

# Mower Tract Ecological Restoration on the Greenbrier Ranger District

## 2010 Accomplishments

In the summer of 2010, the Greenbrier Ranger District (GBRD) planted nearly 1,200 native plants on the Mower Tract. Another 1,500 native plants are being wintered at the District to be planted in spring, 2011. All plants were propagated from local seed source by the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Alderson Plant Material Center (PMC), thanks to FY10 NFN3 funding. Partners involved in plant material collection involved the Alderson PMC, Forest Service, Nature Conservancy, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Mountain Institute, and West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR). The native species priority list was developed in collaboration by the aforementioned groups, with additional input from the Ruffed Grouse Society and Wildlife Area Managers for the WVDNR. Special emphasis was placed on native species most advantageous for pollinators or wildlife.

The objective of the project is to restore native flora on previously strip-mined benches that currently are dominated by a thick, non-native sod layer. This restoration work will greatly benefit high-interest species including the cheat mountain salamander, northern flying squirrel, snowshoe hare, white-tailed deer, black bear, golden eagles, woodcock, ruffed grouse, saw whet owl and a number of pollinating animals by providing a variety of food sources and niches. Once native species are established, the restoration site will develop into a native seed source. Short term benefits are already being realized as wildlife grazing and pollination has already been observed from 2009 plantings. Additionally, bigtooth aspen in particular will help further the goals of programs and organizations for high priority game species, such as the Woodcock Management Initiative (WMI) and Ruffed Grouse Society. In the next 40 years, a vast improvement in natural biodiversity is expected as the restored vegetative community proliferates.



Figure 1. Bigtooth aspen are native to the MNF and grow quickly to shade out invasive grasses and provide a food source and habitat.



Figure 2. The benefits of planting native species on the Mower Tract are not limited to wildlife. Pollinators will be attracted and participate in the development of a viable native seed source.

Year Awarded: initial award in 2009

Project completion: est. 2012

Report number: 2 of 4

Expenditures (through 10/2009):

FY09 funding \$15,000, spent. \$15,000 \$0 remaining

FY10 funding \$23,500, spent. \$23,242 \$258 remaining

**•Total funding \$38,500 total spent \$38,242; \$258 total remaining**

Partners: CASRI, WVDNR, USFWS, USDA-NRCS Alderson Plant Material Center and Wes-Mon-Ty RCD, USDI-Office of Surface Mining, Nature Conservancy, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, and Mountain Institute.

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