

# COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<p><b><u>AGENDA TITLE:</u></b> Biodiversity Work Group Report Presentation</p> <p><b><u>SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST:</u></b> The Biodiversity Work Group is presenting its report in response to the tasks assigned to the group by the Board in November, 2001.</p> <p><b><u>STAFF CONTACT(S):</u></b> Scott Clark, Senior Planner</p> <p><b><u>LEGAL REVIEW:</u></b> No</p>	<p><b><u>AGENDA DATE:</u></b> December 1, 2004</p> <p><b><u>ACTION:</u></b>                      <b><u>INFORMATION:</u></b> X</p> <p><b><u>CONSENT AGENDA:</u></b> <b><u>ACTION:</u></b>                      <b><u>INFORMATION:</u></b></p> <p><b><u>ATTACHMENTS:</u></b> YES</p> <p><b><u>REVIEWED BY:</u></b></p>
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### **BACKGROUND:**

In November 2001, the Board of Supervisors authorized the creation of a Biodiversity Work Group (BWG), whose charge was to begin the Biodiversity Assessment of the County called for in the Natural Resource and Cultural Assets chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, and to advise the Board on the composition of the permanent Biodiversity Committee. The group was made up of citizen volunteers including local naturalists, professionals in biological and environmental sciences, and experts in environmental education. The BWG has completed its work and is presenting its reports to the Board.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Goal 2.2: Protect and/or preserve the County's natural resources.

Goal 3.3: Development and implement policies that address the County's growth and urbanization while continuing to enhance the factors that contribute to quality of life in the County.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The list of the BWG's tasks appears below. This list was modified slightly to clarify the original set of tasks recommended by staff.

- Inventory and collect currently-available biodiversity data;
- Identify biodiversity data gaps, prioritize data needs, and develop a general strategy for addressing data gaps and achieving an assessment of the state of biodiversity in the County. Identify a structure for an ongoing, constantly-updated assessment of biodiversity resources to be adopted into the Comprehensive Plan, with an estimate of costs;
- Assess prospects for donations to the assessment of time, expertise, or other resources from the community, including the University of Virginia;
- Provide time, data, and other support to assist with establishment of the foundation of a County-wide biodiversity assessment;
- Assist in development of preliminary materials for public education on biodiversity and
- Make recommendations regarding the size, composition, and necessary expertise for the permanent Biodiversity Committee.

After its establishment, the BWG met monthly to coordinate work on these tasks, and the members spent considerable time outside of meetings compiling information and drafting sections of the reports. The result of this work is a set of three documents—the full report (Attachment B); a summary report (Attachment A); and the Appendices (Attachment C), which include lists of important sites and species known to occur in the County.

The report makes three types of recommendations: a Biodiversity Planning Goal, which is recommended for adoption into the Natural Resources and Cultural Assets chapter of the Comprehensive Plan; recommendations to the Board of Supervisors; and recommendations to the permanent Biodiversity Committee. In the short term, it is the recommendations to the Board that will require the most attention. They include (1) a list of recommended tasks for the Biodiversity Committee; (2) recommendations for the makeup of the committee; and (3) guidelines for immediate measures needed to protect biodiversity while policy development continues. These recommendations can be found in the Summary Report and the full Report.

In summary, the first step of the recommendations is on establishing the Committee (as a first step toward building the County's biodiversity-planning infrastructure) and on guidelines for immediate protection measures.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Staff recommends that the Board accept this report from the Biodiversity Work Group and direct staff to prepare a report evaluating the next steps for reviewing and implementing the BWG's recommendations. This review should include an assessment of implementing these recommendations, including implications for current County policies and procedures, and impacts to staff and fiscal resources. Staff would schedule a presentation on this report for February.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Albemarle County Biodiversity: Summary Report
- B. Albemarle County Biodiversity: A Report on its History, Current Conditions, and Threats, with Strategies for Future Protection
- C. Albemarle County Biodiversity: Appendices