

**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
August 20, 2020 – Virtual Meeting on Zoom**

Committee Members: Christine Putnam, Emily Luebke, Peggy Cornett, Michael Rodemeyer, Kate Mallek, Nancy Weiss

Absent: Kennon Williams, Lonnie Murray

Other Attendees: Rod and Maggie Walker (Blue Ridge PRISM), Ruth Douglass, Nicola McGoff, Sean Tubbs, Leah Jung

Staff: Kim Biasioli, Margaret Maliscewski, Carolyn Shaffer

There was a quorum of six members present, and Christine called the meeting to order at 5:05.

Welcome to Leah Jung, applied to be NHC member; not approved by BOS yet. Other visitors welcomed.

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

Michael moved approval of the minutes, Peggy seconded. Approved by a roll call vote.

Follow-ups:

- Important Site Visits and Updates
 - Avon Swamp: Christine, Emily, and Kim visited; located purple fringeless orchids. Not a complete survey.
 - Biscuit Run Central: Christine, Kim, and Nancy met with Tim Padalino (ACPR) and Christian Breeden (owner of Biscuit Run inholding). Walked western drainages and ridges and discussed invasive management, parks planning, and land use history.
 - VMN (Rob Finley) working with Dan Mahon; ongoing effort to organize volunteers in parks.
 - Need for coordinated effort for volunteers in parks.
 - Ongoing discussions among staff and ACPR re: volunteers in parks and Biscuit Run invasives management plan.
 - **Action Item:** Peggy will follow up on management at Tufton rock outcrop.

New Business:

- Stream Health Initiative Update
 - July 15th BOS meeting – some ongoing development-related proposals moving forward; those requiring additional staff put on hold. BOS directed staff to move forward with Phase II- improving stream health in the Rural Area. Current focus on public engagement strategy and new website resources.
- NHC workplan discussion
 - Suggestion to add more detail and comments on each action item.
 - Discussion about forming subcommittees; potentially meet in between regular monthly NHC meetings. Two committees proposed:
 - Education and Outreach
 - Policy

- Workplan Goal: Promote management of county-owned lands that conserves and enhances biodiversity and other natural resources.
 - Interest in continuing work in County Parks, specifically Biscuit Run and Charlotte Humphris; invasives education and other opportunities.
- Workplan Goal: Educate the public on the importance of biodiversity and ways to protect it.
 - Discussion of workplan education goal/subcommittee: Christine, Emily, Michael.
 - Discussion of new website; future opportunities. Idea to link to stewardship opportunities.
 - Meadow restoration sign for stormwater facilities.
- Workplan Goal: Strengthen committee and support for its work
 - Suggestion for Kim (and/or others?) to present to VMN, Monticello Bird Club, VNPS about NHC.
 - Other opportunities- zoom meetings/webinars, social media.
 - Action Item:** Christine/Peggy to organize a presentation - Monticello Bird Club.
- Workplan Goal: Promote use of locally native plants (Education and Policy subcommittees)
 - Discussion about working with retailers, nurseries, developing specific resources for the website. Continue to coordinate with Piedmont Regional Group. Create a sustainability badge for nurseries who promote natives.
 - Action Item:** Christine to visit Snow's. Consider presentation to VNPS.
- Workplan Goal: Identify, restore, and protect areas with key ecosystems
 - Discussion of potential new Important Site- CUH discovery of remnant grassland at Avon Ext.; rare plant occurrences. Sidewalk construction pending. Exploring opportunities for protection/education.
- Workplan Goal: Manage non-native, invasive species.
 - Discussion of education, policy recommendations, removal of invasives from plant list. Potential for a 'do not plant' list.
- Workplan Goal: Prioritize Conservation Focus Areas (Education subcommittee)
 - Resources for landowners; website and landowner tool, postcards.
- Workplan Goal: Minimize fragmentation; maintain and improve connectivity (Policy subcommittee)
 - Comp Plan Update, wildlife corridors
- Workplan Goal: Develop indicators, monitor data
 - Long term planning needed.
- Workplan Goal: Promote policy changes that support biodiversity protection and climate change
 - ACE ranking criteria update (Kim, Leah).
 - Focus on lighting ordinance.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50. Next meeting date is September 17th.