

**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
October 19, 2017 – Room 235**

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

Absent: Peter Hatch, Peggy Cornett

Other Attendees: David Hannah, Ruth Douglas

Nancy called the meeting to order at 5:35. The August minutes were approved. There was not a quorum at the September meeting, so no action was taken on those meeting notes.

Chair's Report. Nancy reminded everyone that there have been very few site visits. All recent committee action has been focused on the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). We will continue the idea of having some site visits in 2018 serve as committee meetings. The committee is slowly losing people. Manuel Lerdaun recently resigned. Rochelle Garwood's term recently expired. She has served on the committee for 9 years and plans to step away after the BAP process is complete. Christine's term also expired recently, but she intends to stay on the committee.

Action Item:

- David will email Travis Morris to see if any action is needed to keep Christine as an active member.

There was discussion about the need for new committee members and possible ways to recruit them. The current board of Ivy Creek Foundation may not contain any good prospects. Nancy will reach out to the Rivanna Master Naturalists and Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards. Completing the BAP may help in recruiting new members.

Current Status of BAP. Nancy, Christine and David met on 10/18 to review the draft rankings of Important Sites. Devin Floyd earlier sent an email with information and suggestions which they used. Devin is willing to have some of his art work used in the BAP. He also submitted a final list of natural plant communities to include as an appendix in the BAP.

David made some edits to the BAP and then circulated it for review among some county staff members, including several planners. Access to draft working maps of Important Sites and habitat core areas was included. Feedback from the group will hopefully be in hand by October 31.

Next Steps for BAP. A major component of the BAP, using GIS to analyze landscape connectivity, is yet to be developed. David and Andrew Walker will begin this soon. They would like to have an afternoon work session with committee members in the next few weeks. After landscape analysis is added and some other revisions are made to the BAP, it will be ready for outside review. A number of people/groups are willing to help. David would like to identify some scientists to help with reviewing, but has not been successful to date. An Executive Summary will need to be developed. A presentation on the BAP at the February 14, 2018 meeting of the Board of Supervisors (BOS) has been scheduled. A work session with the BOS will need to occur in the weeks after the presentation.

Group discussion took place about ranking the Important Sites and identifying those that should be identified as High Priority. There were handouts with current draft scores and High Priority sites, based on the meeting on 10/18 of Nancy, Christine, and David. Since that meeting, Nancy solicited input from Dan Bieker, but some clarification about his information is needed. Rochelle noted that denoting which Important Sites occur within larger sites would be very helpful. There was agreement that two categories of high priority sites should be developed. One list would be sites to draw BOS attention to, as action by the county in the next few years could impact the sites. The second category would be sites the committee should focus on for landowner outreach, education, and potential protection.

Action Items:

- Nancy, Christine and David will meet again next week to continue working on the Important Site rankings and high priority designations.
- Nancy will contact Mary Lee Epps about the status of the North Fork Rivanna Proffit Road site.
- Nancy will contact Mary Tillman about the status of the Cactus Rock Barren site.

Motion Approved:

- The “Key West” site will be renamed “Key West Floodplain”.

Committee members agreed the BAP should include wording about why the committee is important, and why it should continue its work.

Staff Report. David gave a short update on the stream buffer review process. He made a presentation to the Planning Commission on October 10, the last public meeting about stream buffers until a work session with the BOS on December 6. The Planning Commission expressed desire to provide input to the BOS as it considers possible revisions to the stream buffer regulations.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30.