

MINUTES
HERITAGE TRUST ADVISORY BOARD
NOVEMBER 8, 2007
PIEDMONT FORESTRY CENTER
TAMMASSEE, SC

MEMBERS PRESENT

Julia Krebs (Chair)
Campbell Coxe (Vice-Chair)
Henry Fair
Rodger Stroup
Joel Felder (for Bob Schowalter)
States Clawson (for Joe Taylor)
Elizabeth Grace
Irvin Pitts (for Chad Prosser)

MEMBERS ABSENT

John Frampton
Mike McShane
Sonny King
Steve de Kozlowski (Interim)
Fritz Hamer (for William Calloway)
Jake Razor
Jon Leader

OTHERS PRESENT

Barry Beasley
Ken Prosser
Kay Daniels
Julie Holling
Sean Taylor
Kathy Boyle
Bert Pittman
Elizabeth Johnson
Val Nash
Tim Ivey
Marvin Davant
Brett Moule
Tom Swaynham
Mary Bunch
Mark Holbrooks
Dick Mangrum
Mark Hall
Frank Holleman

Call to Order

Julia Krebs called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, and requested they introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Krebs asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the August 2, 2007, meeting or the September 10, 2007 special meeting of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board (HTAB). There were none and a motion was made to approve the minutes from both meetings. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Comments from the Director

Barry Beasley thanked those involved for arranging the meeting and also thanked Joel Felder for allowing HTAB to use the Forestry Commission's facilities. At the February meeting, Dr. Beasley said he would have a draft of the updated by-laws. He stated he would like to put together a comprehensive survey program and involve the Natural Areas Committee in this effort, which will be discussed further at the next meeting. Dr. Beasley explained an issue regarding a conservation easement held by Heritage Trust at Hitchcock Woods concerning storm water discharge and stated he would keep the board apprised of the situation.

Regarding I-73, he stated that John Frampton received a letter in October from Buck Limehouse, Director of the State Department of Transportation (DOT), initiating the process for the acquisition of right-of-ways for the southern portion of the highway, which includes 30 acres of preserve property owned by DNR. Dr. Beasley stated that after the process is completed, DOT would transfer \$750,000 to Heritage Trust for the property. He added the process would likely take 18-24 months to complete.

Dr. Beasley informed the board of an issue at Palmetto Fort, a property between Mount Pleasant and the Isle of Palms, in which the department holds a conservation easement. He explained that the property contains a number of archaeological sites and the developer that owns the area would like to extinguish a portion of the easement protecting three sites. In exchange, the developer would protect the earthworks and other archaeological sites, but reduce the wetlands buffer. Dr. Beasley stated that a final archaeological report on the property was never completed and did not feel it would be appropriate to ask HTAB to take action until the report is completed. He alerted the board that the item may be on the agenda in February.

Finally, Dr. Beasley stated he had enjoyed working with Dr. Krebs during her tenure as HTAB Chair and thanked her for her time and hard work in the position.

Nominating Committee Report and Election

Rodger Stroup stated the committee, as a motion, nominated Campbell Coxe for the position of HTAB Chair. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Dr. Krebs asked the committee to bring forth a nominee for HTAB Vice-Chair at the February meeting.

Conservation Bank Board Update

Marvin Davant, Executive Director of the State Conservation Bank, reported that his board met two weeks ago and approved 105 grants totaling \$70 million that will protect 104,000 acres. He noted the average cost per acre was \$530. Mr. Davant stated the bank partnered with DNR in the protection of 12,000 acres during the last three years for grants totaling \$17 million. He stated that Tommy Wyche is working on a book about the bank and that staff are updating the agency's website.

An Overview of the Blue Ridge Partnership

Tom Swaynham stated this partnership began in 2004 to protect properties in the mountains and includes the US Forest Service, SCDNR, SCPRT, the State Forestry Commission, Upstate Forever, Naturaland Trust, the Chattooga Conservancy, and The Nature Conservancy. He explained how they are successfully collaborating on land protection and land management initiatives in the area.

Overview of the Stumphouse Mountain Project

Frank Holleman thanked HTAB for their service. He reviewed the history of Stumphouse Mountain and discussed how many partners worked together to protect this important site.

An Update on Jocassee Gorges Management

Mark Hall reported that the roads in Jocassee were in terrible shape when first acquired by SCDNR, but said staff has made significant progress in improving the road system. He stated that some timber has been harvested and said work is being done on several trails within Jocassee. Mr. Hall noted that prescribed burning had been carried out and staff battled several wild fires that occurred on the property. He updated the board on stream rehabilitation work on Reedy Cove Creek and Laurel Fork Creek, and noted that the department is still fighting the woolly adelgid, which is destroying hemlock trees.

Presentation on Mafic Formation Survey Work

Bert Pittman reported that dominant underlying rocks in the deep gorges and ravines penetrating the Southeastern Blue Ridge Escarpment and Inner Piedmont are composed of granite and gneiss, which have eroded to form acidic soils with low cation exchange capacity and low alkalinity. He stated that because most botanical surveys have focused on deeper ravines and gorges, the drier and more exposed barren communities have received a minimal survey effort. Dr. Pittman said these communities include very localized and isolated outcrops, coves, and ridges derived from mafic (minerals high in iron and magnesium) geologic substrates. He stated a number of very rare vascular and non-vascular plants have been documented in these areas, including Smooth coneflower, White irisette, and Rock gnome lichen. Dr. Pittman stated growing interest in recreational activities would put increased pressure on these habitats, but added that recent acquisitions such as Stumphouse Mountain will protect these unique natural communities and noteworthy species.

Peachtree Rock Management Plan

Brett Moule presented the plan for this 460-acre property in Lexington County, which harbors the largest sandstone outcrop in the state, the only waterfall in the Coastal Plain, two rare plant species, a longleaf pine ecosystem, and several archaeological sites. A

motion was made to approve the plan. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Chestnut Ridge Management Plan

Mary Bunch presented the plan for this 1,886-acre property in Greenville County, which harbors the federally endangered plant species white irisette, southern thimbleweed, single-haired mountain mint and the woodrat. Ms. Bunch stated the white irisette only occurs in three counties in the world, including Chestnut Ridge and in two counties in North Carolina. A motion was made to approve the management plan as presented. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Overview of Heritage Preserve Management Activities in Region 1

Mary Bunch reported that new hiking trails had been constructed at two preserves and exotic plant control and hog control were underway at several preserves. She noted other management activities included removal of understory and woody growth, bog restoration, timber marking, seed collecting, tree planting, prescribed burning, road improvement work, seeking bids for footbridges, and conducting public workdays on preserves.

Overview of Active Projects/Budget Overview

Ken Prosser reported that the current cash balance in the Heritage Land Trust Fund was \$15.5 million. He stated that approved operational expenditures for the year were \$2.3 million and approved project commitments were \$7.1 million. Mr. Prosser reported that pending project commitments totaled \$919,000 and the remaining funds after deducting all expenditures and commitments was \$5.1 million.

Regarding revenues, Mr. Prosser reported that the last quarter produced revenue of \$2.1 million, compared with \$2.4 million for the same period last year.

Executive Session

HTAB entered Executive Session to discuss contractual issues.

Return to Regular Session

HTAB returned from Executive Session and a motion was made to approve the budget. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Meeting Dates for 2008/Other Business

Dr. Beasley stated that HTAB meetings would be held in the same manner in 2008 as in previous year, with two meetings in Columbia and two meetings at other locations in the state. He suggested the February 7, 2008 meeting be held in Great Falls and the

November meeting be held along the coast. The 2008 meeting dates are: February 7, May 1, August 7, and November 6.

Adjournment

No further business was brought before HTAB and the meeting was adjourned.

/k