

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

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

Absent: Emily Luebke

Other Attendees: Scott Clark, Rick Barnett, Ruth Douglas, Leah Jung, David Hannah

Nancy called the meeting to order at 5:33. Brief introductions were made. Minutes of the 4/18/19 meeting were approved.

Scott Clark, Senior Planner for Albemarle County, made a short presentation about planning and zoning in the Rural Area. He then described and discussed Ag/Forestral Districts. His talk generated many comments and questions, and was very informative for committee members.

Chair's Report. Nancy repeated her wish for committee members to invite people to our monthly meetings. The next PEC conservation roundtable, organized by Sean Tubbs, is scheduled for 7/31. Christine plans to attend.

Updating the County's plant list for Site Plans. Peggy and Kennon have not worked together on this, though several people have provided input. A meeting with everyone in the same room would be a helpful next step.

**ACTION ITEM:**

- Nancy will email Repp Glaettli about this.

Nancy noted that she and Emily have continued to revise and organize the Google drive. She noted there is a template for site visits, which everyone should use. Emily has taken on administrative and management duties for Google drive from David.

Mary described some landowner contact she has been making, and described some difficulties in getting access to Important Sites. She has recently been working on Fan Mountain 1 and Chalk Rock. Boundaries and data for Important Sites are often not precise. Mitchell Carr, a Fan Mountain landowner, is supportive. One Chalk Rock landowner is supportive. There might be a cave near Chalk Rock, and a local rock climber may be interested in helping us. There should be a preliminary visit to assess the site, then conduct a biological survey at a later trip. Dates are to be determined. Lonnie and Christine may be the only committee members involved. Tom Wieboldt and Tim Williams may be good resources for site visits. Mary is also working on Bucks Elbow.

Nancy has talked with Gary Fleming, Va DCR, about Mill Mountain. The site boundary that DCR drew is much larger than the actual important area, which includes possible old growth forest. Nancy is walking the site with landowner Peter Mehring next Wednesday or Thursday. It is important to honor landowner requests to stay off of their land when they make those wishes known. The committee should share information with landowners after site visits. Christine made list of agencies, nonprofits, etc. to share with landowners, and showed some potential handout materials.

Michael briefly described the recent site visit to Red Hill Wetlands Complex. He is placing documents in Google Drive, though is still compiling notes from the participants in the visit. Ron Brunk is a great landowner. Rex Linville of PEC intends to meet with him in the coming months. Ruth emphasized the need to locate the plant list for this site, which was begun about 40 years ago.

Biscuit Run. Emily went on a site visit with others, to a location a little bit north of Biscuit Run South. It is one of 4 possible mountain bike sites. Emily, Devin, Mary Jane Epps are going to visit this site again in the near future. Master Naturalists are interested in volunteering their time at Biscuit Run. Dan Mahon met with them on site recently, Ruth and Christine were part of the event. The Ambassador program that Dan has described may not materialize right now. Master Naturalists can explore Biscuit Run if they have their MN “badge.”

Kennon encouraged everyone to review the draft letter to the County’s Biscuit Run Steering Team. The committee can send more letters in the future if they wish.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Committee approved Nancy sending the letter after some more review.
- David will explore creating a map(s) to accompany the letter.
- Lonnie will explore creating a map to identify possible prairie restoration sites.

There are seven Important Sites that need brief descriptions to include in the summary document.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Nancy will develop a description for Mill Mountain.
- Emily will develop descriptions for Polo Grounds Road Wetlands Complex and Brook Hill River Park & Wetlands Complex.
- Christine will develop descriptions for Blenheim Grasslands and Biscuit Run South.
- Kennon will develop descriptions for Preddy Creek Trail Park and Preddy Creek Trail Park Grasslands.

Mary reminded everyone of the riparian buffer program that Va DOF has in place. Bundoran Farm was the first applicant in the program, and will be expanding the existing buffers on the property. David reminded everyone of the community meeting about scenic river designation for the James River.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40. The next meeting is scheduled for August 15. There will not be a speaker at the next meeting, so there will be more time for committee business.