



Florida Native Plant Society

Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 06/28/2020 (revised)

Online GoTo Meeting

taken by Melanie Simon – CoC Secretary

Kara Driscoll called the meeting to order at 06:30 PM

In attendance (22)

*** indicates proxy**

Citrus – Gail Taylor	Nature Coast – Diane Caruso
Cuplet Fern – Mark Kateli	Passionflower – Melanie Simon CoC Secretary
Cuplet Fern – Jan Mangos	Pawpaw – Sande Habali
Eugenia – David Martin	Paynes Prarie – Sandi Saurers
Hernando – Janet Grabowski	Pine Lily – Tayler Figueroa
Ixia – Jessica Spencer	Pinellas – David Perky
Lake Beautyberry – Patricia Burgos	Suncoast – Virginia Overstreet
Magnolia – Jan Blue	Sweetbay – Jody Wood-Putnam
Marion Big Scrub – Deborah Curry	Tarflower – Mandy Morgan
Martin – Dianna Wentink	Villages – Gary Babic
Naples – Kara Driscoll CoC Chair	FNPS President – Bonnie Basham

➤ **Regular Agenda Items**

- **Minutes from previous meeting (May 5, 2020)** - Mark Kateli motioned to approve, Sandi Saurers seconded the motion. No discussion - None opposed/none abstained – Motion carried
- **Reminders:** Kara reminded chapter reps to register for forum notices and about Council officer email addresses. Melanie reminded chapters that Florida corporation Annual Reports are due to the state by 6/30.
- **Board News**
 - A bill which will allow FNPS to have a license plate has been approved by the Legislature and is expected to be signed by Governor and effective in October. Plates will generate revenue for FNPS.
 - Current design ideas (legislation specifies “Florida, Native, and leaves and plants camouflage) can be viewed on the Forum at:
<https://www.forum.fnps.org/index.php/topic,1679.msg3357.html#msg3357>
 - Comments can be emailed to Bonnie B. (president@fnps.org). Needs comments within one week to inform design changes.
 - 3000 plates must be pre-ordered in order for Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to begin printing the plate. The cost of the plate is \$25 in addition to the regular plate renewal cost – if number is

not reached money will be refunded.

- Discussion included potential for member voting on design, competition with FWF (whose plate many members have), use of the saw palmetto (too much like palm vs great ecological benefit), and similarity with FWC plate.

➤ Old Business

• Student/Young Professional Scholarships –

- Gail T. asked if any Chapter Reps are interested in receiving the list of potential scholarship awardees she compiled a few months ago. Diane (Nature Coast), Mandy (Tarflower), Mark (Cuplet Fern), and Melanie (Passionflower) indicated they would like the list. Melanie will send out the list in an email.

• Disaster Relief – Nothing to report

• New Council Purpose –

- Kara D. reported the new Council purpose was approved by Council and Board.
- Mark K. suggested developing a Council logo. Could be put into next year's budget (development starts in September) or could be developed using other resources. Council members with ideas or comments should post them on the Forum where these minutes are posted.
- Kara D. mentioned that we should determine Council goals for supporting chapters and facilitating communications. Will discuss at next meeting.

• SOP Revision

- Melanie S. reported that the Council SOP was last updated in 2015. She has incorporated all the comments she's been able to find into one document along with her recommendations that the Council purpose, goals, member responsibilities and orientation/training be incorporated since these are currently scattered and should be in one place.
- Two issues the Council needs to discuss: First is the timeline for elections
- Current timeline has election voting complete before the nominees are announced in the Sabal Minor.
- Not sure why Council elections are tied to the Society Annual meeting. Poll done asking Chapters when they hold their elections. A total of 21 Chapters responded – elections are in February (1), April (3), May (4), June (2), September (2), November (7), and December (2). If Council election process runs from March through April, the Chapters with elections in April/May would not know who their Reps are going to be which could perhaps be an impediment to Reps from those Chapters running for Council seats. Kara noted these Chapter Reps are also just stepping in and trying to get oriented when a lot is going on with elections and the Conference. Melanie noted newly elected officers also may not have time to arrange to attend the Conference.
- Second issue is that current SOP says members and officers are required to be Chapter Reps, which isn't always the case. Kara D. recommends easing restrictions.
- There may also be an issue with term limits. Council officers are elected for 2-year terms. Poll done asking if Chapter Reps have term limits. A total of 19 Chapters responded they have no term limits (13), 1 year limits (2), 2 year limits (2), 3 year limits (1) or 4 year limits (1). One year term limits (and possibly 2 year limits depending on election timing) could make it a problem committing to a 2 year Council officer position. One option might be to have chapters modify bylaws. Mark K. does not think we should dictate how Chapters operate. Melanie agreed, but said we need to figure out how to make this work without restricting who can run for office.

- Diane C., Mark K., Bonnie B., Tayler F., Kara D. said they were interested in participating in a separate work group discussion.
- Melanie S. said she would set up a GoTo for next Sunday evening. Kara D. suggested a Doodle Poll to determine a meeting day/time.
- **Website**
 - Melanie S. said she will send out a Doodle Poll to ask Reps who uses the website and what they use it for.
 - Kara D., Janet G., Diane C., indicated they would be willing to participate and weigh in on website design and content. Anyone else interested can email Melanie at Council.Secretary@fnps.org. Melanie will email this group to start a discussion.
 - Kara D. asked all members to consider how they envision using the website. What should be there – agendas, minutes, calendar, etc.?
 - Melanie commented that website should be a “one-stop shop” for Council information because now you have to work really hard to find information with all the different places (website, forum, Google Drive, etc.).

Meeting attendees were polled to see if everyone could continue the meeting until 8:00.

- **Google Drive**
 - Kara D. suggested we find a way to include information about what chapters are doing to easily share with other chapters and the Council. Included would be descriptions of current chapter projects and activities. In the past we had reports, and formats varied from pages to a couple of bullet points, but no one wants to read 20-30 reports before every meeting.
 - Kara D. talked about a Society Google Drive with Chapter folders for this information or one-by-one round-table reporting by each Chapter.
 - Mark K. said he wanted to understand what the long-term purpose of this information would be. He questioned how often we would look back at long descriptions and questioned whether a more statistical approach with metrics (45% of Chapters doing restoration work, 15% doing plant sales, etc.) would be more useful.
 - Kara D. said the reason she was thinking about folders was so Chapters could share existing documents about specific projects or activities. For example, if a Chapter was thinking about a grant, they could find a description of what another chapter was doing.
 - Mark K. said what he would suggest a form with bullet points because in the long term a synopsis with metrics would be more useful. On the form a Chapter could indicate they were pursuing grants, and then provide a more detailed description in a separate field. In the long term he thinks this would be more useful especially if you think about it from a volunteer reporting standpoint or to apply for funding or get a feel for what FNPS is doing and would better facilitate discussion at meetings.
 - Melanie S. suggested a folder organization by activity would be more useful than by Chapter.
 - Bonnie B. commented that she liked the idea of reporting activities more like a survey and then having a field for more detailed description.
 - Tayler F. commented that she like the idea of folders and having an activity-based organization would be more useful. That way if a Chapter was thinking about a plant rescue, for example, they could go to a folder and see how other Chapters had done rescues – or newsletters or plant sales. Sort of a “how to” resource for chapters.
 - Kara D. said she liked this direction. This gives the Google Drive we already have more of a purpose. It sounds like having topical folders is the best course of action. Could have folders with

“how to” documents on plant rescues, lobbying and legislation (for example, 5 Chapters participated in a “Take your legislator on a field trip” activity), etc.

- Mark K. compared the Drive to a spice rack – you want to be able to easily see everything that’s available. His concern is that with folders, subfolder, and forms you will have to dig for information.
- Kara D. summed up that there are two ideas: a big-picture breakdown of what all chapters are doing and a library of “how to” resources. Kara is also concerned about a way for the Board and committee chairs to get information as well. She suggested more discussion at a later date.
- Sande H. said that she got the idea from previous discussion that the purpose of website was to consolidate all this information and asked if the Google Drive would be on the website.
- Kara D. responded that in her mind since the website is accessible to everyone what it includes should be more polished documents while the Google Drive would be more of an internal system for unfinished documents. Both the website and Google Drive are still up in the air, so she asked all the Reps to think about how we can best utilize the tools we have to our advantage to improve our communication.
- Sande H. reiterated that she likes the idea of being able to find a document on a specific topic like plant rescue or seeing which chapters have seed banks and how that is working for them. Limiting the places you have to look for information would make it easier to use. Patricia B. agreed in chat.
- Tayler F. agreed with Mark’s form idea if we want metrics for the board in chat. Also noted in chat that if we want resources for Chapters to use to implement various activities, drive folders on different topics are a good idea and noted this is similar to the “collaborative ideas” folder set up when the Google Drive was started.
- Kara D. said she wants to be as accommodating as possible to all ideas and make things easier for people to use even if it’s going to take extra time.
- Melanie S. noted that we also have to consider the time and effort to maintain whatever (and how many) tools and databases we create.
- Bonnie B. commented that a form would be a quick way to collect information and get the ball rolling.
- Mark K. said he would be willing to work on a preliminary form we could develop over time and asked if we could discuss that at the SOP meeting next Sunday. Melanie S. agreed.
- Kara D. commented her idea is more detailed reporting of activities than current volunteer tracking reporting. For a plant rescue you might report how many people worked for how long and rescued how many plants in addition to detailing steps – contact property owner, copies of insurance, etc.
- **Virtual Meetings**
 - Kara D. asked if Chapters are doing virtual programs and how they are going.
 - Kara D. said Naples has had pretty good success with online meetings.
 - Virginia O. said Suncoast has had three online meetings so far and the feedback has been incredible. Had 22 participants for a program they were afraid would not be popular. They’ve also done a field trip so they can limit the number of people and make sure there is social distancing. They’ve done joint programs with Audubon and another Tampa Bay organization and Valerie Anderson is going to be a speaker. People really seem to enjoy the programs despite technical difficulties. Encouraged other chapters to try because with online you’re not limited by geography, so a wide slate of potential opportunities are opened up.
 - Sande H. (in chat) said Pawpaw will continue virtual meetings indefinitely and has had lots of participation on Zoom.
 - Janet G. (in chat) said Hernando had an inaugural meeting on Zoom this month and it went pretty well.

- Tayler F. (in chat) said Valerie has been doing Pine Lily meetings – she recently tied in 2 speakers at different locations and then live-streamed it on YouTube – and they’ve been great.
- David P. (in chat) said Pinellas has had success with online meetings and attendance has been better than the in-person meetings.
- Bonnie B. noted that Valerie Anderson, FNPS Communications, is available to help chapters put together meetings. Contact her at communications@fnps.org
- Kara D. mentioned online meetings open up possibilities for people who are disabled, deaf, can’t make it to meetings (physically or because of drive time), etc. This is one way to make chapter activities more accessible and inclusive, which Kara encouraged.
- Melanie S. (in chat) noted virtual meeting do allow chapters to draw on speakers from other geographic areas and to tap into that it would be great to have a list.
- Tayler F. (in chat) said there is a spreadsheet on the FNPS Google Drive with a list of speakers throughout the State and supplied a link to a 2017 spreadsheet at <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13LnfJ8tMjldVYtCFBLHaGRv8a25KqdlS93z-ZsIfSac>
- Kara D. invited anyone who is interested in participating in a Speaker’s Bureau roundtable discussion to email her or Melanie S. All Chapter Reps should be thinking about the speakers they have had who are willing and able to do online programs.
- Kara D. wants to get a sense for how many Chapters are doing virtual meeting and will set up a Doodle Poll.
- Bonnie B. (in chat) reminded Chapters not to forget the Lunch and Learn on Friday at noon – open to all FNPS members.

➤ **New Business**

● **Online Voting**

- Kara D. wondered if there is current drafting of bylaws to permit online voting. Some bylaws may state voting results are based on the members present at the meeting. Question: do we need a provision to allow Council voting online in general?
- Post-meeting clarification from Juliet Rynear: The Council has been voting online since it was created by the Board of Directors in 2014 – it is a committee, not a Chapter. There is no need for the Council to have bylaws or address statutory issues that only pertain to FNPS as a Florida non-profit corporation and the chapters of FNPS.
- Bonnie B. said the Annual Meeting online vote was successful and thinks they used a provision to temporarily suspend bylaws requirements to do online voting. She will investigate.

● **Background Checks for Officers**

Note: not discussed during meeting, but prior to meeting Bonnie B. stated there is no Florida law requiring the Society (Board, Council or Chapters) to conduct background checks.

● **Endowment/Grant**

- Kara D. said there’s a new 4-year grant fund (The Cornelia McNamara Grant) to advance the study of Florida’s native plant species and habitats, promote efforts that yield quantitative data and information about native plant species, and encourage data collection that is typically unsupported and unfunded by traditional academic institutions and funders (post-meeting clarification and detail added) and the grant could be given to a Chapter to study under-studied plants in their chapter area.

- Kara D. said the Council is being tapped for input and assistance on developing criteria for this grant fund. Also possibly putting together a committee to review applications for this grant fund.
 - Anyone interested should email Kara D. and Susan Carr.
 - Mark K. said he was interested.
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- Bonnie B. said the grant is funded at \$6,000 for 4 years. This is a new grant from a new donor and is separate from the endowment.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Training**
 - Tabled due to lack of time

➤ **Open Floor**

No comments or questions were raised about meeting discussions or topics that need to be discussed at a future meeting.

Kara D. asked that any Chapters having issues should email her so the Council can assist.

Kara D. invited anyone who wants to have a more in-depth discussion of any of the topics raised in tonight's meeting or any Chapter issues to let her know and she will set up a separate meeting.

Janet G. made motion to adjourn.
Diane C. seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:05 PM