



Florida Native Plant Society
Council of Chapters Meeting 07/23/17 Minutes
Created on 08/04/17 by Nicole Zampieri
Gotomeeting

Donna Bollenbach called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

In attendance (17)

Donna Bollenbach – Chair (Suncoast)
Juliet Rynear (Heartland)
Dave Feagles (Serenoa)
Richard Brownscombe (Broward)
Al Squires (Mangrove)
Ginny Stibolt (Ixia)
Gail Parsons (Nature Coast)
Miki Renner (Hernando)
Wendy Poag (Lake Beautyberry)
Julie Becker (Tarflower)
Jan Allyn (Pinellas)
Neta Villalobos-Bell (Cuplet Fern)
Sonya Guidry (Pawpaw)
Ina Crawford (Sweetbay)
Greg Ballinger (Marion Big Scrub)
Ben Johnson (Coccoloba)
Dianna Wentink (Cocoplum)

- Introductions and Welcome to New Chapter Reps and roll call
 - Approve Minutes of the previous meeting. (These are on the COC website under the Meetings tab. Please read prior to the meeting.)
- Motion to approve by Al Squires, second by Neta, motion passed unanimously.

OLD Business

1. COC Meeting Schedule is posted in the calendar. The next meeting is August 12, 2017: In person Meeting: Florida Division of Forestry Withlacoochee Training Center, 24059 Childs Road Brooksville, FL 34601 Brooksville. You should have already received an email to reserve accommodations.

- Donna: Everyone whose going have you registered for the meeting yet? If you haven't you really need too.
- Julie: I am going to register tomorrow.
- Donna: I personally may be coming in for the day but my life is crazy right now.
- Miki: I understand an email went on that one? I haven't seen it.
- Donna: When I sent out the agenda... oh you mean the email about the August meeting? Juliet when did you send that out?
- Juliet: Probably a couple of weeks ago. I can send it out again but it would send it out to everybody whether you have registered or not.
- Miki: And you do the BCC right?
- Juliet: IT is done through our member database system and there is a link you click on and then pay online with your credit card. Civi handles all of it.
- Al: That email came out on the 5th of July.
- Juliet: I will send out another.
- Donna: Juliet did let us know that we did get a two hour window. Now Juliet will any part of that be a board meeting? Like the regular board meeting? Will it be where the council starts the meeting and then we just let people continue while the council chairs go to the board meeting?
- Juliet: It is a whole separate two hours. Are you talking about the council?
- Donna: No I am talking about the full board.
- Juliet: No it is just for the council, you can do whatever you want in those two hours.
- Donna: Does anyone have any questions about the logistics of that meeting? As far as the schedule?
- Unknown: It sounds like the council meeting will only be half a day?
- Juliet: Well most of the day is for the treasurer to report on current financial status and strategic planning. Like we did at the February retreats we will go over our accomplishments and look at unfinished business and how we go forward. There are some organizational issues we still need to work out. We never did get a development plan done. So we have an ad-hoc committee working to put together a draft proposal which we will be reviewing at the retreat. If we need to have break out sessions to talk about things we will, we can break into groups and list our priorities and needs.
- Donna: Let me try to summarize this. So this is a strategic planning meeting, which involves anyone who is at the meeting, and
- Juliet: You don't have to sit through the all of the meetings like the treasurers report but I do think everyone likes to be in the process
- Donna: and then there is a two hour council meeting where we can set an agenda and discuss that and then on Sunday there is a board meeting for about two hours. Is that it?
- Juliet: YEs and if you want extra time on Sunday morning you can have extra time, or you can use that time to meet informally or go for a hike
- Donna: Ben Johnson wrote that he registered but he didn't receive a confirmation.

- Juliet: Yeah you should have received a confirmation right away from Civi. But I am pretty sure I saw Ben registered.
- Donna: any other concerns about the meeting or retreat/ strategic planning for august?

2. Verify/clarification of the wording of the motion for the Bronze Palmetto:

Proposed Motion: "The council of chapters moves that they have the option to award an annual "Bronze Palmetto Award." Chapter representatives would be able to nominate recipients and the council officers, Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary, would choose the recipient from the nominations. The award, which would be presented at the annual conference, would recognize an outstanding President or Chapter representative."

- Donna: When reviewing the minutes I got confused over the wording of the motion so I postponed bringing it to the board meeting until we could clarify. For example. Al when you originally said it, you used the word "for the president" and I wasn't sure if you meant it should be for a president or also open to chapter reps. So, I wrote this up and we can discuss it. [Donna read the motion aloud]
- Al: This is Al again. I don't think we ever included the presidents I think it was just for members of the council of chapters.
- Donna: Well when I listened to the minutes the wording was president. So basically you are saying we should recognize... this award would be presented at the annual conference and would recognize an outstanding chapter representative.
- Al: Why don't we just say "An outstanding council of chapters member"? The reason as the green palmetto award usually goes to different members and silver go to board members, and we are neither of those.
- Donna: Okay. Does anyone have any other discussion on this motion? Lets revote on it then as it is worded.
- Proposed motion to the bod: The council of chapters moves that they have the option to award an annual "Bronze Palmetto Award." Chapter representatives would be able to nominate recipients and the council officers, Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary, would choose the recipient from the nominations. The award, which would be presented at the annual conference, would recognize an outstanding member of the council of chapters.
- Al: I will make the motion again as it is now worded. Greg Ballinger seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Powerpoint: Council of Chapters: Responsibilities and Purpose. Simplified version/Separated from the resources section.

- Donna: I tried to really simplify the PowerPoint for the COC responsibilities and purpose, it was attached with your agenda. IT is also on the forum for the last meeting. And I will have Nicole put it on the website. I did have some positive response for it, did everyone see it does anyone have any comments?

It is a lot simpler, I took out a lot of the verbiage that people said was too complicated, and I took out the resources part and made it its own PowerPoint. The responsibilities and purposes hopefully won't scare off future chapter reps, and the other is resources and toolboxes.

- Greg: I scanned the one I missed the toolbox.
- Donna: Someone even made a comment that their chapter rep from the last meeting had already resigned and they said it would be easier to get one this way. So we will make sure we get all of that on the website.

NEW Business

Council Chair Vacancies:

1. Chair: Donna is moving out of state and will vacate this position by Sept 1 and will have limited ability to handle council business now. We need someone to assume the chair position as soon as possible

- Donna: If you did see my email after the conference, a lot of things did change after the conference, I am actually moving out of state. I will be vacating the position by September 1st, I am doing my best to set things up to make the transition as easy as possible. We are looking for someone to assume the chair position. If at this time we can't find somebody, I am suggesting that maybe we have people volunteer to coordinate each meeting. Til we get someone in the chair.
- Richard: I would like to suggest we just make a try here to see if there is anyone who is online now who would accept the chair if the group wanted them to be the chair. Is there anyone willing to take that position?
- Al: I would love to nominate you for chair.
- Richard: I won't accept it thank you all.
- Julie: This is Julie Becker, I have done this before but I have been thinking about this, until elections next year, I could probably do this, unless someone else really really wants to do this, cause I always think fresh blood is good. But I would be happy to not leave us leaderless.
- Richard: Thank you!
- Wendy: That would be very generous Julie, I just have way too much on my plater and I am not technology savvy, so I would love it if you could step forward.
- Richard: Is there anyone else? Because we have two positions available really.
- Julie: I would certainly appreciate a co-chair.
- Julie: How about we revisit this face to face? Its harder to say no in person.
- Richard: Thank you for stepping up that is really great, we appreciate that.
- Al: Do our bylaws allow us to fill a vacancy by vote by members present at the meeting?
- Richard: Vacancies are normally filled by the remaining officers, by appointment.

- Al: In that case our secretary would have to make the appointment.
- Richard: Donna could participate while she is here. The two could accept her and that would fulfill the bylaws. We could also do a vote of confidence from the whole council.
- Julie: That would be appropriate.
- Richard: It would likely be in August.
- Donna: Thank you Julie, I hope what I sent out about the structure of the meetings will be helpful.

2. **Vice-Chair:** Still in need of a vice-chair

3. **Suggestion:** If the bylaws allow, could there be co-chairs, rather than a chair and a vice-chair, who share responsibilities in running the council.

4. **Suggestion:** If no one is ready to assume the chair or vice-chair position now, can chapter reps alternate the responsibility of running each meeting?

5. **Council Direction:** I received several responses to my previous email outlining a suggestion for a simplified direction of the council and the format of the meetings. Please feel free to add your comments during the discussion today.

Discussions and agenda for next meeting:

Each Chapter Rep will be given an opportunity to speak on these items:

- a. Comment on the suggested (simplified) direction of the council.
- b. Comment on the suggested theme of “saving native plants” for the next year
- c. Comment on the suggested formats of the meetings (We will use the Roundtable format for the meeting in August.)
- d. Suggest what topics they would like to see addressed at the next in-person meeting. (The Council Chairs will review the meetings choose from those topics to set the agenda for the next in-person meeting.

Documents to be shared at meeting and on website.

1. PowerPoint: Council of Chapters: Responsibilities and Purpose
2. PowerPoint: Council of Chapters Resources
3. Copy of previous email with suggested format of meetings
4. Copy of suggested topics and talking points for future meetings.

- Donna: I think for this next meeting, the August meeting, our goal is to keep it simple, have break out sessions, no more than 3 topics, and that we break out into groups depending upon what your interest in those topics are. Each group can talk about there best ideas for those topics, and then report back to the rest of the group. Let me grab my talking points set.
- [Donna reviewed the potential topics from the attached list of topics]
- Donna: So I am hoping that we can choose 3 topics from here or new ones that we can focus on at our next meeting. Lets just go down the list and let each person talk. Ben, how about you do you have any ideas what topics you are most interested in discussing? Is there anyone who would like to speak first?

- Al: This is Al, I am rather interested in the field trip option, not just for regular members but also our new members and younger members. Also programming and speakers.
- Donna: How about while you are talking about that, do you have any input as to anything from the last meeting? or anything that your last chapter successes or challenges you wanted to bring up?
- Al: Our program chair already has everything set up for the following year. And I also have all the field trips set up for the next year.
- Donna: Fantastic, then you should be in that group.
- Neta: I asked my board which one they were particularly interested in, and they are most interested in programming and speakers. We are scheduled up until June 2018, but we do really struggle to find different speakers that we haven't had, so it would be helpful to get suggestions.
- Al: Can I make a suggestion, those of us interested in programs can bring a list of programs they have this year or last year so we can share with each other?
- Unknown: also the contact information would be helpful.
- Juliet: Nobody sends me any information for the speakers list. If we don't get the information we can't add it to the list.
- Donna: Maybe this one topic then should be how we can get that speaker list updated. That could be part of it.
- Unknown: Could we sent a request to all of our chapter reps and presidents the name, title, and contact of their last few speakers.
- Juliet: So heres the easiest way to do this - if you download the excel document on the forum now - you can just fill it out the same way and email it to me. and then I can populate and post it on the forum.
- Neta - Does it have a field on the spreadsheet whereby the speaker will identify that they are willing to go all over the state or are limited to a specific region?
- Juliet: That is one of the columns. It is on the forum under council of chapters > speakers bureau. There is also a field for do they charge a fee?
- Donna: I know some people may not be comfortable putting things into excel, maybe in person wouldn't hurt getting the information together, and then someone can volunteer to put it together. I know some people are less likely to have to download and use it. But just to bring suggestions with the goal to get the list made, I think that would be a really good start. But that does sound like a great one, that will most definitely be on the list of topics.
- Jan: interested in ways to get people more active, volunteering for workdays and to do other continuing chapter tasks
- Greg: That whole membership topic first on the list is our biggest issue, that and the speakers
- Donna: What we probably want to do is identify all the chapters that have had good growth, are there chapters recruiting lots of new members? We certainly want a group for that. Now, it sounds like a lot of you have a lot of

overlap. Would you rather we have these at the same time, or take three topics and discuss them for 30 minutes each, or 40 minutes each.

- Ginny: I would prefer that everybody be there for the whole discussion, than you don't need to report back. IT would be easier if everyone participating in all three topics. Also a note of interest for those of you who are looking, in the Fall of 2018 I will be doing a book tour, so I will be bringing my calendar on August 12th.
- Donna: Normally we are constrained to one hour which is why I wanted the break out sessions, but since it is longer I think we can all attend all 3.
- Wendy: I don't want to walk over anybody else if we are going down a line... I am at the very bottom, Just a couple of things that speak to these overlap of the events vs membership, I brought up a few items at the board meeting, as Juliet will test. There have been a few topics thrown out as far as events go, because we are all faced with this membership thing, bringing in younger members, is there anyone here from Tarflower?
- Julie: Yes
- Wendy: I didn't want to steal your thunder, I have been working with a graduate student, she is now a leader with Tarflower
- Julie: Amanda, yeah she is our new programs chair
- Wendy: Are you gonna speak about the tasting you are doing with brewing beer and wine with natives?
- Julie: They have been trying to do this for a while to get in with younger people. I am aware they are working on it but thats it.
- Wendy: Since I have been working with Amanda at the research center we spoke about it, The beer the local breweries, the home brewers, how does that mesh with native plants? are they the same people? This is something that can happen around the state - the plan is these local flavors, with natives, make local brews and have a tea tasting at the same time, with native plants, for those who don't want alcohol. I love that Amanda suggested the name "Friend-raiser". Its also a fundraiser. They are doing it in conjunction with native plant month. I think its an awesome event - drumming up members and staying current and cool. We say we will do a field trip, we take our members to a field trip, but what if we sponsor an interpretive hike at a state park or local area. We say come join FNPS people as they interpret the trail: whats edible, poisonous, native, exotics... that way we are inviting the public into our events. I think its a mistake that we only do field trips for members.
- Donna: Wendy thats great and that does fall under membership growth and field trips. We do native plant walks at Lettuce Lake Park, it has been such a boom to our membership. One thing I thought that was an excellent idea, she goes to a lot of FNPS meetings, and a lot of chapters are meeting way out in the boondocks. Why not meet once or twice a year at a university? at a place where young people are? This is great that we are started these topics. These are things I want you to be thinking about for our meeting for us to discuss. Does anyone else have any input on topics?

- Miki: All of the topics look very interesting - I know another one had come up is our local governments very often are not saving native plants and in fact are doing quite the opposite. maybe a discussion on how chapters are dealing with land use decisions, good, bad, or ugly. Good segue... Richard, do you want to talk a little bit about our theme?
- Richard: Sometimes I think we are kind of like a theater group where we get together our producers and actors and trying to figure out how to get out of the wings, but I am not sure that we have chosen our play yet. I think it would be useful if each year we choose a theme, and what are we doing for the plants, so after we did all that work for landscaping, we did turn our attention to what was happening to what was happening to the plants in the wild. and it has turned into something pretty interested, we had a meeting with the county to discuss the natural areas, and in the course of the discussion it came out that they don't have any conservation land, a way to take care of the properties. they are doing invasive removals, but they did not have a plan, such as what it costs and that sort of thing. And I thought maybe we could all look at whats happening to the plants in our areas. But it is something we all care deeply about, but it is terrible timely with so much change happening so fast. I just think it would be great if we could have the theme of whats happening to the plants in the wild in our areas, and what we think we can do about it. ITs nice to have a theme we can talk around.
- Miki: That's actually a very good base for us to begin these discussions.
- Donna: Yeah its not a thing that's limiting, like native plant month, we plan things that go around that. This is like that, what we are really looking at ... This really does show the organization saving plants in the wild.
- Juliet (in Chatlog): ""The State of our Plants" "Saving the Last Great Plants" "Saving Native Florida"
- Donna: He is just suggesting that maybe we have that theme run through our programs.
- Ginny: The thing is that only people like us want to save the plants. We have to have something that reaches out people who have never thought about a native plant. Maybe "Real Florida" or "all American" or "patriotic" should be in there. Not something that says we are do-gooders. If we are going to do this theme, I think we need to do it in such a way that we get other people excited.
- Richard: I think that's right to the heart of the problem - because the problem is how we communicate with the public. In Broward, 80% of voting public has voted for every environmental initiative that's come up. There are a lot of people that care, I think it is how we talk about it and how we bridge the gap in understanding.
- Ginny: Maybe we need to do something more biblical, like being good stewards of the land, to bring in people who aren't just thinking about saving native plants.
- Unknown: I hear you Ginny but to me I think that sounds more like a membership tactic. What we are trying to do is essentially get to know each

other within the council and what the chapters are up against, what is that risk. all the voters voted for an environmentally sensitive land measure and we have a system who is not interested in purchasing land and we are seriously becoming members of a lost age as a chapter. Aside from the membership piece which is always needed, we also need to a just the nuts and bolts of native systems and plants in our areas.

- Donna: and perhaps while we can think about this through the topics we discuss in august, is maybe we need this as a topic for one of our future meetings. One thing I remember reading about what attracts young people, is that they want to do something that is meaningful. and if you see where what Scott Davis does is boots on the ground type thing, and look at the young people he attracts. We need to start implementing more of that in our programs and field trips, we could all work together to bring people in.
- Juliet: I would just like to reinforce what you just said, look what Scott Davis has done for us already, we have Nicole Zampieri who has taken leadership position on the council, she is on the board of directors, and I was just talking to one of Scott Davis' prodigies who moved to South Florida, and we talked for two and a half hours on the phone, she was like what can we do? how can I work with the native plant societies? She is watching the last of the scrub in her area of the state get bulldozed. She said this is just crazy. what can we do? And she has all these ideas and energy. She said we need to get a broad coalition of environmental organizations to work together and have leverage when we lobby our representatives. That would be great to put something together for the conference, to invite Audubon and you name it to discuss how to get everyone on board.
- Unknown: We have actually been talking about that in Hernando County, you know getting these organizations together.
- Richard: I just started to tell the group - I am not gonna be there in August, but my not being there doesn't mean I don't care about all this.
- Donna: I would be remiss if I didn't miss someone who isn't here who said she wouldn't make it is Lucy Keshevarz, I wanted to show you all a couple things she sent me.
- [Donna pulled up a plant sale brochure Lucy sent]
- Donna: These will all be included especially when we discuss plant sales. She created this for her "rare and unique" native plant auction. I sent this to my plant sale coordinator because it was very creative, this is something to talk about plant sales. I will see if I can get Nicole to post these somewhere under our resources. It is very clear about how they structure their plant auctions. She also sent me their contract with their Habitat for Humanity partnership.
- [Donna pulled up the contract between the FNPS chapter and habitat for humanity]
- Donna: This is for planting natives at the homes habitat for humanity builds. I would like for her to discuss how they did it. I would like to see these discussed at future meetings.

- Donna: I am going to put together an agenda for our August meeting, and after the business portion our 3 topics will be (1) field trips, (2) programs and speaking, (3) membership and growth. We can spend approximately 30 minutes on each and if we get the business meeting done quickly maybe a little bit more. Does anyone have anything else before we adjourn?

Donna adjourned the meeting at 7:35 PM.