RCW Downlisting Talking Points

The Nature Conservancy has spent many years working to bring back the Red-cockaded woodpecker from the brink of extinction. With protection, restoration, and management of longleaf pine we’ve had success.

Since 2010, the Conservancy and its conservation partners have planted more than a million acres of longleaf pine, burned more than 10 million acres and protected more than 200,000 acres. But there is still more work to be done.

Red-cockaded Woodpeckers didn’t come back from the brink of extinction on their own; continued intervention is necessary to keep the positive trend going for Red-cockaded woodpeckers.

And it isn’t just the Red-Cockaded woodpecker that benefits from this work, management for Red-cockaded woodpeckers is also good for lots of other species including gopher tortoises, Bobwhite quail, Indigo snakes, and wild turkey.

Climate change is leading to unprecedented rainfall events and flooding, along with increased hurricane activity in the southeast, which are expected to continue impacting RCW populations with potentially devastating results. Hurricane Michael ravaged longleaf pine at the Apalachicola National Forest. Longleaf pine at Croatan National Forest suffered because of Hurricane Florence.

Today’s announcement is the beginning of a process. There will be a public comment period on the proposed downlisting. TNC will be involved in that process. Our goal is to ensure that the population of Red-cockaded woodpeckers continues to grow and remain healthy.