

Wildlife Habitat Zones Advisory Team (WHZAT) Meeting 1 Notes
January 29, 2009 at Anderson Point Park, City of Raleigh 10am-12pm

WHZAT members and support:

John Connors, Wake Audubon Society – present
Harry LeGrand, NC Natural Heritage Program – present
Jacquelyn Wallace, NC Wildlife Resources Commission – present
Chris Moorman, NCSU Cooperative Extension Wildlife Biologist – absent
Dowd Bruton, Wild Turkey Federation – absent
Dr. James Gregory, NCSU Professor of Forest Hydrology and Soils – absent
Dr. Jon Stucky, NCSU Professor of Wetland Plant Biology - present
David Shouse, City of Raleigh Parks Senior Planner – present
Wayne Schindler, City of Raleigh Parks Maintenance Superintendent – absent
Tiffany Frost, City of Raleigh Nature Program Director – present
Melissa Salter, City of Raleigh Land Stewardship Coordinator – present
Jamie Loyack, Hager Smith Design – present (support)
Jill Braly, City of Raleigh Parks Planner – present (support)

Ivan Dickey, City of Raleigh Assistant Superintendent was present in place of Wayne Schindler.

Stephen Bentley, City of Raleigh Parks Senior Planner, facilitated.

Stephen Bentley opened the meeting with an introduction and thanks to the team members. Team and support members introduced themselves. The WHZAT group agreed that preferred method of communication is email. Bentley briefly outlined the agenda:

1. Introductions
2. Horseshoe Farm history and current status
3. Horseshoe Farm inventories and maps
4. Discussion of WHZAT goals and outcomes
5. open comment/wrap up
6. next meeting confirmation

David Shouse provided background information about Horseshoe Farm (HSF) – acquisition, previous park planning, City Council action, current management (mowing regime and bird houses), expected development of the road providing park access. He explained the purpose of WHZAT: to meet the fifth stewardship goal mandated by City Council in the document, *Environmental Stewardship Recommendations from the Horseshoe Farm Master Plan Committee*. Shouse noted the WHZAT plan will be part of a larger natural resources management plan for HSF.

Harry LeGrand discussed his document, *An Inventory of Significant Natural Areas in Wake County, North Carolina*, as it relates to the HSF property. HSF is part of a regionally significant area listed as site 23 of the Inventory, the “Upper Neuse River Floodplain” on pages 138-142. He said the most significant portion of the “Upper Neuse River Floodplain” is the Horseshoe Farm area. HSF supports a well developed natural levee forest and floodplain pools. Harry LeGrand said they have not identified any rare native species but Connors mentioned the Eastern Spadefoot Toad which was recorded calling at HSF in 2006. (This was the first record of Eastern Spadefoot in Wake County since 1985.) Harry LeGrand mentioned the strong presence of native river oaks and Giant Cane, which is a host plant to several HSF butterflies. LeGrand also noted the abundance of exotic invasive Japanese stilt grass at HSF.

Stephen Bentley handed out a copy of the HSF Interim Environmental Assessment Report completed by Environmental Services, Inc. (ESI) in 2005, and a HSF Comprehensive Inventory compiled in April 2008, and briefly explained the documents. Harry LeGrand noted the HSF Comprehensive Inventory is taken from about five different sources and that the document has a lot of repetition, a few mistakes, and needs to be cleaned up/re-organized. Both LeGrand and Jon Stucky concurred that some species listed in the inventory may have

been misidentified. LeGrand offered to work on the HSF Comprehensive Inventory, and will add notes as he revises the document.

Stephen Bentley charged the WHZAT group to develop goals for the next several meetings. He began with the goal to ensure information is shared and posted to the web in a timely manner. Jon Stucky wants clarification on what he is expected to contribute to WHZAT. Ivan Dickey wants guidance and direction for City of Raleigh maintenance efforts at HSF. Harry LeGrand would like to be clear on infrastructure at the park – interior site/meadow, external levees/pools, master plan layout/use (trails). Melissa Salter wants to utilize the WHZAT group for guidance in developing management plans and stewardship opportunities. Jacquelyn Wallace wants to know how the end products and recommendations of WHZAT will be used at HSF and expressed concern over financial limitations associated with implementation. David Shouse would like ideas for development opportunities and how to avoid negative impacts of development on HSF. Shouse would like to convey significance of the HSF area to the public through experience and interpretation. Tiffany Frost is concerned with defining the line between public access to the site and preservation of the site. John Connors wants to utilize HSF inventory to identify areas for limits and improvements, and to make this park a showcase for natural resources. The group discussed the pros and cons of posting sensitive areas at HSF with signs to deter public access. Jamie Loyack highlighted making this group's recommendations concordant with the master plan. These goals were summarized by Stephen Bentley as follows:

1. Make sure info gets to participants in timely useable format and put WHZAT info on web
2. Definition of each others role in process
3. Clear direction on maintenance both routine and annual/seasonal
4. Clear Definition: interior sites/meadows; external levees/pools; masterplan layout/use
5. How can we get the best information from participants and apply knowledge from past experiences
6. Outcomes – how will they be implemented? What is the financial impact? What are realistic goals? Phasing?
7. Development Implications (based on Council adopted Master Plan) – access, impact, layout, education/experience (Make sure that what we do in the short term does not influence the long term negatively)
8. Define the “line” – How do we protect vs. Providing safe access vs. Providing great educational opportunities
9. Use data to enhance resources based on sound stewardship practices and the improved resources will help define better experience. Improvements, long term management.
10. Look at what is working in other areas.

John Connors noted a need to study detailed drainage patterns at HSF. If the wetlands receive water primarily from interior field runoff, as opposed to from Neuse river overflow, that knowledge needs to be incorporated into site development and site management plans. David mentioned storing and treating field run-off if necessary.

Calendar and proposed group process were reviewed.

Stephen Bentley discussed the proposed WHZAT outcomes: 1. Visual Aid with Narrative. David Shouse noted that this outcome will fit into a long range management plan for HSF and the document may be support for grant requests. 2. WHZAT will identify and define the wildlife zones called for in the HSF Master Plan. The City of Raleigh is also looking for specific recommendations on management of the zones. The group discussed the desire to be able to tell people what criteria were used to define the wildlife zones.

David Shouse noted the City of Raleigh is looking to develop an invasive species control program. Connors noted the large HSF deer population and the need to address management of the deer.

LeGrand mentioned fragmentation of the field due to planned facilities. Connors highlighted the uniqueness of the wild turkeys on site, descended from an old stock of wild birds, and questioned the possibility of creating a management plan for them.

Stephen Bentley discussed the need to consider public involvement.

David Shouse stated the WHZAT meeting schedule needs to be flexible, and if inventory by WHZAT members is needed at HSF during a particular time of year, the WHZAT meeting schedule may be modified. More meetings may be added in the late spring. Goals for each WHZAT meeting may shift.

Jon Stucky noted that evaluating the successes and failures of other sites with similarity to HSF could be valuable to the group, such as the City of Raleigh's Anderson Point Park, and the NC Museum of Sciences *Prairie Ridge*. A sharing of this information can be scheduled into future meetings.

Jon Stucky spoke of the potential opportunity to work with graduate students at HSF. He noted that May is an ideal time to do field identification of plants. Graduate student research at HSF would ensure repeated visits and proper documentation of plant species.

The HSF archaeological survey, completed by ESI in 2006, was referred to as having master planning and site management implications in order to protect cultural resources.

Connors expressed concern over potential site impacts from a possible canoe launch, greenway trail connections and potential sewer line. LeGrand says WHZAT needs to look at the areas affected by the proposed bridges.

Proposed Goals for WHZAT Meeting #2, on site at Horseshoe Farm

David Shouse will lead a site visit at the next meeting, scheduled for Thursday February 12th at HSF from 9 am – 12 pm.

During meeting #2, the group suggested they use a GPS to mark the locations of notable site features, and to delineate proposed boundaries of wildlife habitat areas.

Connors would like to be shown proposed locations of bridges and canoe launch. David Shouse will bring that information.

A detailed topo map with drainage patterns will be provided if available.

WHZAT Meeting #1 concluded at 12:03 pm.

Supporting documents and handouts include:

-City of Raleigh Horseshoe Farm Park Wildlife Habitat Zone Advisory Team (WHZAT) Outline and Facilitation Plan 2009

-Horseshoe Farm Park Comprehensive Inventory April, 2008

-Interim Environmental Assessment Report March, 2005

-An Inventory of Significant Natural Areas in Wake County, North Carolina June, 2003 p.139-142 and Upper Neuse River Floodplain map

-Environmental Stewardship Recommendations from the Horseshoe Farm Master Plan Committee

-Horseshoe Farm aerial photo