

NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

December 6, 2011
Environmental Laboratory
Richards & Robbins Building
Dover, DE 19901
9:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Council Members:

John Williams, Chair
Jennifer Adkins
David Athey, P.E.
Debbie Heaton
Peter Martin

Guests:

Ginger North, DNS
Jim White, DNS

Staff:

Eileen Butler, Parks & Recreation, DNREC
Ron Vickers, Parks & Recreation, DNREC

I. Call to Order/Announcements

Mr. Williams, Chairperson, called the Natural Areas Advisory Council meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. He welcomed Council members, and staff and asked for announcements.

II. Approval of Minutes of Meeting

Mr. Williams asked for a motion to approve the September 20, 2011 meeting minutes. Council approved minutes as read.

III. Old Business

No old business.

IV. Natural Areas Registry

- *Frenchtown Woods Natural Area – Cell Tower:*

A cell tower application has been approved within the boundaries of the Natural Area. The total area if impact is approximately 5,000 square feet. Once the development has occurred, Ms. Butler will inform the Council on the change to the map.

V. Nature Preserve Dedications

- *Milford Millponds Nature Preserve – Isaacs/Green Tract*

A draft Articles of Dedication document was emailed to all Council members. After some discussion it was suggested that more consideration be given to the proposed restrictions identified in the document.

Ms. Ginger North indicated that The Delaware Nature Society is continuing to determine how the organization will ultimately use the property, which includes access and parking as well as programing, trails development, and camping.

VI. Nature Preserve Management Issues

- *Angola Neck Nature Preserve Encroachment Issue* – Prior to 2007, Mr. Robert Tunnell built a fence beyond his property line and included a portion of the Nature Preserve land. Staff

contacted Mr. Tunnell about the boundary dispute. He has since removed fence. Parks will continue to monitor the area to ensure no further encroachments occur.

- *Monitoring Schedule* – Ms. Butler will establish a Nature Preserve monitoring schedule for 2012. Council members are welcome to attend monitoring visits.

VII. New Business

- *Voting of Officers*

Chairman Williams asked for a motion to approve nominations for the 2012 Council Members. It was seconded and agreed, to approve the nomination: Mr. John Williams as Chairperson; Mr. David Athey as Vice Chairperson; Ms. Debbie Heaton as Secretary. Motion Carried.

- *Division of Fish & Wildlife*

Mr. John Williams wished to recognize the Division of Fish & Wildlife in celebrating 100 Years of Fish & Wildlife Conservation – beginning 1911 with the State of Delaware’s first Board of Game and Fish Commissioners. Accomplishments include:

- Restoration of many species of fish and wildlife including deer, turkey, bald eagle, striped bass and summer flounder populations.
- Acquisition of thousands of acres of land and waterways for habitat conservation, management, restoration and public use.
- Habitat management and restoration on thousands of acres of private lands and waterways.

- *Natural Area Program Goals*

Ms. Debbie Heaton said at the June meeting Council discussed developing a strategy to be more proactive in protecting natural areas. In the past, land was protected through gifts or donations. Ms. Heaton suggested the Council develop criteria for accepting lands and that this subject be discussed at the March meeting.

Ms. Butler reminded the Council that Guidelines for Criteria and Standards in identifying Natural Areas was recently adopted by Council. However, if Council would like to discuss landowner outreach opportunities, staff would include it on the next Council agenda. Mr. Vickers explained that a new ranking system has been developed, primarily for acquisition purposes.

VIII. Public Comment and Synopsis Reports From Other Councils, Stakeholders, and Partners

Mr. Williams said the State Parks Council held their meeting on September 4, 2011. The main discussion was the continued trail plans for Gordons Pond; how it would impact the environment in that area of Sussex County, and resident curatorship. Mr. Williams invited Council to attend future State Parks Council meetings.

IX. Next Meeting and Adjournment

The 2012 Natural Areas Advisory Council meetings will be held on March 6, June 5, September 18, and December 4 at DNREC’s Environmental Laboratory, Richards & Robbins Building, 89 Kings Highway, Dover, DE, starting 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Williams asked for a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.