



The Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative

THE CENTRAL APPALACHIAN SPRUCE RESTORATION INITIATIVE

PROTECTING ONE OF THE CENTRAL APPALACHIAN'S MOST UNIQUE ECOSYSTEMS: 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

YEAR-END REVIEW

We are pleased to share highlights of the Central Appalachians Spruce Restoration Initiative!

CASRI is a diverse partnership of private, state, federal, and non-governmental organizations who share a common goal of restoring historic red spruce-northern hardwood ecosystems across the Central Appalachians.

CASRI's vision is of a functioning red spruce-northern hardwood forest ecosystem restored across portions of its former range on both public and private lands, with the scale, connectivity, maturity and other features that provide habitat to sustain and enhance the viability of the many species and natural communities dependent on this ecosystem.



Photo Credit: V. Woltz

The Ecological Restoration Team hikes to a monitoring plot.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

2015 proved to be another extremely productive and fruitful year for CASRI:

- Over \$800,000 for land conservation purchases and on-the-ground restoration projects in 2015, totaling over \$3,784,141 raised to date.
- Over 1,916 acres of high-elevation lands placed on a trajectory to develop into functioning red spruce ecosystems, bringing our restoration total to nearly 4,166 acres.
- 62,040 red spruce seedlings and 48,100 native plants were planted on high priority conservation and restoration sites.
- Over 234 volunteers dedicated over 1,521 hours of their time working to restore red spruce.
- Over 500 acres of non-native invasive species were treated in high-elevation red spruce systems.
- Standardized and digitized monitoring forms for spruce release, spruce planting, and NNIS control.
- New research on a diverse range of topics concerning the red spruce ecosystem and restoration.



Volunteers plant red spruce seedlings on a decommissioned road adjacent to a riparian area in Monongahela National Forest.

RESEARCH & OUTREACH

CASRI and its partners are dedicated to both enhancing and spreading knowledge of the red spruce ecosystem.

- The **red spruce teaching toolkit** was used to outreach to over **2,500** people at over 25 events, including the **Mountain State Forest Festival** and **Discover Nature Day**, and welcomed the addition of a new **soil monolith** that will be used to teach the public about carbon storage and spodosolic properties.
- CASRI partners engaged in **valuable research** involving, spruce release, northern flying squirrel habitat, presence/absence, and diet, Cheat Mountain salamander phenology and reproduction, soil pedomemory, soil moisture and temperature characterization, and more.
- CASRI partners sponsored a **Kenyan restoration intern**, **Mart Kabochi**.

SPRUCING THINGS UP

CASRI hit the ground running this year, carrying out a broad array of restoration projects:

- **The Nature Conservancy (TNC)** planted a total **21,100** red spruce seedlings and **11,600** hardwood seedlings on their Gandy Ranch and High Mountain properties. **The Ecological Restoration Team and Potomac Highlands CWPMA Field Crew**, which are run out of the TNC office, accomplished **401** acres of spruce release and **498.4** acres of invasive species treatments respectively.
- The **U.S. Forest Service—Monongahela National Forest** and **Trout Unlimited** partnered to complete **14** miles of road decommissioning and **58.4** acres of riparian plantings, which included **5,200** red spruce seedlings and **5,100** native hardwoods.
- **Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge** planted **3,000** red spruce seedlings at their spring planting, in partnership with **Patch Adams' Gesundheit! Institute**, and **3,000** more at their fall planting.
- The **WV Division of Forestry—Kumbrabow State Forest** accomplished **40** acres of commercial spruce release.



A student at Petersburg Elementary learns to think like a WV northern flying squirrel

To learn more about CASRI and view the complete 2015 annual report, visit:
<http://www.restoreredspruce.org/>



Photo credit: A. Akers