Highlands Biological Station
Botanical Gardens & Grounds Planning and Advisory Committee
Update for HBS Board of Directors
June 10, 2024

Ken Conover, Chair

The Botanical Gardens & Grounds Planning and Advisory Committee continues to meet monthly and assist the HBS with implementing Gardens and Grounds Roadmap priorities.

Current Committee members are Bryding Adams, Lynda Anderson, Ken Conover, Jim Costa, Jamie Creola, Jason Love, Paul Manos, Kathy Mathews, Liz Sargent, Jeremy Schewe, Dollie Swanson, and Glenda Zahner. Jamie Creola and Jeremy Schewe both recently joined the Committee. Jamie is the new Executive Director of the Highlands Biological Foundation. Jeremy previously worked as a botanist and landscape designer at the Highlands Botanical Gardens. He is the owner/senior scientist of Unaka Environmental, LLC, co-founder of Ecobot, and founder of Enchanted Journeys.

Roadmap Implementation
During the past six months, the HBS and Committee continue to work on several key priorities.

1. Public Engagement

Garden Tours:
Bryding Adams spearheaded organizing public Botanical Garden tours again for this summer. They are scheduled every Wednesday at noon from June 5 to August 7. Many of the Committee members are leading tours of different themes or gardens.

2024 Native Plant Symposium:
The 2024 Native Plant Symposium is scheduled for September 13th and 14th. Charlie Williams will be performing his one-person act impersonation of Andre' Michaux on Friday afternoon in the amphitheater. Our main speakers on Saturday are Ms. Barbara Sullivan, author of "Climate Change Gardening for the South", and Dr. Joey Shaw, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and Director of the Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Saturday's event also includes four short talks on research relating to the Botanical Garden, book sales and signing, and silent and live auctions of native plants. Proceeds will be used to support the Highlands Botanical Gardens.

2. Wayfinding and Interpretative Signage

The wayfinding plans and bid package developed by Equinox had to be reviewed by the State Construction Office (SCO). Plans were approved by the SCO this spring with comments. The bid package has been revised by Equinox. The next step is for WCU Facilities Management to solicit bids.

HBS staff completed a new garden brochure that includes an updated map consistent with the on-line interactive map and other information about the Highlands Botanical Gardens and some of the native plants.

3. South Gateway Entrance Garden

Warren Byrd and Sue Nelson, renowned landscape architects and retired professors and business owners from Charlottesville, VA, have been creating a conceptual design for a new South Gateway Entrance Garden next to the Nature Center on a pro-bono basis. They have twice met with the Committee to present ideas and concepts and receive comments and suggestions.

Warren and Sue are now preparing the final conceptual design. Warren will present the design to the Committee on July 11. He will also be giving a Zahner Conservation Lecture on the evening of July 11 describing his design approach and presenting the South Gateway Garden conceptual design.