

**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee Meeting
October 25, 2016 – Totier Room 235**

Committee Members: Devin Floyd (Chair), Lonnie Murray (Vice Chair), Peggy Cornett, Ari Daniels, Nancy Weiss, Manuel Lerda, Christine Putnam

Absent: Jeremy Glode, Rochelle Garwood, Peter Hatch

Other Attendees: David Hannah, Tom Olivier, Taylor Livick

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 by Devin.

Minutes of the 9/27/16 meeting were approved.

The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a very important project and will be bumped in importance and order of agenda in coming months. It was moved up in the agenda for this meeting, with Important Sites discussion moved to the end.

The scheduled November committee meeting date of 11/22 was confirmed, even though it is during the week of Thanksgiving. Nancy will be away but other members can attend.

Devin brought two plants to the meeting. Hairy lip fern (*Cheilanthes lanosa*) is an uncommon but not rare plant. It is very resilient and often grows in flat rock barrens with extreme, often xeric conditions. It can be an indicator of rare ecosystems and plants. Log fern (*Dryopteris celsa*) is much more common and is not suited to extreme conditions, grows well in shade and likes rich soils.

The BAP subcommittee (David, Lonnie, Peggy, Tom) discussed their recent meeting of 10/21. They described the need to bring more resources and involve more committee members in developing the BAP, especially given the importance of the report. They reported the need to create a more detailed process for developing the BAP. Tom and David will develop a detailed outline/structure for the BAP to present at the January 2017 NHC meeting. The document will facilitate involving more people in developing the BAP. The target date for completing the BAP is by end of year in 2017.

There was general discussion about the structure and format of the report, how to address overarching, repeating issues that cut across multiple habitat types, who the target audiences are, and how best to reach those audiences. Education will be a key aspect of the BAP. The committee acknowledged the need to update the BAP on a periodic basis, so this report will be the first of many to be developed in the future. David encouraged committee members to email their ideas about the BAP to him and Tom.

David spoke about the draft document he shared, proposing a method for a short term, simple prioritization of the Important Sites. A more thorough and robust review and classification of the Important Sites is needed in the longer term. The short term ranking is needed for the BAP and is a way to begin involving more committee members in the report. Nancy and Christine offered to help with the ranking process by selecting one or a small number of Important Sites to begin with. They will work with David, and Lonnie and Devin will be available for help. Lonnie and Devin will discuss developing an A1 thru A5 system for species in our Important Sites (“A” for Albemarle, mirroring the DCR systems of S1-S5 for “State” and G1-G5 for “Global”). Lonnie will send a link to the spreadsheet with information about each Important Site.

Tom summarized the Invasives/climate change subcommittee meeting of 10/19. At the meeting, Leah Jung shared an EPA document and process for documenting the risks that climate change poses to communities. It is a risk management approach using stressors, consequences, probabilities of occurrence, importance of dealing with the threat (e.g., can human actions have an impact), short term vs. long term considerations, etc. The subcommittee will continue exploring this. The subcommittee will develop a preliminary set of recommendations related to climate change for possible inclusion in the BAP, and present to the NHC at the Feb. 2017 meeting. Lonnie mentioned the need to start documenting the north-south geographic ranges of species occurring at our Important Sites.

The topic of the NHC being a partner with Blue Ridge PRISM was discussed. David read an email exchange with Rod Walker describing what is involved in being a partner. David will forward the email exchange to committee members.

Motion Approved: The committee approved, by a 6-1 vote, becoming a partner with Blue Ridge PRISM at their simplest level – being listed as a stakeholder and participating party on their website and outreach material. No agreement or documents need to be signed.

Albemarle County's Native Plant database has some errors in it due to past Import-Export procedures. Some errors are significant and need to be fixed. Work is also needed for Version 2 of the database, which has more advanced search functions. Could the Education subcommittee help with this? Elaine Pack of Albemarle County maintains the database now, as it is accessible through the county's website.

Devin described a natural area he recently discovered, an alluvial swamp wetland along Biscuit Run. Virginia DCR was unaware of the site until Devin reported it to them. He will send a report on the site to the committee, for consideration as Important Site at next month's meeting.

The meeting quorum dissolved at 7:15.

Carolina buckthorn (*Frangula caroliniana*) occurs on Nancy's property. It is only the third known site/colony in Albemarle County. Lonnie wants to propose a bike ride to see some of the Important Sites along Mechums and Moormans Rivers. The trip would begin at Meriwether Lewis School and travel on Decca Lane and Ridge Road. He will schedule something this fall. Lori Chamberlin, Forest Health program manager for VA DOF, will speak at the Native Plant Society meeting at Ivy Creek on Nov. 9. David complimented Tom on the op/ed article he wrote for the 10/9/16 *Charlottesville Daily Progress*.

David confirmed that NHC is scheduled to make a short presentation to the BOS at their Dec. 7 afternoon meeting. David has a work session scheduled for Jan. 4 with the BOS, to present recommendations and priorities for managing natural resources.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30.

Next Meeting: November 22, 2016 at 5:30pm, Totier Room 235.