

**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
April 18, 2019 – Room 235**

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

Absent: Peggy Cornett

Other Attendees: Sidney Huffman, Kim Swanson, David Hannah

Nancy called the meeting to order at 5:35. Brief introductions were made. Minutes of the 3/21/19 meeting were approved.

Lonnie led the group through activities to learn the iNaturalist app, including photographing plants in order to identify them. We visited the iNaturalist website and looked at observations that have been made in the Biscuit Run area. Different ways of uploading pictures, organizing data, and obscuring locations of species were discussed. The Flora of Virginia app is also useful, at cost of \$20.

Chair's Report. Nancy talked about a small group walk at Biscuit Run on 4/15, which she was unable to attend at the last minute. Emily and three other very knowledgeable naturalists/scientists walked a section of the northern part of the park land. Nancy also described a wildflower walk at Key West on 4/10 led by Ruth Douglas. After the group walk, Nancy and Ruth visited a nearby location with many dwarf larkspurs (100 – 200 individual plants). Nancy used Google drive to show some photos she took and the site visit form she completed, emphasizing that everyone should use Google drive to do the same thing on other site visits.

Nancy repeated the need for committee members to invite people to our meetings and to recruit new committee members. Lonnie mentioned a coworker that he will invite. The committee's annual report for 2018 was submitted to the Board of Supervisors via the consent agenda at their 4/3/19 meeting.

Emily talked more about the 4/15 site visit to Biscuit Run. The group focused on the area of two hydrologic resources identified by Va DCR-Natural Heritage in their 2011 report. The group was very impressed with the more northern of the two sites. High quality habitat, healthy forest, relatively few invasives, and a great mix of plants. The more southern area was not as high quality as the other. In designing the park, trails and other disturbance to these areas needs to be avoided. David noted that rezoning of the park land is proceeding and should be complete in the upcoming months. Rezoning will allow development of the park to begin. He encouraged the committee to provide comments to the park's Steering Team about designing and managing the park.

Mary is trying to contact landowners of the Fan Mountain Site 1. This site was recommended by Devin Floyd as the next site for a biological survey. Mary has sent letters to three of the four landowners, and is waiting to (hopefully) hear back from them. Michael has written to the owner of the Red Hills Wetland Area site.

Emily talked about the continuing work on organizing the Google drive. She and Nancy have accomplished much, but there is still a little more work to do. A Correspondence folder needs to be in each Important Site folder, and letters like the ones Mary and Michael sent should be filed there.

David reviewed the committee decision in the April meeting to add new Important Sites. An image of the Mill Mountain site was shown, and the idea of a future site visit discussed. The Va DCR-Natural Heritage boundary for Mill Mountain will be used until Nancy can gather more information about the site. Lonnie is eager to visit Chalk Rock, which is very near Mill Mountain, as this is an ideal time of year for observing the plants likely to be there. Lonnie will move ahead with visiting, and hopefully include another committee member, rather than trying to coordinate a visit to both Mill Mountain and Chalk Rock. Mary will try to contact the two landowners of Chalk Rock.

The group viewed a map and discussed the proposed new Important Sites at the location of the current Salamander Crossings site. Emily talked with Devin about the area, drew site boundaries, and shared the info with Nancy and David. The recommendations from the discussion were:

- Eliminate the current Salamander Crossings site (almost all of the area is being incorporated in the two new sites)
- Keep South Fork Rivanna Dam Area 1 and 2 sites, with no changes.
- Use the boundaries created by Emily to create two new Important Sites – Polo Grounds Road Wetlands Complex on the east side of Route 29, and Brook Hill River Park and Wetlands Complex on the west side of Route 29.

Lonnie made a motion and the committee approved taking these actions.

Christine talked about a recent article in the Daily Progress about Ag/Forestry Districts. Some landowners are being removed from the districts if their property has no development rights. There was much discussion. The committee would like to invite Scott Clark to come speak on the topic at an upcoming meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37. The next meeting is scheduled for May 16.