

**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
September 21, 2017 – Room 235**

Committee Members: Nancy Weiss (Chair), Ari Daniels (Vice Chair), Lonnie Murray, Christine Putnam

Absent: Peter Hatch, Manuel Lerda, Peggy Cornett, Rochelle Garwood

Other Attendees: David Hannah, Andrew Walker, Ruth Douglas

Nancy called the meeting to order at 5:35. There was not a quorum present.

The Chair's Report focused on the need to recruit new committee members. Two potential members that Nancy has talked with cannot make the commitment. Two others might consider joining in 2018, but it is unclear. Nancy encouraged everyone to think about possible new members. There was discussion about changing the meeting days to Monday or Tuesday, to make attendance easier.

Action Item:

David will check on Mondays and Tuesdays as potential new meeting days.

Andrew Walker was introduced and welcomed as newly hired GIS Specialist for the county, formerly with Green Infrastructure Center. He has been working with David on landscape analysis for the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), and created several draft maps. Group review and discussion followed on maps of Important Sites and Core Habitat areas. The methodology to assign scores on both biological value and resilience was discussed. There was general agreement on the methods used, but the biological value of the Important Sites needs more review.

A number of topics and ideas came up during discussion:

- Possible BAP recommendation could be increased education and outreach to planning staff on biodiversity topics so they can have better-informed conversations and meetings with developers. Many issues involved with this, including talking with developers before they have invested large sums of money on a project.
- Presence of easements and number of unofficial development rights on parcels (available on county's GIS-Web) could be considered when assessing Important Sites. Much data related to vulnerability/threats is simply not available (e.g., non-native invasive species locations)
- How has the land use in the county changed over time. The BWG 2004 report had a map of forest cover in the county.
- Design and use of color schemes of the maps. Important Site locations need to be obfuscated in some manner.
- Could Devin Floyd's artwork be incorporated in the BAP.
- Core habitat areas are forested, don't include wetlands. National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) is the primary data available on wetlands. It is widely used, though can be very inaccurate. VA Wetlands Catalog data should be looked at, but it used NWI as a primary data source.

Action Items:

- David will upload the Albemarle County map showing TNC resilience information to the Google drive.
- David will send spreadsheet information to all committee members and request that they review the draft Important Sites scores.

- Andrew will investigate the VA Wetlands Catalog data.
- Andrew will create a map showing intersections of Important Sites and Habitat Core areas.

Connectivity of habitat is an important concept and topic. Perhaps it will serve to link what appear as isolated sites on the draft maps. David and Andrew will incorporate connectivity of Core Habitat areas in the BAP, but it will not be completed or included in the draft BAP to be sent out for review. Some analysis was done by Andrew while working at Green Infrastructure Center.

David listed several tasks to be done before the BAP would be ready to send to “outside” reviewers. There was brief discussion about individuals to include in the review process.

Action Items:

- Christine and David will meet and talk about developing a list and descriptions of the Important Sites to include as an appendix in the BAP.
- David will revise the most recent BAP, submitted by Tom Olivier on 9/14/19, and circulate among outside reviewers within the next two weeks.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30.