

**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
August 16, 2018 – Room 235**

Committee Members: Nancy Weiss (Chair), Christine Putnam (Vice Chair), Michael Rodemeyer, Peggy Cornett, Mary Tillman, Emily Luebke, Kennon Williams, Lonnie Murray

Absent: none

Other Attendees: Ruth Douglas, David Hannah

Nancy called the meeting to order at 5:35. Peggy noted that there is a misplaced comma in the very first sentence of the BAP report.

Ruth talked about some current invasive species issues. Earlier in the day she emailed the committee with an updated list of links to good websites on invasive species and native plants. She began by discussing the difference between noxious weeds (and their control in Virginia) and invasive species. A noxious weed law passed in Virginia around 1970, and Va Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services administers it. Plants that are commercially propagated in Va, or in-state production of the plant is commercially viable, are not considered or designated as noxious. Lonnie serves on the state's Noxious weed committee and noted some recent activity. Ruth then talked about several invasive plants and a few animals that are of concern locally. Matt Smith of the Parks & Recreation Dept. has been a good resource and supporter of trying to control invasive plants at county parks.

Action Item:

- Ruth will send an outline of her presentation to the committee.

Minutes of the July meeting were approved. Nancy gave a brief Chair's report. She attended a recent presentation by Chris Burkett about the DGIF Wildlife Action Plan.

Important Sites were discussed, using Matt Smith's website as an aid. There was discussion of roles for Master Naturalists and the iNaturalist app in documenting data about Important Sites. A future discussion is needed about how to organize and manage data about Important Sites. Members discussed ways to contact landowners and arrange site visits. It would be helpful to develop a list or spreadsheet of funding possibilities, helpful organizations, etc. to provide to landowners as we talk with them.

Important Sites that committee members would like to visit soon include North Fork Rivanna Proffit Road, Old Mills Trail Complex, Key West Floodplain, Bucks Elbow, Cove Garden Wetlands, and Avon Swamp. Comments about the county's land use taxation program were made, and the inconsistency the program may have with good conservation and management of private land. Three potential future speakers for committee meetings were mentioned: Peter Lynch (county assessor), Anne Coates (TJSWCD), and Kory Kirkland (NRCS).

Action Items:

- Peggy, Nancy, Emily, and Mary will do some landowner research and prepare for various site visits.
- Christine will begin gathering information about funding sources for landowners.

Development of Biscuit Run Park was discussed. Nancy attended a Biscuit Run Ambassadors group meeting earlier in the week, organized by Dan Mahon. A large public meeting will be held on 8/22. Several committee members plan to attend, and David will be there. The committee would like to visit Avon Swamp and the two DCR natural plant communities identified in 2011, to provide input for the park planning process.

Action Items:

- Nancy will contact Dan Mahon to begin arranging visits to Biscuit Run.
- After the 8/22 public meeting, committee members will send ideas and comments to Nancy, who will write a letter to the Biscuit Run Steering Team.

Emily noted that plans for a public boat launch and park are in process at the Salamander Crossings Important Site, on the west side of Route 29. David provided comments to county staff, ensuring they are aware of the vernal pools on site and their importance for salamander breeding. Emily reminded everyone there is evidence of marbled salamanders breeding at the site.

David will speak to the Rivanna Master Naturalists on 8/23, about BAP and related topics.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40. The next committee meeting is scheduled for September 20. Devin Floyd is scheduled to make a presentation.