

**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
September 2nd, 2021 – Virtual Meeting on Zoom**

Committee Members: Christine Putnam, Peggy Cornett, Lonnie Murray, Leah Jung, Emma Andrews, Kate Mallek, Emily Luebke, Michael Rodemeyer, Michael Callahan, Bruce Gatlin-Austin, Kennon Williams, Nancy Weiss

Absent: N/A

Other Attendees: Rod and Maggie Walker

Staff: Kim Biasioli, Carolyn Schaffer, Nicole Jones

There was a quorum of twelve members present, and Christine called the meeting to order at 5:31.

Welcome to guests.

Bruce moved approval of the agenda, Peggy seconded. Approved by a roll call vote.

Lonnie moved approval of the minutes, Bruce seconded. Approved by a roll call vote.

Follow-Ups:

Important Site Updates

- Blenheim Grassland – Christine is observing a lot of diversity and working to control invasives.

Spotted Lanternfly Efforts

- Emma organized materials on the google drive and reached out to Blenheim winemaker. Recommended outreach through the Monticello Wine Trail, farmers markets and CSAs.
- Kim worked with CAPE to send out an alert via Albemarle County News and social media. Kim and Mike trying to work with economic development folks on further outreach.
- Christine sent a letter to BOS and has been putting up laminated flyers at parks and other sites. Master Gardeners set up a help desk at the City Market.
- Peggy shared information via Monticello staff newsletters and will look into putting up flyers there. Spreadsheet on google drive.
- Christine recommends a follow up notice from the County 'SLF is on the move'. Kim is still working to set up a follow up meeting with VDACS and VCE to clarify the messaging; County would prefer to amplify messaging from the experts (VDACS and VCE) rather than recreating it.
- Rod Walker (BR Prism) suggests sending a mass mailing to all landowners.
- Kim is working on informing County leadership and encouraging a county-wide response.
- Emma recommends a targeted ad on social media.
- Leah noted that winery near her had already received information from the winery association; suggests determining how we can support outreach that's already being done.
- Emily did not receive info on SLF on the opposite side of the river. Can pass on through HOA.
- **ACTION ITEM:** NHC Members will share information with their networks, HOAs, and neighborhood groups. NHC Members will document where they are doing outreach on the spreadsheet on the google drive.

Staff Update – Kim Biasioli, Natural Resources Manager

- Stream Health Initiative – 16 strategies presented to the BOS in July.
 - One strategy is to formalize and expand the NHC Education Subcommittee's new landowner education project.

- Public can learn more and provide feedback on the public input site.
- Southern Albemarle Mountains Connectivity project
 - Collecting data from camera traps and looking at potential enhancements to crossing sites.
 - Roadkill survey underway with Virginia Master Naturalists.
- Other Work Items - Climate Program Team, Environmental review, James Riparian Consortium, Land Conservation Program support and thinking forward to a future Invasive Plant Task Force.

Important Site designation, long-term monitoring, and tracking system

- Need for criteria for designation of Important Sites.
 - Recommendation to use DCR's methodology for Natural Communities.
 - There are different levels of intensity of survey; could consider representation of diversity of community types.
 - Eagle nesting sites may need to be treated differently. Eagles have been delisted.
 - Recommendation to continue tracking species as well.
 - Unclear how Important Sites have been tracked in the past.
 - Kim recommends a database linked to the GIS; could create a Survey123 app to track site visits and observations.
 - Lonnie expressed concerns about FOIA. Kim suggested it might be good to have information stored and tracked in a central location. Emily commented that some of the information might be on private land; access might have been personally provided to individuals so the NHC should consider sensitivity of that.
 - We could move the google drive to a County managed sharepoint site; access and FOIA are still considerations.
 - Bruce suggested that Important Sites should be locally important – don't have to be state-listed – so eagle nesting sites may still be locally important.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Policy Subcommittee will develop criteria for designation of Important Sites.
 - New potential Important Site: Emma's Place. Emily Luebke has agreed to visit.
- Membership Updates
 - Thank you to Emily Luebke and Michael Rodemeyer, who are stepping down.
 - Kennon would like to renew and get more involved.
- Subcommittee and Member Reports
 - A. Education and Outreach
 - Subcommittee has not been able to meet.
 - Continuing to work with Piedmont Master Gardeners on Plant Northern Piedmont Natives campaign; working with nurseries to advertise native plants and sell native plant book.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Christine and Emma will have a table at a farmer's market this fall.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Peggy could also do outreach, native plant book sales at the Monticello plant sale and other upcoming events if she has materials.
 - B. Wildlife Corridors
 - Leah working on proposed study to track and monitor bobcat movement to potentially help identify wildlife corridors. Working with Smithsonian and Virginia Tech, support from DCR and others for a grant proposal.
 - C. Policy
 - Subcommittee will be meeting September 9th.

- Other Matters
 - Lonnie shared SERNEC database online with herbarium specimens. Great resource for history and tracking sites and species.
 - Christine discovered there is wavy-leaf basketgrass at Boars Head and has been trying to bring awareness to Boars Head for potential management.

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:26. Next meeting date is October 7, 2021.