

Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
March 21, 2019 – Room 246

Committee Members: Nancy Weiss, Mary Tillman, Christine Putnam, Michael Rodemeyer, Peggy Cornett, Emily Luebke, Lonnie Murray

Absent: Kennon Williams

Other Attendees: Narissa Turner, Ruth Douglas, Tom Olivier, Leah Jung, Sidney Huffman, Clai Lange, Liz Sidamon-Eristoff, David Hannah

Nancy called the meeting to order at 5:35. Minutes of the 2/21/19 meeting were approved.

Narissa Turner made a presentation about the county's Climate Action Plan, and how the county is working with Charlottesville and UVA. An Open House for the county's plan was held 3/18, and a presentation to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) was made 3/20.

Chair's Report. Nancy updated everyone about working with the Rt. 29/Hydraulic Road Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) on improving the Charlotte Humphris County Park. County Parks & Recreation plans some cleanup of the park before community outreach begins. The CAC has approximately \$30,000 to spend.

Someone suggested the NHC reach out to all of the county CACs to talk about biodiversity. There was a short discussion about education ideas, and some recent educational efforts by some area groups. Christine is the only current member of the Education Subcommittee. Michael committed to joining it.

The NHC Annual Report for 2018 was briefly reviewed and approved. David will send it to the BOS clerk for the consent agenda at the 4/3/19 BOS meeting.

There was discussion about revising the county's approved plant list for site plans. It has not been updated since 2003. Peggy and Kennon volunteered at the March meeting to review the list but have not compared notes yet. If any committee members have ideas, they should share them with Peggy or Kennon. David believes this is an opportune time to work on native plant lists and ideas with county staff.

Biscuit Run was discussed. David did not know details, but believes the county budget for FY 2021 will include some funding for Biscuit Run, possibly shifting funding originally directed toward Hedgerow Park. The first draft budget included no funding for Biscuit Run, even though the county wants to move forward with a soft opening on the east side of the park. The Steering Team for Biscuit Run approved a recommendation from David and Ches Goodall to work with Va Dept. of Forestry to treat the larger eastern hemlock trees (10" dbh or larger) for the hemlock wooly adelgid this fall. There is a folder in Google drive specifically for information about the hemlock stand. Matt Smith of Parks & Recreation is a certified commercial pesticide applicator and the county has 5 certified technicians. Parks & Recreation received Lonnie's ideas about controlling invasive plants at Biscuit Run. The county needs to develop a comprehensive plan for invasive plants, which Va DCR will review. Lonnie reported that NRCS can help with wildlife habitat ideas for Biscuit Run.

Nancy and Emily reported and showed their most recent improvements and modifications to the Google drive and its structure. Among the enhancements are links to the Center for Urban Habitats' data for some Important Sites. The committee continues to be grateful for Nancy and Emily's dedication to this important task.

There was group discussion about potentially adding five new Important Sites. The discussion was limited to this topic. The committee recognizes the need for a more comprehensive review of all Important Sites, including where boundaries are drawn, if other candidate sites should be added to the list, and if some sites should be removed from the list.

There was consensus about adding the following six sites.

- Biscuit Run South (including boundary).
- Preddy Creek Park (entire park).
- Preddy Creek Park Grassland (boundary provided earlier by Devin Floyd), which falls within Preddy Creek Park.
- Blenheim Grassland (including boundary provided by Devin Floyd).
- Mill Mountain, within Southern Albemarle Mountains site (Nancy will create boundary).
- Brook Hill River Park and Salamander Crossings. There was agreement about the what the site should encompass – the soon to be created Brook Hill River Park, the current Salamander Crossings site, the current South Fork Rivanna Dam Area 1 site, and wetlands south of Polo Grounds Road (not currently included in an Important Site). Emily will create the boundary. A name for the site needs to be agreed upon.

We ran out of time before having a tutorial on iNaturalist from Lonnie. The next meeting is scheduled for April 18. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40.