

**Notes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee Meeting
January 12, 2016 – Totier Room 235**

Participants: Lonnie Murray (Chair), Peggy Cornett, Ruth Douglas, Peter Hatch, Tom Olivier, Nancy Weiss, Manuel Lerda, Devin Floyd, Rochelle Garwood, Terri Keffert, David Hannah

The meeting began at 5:30 with the announcement that Peter Hatch and Nancy Weiss had just been appointed to the committee by the Board of Supervisors. That brings to 8 the total number of committee members, with 7 present at this meeting.

Committee officers for 2016 were elected. Devin Floyd will serve as Chair and Lonnie Murray as Vice Chair. It was decided that a Secretary was not needed, as David Hannah will take notes at the meetings.

Meeting logistics were discussed in light of recent requests to accommodate other public meetings in the COB by adjusting the start time of our meetings. The committee decided to meet the fourth Tuesday of each month at 5:30. If there are conflicts with reserving a room at the McIntire Road COB, the COB on 5th Street Extended will be used for the meeting. David will check availability of rooms to ensure this schedule will not be a problem and report back to the committee.

Lonnie described the use of Google drive to store NHC files and documents. A “show and tell” session about the Google drive should be held at the next meeting.

There was discussion of the Green Infrastructure Center (GIC) grant project. The grant subcommittee (Devin, Manuel, Tom, David) reported on the subcommittee meeting with Andrew Walker and Lara Johnson of GIC on 1/6. Tom Dierauf participated in the meeting. Rochelle expressed interest in joining the subcommittee. There was agreement by the full committee on the importance of using historical aerial photos to identify undisturbed forested areas in the county. Lonnie expressed how effective Google Earth is with incorporating very recent aerial photography. Recent timber harvest in the Fox Mountain area and land clearing at Miller School show up well. We will check with GIC to see if the Google Earth imagery can be used in the project.

Some other points brought out in discussion: regular subcommittee meetings should be held, subcommittee feels good about the work to date and the GIS capabilities of GIC, we should add to the plant-centric and rare species focus of the project, we should QA/QC the data that GIC are using (geology is good example), significant habitat areas in the county need to be identified, “bad” layers should be included in the analysis (e.g., highly degraded areas, invasive plant concentration areas). The committee should augment what GIC does. The grant period ends September 2016, and there will be a limit to what the project can include.

Tom Olivier made a presentation about population structures, invasive species, and climate change. Discussion followed, with Tom emphasizing his view that each of these factors need to be included in any future conservation/biodiversity plans the committee develops. It appears these factors are not being incorporated in a substantive way in the GIC project. The issues surrounding population structures are not well known and not well understood in many cases.

The meeting concluded at approximately 7:45.

Next Meeting: February 23, 2016 at 5:30pm, location TBD.