

Minutes of the Rare Plant Forum 8 April 2000

Attending: Tim Block, Mark Bowers, Erin Copeland, Robert Coxe, Janet Ebert, Steve Grund, Jack Holt, Bonnie Isaac, Joe Isaac, Larry Klotz, John Kunsman, Stacy Lash, Susan Munch, Barry Poglein, Loree Speedy, Paul Teese and Sue Thompson.

Meeting was called to order at 9:10 AM

Announcements

Steve Grund asked for up to date email addresses for all those attending and to please note if you can open attachments in Word. Sue Thompson questioned why not just paste text into a message? Steve Grund explained that it comes out messy and he ends up having to do it three different ways.

Steve Grund announced that the BOF has a new coloring book out that is oriented to 3rd through 5th graders. Early reviews claim that it is too nice to give to kids to color. Grund commented that it sounds like it is a nice way to introduce kids to botany. The BOF is giving them away and they will probably go really fast. Contact Chris Firestone at 717 783 3227 for copies.

No POSCIP lists were printed up for this meeting but it is posted on the Internet and will hopefully be updated quickly following this meeting. The list is posted at: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/pndi

Wild Plant Permit applications are available, permits cost five dollars. Chris has been issuing general permits lately.

Grund announced that he had received a note from Maggie Harlan of the Pennsylvania Native Plant Society who sent a copy of a letter from Ralph Kinter regarding the effect of acid mine drainage on acidophiles at Stony Valley. Trout unlimited wants to continue to raise the pH in the stream so that rainbow trout can survive. The Native Plant Society is concerned for the acid loving plants that grow there (e.g. *Juncus gymnocarpus*).

Grund also received a letter from Bob Ryba who sends his heartfelt thanks to the Rare Plant Forum people and is now a pre-novice at the Mt. Carmel Hermitage. Ryba is working to become a brother in the order of Carmelites.

Tim Block announced that the new book by Rhoads and Block, *Plants of Pennsylvania and Illustrated Manual*, would be out on 5 May. When books will be delivered from the Press is unknown. You can order copies by calling the University of Pennsylvania Press or the Morris Arboretum, someone will send you a copy when they are available. Grund pointed out that this is the first manual on the flora of Pennsylvania since Porters 1903 flora. Grund also commented that this has been a long time in coming and will be nice to have.

Bonnie Isaac noticed in *Ann. Bot. Fennici* 36:291-292 that a new *Taraxacum* has been published from Pennsylvania. *Taraxacum carbocapillum* was described by Sonck. The original collection was from Philadelphia, collected in 1950. Isaac was not suggesting this for listing, but instead just wanted the RPF to be aware of the publication. Sue Thompson noted that the Europeans are really known for splitting *Taraxacum*, especially the northern Europeans. Steve Grund found this an interesting development. Larry Klotz questioned what if a European species gave rise to a new species due to allopolyploidy? It would essentially be native and endemic. This remark evoked light laughter.

Sue Thompson reported that not a whole lot has been happening at PBS. She noted the new otter plate is out, and that it is gorgeous. Brochures are available. Steve Grund asked if there are any plants on the plate. Sue Thompson answered yes, *Typha*. Thompson continued that the PBS is having a meeting in August in conjunction with the ecosystem management advisory committee. Tim Block confirmed that this meeting would be on 9 August. Sue Thompson stated that information would be sent to all VPTC members. The meeting will be held in State College. Thompson continued that the PBS did have a web site at DCNR that

had to be taken off because it did not meet ADA compliance guidelines for web sites. It may be back up now. Other activities, WRCF has growing greener moneys. There was a meeting in January for proposals that had been held for a while due to lack of money. Growing greener allocated \$200,000 dollars and some WRCF money was used to fund these proposals. The June deadline will have \$300,000 dollars. This is still subject to approval by John Oliver. WRCF was supposed to have up to \$500,000 each year. People were perturbed that it was cut back to 2 or 3 hundred thousand dollars. They are lobbying John Oliver at DCNR for full funding. DCNR got some growing greener funding, although they only got \$200,000 out of \$24 million. The other thing that has been happening in terms of natural diversity at the state level involves recommendations for public-private partnerships. There will be a separate nonprofit PA natural diversity partnership coordinating body for diversity issues involving industry, state, and individuals. This will involve an executive committee of about 20 people. Sue Thompson is serving as the interim director. They will be submitting a grant to Heinz endowments and operating along the lines of the PABS with task forces giving advice to an executive committee. The task forces will include science, policy, education, funding, public relations and stewardship.

Steve Grund asked if any bioblitzes were happening this year? Sue Thompson replied that Jerry Hassinger was talking about doing another one but not this year.

John Kunsman's winter project this year was to go back to the earliest rare plant meeting notes he could find (went back to 1984) and note any changes or additions to the list by the RPF and VPTC, he came up with 184 page document. It is not quite ready yet for distribution. He noted he found some interesting things; some species have been on and off the list several times. He also noted that some species added to the list as TU in 1984 are still TU 16 years later. He hopes to pass copies out to all in the future.

Proposed Deletions:

Aster praealtus: Proposed by Rhoads and Block. Rhoads and Block found this species, in three locations in different counties, by chance just looking at roadside Asters. (Carbon, Luzerne, & Monroe) It is probably elsewhere. There may be need for fieldwork to see how common it really is. Discussion about how to distinguish it specifically ensued. Jack Holt recalled that it was found in every state surrounding PA, and probably just wasn't being collected. Kunsman inquired if the habitat was a roadside ditch kind of thing. Block confirmed that it was. Grund suggested the habitat indicates it may be kind of ruderal and queried if anyone else was finding it. Block commented that Ann suggested we put it in as an N just to see what people said. Block thought we should give it a little more status. It is already listed as TU. Grund noted that there are 26 records from Carnegie to be processed yet. Teese inquired if any previous records indicated habitat and were they all from roadsides. Grund quoted "rich soil, weedy woods, woods border" from the unprocessed records. Thompson stated "if we follow the guidelines, its present status is adequate URF". There are still fewer than 50 sites. Grund expressed concern about needing environmental review if it is ruderal. Block suggested that if we start looking for it, it would turn up in more places. Sue Thompson interjected that it is not scientific to make a decision on evidence we just don't have. Grund answered "we have evidence that it's weedy, just not that it's common." **Remains TU**

Aster racemosus: Proposed by Rhoads and Block. This species is turning up more and more frequently especially in the SE. There are large populations at French Creek State Park where it occurs in very disturbed old field habitats. It was noted that it is often mixed with *A. pilosus*. Janet Ebert remarked that in Delaware just across the state line it is very common. Grund pointed out that the guidelines state we need 100,000 plants for it to not be rare. Block replied that the estimate of 10,000 plants is probably a vast underestimate. Ebert noted that you have to really go out and look for it or you will miss it. Holt emphasized that he didn't believe it was of conservation concern. **Delist**

Eleocharis olivacea: Proposed by Kunsman who gave a history of the plant's status. It was added in 1989 as TU, in 1990 it went to PR, in 1991 it was changed to PT, then in 1992 it went back to PR. Kunsman suggests that it now go from PR to TU or even to the watch list. Reason given is that it is undercollected. The original atlas had few dots. Because it is so tiny it is just overlooked. The plant is also a classic seed banker, some years you see it, others you don't. Ebert agreed that it's a drawdown plant. Kunsman noted that you often find it in beaver ponds that have lost their water and that it likes peat. Many of the sites are

on public land, so it is well protected. Kunsman expressed that he doesn't think it needs to be subject to environmental review. Tony Davis originally proposed this species for PT. Kunsman talked to Jim Bissel about delisting and said Jim wouldn't be mad. **Watch list**

Eupatorium dubium: Proposed by Rhoads and Block. There are many extant sites in southeastern Pennsylvania. It is locally abundant at French Creek. Block noted that we know of a lot of these, tens of thousands. By the guidelines it is not rare. Holt saw this probably close to 20 times in large populations. Block emphasized that it just doesn't qualify! Kunsman inquired about the Lawrence County dot in the Atlas. Bonnie Isaac responded that the sheet is at Carnegie. It was collected in 1947, E of New Castle. Grund agreed that with the number of plants in the SE it doesn't meet the guidelines. Kunsman has a list of disjunct populations that he keeps notes on and he could add the Lawrence County data to that list. Sue Thompson thought it would be worth checking the identification of the Lawrence County specimen. Ebert wondered if *E. dubium* stops where *E. maculatum* starts? Kunsman stated that *E. maculatum* is more in calcareous places. Teese asked for clarification if this plant should be watched due to particular populations. If there are particular populations being watched is that justification for the species being listed? Grund responded that the problem is at the state level, it is for political not biological reasons. Grund explained that most of the plants listed in Pennsylvania are globally secure but only rare in Pennsylvania due to being at the edge of their range. Globally rare plants are at a completely different level. They are dealt with by US Fish & Wildlife. Teese questioned "where do we come down on this? If we think there is interesting diversity at a lower level have we taken that upon ourselves to list those?" Grund related that there is a category for special populations that we just have not used much. This discussion was tabled for further discussion by the VPTC. Kunsman mentioned that he only started his disjunct population database to keep these species on the radar screen just in case they become significant genetically later on. Grund suggested that it might be helpful to know what species like this are doing in Ohio, and other adjacent states, to know if the Lawrence County population is significant. If it's common in Ohio then the Lawrence County individuals are probably not significant. Poglein questioned if any Pennsylvania plants have been lost due to construction. Grund noted that we have a fairly long list of PX species and we don't always know what caused their demise. Grund suggested that most of these losses are presumably due to general habitat destruction. **Delist**

Huperzia selago: Proposed by Rhoads and Block. Block explained that the previous record for this species was based on a misidentified specimen. Jim Parks made the new determination. Grund queried what he redet the specimen to and whether *Huperzia*'s hybridize? Klotz noted that *H. selago* is usually from more northern states and not on rock cliffs. Kunsman added that the specimen was from the Delaware Water Gap collected by Knipe ca 1870. Klotz suggested that the habitat is more like *H. porophyllum*. Ebert recommended that we believe Jim Parks that it was misidentified. **Delist**

Populus heterophylla: Proposed by Rhoads and Block. Block explained that he and Ann believed that all of the Pennsylvania specimens were from cultivated sources. They could find no naturalized populations. Holt reminded that he was the one who originally suggested this species for listing based on a specimen in the Darlington Herbarium. The specimen is from East Marlborough, in the area of Longwood Gardens from long before Longwood Gardens existed. The specimen is from the early 1830's or 40's. Holt continued that some habitat still remains there and it could reasonably still be there. Block noted that they were not aware of a specimen that old. **Stays PX**

Potamogeton alpinus: Proposed by Rhoads and Block. All Pennsylvania material previously identified as *P. alpinus* is apparently a hybrid of uncertain parentage. This is the result of a study by Elizabeth Zacharias (an intern) at the Morris Arboretum & the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. The specimens are definitely not *P. alpinus*. Bonnie Isaac commented that the two specimens identified as *P. alpinus* at CM are both Kunsman collections. Kunsman replied that he was wrong and that Haynes thought that *P. gramineus* and *P. perfoliatus* might have been the parents. Thompson questioned if *P. alpinus* was in Pennsylvania at all? The answer was No. **Delist**

Saxifraga micranthidifolia: Proposed by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Coxe found about 12 new locations in Fayette County. The historic sites are also quite large and fairly widespread. Many of the sites are on state land. Grund commented that down in that part of the state, its not in every little run but

quite a few of them, especially in the Chestnut Ridge area. Holt noted there are two Chester County populations that Janet found. Ebert added that both Chester County localities are on protected land.

Delist

Recent Discoveries:

Carex foenea: Proposed by Rhoads and Block. This species was found in Potter County by John Thieret & Rob Naczi in 1996 (Bartonia 60:117-120). Block noted that there is at least one population out there. Grund commented that he would trust Naczi's identifications since he studied under Tony Reznicek. Species that are PX legally becomes PE once found. We are just formalizing it at this meeting. Holt queried about synonymy with *C. siccata*? Block noted that *C. siccata* is not treated in the new manual. Grund stated that if *C. siccata* equals *C. foenea* then maybe it should be listed as PT. Block discovered that *C. siccata* is in the new manual. He noted that Rothrock wrote the treatment. Rothrock recognized both species. Klotz stated that *C. foenea* was misapplied for *C. siccata*. It was agreed that there is a nomenclatural mess here and more discussion followed! **Goes to PE**

Spiranthes tuberosa: Proposed by Rhoads and Block. A. Rhoads found this species on the grounds of the Haverford State Hospital. Block noted that the specimen really is *S. tuberosa*. **Goes to PE**

Proposed additions:

Utricularia subulata: Proposed by Rhoads and Block. Block noted that this species is new to the state. A specimen was found at the academy from 1909 collected at Barnesly, Chester County that had been misfiled. Taylor annotated the specimen in 1979. This represents an occurrence of a plant we didn't know about. An intern found it by accident. Grund wondered if this is one of these real tiny ones? Yes. Holt added that he had found it in New Castle County Delaware a few times. **PX**

Proposed status changes:

Muhlenbergia uniflora: John Kunsman suggested dropping this species from PE to PT due to undercollecting. The numbers fit T better than E. There are also large populations on state land. It's common up where Sullivan, Luzerne and Wyoming Counties come together. He also noted that it's an opportunist, almost weedy and invades areas like fisherman paths. Kunsman doesn't think it needs as much protection. **PT**

Diarrhena obovata: Proposed by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Steve Grund mentioned that this species used to be a C2 species and was thought to be a western species. People have been finding it a lot in Maryland and West Virginia. Joe & Bonnie Isaac have found several populations in Huntingdon County. Klotz also found two new locations in Franklin County. Grund suggested that it might be on its way to PR. Joe Isaac suggested that the estimate of 200,000 plants may be conservative, there are lots where you find it. Grund stated that it seems to be getting more common, not just in Pennsylvania but elsewhere also. A question was raised about the Fayette County dot in the atlas. Block said it was a 1991 collection by Ann Rhoads at Ohiopyle. Sue Thompson wondered if it shouldn't go directly to PR based on numbers. Grund noted that the numbers were stems (ramets) not plants. It was agreed that based on number of sites and number of stems it should go directly to PR. **PR**

Oxypolis rigidior: Proposed by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Grund noted that there are a lot of dots in the Atlas. Holt mentioned that there are also a lot of recent collections. This summer they found seven new sites in Chester County with an average of 10 plants per site. Grund noted that the WPC sites tend to be less than that. There seems to be a problem with browsing, they are really under pressure from the deer. Holt suggested that they are also under pressure in Chester County from housing developments. The biggest populations are probably 20-30 plants. There are now 15 populations in Chester County, but not many individual plants at each site. Grund suggested that if the populations are small and deer are eating them, the plant might really be declining. Holt remarked that in his area you would probably track it down in any decent wetland. Holt added that this species had come up for discussion before and he only got blank stares from the people in the west. Is it being looked for now? Grund replied that the WPC has

been doing the Fayette County inventory and they are finding it. Holt commented that if it were up to him, he would go to PR, he knows we have not found all the sites yet. Holt and Ebert were still finding sites in November. Grund remarked that some of the dots are based on single plants. Thompson suggested that we should go with number of plants not numbers of localities. Coxe interjected that three of the populations had only one plant. Holt remarked that there are bigger populations in Delaware. Ebert mentioned that it could be trouble trying to defend to some developer. Munch stated that developers are not supposed to be building in wetlands anyway. **PT**

Potentilla anserina: Proposed by Jim Bissel. Very common at PE bay, inland pond shores and throughout Gull Point. It is very resistant to habitat disturbance and trampling. Sue Thompson pointed out that under the guidelines it is still PT. Steve Grund stated in Michigan it withstands new sand being dumped on the beaches. Grund suggested it would be nice to see dots from NY and OH for great lake species. Sue Thompson proposed that it should be tabled since Jim isn't here to speak and it still falls under guidelines for PT. Steve Grund agreed with Sue. **Stay PT**

Potamogeton richardsonii: Proposed by Jim Bissel. Plant is very secure at Presque Isle and Lake Pleasant. It is frequent on French Creek and Allegheny River from 25 miles south of Franklin to Tionesta. Grund commented that the real issue is on agenda for the afternoon VPTC meeting over whether this is a good species. Sue Thompson again proposed that this species be tabled without Jim here to comment on his reasons for proposing. **Remains PT**

Grund noted that he had neglected to list one other proposal on the mailing.

Hypericum densiflorum: Proposed by Robert Coxe. PT-PR. 20 historic, 10 extant, 35,000 plants. Several populations are quite large (over 10,000 stems) also the species is tolerant of moderate levels of disturbance. Coxe noted that Fayette County has some huge populations. The Deer Lake population is probably the largest. Grund suggested that this species is not as habitat specific as we had thought. We find it in quality wetlands, but also in woods on way back to the car. Should still be listed but populations are just too big to justify it being listed as threatened. Even though the number of localities is low, the number of stems would make it PR. Coxe assured that there are more populations out there we just haven't found them yet. Munch questioned if it is growing in protected habitats? Coxe stated that about a third of the populations are on protected land, but most are on private land. **PR**

Teese commented that the last species brought up exemplifies procedural or ethical issues that need brought up. Would locations need to be broken out in public versus private to help analyze what the status should be? Teese also questioned if we should be actively trying to classify our collections according to Jean Fike's book of plant communities. Grund stated that as far as the regulations go, we are supposed to just look at plants not communities. There is no regulatory protection for communities. PNDI tracks plants, animals, communities and geological features. The theory is that if we do conservation work to protect biodiversity, we must first concentrate on things of global significance. A discussion of rankings followed. Grund noted that the state POSCIP list is just one of the many uses of PNDI data. Kunsman remarked that the DCNR sponsored the community thing to be used on their lands and that it will probably never be used on private lands. Sue Thompson questioned how the ranks are determined. John Kunsman explained that it is being done by ecologists at PNDI and that they decide what makes a good fen etc. Sue Thompson wondered how many ecologists are at PNDI. Kunsman and Grund decided there were about 5 or 6. (Tony Davis, Podneisinski, Jean Fike etc.) Grund then explained how the rank system works. Thomson questioned whether there is any external review. Kunsman noted that the PNDI ecologists are attempting to use national guidelines. Thompson again remarked that there should be a review process. Coxe noted that a type community system like that used in North Carolina was suggested but was rejected by the Pennsylvania people. More discussion followed on the community issue.

Steve Grund asked if there was other business to discuss.

Janet Ebert brought up the subject of *Chionanthes virginiana*, which is now PT and noted that it is not uncommon in the Octoraro drainage. Kunsman asked if there were many plants. Holt noted that there were different numbers at different populations. Munch noted that this plant is at the edge of its range. Grund suggested that more observations should be made and the plant be proposed for discussion at next

years meeting. Kunsman wondered if the plants were reproducing. Holt and Ebert noted they were finding all age groups of the plant at their sites and that it responds well to disturbances. They noted that after logging, lots of little ones appear.

John Kunsman then brought up *Trillium cernuum*. He noted that it was just added to the list a year ago and since that time ca 30 new sites have been reported in the east. He also noted there are about 70 sheets at the academy. He wondered if we could make a decision on this plant already? Holt remarked that it is not common but not uncommon either. Tim Block noted that it was not on the POSCIP list that was posted on the DCNR website. Grund remarked that that was a data management issue. Grund also remarked that he believed *Trillium cernuum* was one of the dirty dozen. [The first 12 plants to have data gathered from the year that too many plants were added to the list to gather all the data] Thompson remarked that this should be tabled since it was not on the list of proposals sent out and that people can't comment on it since they were not expecting to discuss this species. Holt then remarked that he personally thinks that it is rare and that he doesn't find lots. He noted it is similar to *Oxypolis*. Kunsman stated that once it goes on the list it goes under environmental review process. Teese noted that we want to be cautious and that its current URF standing describes what we talked about. Thompson then questioned how far behind the PNDI people were with data entry? Grund noted that the western office got behind while they did not have a data manager but progress was being made in catching up. Kunsman noted that PNDI east did well until 2 years ago when the big list was added. He then questioned if only more recent data should be entered until they get caught up? Grund noted that there was value in having the older records there! How else would we know where to look for PX species. Thompson suggested getting in the basic data until caught up and then go back and add full details such as latitude and longitude. Grund and Kunsman noted that that was more effort than just adding full details on initial entry. Kunsman then remarked they would just add recent data until they were caught up.

Thompson questioned what the status of the published regulations was. Kunsman remarked that it has been 7 years since the last regs were published and some species have had their status changed several times since the last published regs. A discussion of problems the fish commission had with their last regs procedure ensued. It was noted that this might be why it has been so long since we had ours published.

A discussion followed as to the procedure for having the regs published. Teese wondered if we could explore the possibility of having joint meetings with some of these other groups that are involved in the process to expedite the procedure. It was explained that this really was not a feasible possibility. Grund noted that the BOF must justify each species and Kunsman's PNDI history project may help in this process.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 AM.

Bonnie Isaac