

MINUTES
HERITAGE TRUST ADVISORY BOARD
MAY 19, 2005
CONGAREE BLUFFS HERITAGE PRESERVE
ST. MATTHEWS, SC

Members Present

Julia Krebs (Chair)
Campbell Coxe (Vice-Chair)
Beth Grace
Freddy Vang
Henry Fair
Fritz Hamer (for William Galloway)
Rodger Stroup
Jon Leader
Sonny King
Mike Foley (for Chad Prosser)
Darryl Jones (for Bob Showalter)

Members Absent

Mike McShane
John Frampton
Graham Gallivan
Jake Razor

Others Present

Barry Beasley
Stuart Greeter
Chris Judge
Ken Prosser
Bert Pittman
Hank Stallworth
Kathy Boyle
Brett Moule
Tim Ivey
Gil Newberry
Mary Edmonds
Johnny Stowe
Ann Darr
Mike Creel
Rick Huffman
Breck Carmichael

Julia Krebs called the meeting to order and called the roll.

Approval of February 3 Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2005 Heritage Trust Advisory Board (HTAB) meeting. The motion was approved.

Comments from the Director

Barry Beasley thanked members for comments he received on the Habitat Protection Strategy and said a revised version will be released in June for review. He noted a new strategic plan for DNR is underway and said that Tom Kohlsaas is continuing work on the Comprehensive State Wildlife Plan. Dr. Beasley stated the Habitat Protection Committee is creating a list of criteria for all potential DNR acquisitions and he said that Heritage Trust biologists would shift their focus back to biological survey work. Ken Prosser updated members on the status of current acquisition projects.

Natural Areas Committee

Freddy Vang stated the committee discussed one item:

1. Update on Approved Projects List: Bert Pittman discussed the status of the list relative to species and community types. He noted staff would continue to refine the list so goals can be set and partnerships can be developed for future projects.

Cultural Areas Committee

Rodger Stroup stated the committee discussed four items:

1. Fig Island World Heritage Site Designation: Chris Judge described this shell ring complex, found on Botany Bay Plantation. He proposed DNR hire Mike Russo, a shell ring expert from the National Park Service, to prepare the documentation necessary to nominate the area as a National Historic Landmark. If successful, Mr. Judge stated this would be the first step toward obtaining designation as a World Heritage Site.
2. Ranking of Cultural Sites: Mr. Judge informed members that a committee of archaeologists will review the rankings and criteria developed in 1990 for cultural sites to see if changes should be made to the criteria or if new projects should be added to the list. He said the work should be completed by November and a presentation could be made to HTAB at that time.
3. Property Donation: Mr. Judge stated that SCANA would like to donate 14 acres of land adjoining Congaree Creek Heritage Preserve in Lexington County as mitigation for a wetlands violation. Besides the property donation, Mr. Judge said SCANA would also provide a footbridge for the preserve and lease DNR land for a parking area. Dr. Stroup stated the committee as a motion recommended approval of the project. The motion was approved.
4. Geocaching: Dr. Stroup mentioned that this relatively new activity involves groups hiding items on properties and then trying to find them using GPS. He stated that legislation, which has passed the House and is in the Senate, has been introduced to control it in South Carolina. Dr. Stroup said state officials and geocachers would likely be meeting soon to try and work out a solution regarding activities on state properties.

Other Business

1. Prescribed Burning: Johnny Stowe discussed prescribed burning and stated the biggest concern is smoke and its associated liability. He said approximately 30,000 acres are burned every year in the state and added that most properties in rural areas can be burned without incident. Mr. Stowe said the burning program for heritage preserves has benefited from partnerships with DNR's Wildlife Section, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy.
2. Heritage Preserve Management: When the Wildlife and Wildlife Diversity Sections were merged, Dr. Beasley stated that management functions for natural areas preserves was transferred from Heritage Trust to the Wildlife Section. Tim Ivey, Chief of the Wildlife Section, explained that management begins with a work plan detailing needs for each region, followed by proposed annual budget. Next year, Mr. Ivey said capital improvements would be included in the preserve management budget, as well as needs for cultural preserves. Since December, Mr. Ivey reported that 440 visits have been made to preserves by staff. Dr. Beasley stated this transfer of management responsibility is a positive move that will allow Heritage Trust biologists to return to the research and survey activities that were drastically reduced several years ago.
3. Research Project at Congaree Bluffs: Bert Pittman explained a proposal for HTAB to fund a plant study at Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve. He said a USC student would assist Dr. John Nelson in the study, which could be used as a model for future surveys of heritage preserves.

Budget Committee

HTAB entered executive session to discuss contractual matters. They returned to regular session and voted to approve the Heritage Land Trust Fund budget as presented. Addendums to the budget included the Alewine tract and a property donation at Congaree Creek Heritage Preserve. The preserve management budget was approved, as well as funds for a research project at Congaree Bluffs and a study at Fig Island.

The next meeting will be August 4 in Columbia. The November meeting is tentatively scheduled for 2 days in the Pee Dee.

Adjourn.