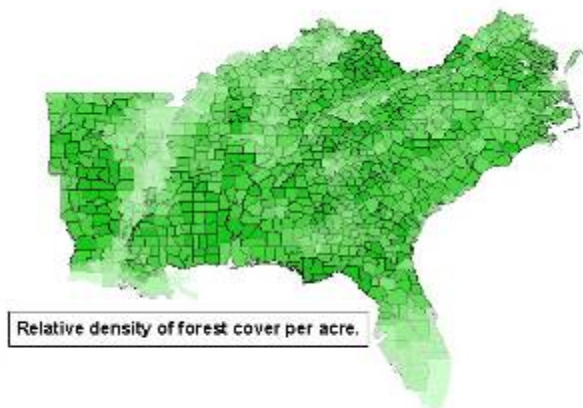
More Lessons....



- Community forestry seldom takes a direct route - first aid and EMT training was an important first step for eco-tourism
- Building on cultural traditions and understanding of the land is vitally important to long-term success
- Regional implications in the South.....



- There is a geographic overlap of persistent poverty, Black population and forestlands in the Southeast



Southern Forest Resource Assessment: 30 million acres of forestlands will change ownership by 2020 - important opportunities for community forestry



It's about community and about options for the future.....and for future generations!