

**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee Meeting  
August 23, 2016 – Chris Greene Room 246**

Committee Members: Devin Floyd (Chair), Lonnie Murray (Vice Chair), Peter Hatch, Peggy Cornett, Manuel Lerdau, Ari Daniels, Christine Putnam

Absent: Nancy Weiss, Rochelle Garwood, Jeremy Glode

Other Attendees: David Hannah, Ruth Douglas, Tom Olivier, Leah Jung, Rod Walker, Maggie Walker

The meeting was called to order at 5:38 by Lonnie. Minutes of the 7/26/16 meeting were approved.

Ragged Mountain Natural Area. CAMBC (Charlottesville Area Mountain Bike Club) appreciates the way we phrased the comment letter to the City about management of RMNA. The process of creating the letter appears to be solid relative to public meeting and FOIA laws. Regardless though, as a public body, we should retain all emails about committee related business. David is meeting this week with John Blair, an attorney for Albemarle County. The committee is very open to have him attend a future meeting and talk about issues.

No one is sure about the process and timing of a decision about RMNA from this point on. David sent the committee's letter to all the Board of Supervisors, accidentally sending the Va DCR letter in his first email. Diantha McKeel was the only supervisor who responded, with a short thank you.

Brookhill project. Devin has been involved for 1.5 years, and recently briefed Dan Bieker on all the history. We should hold off on actions at Rio Mills Road until a decision to pave it has been made. There are many moving parts, including a DGIF boat landing at the bridge abutment (Berkmar Road Extended), a trail/greenway system being developed, a possible future high school, and possible connector road to Berkmar Road. Lonnie thinks the wetland areas have been violated by the bridge construction.

Riverbend Corporation is being progressive with salamander tunnels on Polo Grounds Road. Devin got push back from Rivanna Master Naturalists regarding his email encouraging them to attend the Planning Commission meeting. There are good models to follow for salamander tunnels, and they will present very good education opportunities in the future. But, with a connection to Berkmar Road Extended, there could be motivation to add the whole area into the Development Area in the future.

Important Sites. Peter and Devin have a Sept 17 site visit planned to the Rivanna Bluffs below Buck Island Creek site. Maybe a larger group can go in the future. It is another example of healthy hemlocks with no hemlock wooly adelgids present. There was brief discussion about possible reasons for patches of healthy hemlocks in the area. Peggy had good fern walk at Tufton recently, and offered to take folks out again. She will send an email about it. Only one Christmas fern was seen on the walk, maybe due to acidic soils? Ari is interested in leading a walk, but needs direction as he is not a plant person. Chalk Rock is a possibility, Dan Bieker may know landowners there to contact. Bucks Elbow would be a great site too. The landowner at Red Hills Wetlands (Gladden Fields) is open to visitors coming to his property, but he wants to be contacted first. He does not want people to simply show up.

David described the Flag Layer data and purpose. The Mo Stevens sites should be considered at some point for addition to the Important Sites. This should be discuss at the next committee meeting.

**Motion Approved:** A revised list Important Sites should be added to the Flag Layer, as proposed by David in a table document he sent to the committee prior to the meeting.

Education Subcommittee. Christine and Ari are the only committee members on the subcommittee at this point. They are seeking ideas and input. The 2004 report by the Biodiversity Work Group has a section on biodiversity education. David and Christine will talk about some ideas.

**Motion Approved:** Christine will approach Rivanna Master Naturalists to recruit volunteers for the Education Subcommittee.

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Subcommittee. Tom briefed the group on the first subcommittee meeting, held 8/18. Tom, Peggy, Lonnie, and David attended. The intent is to proceed through Tom's outline in future subcommittee meetings, and some needed outline revisions were mentioned. The subcommittee will need full committee input and decisions at times as work continues. Lonnie made a motion to approve the BAP subcommittee report. There was discussion about whether approving the subcommittee report was necessary, and the motion was tabled.

Rod and Maggie Walker were present for the committee meeting. Rod made a presentation about Blue Ridge PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management). Blue Ridge PRISM is a Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA), the first one created in Virginia. There was much discussion and many questions from the committee during the presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30.

Next Meeting: September 27, 2016 at 5:30pm, Totier Room 235.