



Florida Native Plant Society

Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 10/25/2020 (Revised and Approved 11/22/20)

Online GoTo Meeting

taken by Melanie Simon – CoC Secretary

Kara Driscoll called the meeting to order at 06:33 PM

In attendance (18) – 14 of 33 Chapters

*** indicates proxy or guest**

Citrus – Gail Taylor

Cuplet Fern – Mark Kateli

Cuplet Fern – Al Squires*

Eugenia – David Martin

Ixia – Jessica Spencer

Lake Beautyberry - Patricia Burgos

Magnolia – Jan Blue

Martin – Dianna Wentink

Naples – Kara Driscoll - **CoC Chair**

Palm Beach – Helen Laurence

Passionflower – Melanie Simon - **CoC Secretary**

Pawpaw – Karen Walter

Pawpaw – Sande Habali

Pinellas – David Perkey

Sarracenia – Jeannie Brodhead

Villages – Gary Babic

FNPS President – Bonnie Basham

➤ **Regular Agenda Items**

● **Minutes from previous meeting –**

Mark K. motioned to approve the September 27, 2020 meeting minutes. Gary B. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

● **Reminders:** Next meeting scheduled for November 22 at 6:30.

● **News/Announcements**

- The new FNPS website is up and running. If issues are noted, email Juliet (executivedirector) and copy Shirley Denton (s.denton) @fnps.org.
- Membership data (site to login with Chapter name and password) is on a different site – <https://fnpsmembers.org/home> - which has a link on the right side panel of the Council website.
- FNPS license plate design is almost complete. Final design and order form will be made available soon so pre-sale can begin. Mark K. suggested there be a website page for the license plate info and ordering. Bonnie B. discussed plate design requirements and noted that an organization will be helping to sell the plates to their hunting/fishing clients.
- FNPS and the Council are switching from GoTo Meeting to Zoom. The next Council meeting will take place on Zoom.

- *Follow-up:* If you have not used Zoom before, get set up before the next meeting (there's a how-to video at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-Joining-a-Meeting>). Email a Council officer if you need assistance getting set up.
- There will be a Lunch and Learn addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion featuring a speaker who won a Master Gardener award for inclusion. Watch for this in December or January.
- It was confirmed that the May FNPS Conference will be virtual. Melanie reminded Chapters that they need to start thinking about a Chapter video and send the committee. Several questions were raised:
 - Whether there would be a cost for registering for/attending the conference or any of the in-depth workshops, including whether it would be free for students. This is pertinent for Chapters considering sponsoring a student.
 - Whether there were specific topic and/or length suggestions for Chapter videos
- *Follow-up:* Bonnie said it may be too early for details, but suggested sending questions to Juliet to bring up to the Conference Committee. Melanie will send an email with the questions above.

➤ Old Business

- **Council Website and Council Orientation & Training Initiatives**
 - Melanie S., Karen W., Lucy B. and Diane C. have met to discuss revisions to the “How To” website page. Since this page deals with Chapter Rep orientation, the two initiatives are being addressed at the same time.
 - In a work session, Karen W. suggested an orientation letter for new Chapter Reps, so that is being drafted.
 - Melanie S. is aiming to have the revised “How To” website page and a draft orientation letter prior to the November meeting and will send out a notice so Chapter Reps can review and provide feedback at the meeting..
 - Al S. commented that he found it very easy and useful to have documents and announcements posted on the website home page.
 - *Follow-up:* Kara D. reminded everyone the website needs to be useful for everyone and urged Council members to look at the revised website pages and send comments, questions and ideas to Melanie. Feedback especially needed on things to fix, easier navigation, and things to add.
- **SOP Revision/New CoC Guidance Document**
 - The new Council Guidance document was approved by the FNPS Board. It will be incorporated into the FNPS Handbook – once complete that will close out this initiative.
- **Closed Captioning**
 - Kara D. reported she just sent an email to Valerie Anderson about closed captioning services for FNPS and Chapter presentations so we can reach a wider audience. Also suggested signing for the conference.
 - Mark K. added out that there is a setting on YouTube that does closed captioning and translation for free, although he has not investigated the accuracy. Sande H. noted in chat that YouTube CC and translation is limited.

- Helen Laurence noted that Susan Lerner has proposed a project to translate the Southeast Native Landscaping brochure into Spanish.

➤ **New Business**

• **Environmental Initiatives**

- Dave P. explained Pinellas received an email from their local Sierra Club asking them to support their initiative to get the Pinellas County government to commit to the “Ready for 100” initiative to transition to 100% clean, sustainable energy for electrical generation by 2035 and for the community as a whole by 2050.
- Dave explained the concerns: the initiative doesn’t fully match the FNPS mission (doesn’t mention conservation or plants); it’s a very political issue which might alienate some members; and support for this initiative would tie the Chapter to the Sierra Club.
- Dave asked if other Chapters have been asked to support this initiative (to make sure FNPS chapters are not approaching this differently) or have had experience with a similar support request and have any advice on how to respond.
- Mark K. cautioned losing control of the event or cause (i.e., letting the other organization speak for you or using your organization’s support as currency for other initiatives).
- Gail T. asked and Dave responded that they have consulted with Gene Kelley (FNPS Policy Chair) who he sees no issue with supporting the initiative.
- Kara D. pointed out that there is evidence that plants are affected by climate change.
- Dave said they are considering writing an endorsement directly to the Pinellas commission (cc to the Sierra Club) supporting the initiative and adding something about plants and conservation – several agreed this is a good solution.
- Kara D. provided the link to the FNPS Policy Handbook in the chat.
<https://www.fnps.org/assets/pdf/pubs/policyadvocacyhandbook2019.pdf>
- Kara reinforced that any Chapter can bring up issues – send an email and it will be added to the agenda. She also noted that we should start forming partnerships (with other Chapters or local organizations) on conservation issues.

• **Council Survey**

- Melanie S. reported that as of last night 55% of Chapters had responded to the Council Survey.
- Majority of Chapters (56%) report they are stable, 22% report they are doing great, and 22% report they are struggling. Additional analysis is needed, but looks like many of those struggling may be having issues conducting activities during COVID (lack capacity to do online programs, members not comfortable with technology, lack of participation, or other issues).
- Based on reported challenges, Melanie suggested:
 - Conducting activities during COVID (18% reported this challenge) be discussed now.
 - Encouraging participation in chapter governance (25% reported this challenge) could be addressed with a panel discussion at a later meeting.
 - Publicity and Outreach and Membership Growth (12% reported each of these challenges) could perhaps be addressed with a workshop led by Ginny Stibolt.

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- Kara D. asked that chapters make sure they are abiding by CDC guidelines and noted that COVID numbers are rising. She cautioned everyone to be careful and suggested chapters find activities which will keep members safe.
 - Melanie S. reported that Passionflower has been doing online programs with mixed attendance results – senses people may be burning out on online programs. Had an in-person plant event (outdoors, mandatory masks, spaced attendance), but participation was not overwhelming.
 - Al S. mentioned that an email Juliet sent out for guidance was useful.
 - Kara D. suggested scavenger hunts (participants do it by themselves, then come together online to compare results).
 - Kara D. suggested an activity based on Citizen Science of some kind. Maybe observation records - she got her masters started by compiling research records. Maybe there are projects out there people could participate in.
 - Melanie S. said she likes the idea of an online program that's not a presentation.
 - Kara D. suggested an online discussion on a topic of interest or "Show and Tell" – people could show off their favorite plant or some other cool thing they've found. Or everyone gets a few minutes to talk about a plant they're growing, what they are researching now, or to ask questions.
 - Karen W. reported (in chat) that Pawpaw had a plant swap in August. Socially distanced, masked, everyone was so glad to see each other. Pawpaw is planning a holiday plant auction at a large open air locations (socially distanced, masked, no food).
 - Gail T. reported (in chat) that Citrus had a plant and seed swap. Only 7 members attended. They have also done some maintenance at their native gardens – mostly the same few members attend.
 - Jeannie B. reported (in chat) that Sarracenia had a socially distanced field trip. Ten people showed up and they explored a large, recently burned area. It was great – wildflowers were everywhere.
 - Sande H. reported (in chat) that she feels Pawpaw has lost several of their long-time members because they don't do Zoom or even traditional emails. These are members they would see at field trips, but they are also uncomfortable with in-person.
 - Al S. reported Cuplet Fern had a very good plant sale a couple of months ago and Tarflower had a rouge plant sale last week. He thinks many members have been doing work in their yards and could talk about that. Kara commented that she thinks this is a good idea and likes it as another "Show and Tell" idea.
 - Gail T. suggested that a "Show and Tell" could be done on Facebook. Members could be encouraged by email to add their comments and photos. She was thinking she would post on Red Salvia – how easy it is to grow and how to propagate. Kara D. said this sounded like a good idea given that chapters are having a problem with attendance at in-person events.
 - Karen W. asked (in chat) if videos (short yard tours) could go on Facebook. Kara responded yes.
 - Follow-up: Melanie posted the survey results on the Council website home page since there was not have time to go over the rest of the survey responses (other challenges and comments).
 - Follow-up: TBD. There was not time to formulate plans to discuss/address the challenges/issues identified in the survey.
- **Other**
 - Pat B. asked to add Zoom Regional Meetings to the agenda for the next meeting.

Gail T. made a motion to adjourn.

Pat B. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:42 PM