



Florida Native Plant Society

**Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 05/03/2020**

Online GoTo Meeting

taken by Melanie Simon – CoC Secretary

Kara Driscoll called the meeting to order at **06:31 PM**

**In attendance (21)**

**\* indicates proxy**

Citrus – Gail Taylor  
Coccoloba – Lucy Breitung  
Conradina – Martha Steuart  
Cuplet Fern – Mark Kateli  
Eugenia – David Martin  
Hernando – Janet Grabowski  
Ixia – Jessica Spencer  
Lake Beautyberry – \*John Benton  
Marion Big Scrub – Deborah Curry  
Martin – Dianna Wentink  
Naples – Kara Driscoll **CoC Chair**

Passionflower – \*Melanie Simon **CoC Secretary**  
Pawpaw – Karen Walter (Rep-elect)  
Pawpaw – Sande Habali  
Pinellas – David Perky  
Suncoast – Virginia Overstreet  
Sweetbay – Jody Wood-Putnam  
Tarflower – Julie Becker  
Tarflower – Mandy Morgan (Rep-elect)  
Villages – Gary Babic  
Athena Philips – outgoing CoC Secretary

➤ **Regular Agenda Items**

- **Minutes from previous meeting (March 29<sup>th</sup>)** Martha Stuart motioned to approve, Gail Taylor seconded the motion. No discussion - None opposed/none abstained – Motion carries
- **Proxies:** Kara reminded chapters to please send a proxy if the Chapter Rep can't attend.
- **CoC Chair Email :** Kara has a new email – [CouncilChair@FNPS.org](mailto:CouncilChair@FNPS.org). She would prefer everyone to use that email for Council-related communication, but she can also be reached via her personal email and by phone (listed on her email signature).

➤ **Old Business**

- **Annual Meeting** – Usually takes place at the Conference, but with the Conference cancelled there will be a virtual Annual Meeting. Kara explained everyone will be getting a link to the meeting – Valerie will be sending this out within a week and it should be in the Sabal Minor. The meeting will be on June 6<sup>th</sup> (no time set yet). Kara asked that everyone notify their chapter members so they can join and vote on the slate of officers. The GoTo meeting email will include a link and code to use when they vote.
  - Gary (Villages) asked if there was a minimum quorum. Martha replied that the quorum is not a minimum number, but is usually based on the number of members attending the meeting, so it will be based on how many people call in or join virtual meeting.
  - Karen (Pawpaw) asked about whether slate would be posted in the Sabal Minor.

- Athena said the officers being elected are the Vice President and 2 Directors at large. A brief summary of the Officers for election is at: <https://fnps.org/news/society-news/virtual-annual-members-meeting>
- **Roundtable Discussions** – There was a discussion at last meeting about interest in having roundtable discussions about areas of interest to chapters. Kara is maintaining a list - topics might include speaker lists, improving volunteers, finance, etc. Kara will schedule GoTo meetings for discussions.
- **Council Working Groups** – Working groups will be formed to improve communications and provide chapters with the support they need. Three key areas for working groups – Updating Standard Operating Procedures (guidelines for running the Council), updating the website, and organizing the Google Drive – Kara has list with other ideas. Kara hopes these can be worked on over the summer. Kara will send out a Doodle Poll for Chapter Reps to indicate what they are interested in assisting with. Kara also asked that reps email other ideas for things to work on and roundtable discussion ideas.
  - David (Pinellas) asked whether working groups are restricted to Chapter Reps or whether other members can participate. Doodle Poll would be for Chapter Reps, but Roundtable discussions and working groups would be open to all members.

## ➤ **New Business**

- **New Officers** – We got a quorum for votes. Welcome Wayne Baker (new Vice-Chair) and Melanie Simon (new Secretary).
- **Virtual Meetings**

Kara asked how many chapters had hosted virtual meetings or tuned into FNPS or other chapter meetings. How do you feel about them? have they been successful.

  - Lucy (Coccoloba) – Had virtual board meeting last week. Have not done one with members yet (member meeting won't be until June).
  - David (Pinellas) – Had virtual meeting in April with Jean Murphy from Sensing Nature talking about the Florida Master Naturalist Program. Went well. Had good attendance. A little trouble with bandwidth every now and then, but nothing major. Very positive. Upcoming virtual program on native trees on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Hosted on Zoom.
  - Gary (Villages) – Had one using GoTo Meeting (software borrowed from another Villages club) and a second one using Zoom. Thinks attendance was higher than normal because people didn't have to travel. Feedback extremely positive. Mostly screenshot presentations without a lot of discussion.
  - Virginia (Suncoast) – April meeting was GoTo Meeting. Shirley Denton did a presentation on using plants outside their normal range. Thinks attendance was slightly lower than normal – perhaps because people weren't completely comfortable with the technology. This month on the 20<sup>th</sup> Virginia will be speaking on native plants that support wildlife. Trying to make it work, but it's a learning process for a lot of their members.
  - Melanie (Passionflower) – Have done a couple of chapter board meetings using teleconferencing. First Zoom presentation scheduled for this Wednesday (May 6<sup>th</sup>). UF/IFAS doing the program using their software as they have virtual program experience.
  - Mandy (Tarflower) – from chat – Tarflower is hosting a Facebook livestream May meeting on Tuesday. Chapter has a lot of users through Facebook, so they are trying that platform.

Kara asked whether chapters had encountered any issues or problems running virtual meetings.

  - Sande (Pawpaw) – Ran into the problem that the scheduled speakers were not comfortable doing Zoom or GoTo meetings, so had to substitute speaker who was more comfortable.
  - Kara commented this may be an issue that is more common than we think. She said when she did the FNPS virtual program for Valerie she was nervous.

- Martha (Conradina) – Planning to do a chapter board meeting using Zoom. One board member would not participate because of security concerns. Two others said they had similar issues about using Zoom.
- Lucy (Coccoloba) – Said her understanding is that if you set up the Zoom meeting with a password it is secure. Asked if FNPS has paid for a GoTo Meeting account.
- Kara - FNPS has a GoTo Meeting account. She has talked with Valerie about upgrading the account so more people can attend, specifically for streaming the conference. Not sure, but it may be possible to schedule to use the FNPS account. However, individual chapters are encouraged to get their own accounts – an expense that may be worthwhile if chapter is considering streaming in-person meetings.
- Lucy (Coccoloba) – Facebook another option for streaming.
- Melanie (Passionflower) – Another option – several chapters are discussing going in together on a Zoom account – sharing cost and usage time.
- Kara – Sharing is an excellent idea. Would work well for regional chapters.
- Kara - Encouraged to use a password and access code for security if you are using Zoom.
- Lucy (Coccoloba) – With a password people are in a waiting room and moderator only allows in people with the code. Also advisable to not post virtual meetings on public sites (internet, Facebook) – only post it for members. Why wouldn't FNPS pay for Zoom or GoTo meeting for any chapter to use?
- Athena – Questions about FNPS purchase of accounts for individual chapters to use are best directed to Valerie. If you're only doing public presentations you're probably better off going with a free service like Facebook Live or YouTube Live, which Valerie can help set up. Citrus chapter has been doing private meetings using the FNPS GoTo account. Issue is FNPS account can only do one meeting at a time, so can be a scheduling issue. An idea might be to ask FNPS to upgrade to a higher tier level so there can be multiple meetings – Valerie would handle. Tech Soup offers a Zoom discount for non-profits at <https://www.techsoup.org/zoom>.
- Mark (Cuplet Fern) – Has been able to schedule to use the FNPS GoTo account. There is a difference between GoTo Meeting and GoTo Webinar, so this should be researched before a chapter decides which platform will work for them. Webinar allows sharing of screens. Mark researched and thinks that Zoom offers more, is easier to use, and is cheaper. GoTo not available on TechSoup. Zoom is available for \$65/year for basic level platform. Mark looking into the Zoom business level platform as the basic only allows 100 participants and Cuplet Fern has more than 100 members – needs larger platform so no one is turned away.
- John (Lake Beautyberry) – from chat - Suggested chapters could contribute to allow FNPS to upgrade
- Kara will bring up ideas and suggestions for upgrading FNPS GoTo with Board and Juliet.
- Deborah (Marion Big Scrub) – from chat – Would like help running a GoTo meeting. She cannot run Zoom on her computer.

Kara asked about participation in the FNPS Lunch and Learn meetings – Has anyone or any chapter members tuned in? Opinions about whether they are run well? Notice any issues? Wants to get a sense for whether people like these types of presentations and ways they can be improved.

- Lucy (Coccoloba) - Saw email, but did not participate. Asked who gets emails – only board members, or all members? Should emails be forwarded to membership?
- Kara – Lunch and Learn emails should be going to all members.
- Gail (Citrus) – Tuned into Kara's presentation. Thought it was excellent and looked like there was a tremendous crowd online watching. This is a learning experience for everyone involved.
- Karen (Pawpaw) – Thought both Juliet's Companion Planting and Kara's presentation were a great idea.
- Gail (Citrus) – Mentioned that she couldn't watch live, but likes having them recorded to watch later. Mark's presentations also excellent.
- Melanie (Passionflower) – Tuned into Companion Planting. Some questions were asked with audio and some asked in chat box. Sometimes confusing, so may need clarity on how people ask questions.
- Kara – Agrees that audio questions can be sensory issue and distraction for presenters. In her presentation asked audience to hold questions until the end and use chat box. Will run this by Valerie.
- Sande (Pawpaw) – from chat – Has been enjoying them. Loves the fact they are recorded so they can be watched later.
- Mandy (Tarflower) – from chat – Lunch and Learn was great for the Companion Planting.
- Athena - from chat) – Attended Lunch and Learn, they were good. Her chapter is sending online presentation links out to the members every month, and these are put at the top.

- Julie (Tarflower) - from chat – Watched the Companion Planting online afterwards. It was great.
- Kara – Sounds like everyone is learning and asking the right questions. Reminded everyone if they have any comments or questions or any issues to let her know. If there's a communications issue, let Valerie know (at [communications@fnps.org](mailto:communications@fnps.org)). Want to make sure Council is keeping channels of communication open and doing what we can to continue to improve and make sure the chapters have the tools they need to communicate the mission of the Society. Other thoughts on virtual meetings?
- Sande (Pawpaw) – from chat – Wanted to clarify again whether all FNPS members get Lunch and Learn email as well as Mark's chats.
- Kara – 95% sure all members get Lunch and Learn invites. Asked Mark if public is invited to his Garden Chats.
- Mark (Cuplet Fern) – Confirmed his chats are open to all.
- Mandy (Tarflower) – from chat – Tarflower is trying to have a good balance of talks and also activities to try and get people involved or outside or have an activity to do.
- Gail (Citrus) – Interested in knowing how Mark's chats are going since he's using several different platforms.
- Mark (Cuplet Fern) – They're going really well. There are people who regularly tune in and people who tune in based on availability (during the week, on weekends). Really well received. Not sure of return on investment yet, but social media presence has been bolstered by everyone being isolated at home. Feels that what Society is doing is a good balance with what Cuplet Fern is doing. Society is addressing member retention with "exclusive" member programs while Mark is doing outreach - fielding prospects for people who want to learn and discover the native plant message.
- Kara said she personally feels the more we collectively do to spread our message out the better. This means making our presentations, message and mission accessible to more people and part of that is having great streaming events that anyone can just click on and join. Asked Mark if he uses a particular streaming service different from Zoom or GoTo Meeting to stream on Facebook.
- Mark (Cuplet Fern) – Using Streamyard.com for Garden Chats. Limited to 20 hrs./month for free (purchase is around \$475/year). Only streams into social media. Zoom can stream into Facebook.

### ➤ **Open Floor**

- Kara asked if there were other items for discussion.
  - Gail (Citrus) – Would like us to go back to the Conference scholarship issue at the next CoC meeting and also disaster relief for helping other chapters.
- Kara asked if anyone feels we should have a more detailed discussion on the topic of virtual meetings.
  - Lucy (Coccoloba) – Thinks Valerie should be in on discussion and do more research before we can decide on anything.
- Everyone thanked Athena for the excellent job she has done as Secretary.

Martha made motion to adjourn.  
Lucy seconded motion. Motion carried.

**Meeting Adjourned at 7:33 PM**