

**Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (NRJAG)**  
**Meeting Minutes 4-2-18**

The meeting was called to order at 7:10pm in the auditorium of Long Branch Nature Center.

In attendance were: Caroline Haynes, David Howell (Park & Rec), Evelio Rubiella (UFC), Sarah Meservey, Gabriel Thoumi (E2C2), Alonso Abugattas (DPR), Bill Browning, Mary McLean, Mary Churchman, Kit Britton, Margaret Fisher (Public)

Guest: Ken Rosenthal, Arlington County Park Naturalist, Gulf Branch Nature Center, DPR

Introductions made all around

No Public Comment

March 5, 2018 Minutes accepted with no corrections.

**iNaturalist and the City Nature Challenge 2018**

Ken Rosenthal, Arlington County Park Naturalist at Gulf Branch Nature Center, presented on iNaturalist and the upcoming City Nature Challenge. Mr. Rosenthal explained that citizen scientists, the general public participating in natural history data collection, has been in place for a long time. The oldest such efforts are the Christmas Bird Counts that are decades old. Several such efforts and applications are available including eBird and Bugguide. iNaturalist serves to record observations of any organisms and started in 2008 as a crowd sourcing based identification effort. It now serves as one of the most used apps for data collection in bioblitzes and other citizen science efforts.

The City Nature Challenge began in 2014 as a friendly competition between the California Academy of Sciences and the Natural History Museum in Los Angeles, seeing who could get the most participants, make the most observations, and tally the most species. The following year 20 cities participated and DC came in 7<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Rosenthal then demonstrated how citizen scientists could make observations, including the suggested identification feature and how to record sound recordings as observations. Suggested resources, links to the Arlington based events were also provided.

**Staff Updates:**

Alonso Abugattas provided the following updates:

- The native plant nursery will be expanded an additional 20'.
- Improvements such as irrigation will be added to both the greenhouse and nursery areas.
- The NOVA PRISM cooperative invasive management area continues to be formed, seeking signatories to collaborative agreements, with pilot project sites identified.

- The DC based NVR-PRISM did not get awarded the grant they were seeking. They will continue forming, with a large event July 31.
- As a public engagement exercise the Natural Resources and Forestry Units both worked together in using the template to look at what would be involved in crafting a joint environmental plan.

**Member Reports:**

- Sarah Meservey (E2C2) reported that the AIRE program was facing cuts and that E2C2 was writing a letter to address concerns.
- Sarah Meservey (E2C2) informed NRJAG that a commission representative replacing Claire O’Dea was being sought.
- David Howell (UFC) reported that there were disagreements among some citizens as to what the tree canopy numbers signify and if they make too much of a percentage gain. He suggested they just use raw numbers.