

MINUTES
SC HERITAGE TRUST ADVISORY BOARD
MAY 5, 1994
DONNELLEY WMA
COLLETON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Members Present

Dr. Whit Gibbons (Chairman)
Dr. Terry Ferguson (Vice Chairman)
Dr. John Dean
Dr. John Leader (for Dr. Rippeteau)
Mr. Lee Tippet (for Dr. Vogt)
Mr. Joe Mills (for Hugh Ryan)
Ms. Wendy Parks
Mr. Ed Drane (for Marion Burnside)
Mr. Brock Conrad (for Dr. Timmerman)
Mr. Donnie Barker (for Grace McKown)

Members Absent

Mr. Jack Lunn
Mr. Tony Merck
Mr. Russ McKoy
Dr. Tony Ganong

Others Present

Mr. Tom Kohlfaat
Mr. John Robeinet
Mr. Steve Bennett
Ms. Linda Lundquist
Mr. Stuart Greeter
Mr. Ted Kinard
Mr. Larry Robinson
Mr. Niels Taylor
Mr. Tom Murphy
Mr. Chris Judge
Mr. Bill Kerrigan
Mr. Ken Prosser
Mr. Greg Lucas
Mr. Dean Harrigan
Mr. John Coker
Mr. John Frampton

Dr. Whit Gibbons 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, 1994 Heritage Trust Advisory Board (HTAB) meeting. The motion was approved.

Comments from the Executive Director

Brock Conrad stated that Dr. Timmerman was sorry he could not attend today's meeting, but he is busy working with the Department budget. Brock added that Dr. Timmerman's counterpart in Florida, the recently retired Bob Brantley, would be visiting Columbia several days next week. One of Mr. Brantley's duties will be to examine the NGHT Program and offer suggestions for improvement.

Archaeological Conservancy - Bill Kerrigan

Bill said The Archaeological Conservancy started in 1980 as a spinoff from The Nature Conservancy. TNC members in New Mexico and Arizona were interested in protecting cultural resources. However, they felt this was outside the mission of TNC and thought a new agency should be formed.

Bill stated that the main focus of the Conservancy has been to acquire archaeological sites of pre-contact and contact variety. He showed slides of different sites to HTAB members and stressed the need for preservation of cultural resources. Bill said his

organization tries to rank the most important sites on a state-by-state basis and see how they can help acquire these sites.

Bill added that The Archaeological Conservancy usually acquires small sites 1 to 40 acres in size. He reported that the largest site is 300 acres. Once a site is acquired, Bill said a 100 year management plan is developed and professional archaeologists are allowed to conduct research on the area. Bill stated that the Conservancy also tries to develop local relationships and interest in each project. These relationships help provide personnel to monitor the sites after they are established.

Finally, Bill said that most of the agency's work has been in the southwest. One hundred sites have been acquired in 17 states over the last 14 years. In conclusion, Bill stated that The Archaeological Conservancy would like to be involved in some of the projects now evolving in South Carolina.

US Fish & Wildlife Service - John Robeurette

John stated that the Wildlife Department has been instrumental in helping the Fish & Wildlife Service accomplish it's mission. He added that the Department is not afraid to take a stand with the Service to recover valuable resources. Having these objectives in mind, John presented Tom Murphy with A Friend of the Refuge Award for his hard work, dedication and sacrifice in the protection and restoration of wildlife.

Ted Kinard - Colleton County Council

Mr. Kinard stated he was Vice Chairman of Colleton County Council, a Colleton County native and was retired from the Air Force. He feels there is a problem with taxes and the tax base in Colleton County. Although Mr. Kinard believes we all are trying to accomplish the same goal, he said he would like to make a few points for us to consider the next time we purchase land in Colleton County.

Mr. Kinard reported that 27,000 acres of land in the county belong to the Wildlife Department; 3,400 to the Army Corps of Engineers; two parks and a large plantation are controlled by SC Dept. of Parks, Recreation & Tourism; and they have all been taken off of the tax rolls. He said the county is losing over \$50,000 a year in direct tax base. Every time a piece of property goes off the tax rolls, there is a tax increase for all residents. The county, in turn, receives criticism from the residents.

When buying property, Mr. Kinard suggests that we keep property purchases as small as possible. Even though some land is taxed fairly low, the losses add up. Mr. Kinard would like for us to think of ways to acquire property without hurting the tax base.

John Dean said he understood the dilemma, but asked John Frampton what each visitor day would generate in income.

John Frampton replied that the ACE Basin Task force has looked at this and the revenue that is generated by the ACE Basin substantially outweighs the tax loss.

Brock interjected that the figures are available as to what the average hunter spends per day.

Mr. Kinard said he understood all this, but the area wasn't a desert before these programs came into the area. It was an active, well-managed private area where a lot of money was spent.

John Frampton said the budget has probably doubled now, prior to when the state became involved. Steve Bennett added that the property wasn't open for public hunting at that time either.

John Dean asked Mr. Kinard if he had access to this data. Kinard said he did, but the bills are still adding up.

Niels Young asked Mr. Kinard what the annual budget was for the county. Mr. Kinard replied it was \$22 million.

In conclusion, Mr. Kinard said he appreciated the opportunity to present a different perspective to HTAB members. Chairman Gibbons said he appreciated Mr. Kinard's remarks and added that it is something we need to think about in the future.

Committee Announcements

Chairman Gibbons announced there was an opening on the Budget Committee. He asked that anyone who is interested in serving on the committee to see him after the meeting. Dr. Gibbons noted that the others members of the Budget Committee are Dr. Timmerman and Tony Merck.

Chairman Gibbons also reported that he is no longer the head of the Natural Areas Committee. He stated he has appointed Dr. John Dean as the new Chair of the committee.

Savannah River Bluffs Heritage Preserve

Stuart said it seems that every few months we get requests for use of existing preserve property for something other than preserve use and this is one of those instances.

Stuart displayed a map and pointed out the location of the preserve and the official access point. He said a power line which is 250 feet wide serves as the northeast boundary. The area in question is on that corner of the preserve.

Stuart stated people have been using the driveway of a property owner to get to the preserve. The owner, Dr. Waugh, has allowed access through his property.

Stuart added that the downstream property is being developed into subdivisions and a new road is being constructed through the

subdivision. Dr. Waugh would like to encroach on the power line with his driveway to get to his house. Normally, Stuart said that we do not deal with anyone who does not have the power of eminent domain when we talk about trading properties or using preserves for alternative purposes. However, since Dr. Waugh is a cooperative landowner who has been supportive of the program by letting people use his driveway to get to the preserve, maybe we can do something to help him.

Stuart suggested we could grant Dr. Waugh a license to use a small portion of the preserve for his driveway. We would not be giving up any property rights because the license can be revoked at any time. The licensed area would be 50 feet wide by 180 feet long.

Stuart said he is asking that the Board approve granting Dr. Waugh a license to use the area for his paved driveway with the understanding that the license be written by our attorney and that the license could be revoked at any time.

John Dean asked if the power line was inside our area. Stuart said that was correct. Dr. Dean asked that if a new road exists, would it be possible for us to make our access road in the power line off of the new road. Stuart replied that the developer had already offered us access on the new road if we trade him for some property down on the river. Stuart said we are not going to do that, therefore, we probably won't get access to the new road.

Dr. Dean remarked that this created an awkward precedent for the Board and wondered what makes this different than the next request that comes along in the future. Stuart replied that this is not a permanent easement request, like some of the others. Stuart said if this is a question of damage, no damage will occur to the preserve.

Stuart said if the Board approves this request, it will also go before the Commission and our attorney will work out the details.

Brock Conrad made a motion that we take this under advisement and come back with a draft license to examine at the next meeting.

Dr. Dean interjected that he believes this project should continue moving and he would ask that the motion include a provision that when the license is done, the Board move it along via mail and telephone and not wait until the next HTAB meeting. It was agreed that a mail ballot would be sent to each member along with a copy of the license.

Chairman Gibbons asked if another provision could be put in the agreement stating Dr. Waugh agree that anyone who has access to the new road can also use his driveway to get to the parking lot if there is one. Stuart agreed, but once again said we could deal with Dr. Waugh at any time because of the conditions of the license. He added that if we are allowed to use the new road, Hammond Road, then the language will say that we, in turn, get to use a portion of Dr. Waugh's driveway to get to our property.

The motion to use a mail ballot to consider the license was passed unanimously by the HTAB.

Next, Chairman Gibbons entertained a motion that the next topic, Victoria Bluff, be delayed until Executive Session. The motion was seconded and approved by the HTAB.

Bunched Arrowhead Heritage Preserve Management Plan

Tom Kohlsaas reported that a draft management plan was recently sent out to HTAB members. Since that time, Tom said that Dr. John Dean has raised several concerns about the plan that the staff had overlooked. Therefore, Tom said he proposed that the plan be withdrawn and a meeting be held to discuss members' concerns in more detail.

Dr. Dean asked if a plan had to be done for each site. Tom replied that was correct. Dr. Dean then said we are doing this on a case-by-case basis. He feels we should use this as a beginning and develop more of a format to use with other sites so there will be some type of consistency to the process. Dr. Dean said the current plan seemed to contain implied objectives, not stated objectives. He said there is no way to check and see if we are achieving those objectives.

Brock interjected that he and Tom have been discussing that and he would like to see a management plan done before a piece of property is purchased.

In conclusion, Tom stated that the plan would be withdrawn and there would be no need for Board action.

Capital Improvements on Heritage Preserves

Stuart stated he had a list of capital improvements needed on heritage preserves to pass around as information to HTAB members. Stuart said that out of the 41 preserves, 24 are on this list and need some type of improvement such as road work, parking areas, signs or boundary marking. Stuart noted that the total cost for these improvements is about \$350,000. He stated that work on these improvements will begin shortly and he wanted all members to be aware of this situation when they see proposals for capital expenditures in the future.

Dr. Dean asked Stuart if this was a priority list. Stuart said it was not and there may be other improvements on other preserves that may need to be added to the list. Dr. Dean stated that members would like to know the sequence of these improvements as they are undertaken. Stuart agreed and said that the improvements would take at least two years to complete.

Other Business

Dr. Gibbons informed members that in the last few months, there have been 20 newspaper articles and 4 television spots highlighting the Heritage Trust Program. Copies of the articles were distributed to members for review.

Stuart added that river trail guides for the Little Pee Dee and Waccamaw River are now available and said we need to encourage public use of these properties.

Finally, copies of the Tradelands Bill were distributed to Board members. Stuart said the bill allows donations of any kind of asset to the Heritage Land Trust Fund. That asset can then be sold and the money be used to buy property. Stuart said this could enhance revenues to the Heritage Land Trust Fund.

Brock suggested a brochure be created describing all aspects of the program in addition to the new Tradelands bill.

Cultural Areas Committee

Dr. Terry Ferguson reported that the first item discussed by the committee was an addition to the Nipper Creek Heritage Preserve. He said the proposal is to add 20 acres to the existing preserve and the committee recommends approval of this project.

Next, Dr. Ferguson said the committee discussed the Fort Lamar site. He stated there have been some changes with the landowner and the committee recommends that the landowner be contacted to obtain a definitive answer to a proposal that has been made to him. If this proposal is not suitable, then an alternative proposal should be prepared.

Further, the committee discussed archaeological reconnaissance work being conducted on Hitchcock Woods. This area concerns a conservation easement on a 2,000 acre tract of land in Aiken.

Finally, Dr. Ferguson reported that some responses have been received back from letters send out to cultural site landowners. He said the response rate has been about 10%, some being favorable, some not favorable.

In conclusion, Dr. Ferguson made a motion to approve contacting the Fort Lamar landowner to obtain a definitive answer to the first proposal and prepare a second alternative if needed. The motion was approved by the HTAB.

Next, Chris Judge gave a slide presentation on Otter Island. He presented a brief history of the Civil War fort located on the island and invited members to join the field trip planned for the following day.

Natural Areas Committee

Dr. Dean stated there were no action items on the agenda. However, several issues were discussed by the committee.

First, Steve Bennett presented an overview of all the active projects currently going on within Heritage Trust.

Next, there was a long discussion about ecosystem management and the differences between ecosystem management versus traditional management.

Further, Dr. Dean stated there should be some more discussion about the strategic plan and some statement about the status of the plan. Tom reported that a draft of the strategic plan had been completed and he presented copies to Board members. Tom added that the plan would be revised into a shorter and more readable document. Tom said he would like members to review the plan and provide comments to him by June 15. Dr. Dean added that a special meeting may be needed to discuss the strategic plan in detail.

Finally, Dr. Dean stated that geologic sites of interest have not been a part of the Heritage Trust Program. He said information has been received on a specific site on the Pee Dee. The committee had a preliminary discussion and asked Steve to do some background work and present his findings at the next meeting.

Budget Committee

HTAB entered Executive Session and Stuart Greeter presented the budget. The HTAB returned to regular session and voted to approve the HLTF budget as presented. Concerning Victoria Bluff, Dr. Dean moved that we adopt the Victoria Bluff recommendation to trade highway frontage for other property based on the following reasons:

1. This is a public safety issue and the land trade would result in a public benefit.
2. The newly constructed road would serve as a firebreak and be beneficial for preserve management.
3. The Preserve would gain more land (beneficial wildlife habitat) than is lost.
4. The Wildlife Department would have access to the new road, which would be beneficial for management of the Preserve.
5. Property away from Highway 278 is probably more beneficial for wildlife than property adjacent to Highway 278.
6. The proposed land trade is not in conflict with the management plan for the property.

A motion was made and passed by the HTAB to adopt the Victoria Bluff recommendation.

Other Announcements

Tom reported that Wendy Parks will soon be an employee of DHEC and will probably not be representing that agency on the HTAB. Therefore, Tom said this may be her last meeting and he thanked her for her service to the HTAB.

Next, Tom stated that Dr. Gibbons had a new book out and to see him if anyone wanted to order a copy.

Finally, Tom reported the new endangered species tag is now available. He said if Board members would like a low tag number, some are reserved in the Columbia office. Tom noted the cost was \$78 for two years with \$24 going to Heritage Trust.

Adjourn.