



Florida Native Plant Society
Council of Chapters Meeting 08/12/17 Minutes
Created on 08/24/17 by Nicole Zampieri
In-Person meeting at Withlacoochee State Forestry Training Center

Julie Becker called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

In attendance (26)

Julie Becker – Chair (Tarflower)	Athena Phillips (Citrus)
Nicole Zampieri – Secretary (Magnolia)	Gail Taylor (Citrus)
Catherine Bowman – FNPS President (Tarflower)	Jan Allyn (Pinellas)
Juliet Rynear – Executive Assistant (Heartland)	Susan Knapp (Passionflower)
Anne Cox – Past President (Cocoplum)	Jon Pospisil (Passionflower)
Dave Feagles – (Serenoa)	Sonya Guidry (Pawpaw)
Al Squires (Mangrove)	Sandi Saurers (Paynes Prairie)
Ginny Stibolt (Ixia)	Jeannie Brodhead (Sarracenia)
Greg Thomas (Heartland)	Carol Sullivan (Sparkleberry)
Gail Parsons (Nature Coast)	Greg Ballinger (Marion Big Scrub)
Miki Renner (Hernando)	Ben Johnson (Coccoloba)
Wendy Poag (Lake Beautyberry)	Gene Kelly (Hernando)
Martha Steuart (Conradina)	Taylor Figueroa

Julie Becker called the meeting to order at 10 AM.

- Introductions and Welcome to New Chapter Reps and roll call
Julie Becker introduced herself as the new council chair.

Discussed need for a co-chair, at least temporarily until a vice chair is elected. Julie also called roll. After roll was called we discussed having chapter representatives send their list of officers to Cammie for inclusion in the civi [info@fnps.org].

- Julie: With us being so spread out, communication isn't always as good as it could be between all of us because when we leave this room we feel exhausted. Even with email and all that other stuff, I know I won't see people for three months... I think that the vice chair needs to be my cohost when we have to go to meetings. I would like that to pass around to the different people who come. Your job would not be to write the agenda, although I could use help with that, the idea is that this isn't the worst part in the world, it's actually kind of friendly, actually the worst part for me is writing the agenda - getting you to talk to people and get ideas together that are workable and helpful to each other is

part of it. Finding workshops and things, finding someone else to present something that helps us be more organized is a joint effort. If we are going to have people to volunteer to do one of these jobs for just two years, you ought to practice and see its not such a terrible thing. You have some time to think about this, but for the next gotomeeting, maybe we will draw a name or whatever and you can be my cohost. And basically you will lead the discussion. You would just be the moderator. And a little practice might go a long way helping us share our leadership wealth, and encourage people to take a little bit of time.

- 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 the last minutes made by Al Squires. Seconded by Sandi Sanders. All were in favor.

OLD Business

1. **COC Meeting Schedule is posted in the calendar.** The next meeting is a GO-To-Meeting October 22,2017. Invite will be sent by Chair:
2. **Bronze Palmetto:** Motion submitted to board: “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.”
 - Gail - I don't understand what the criteria would be for an award, because if you come and attend the meetings, I thought we all attend the meetings. I don't know what other chapter reps do. What is deserving of an award?
 - Al - We have some members of this group who go above and beyond just coming to a meeting. For instance, we have some members such as Donna and Richard who spent hours and hours working on our landscape brochures. We have other members who spent hours working on other projects for us. And these people I feel should be honored. And thats why any member of the council of chapters can nominate somebody. And then it is up to the three officers of the council to vote.
 - Julie - Remember we are not obliged to award this all the time. It is a very special thing - we have the silver/green palmetto awards thats for the whole FNPS, and certainly in this case those people can be nominated for those too. Its open for discussion. No more than 10 minutes. So be brief.
 - Miki - The question does raise the possible need for a statement or series of criteria for this. So it might be someone who has gone above and beyond furthering the mission of the council.
 - Al - This was already approved at the last gotomeeting.
 - Juliet - Right now it is pending a vote at the board of directors.
 - Julie - So we already talked about this. Remember it's not something we have to do every year.
 - Athena - so is there anything that says, if its something thats not done every year.... Do the officers of the council have to approve it? Or can they turn it down?
 - Julie - thats something we have to decide. We have to make some criteria.
 - Juliet - That was what you voted on. That the chair the vice chair and the secretary would choose a nomination. They could vote no.

- Al - as far as criteria is concerned, lets get this passed by the BOD and then work on that criteria.

1. **Council Chair Vacancies:**

a. **Chair:** Julie Becker has volunteered to lead the council until May of 2018 unless someone else wants to step up. Nicole and Donna (Secretary and Vice-Chair) support her appointment and thank her for volunteering.

b. **Vice-Chair:** Still in need of a vice-chair. Need volunteers from the floor.

- Position was discussed by Julie Becker in the introductions.

1. **BOD and Committee Report** by Juliet Rynear She will provide a handout for everyone that shows all the current projects that the committees are working on in support of our mission. We could use more support from the chapters. I will make sure to turn in a report to the COC for all future meetings beginning at the August meeting. It will include the spreadsheet for all of the volunteer hours submitted to-date and a list of current projects/issues.

- Juliet - Just to keep us on the same page. The job of the COC is to be that conduit of information, from the council to chapter to board, and the other way too. To improve our communication constantly. I think we are doing a good job, but there still seems to be a disconnect. We still don't have enough support from the committees. We know that a lot of the committees are repeated at the chapter level. Our hopes is that there could be more of a back and forth between the committees, since we are all working towards the same mission. And I do think we need more participation in the committees. Even if you are just a fly on the wall and you don't have time to participate, just the fact that you attend and know whats going on, that's really important. Some of our committees are struggling to stay alive.

- Unknown - Do we have some list of consistency of the chapters to see what committees are going on?

- Juliet - Shirley, are we gonna be able to see that in the future?

- Shirley - No we were talking about officers. IF they are in the table of leaders in Civi then we could produce that

- Cammie - and we don't have chapter leadership often other than executive board. So if we were to double the amount of them, I think we are asking for trouble. It is a little bit cumbersome and error prone. Jackie just told me she gets the random email about being leader in Tarflower when she is not anymore.

- Juliet- It would be easiest if you have a policy or conservation chair or whatever at your local chapter, it would be nice for them to participate as a member of the state committee.

- Catherine - Do we know how many chapters have any kind of committee chairs?

- Julie - If you have a group in your chapter going out to do conservation work, or people always going to the policy meeting, those are technically committees.

- Unknown - Just to clarify, is the list of committees on the masthead of the Palmetto, is this the committees you're talking about? At the state or the chapter level?

- Juliet - if you have similar committees to these state committees, it would be nice if we could cooperate.

- Miki- Is there a formal location we can get the information to know when these committees are meeting?

- Devon - so you are talking like membership? Most chapters have a membership chair?

- Juliet - The easiest thing to do is contact the committee chairs and find out what day they are meeting. The conservation committee mostly communicates through telephone and email and gotomeeting.

- Miki - But if you are having a meeting, I would like the time to tell my group and see if anybody is interested.

- Ben - inaudible

- Athena - I have to jump in and say the 2 emails I sent from the website never got responded too

- Juliet - [Showed how to access on screen. Main page - who we are - contacts - standing boards]

- Anne - If you go down the forum, every committee has a position under "FNPS committees".

The committee chairs need to start posting their meetings. Heres a suggestion: I think theses a really good information exchange, if everyone who is a committee chair, uses that, post whats going on in your committee, and post your gotomeetings. If every chapter has people doing this great work. It would really be helpful and cohesive for every chapter to have a committee that is similar to that on the board, then we really move things up and down, and the committee chairs post on it.

Land Management Committee

- Juliet - on page 17 of strategic plan proposal there is a chart listing all of our committees. Some of these are ongoing, Land management partner 5 year reviews have been going on for a long time. Now we have 10 year land management reviews. A passion for public lands is the powerpoint that explains that. That's posted. [Land management partners > Land management support materials > Passion for public lands powerpoint]. You can make this relevant to your region. Thats definitely a great tool to use for a meeting if you don't have a speaker to build support for our land management committee.

- Wendy - There are notes and it is short. IF you wanted to post the one from the conference, which is part 2 to this, which is more in depth, the point of this is to be short so you can do a little program or field trip after.

Conservation Committee

- Juliet Tons of projects, habitat restoration and citizen science. So I designed a new webpage that hasn't gone live yet... But it was supposed to highlight habitat restoration efforts throughout the states. When Shirley reviewed it she noticed it had a lot of citizen science going on. Because theres a lot of monitoring going on. When you do these restorations you need to monitor to see what is really going on, are the restorations effective. Is the population expanding? Is it dying? New seedlings? You have to document it. Of course every year we review the conservation grants and now we have the Dan Austin award for ethnobotany. We have asked our conservation committee members to volunteer to judge this award. Some people love it, some are like nope that's fine. I have probably 5 people on the committee that just wanna be on so they know what's going on. And that's fine. And then they can pancake back to their chapters. As most of you probably know, Scott Davis has been mapping *Asclepias* populations throughout the state. He's also been mapping rare plants throughout the state. This is such important mapping information. If you have milkweed sitings, let Scott know and he will add it to the map. Through this mapping process, we are discovering that there are a lot of milkweed species that we think are common, are actually not. The problem is this massive development, we are losing so many populations and its not on anybodies radar. There are a lot of plants that used to be common that are not common anymore. Field trips are so important, plant lists and that kind of documentation. We want to start doing a better job to gather as many of these plant lists as we can and monitor. There are a lot of species we want to recommend for listing, things that everyone thinks are common. And this is gonna be more and more true as we go forward with more species. So use your field trips to gather information.

- Catherine - So after field trips when we take down lists of plants are we supposed email this to you?

- Juliet - Yes please.

- Taylor F.- How do our chapters get involved in helping with these programs, committees?

- Juliet - contact me. I guess I should have said that. I am the conservation chair.

- Taylor F. - these are going state wide? Or do you narrow it down to specific areas?

- Juliet - Mostly state wide. Scott Davis himself is state wide.
- [inaudible]
- Greg - Committee updates might be a worthwhile page for the palmetto.
- Juliet - I try to do them on the sabal minor, but now I am learning it looks like a lot of these are never opened. I am learning, if you want to get a message out there you have to use multiple outlets.
- Marjorie - As new people re coming in and they may not understand the board structure and stuff. It would be good to have a newbie area to break down information that is good to know. Maybe once a year or something.
- Juliet - We made a list of species we were most concerned about in the different regions of the state. Plantathon was an idea a couple of people came up with based on birdathon (Audubon). You schedule an event and get people to sponsor you, for every species that you identify they donate a dollar or whatever. We could set up an iNaturalist event specifically for an event. iNaturalist is a really easy app to use and thats how you would document how many species you found. Its a fundraising idea, plus you get plant lists from it. The person who was taking it on had to step down from the committee, so now it is just an idea waiting to be birthed. IF you are interested lets talk. Gene, would you like to talk about policy?

Policy Committee

- Gene - To bring up more funding for Florida Forever, that's something I was hoping I would have a few minutes for. At the conference we unveiled the challenge to have chapters bring their legislature on a field trip. Those of you who are on our action alert list get our emails every year, we ask you to write to your legislature to support Florida Forever. It hasn't happened. The lawsuit has not been settled. If it goes the right way they will owe use for the 3 years they have robbed from us. What we are trying to do now, since it hasn't worked thus far, is this idea that our lobbyist has tried to impress upon all of us, is to speak to your representative as a constituent, you are the ones who vote them into office or not. Right now before the session starts in January now is your chance to speak to them one on one, now is the time to impress upon them why you support Florida Forever. We are getting ready to issue this challenge, we have got a third draft of our document, we expect to send it out to the chapters within the next couple of weeks. and the timing is such that we will really want the chapters if they are going to act on this to start getting in gear on this. The next session starts in January, if we wait till then its too late. The leadership will have already corralled them into what they are going to do anyways.

- Miki - Would you provide talking points?

- Gene - of a sort, there is quite a bit of guidance in there as well as there are a lot of pitfalls. We are a 501c3 so we cannot support candidates without violating our tax exempt status. We can advocate for programs like Florida Forever, but you cannot go into this saying "we are gonna oppose your candidacy if you don't support FL forever", thats a no-no. Ee have several months between now and the start of the session when its a great time to go out into the woods with these people. The dog days of summer will be winding down. This is really gonna be our big push between now and the end of the year to try and get people to do this even if you can't find a legislaturer to go on a field trip with you contacting them about it, to familiarize them with what projects have been conserved in your area through FL forever, what project would have been approved in your area if there was funding. If they don't go on a field trip with them you cans till talk to them about it and meet with them in their office setting with a group of people for your chapter. There are a lot of ways, if only half our chapters actually did something like this more than half the legislation in the state would have heard directly from FNPS members.

- Al - What are we doing about counties that only have one due to sunshine law?

- Gene - I think Brevard has about a dozen representatives and about a half dozen senators. It would be a shame to just select one, in an abundance of caution, meet all sunshine law requirements.

This document will explain what you have to do. By Monday I should hear from the first amendment foundation, she will give us some guidance just to make sure we are doing this properly.

- AL - When we met with our representative before the last session two of us spoke on amendment 1, it was like talking to a stone wall. The only concern he had was getting guns on college campuses passed.

- Gene - This is a tough sell when the legislatures hit back with “We already conserved too much land” or “we can’t manage the lands we have why should we buy more?” we don’t want it to just fall and then there is just dead air. We want you to be armed with a good response.

- Al - one of the big things I have pushed is you have bought these lands, you need to manage them.

- Gene - If they cut management funding they will say we can’t manage. We need to say weave eyes and ears and say we know that you cut funding landing last year. You made that a reality.

- Miki - On the flip side of that is it true that any of the boundaries for rep and senates cross chapter boundaries. This might be an opportunity for that regionalization we are trying to do

- Gene - Hernando has one senator and 2 reps and Brevard has 18 state legislatures. SO that chapter needs to hit them. We are gonna encourage you, invite press. Make this something where they will want to show up and put on their best face.

- Jan - You had an excellent suggestion about going to delegation meetings, thats a great way to hit more than one legislator at one time.

- Gene - every legislative delegation is supposed to have a meeting before January. They make it really hard to know when they are happening and how to attend. If you are on the action alert we have tried to target a chapter to let them know when/where a delegation is meeting, if there is a form, they all handle it differently. There are even a few that have their own websites. There is no one size fits all. There is another way, thats what we have been trying to do the last two years and FL forever still hasn’t been funding. We are trying something different. WE are not giving up on promoting legislative delegation. We suggest now taking them out on a field trip, they might recognize your face or name, then you get up at a delegation meeting and speak, and thank the representative for attending their field trip, we are hear to say we support Florida Forever and we want to get it funded. And all of a sudden you have established a relationship. I encourage you to mention “If you ever need help with any native plants or landscaping, give us a call.”

- Juliet - I don’t want to cut you off but we have to move along. If you have more questions please talk to Gene at lunch or on break. Also the presentations they gave at the conference are on the website.

- Dave -If you are disappointed because the legislatures are not available, talking to their aids and inviting their aids on field trips is important as well.

- Gene - Sometimes talking to their aid could be better.

- Juliet - Also we have native plant month coming up. Andy is gonna be giving a development report later today. Yet another great time to get face to face with representatives during proclamations.

Research Committee

- Juliet - If you are a scientist and you want to help review grants and review the palmetto submissions talk to Paul Schmalzer.

Education Committee

- Juliet - Our education chair has stepped down, so we are looking for a chair. The good neighbor handbook is in progress. We still need to have workshops for environmental professionals, and we need to continue with the junior botanist in training. If you or someone you know wants to participate with the education you can contact Wendy or me.

Landscape Committee

- Juliet - So they review the annual landscape award applications, and then the COC, I know they are having workshops across the state using their regional brochures, that is something we would like to

hear more about. I also wanted to mention that FNPS does have a model landscape ordinance that is available for download on our website. Under landscape committee tab. If all these legislatures knew that we had these resources available... its so easy to mention to them how easy it is to pull from these ordinances.

- Wendy - You mentioned the regional landscape brochures, I had given you a powerpoint with the brochure. if thats posted its just our region, its a template. It worked very well to run-through the brochure. Its like a workshop. If that gets posted.. its a template, modify it with you own region.
- Juliet - I will upload it
- Ron - We definitely need to have some work in terms of the landscape committee, the tasks that we do, I wasn't even aware of this, if it gets posted we don't want it on here [the forum]. The main problem I heard at the conference is navigating. In terms of their availability on the website. Something like this would be good within the chapters. We need to elevate the landscape awards, some of the materials, could be shared within the chapters.
- Juliet - We need to make the website easier to navigate. I have to stop now.

Council Discussions:

1. **Membership/Growth: Chapter Reps, Please bring your questions, suggestions and best practices that your chapters use to recruit new members, especially younger ones. If you have membership packets, please bring them to the meeting.**

- a. How do we get young people to join and stay? What chapters are successful at this and how do they do it?
- b. Could all or some of the chapter meetings be held in more populated areas or even college campuses?
- c. How do we recruit new members?
- d. How do we retain current members?
- e. Will offering opportunities to "save the plants" attract more young people or people from other conservation organizations.

- Julie - whatever we do we need members, we need the members to fund our programs, we need active members, we need members. Unless we have members, we will not be very successful with our mission. I put markers up here, and we have two boards. Some of the questions [read from the agenda] [Julie set up a board with "New Members" for people to populate with ideas for how to get new members]

Thought board:

1. ASK!!!! In person!
2. Member discount @ sale
3. Gaden tours
4. Special event/presentation
5. "Good neighbor" outreach
6. Make sure you have a clear picture of who you want to join
7. Use strong selling points
8. Create a sense of urgency
9. Answer objections up front
10. Make it easy to join
11. Neighborhood tree walk
12. Field trips -> bring membership flyers
13. Master Gardener talk before meeting
14. Free library offsets membership costs

- Devon - one of the most important things we need to do is ASK people to join
- Jeannie - What about asking the young members what attracted them??
- Taylor - I joined because I got into butterfly gardening. All the resources online were a mishmash of random nectar plants. FNPS taught me about larval host plants and the importance of using native plants as habitat.
- Jan - Discounts at plant sales
- Pete - Conradina has a garden tour each year where they have 6 homes/businesses toured
- Andy - Palm beach county had one and they added 23 new members at one event
- Ginny - I did three hour workshop for Martin county They had it at a library and fed lunch, and they had maybe like 25 new members. (FYI I will be doing a book tour in the fall of 2018 and I have my calendar)
- Wendy - the Good Neighbor outreach its about being water wise, being wildlife smart, firewire, you go to a community and develop partners [FWS, pet amnesty] with other like minded groups that have a message, it could be replacing your septic tank, and we set up little tents. Its simply a small regional community type event where you go. But they are also getting a realm of information. Its not just about being a good neighbor, it is geared to your area. You might do one on light pollution. its that type of an event. We are building on it cause we are trying to work on that brochure.
- Miki - We do a lot of field trips in the woods, but there is a huge contingency that might prefer to do things on sidewalks.
- Julie - Make it easy to join, thats a good one. Sometimes we help people fill out their membership cards and then we mail it to them. You've got to be asking people on your field trips to join.
- Susan - I asked Marc Godts how he met his wife and he said on a field trip for the Tarflower chapter
- Al - we have got to push sustaining membership. Most people have \$10 a month and that adds up.
- Miki - Can we go less than \$10?
- Devon - We have a check box on our application that says "renew automatically". If we get that and someone gives us a credit card we continue to renew without having to solicit.
- Shirley - its easy, its been implemented online, not on our paper form.
- Devon - I would check that off because I don't want to go through the hassle of renewing everytime, and so you don't have to solicit them.
- Cammie - Our policy is if you send us money we don't send it back. So if you pay it twice your membership is good until 2019. We have been doing it for years and people almost never ask for their money back.
- Catherine - If they have selected that and are doing the automatic renewal, do they get a thank you, you're renewed?
- Unknown - no
- Catherine - they should
- Cammie - No they don't, the email is triggered by the initial payment.
- Anne - I have one other suggestion. Take membership brochures with you to everywhere you go to.

2. Programming/Speakers: **Chapter Reps, Please bring a list of your last three (or more) speakers, topics, and contact information if ok to share.**

- a. Does your chapter have a programming coordinator?
- b. Are you able to identify and schedule all your speakers at least six months ahead of time?
- c. Does your chapter have a good mix of speakers that support the FNPS mission? Do you also have speakers addressing other related topics?
- d. Where do you find your speakers?
- e. How can chapters do a better job of sharing potential speaker ideas? Do you know about the Speakers Bureau spreadsheet on the forum and how to update it?
- f. Does your chapter have joint meetings with like-minded organizations?
- g. Does your chapter meet every month, or do you skip some months?

- Juliet [showed the steps to access the speakers bureau]
- Juliet commented on the need for chapters to participate and send information to be put on the speakers bureau. Recommended that we download the excel file from the forum and use it as a template, so all the table headings are retained and the correct information is shared with Juliet.
- Al - just a hint for people looking for speakers is using your county extension agents

3. Fieldtrips: Chapter Reps: Please plan to discuss how you choose your fieldtrips, and more important, field trip leaders. Plant discuss how regional chapters may have joint field trips and share knowledgeable leaders.

- a. How do you choose where to go?
- b. Do you adapt field trips for different physical abilities?
- c. Do you have field trips every month, or do you skip some months?
- d. Do you have knowledgeable leaders? Should chapters have a fieldtrip leader board (people who say they may travel to lead a field trip for a chapter other than their own)
- e. Do you use and retain liability waivers?
- f. How do you publicize the field trips?

- Julie - How many publicize your field trips?
- Julie - Good to remember you should be doing liability waivers
- Al - Cammie are we supposed to mail them to you?
- Cammie - I hate to tell you but yeah you are. Mail to them
- Al - A tip for field trips, look around your public lands and talk to the people who manage the lands, they know it better than anyone sometimes they will take you out
 - Gail - I wanted to share with everyone, my chapter did an over night trip to the panhandle and met with Scott and went to the milkweed nursery and then we went on a wildflower tour of 65 with Eleanor Dietrich and it was wonderful.
 - Athena - We are trying to do two field trips a month, one is led by a botanist or ranger, and the other is just one we just try to do together for fun. About twice a year we do a field trip to native nurseries together to shop and talk about native plants together.
 - Sandi - We try to tie our field trips together with our speakers, so we will have a presentation at our meeting and then a related field trip the following weekend. The other thing we do is we have a local landscape tour... meaning the members of our chapter open up their yards for people visit.
 - Sonya - the other thing we do is a native plant walk each month, and we visit a native plant persons no-mow yard. We combine some things where possible...
 - Ben - We have gone to Fakahatchee
 - Devon - twice a year Suncoast goes camping. We go out to an area not near our county

- Sonya - We have been monitoring our rare Rugel's pawpaw we do "Rugel's roundup"
- Al - We try and do one trip that's at least an hour away each year, we are right on the border between Charlotte and Sarasota county, between 10 and 9. So we try to get out into another zone, where we might find totally different plants
 - Anne - Work with the universities, we have gone to several of the university sites, ... go out with their classes.
 - Shirley - We are very bad at asking people to join on social media!!! Please post the link over and over again!
 - Ginny - do Field trip organizers have a committee at the state?
 - Julie - No but we could certainly have a board on the forum
 - Juliet - Or we could make a board on the google drive.

Meeting adjourned at 11:59

