

**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
February 16, 2017 – Room 246**

Committee Members: Nancy Weiss (Chair), Ari Daniels (Vice Chair), Peggy Cornett, Lonnie Murray, Rochelle Garwood

Absent: Christine Putnam, Peter Hatch, Manuel Lerdaud

Other Attendees: David Hannah, Tom Olivier, Ruth Douglas, David White

Nancy called meeting to order at 5:35, and welcomed everyone. The meeting agenda was reviewed and approved. Minutes of the December 20, 2016 meeting were approved.

Each committee member took a few minutes to describe their skills and interests, why and how they got involved with NHC. Ruth noted her long history with NHC and Biodiversity Work Group too. It was noted that the committee is now down to eight members and should think about potential new members. Lonnie mentioned the UVA Landscape Architecture department might be a source of new members to consider.

Action Items:

- Each committee member will think about what skills and talents would be good to add to NHC, as well as potential new members to recruit.
- Nancy will communicate with Travis Morris, county staff, to document expiration dates of committee members and better understand the appointment process.

David discussed a Ragged Mountain meeting earlier in the day among a small number of county staff. The meeting was held in hopes of developing strategies to resolve differences between the City and the County about trails at Ragged Mountain. Staff will explore the idea of a small group of well-informed people meeting to discuss possibilities for revising the trail system proposed by City Council. Bob Crickenberger was to contact City staff about the public hike at Ragged Mountain on March 4. Dan Mahon will arrange a time for a small number of county staff and others to visit Ragged Mountain. Devin Floyd should be part of the group. Lonnie, Ari, Ruth, Peggy, Dan Bieker, and Nancy are all possible participants, depending on the date. It was noted that no more than two committee members should participate so that a public meeting would not be created.

Action Item:

- David will communicate with Dan Mahon about the site visit and possible meeting.

David took a few minutes to describe a public engagement process that will begin soon, to review the county's Water Protection Ordinance. Lonnie, Ari, and Rochelle would like to be involved in the process.

Nancy and David reviewed Important Sites data. It was pointed out that an appendix in the 2004 report by the Biodiversity Work Group has a list of species observed at the original list of Important Sites, and these data should be added to the current Important Sites spreadsheet. The Plant Team has updated that BWG information, but no one is sure where that information is located.

Action Item:

- Ruth will find out who has the updated data.

Mo Stevens' field notes were also discussed as a valuable source of data, and NHC should get them, or copy of them at some point. Tom Wieboldt has Mo's notes. Tom recently retired as curator of Virginia Tech's herbarium, and will be speaking at the local Native Plant Society meeting on May 10.

Action Item:

- Ruth will email Tom W to find out where Mo's notes currently are.

Development of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was discussed. In thinking about the report, Tom O and David had independently arrived at September as a target date for a complete first draft of the BAP, fit to circulate for review. The committee agreed to continue using Google drive as a means for sharing and editing documents. David reported that Scott Clark and Karen Firehock receive emails related to Google drive documents. There was discussion about the need for outside review of the draft BAP, particularly on policy issues, hopefully including county staff. The BAP subcommittee will resume meeting again, to expedite review of draft sections of the report. Christine Putnam has volunteered to begin drafting material for the BAP related to education.

Action Items:

- Lonnie will review the list of people with access to Google drive, removing Scott Clark and others who do not need access.
- David will investigate the level of review the county staff will provide for the BAP.
- David will organize a meeting of the BAP subcommittee.

Tom updated everyone on the progress made to date by the Invasives/Climate Change subcommittee.

Action Item:

- Everyone will review the draft outline Tom circulated for Invasives and Climate Change sections of the BAP, and provide feedback.

A recent email describing an invasive plant survey by Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute was discussed.

Action Item:

- Nancy will contact Dr. Lacher to see if there is potential for a partnership or other way for NHC to work with them.

Norman Dill is interested in natural resources and the NHC. He recently met with David, plans to meet soon with Tom, and had a recent email exchange with Lonnie. He is on Devin's email list about spotted salamanders, and is interested in protecting the wetlands and vernal pools area.

David and Lonnie recently submitted comments to VDOT about the Route 250 bridge replacement over Little Ivy Creek. In the process, David was introduced and met with Bridget Donaldson, a senior research scientist at Virginia Transportation Research Council. She has been studying highway underpasses and how wildlife use them.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30.