Highlands Biological Station
Botanical Gardens & Grounds Planning and Advisory Committee
Update for HBS Board of Directors
April 3, 2022

Ken Conover, Chair

The Botanical Gardens & Grounds Planning and Advisory Committee (herein referred to as Committee) continues to review progress on priorities established with our Roadmap development process and address any new business. Committee membership continues to include Bryding Adams, Lynda Anderson, Margie Bauer, Ken Conover, Jim Costa, Jason Love, Paul Manos, Rachel Martin, Kathy Mathews, Helen Regnery, Liz Sargent, Dollie Swanson, and Glenda Zahner. In February, the Highlands Biological Foundation (HBF) appointed their Executive Director, Charlotte Muir, to the Committee replacing the chair of the HBF garden committee.

Roadmap Implementation
Subcommittees are assisting the HBS with four priority actions items. Following is the status of each.

1. **Native Plant Symposium (P4).**
   A working group is assisting the HBS staff in developing and hosting a Native Plant Symposium this year, the 60th anniversary of the Botanical Garden. The theme is 60 Years of Conservation Gardening. The mission is to educate the public about native plants and the importance of conserving them while celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Highlands Botanical Garden and those who had the foresight to develop a conservation garden. Plans are to hold a late afternoon celebration at the Botanical Garden on Friday, September 16 including a presentation by Jim Costa in the amphitheater, guided garden tours, and a reception. On Saturday, September 17, the symposium will be held at the Community Building and include four speakers, lunch, silent and live plant auctions, and a reception. Confirmed speakers include Patrick McMillan, Larry Mellichamp, and Doug Tallamy. We invite all HBS Board of Directors to participate in this special event.

2. **Wayfinding and interpretation signage (P2) and HBS South gateway garden (P1).**
   Equinox Environmental will soon begin work on designing a comprehensive wayfinding and interpretation plan for the gardens and grounds. Funding was received from a private donor (50%) and from the HBF (50%). The Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust declined the funding request from the HBS. Funding has not yet been obtained for the future implementation of the wayfinding and interpretation signage plan or for the planning and design of the South gateway garden.

3. **HBS conservation mission statement and conservation program (C2).**
   Rachel Martin completed an almost final draft and is awaiting feedback from colleagues at other botanical gardens with a conservation focus.

4. HBS Bridges and boardwalks (G1).

HBS staff is collaborating with leaders of the Highlands Plateau Greenway who have agreed to work on trail improvements in the garden. The work by the Greenway will be scheduled this summer. This is the first step in this multi-year project which will also include replacing or improving several bridges.

Other garden enhancements that are in progress include the following:

Moss Garden Enhancements

Improvements to the moss garden have begun. Volunteers from the Greenway removed the obsolete stone steps on the south slope and repurposed the stones to create a new entrance from the driveway to the cottages. They also used some of the stones to add an additional step at the bottom of the existing steps entering into the Botanical Garden. Handrails for the new steps will be installed and the existing moss garden sign will be moved to the improved entrance. A restricted donation to the HBF for the moss garden will be used to procure additional complementary plants for the slope surrounding the moss garden and creation of a stumpery on the slope where the obsolete stone steps were removed.

Plants of the Cherokee Garden Enhancements

Rachel Martin is working to enhance the Plants of the Cherokee Garden with new plant labels containing QR codes that will provide visitors with the ethnobotanical significance of highlighted plants. She has consulted with the Education Outreach specialist and Horticulturalist from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and is awaiting feedback. Jim Costa obtained an 1889 Grant from WCU that will be used to purchase the new plant labels.

Foundation Proposal to Add Shade to North Campus Plaza

HBS staff communicated the Committee's recommendations for tree placement and species to the HBF. Charlotte Muir recently communicated to the Committee that the planting of new trees on North Campus is on hold pending receipt of an occupancy permit from the State construction office.