



Florida Native Plant Society

**Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 01/24/2021 (revised)**

Online Zoom Meeting

taken by Melanie Simon – CoC Secretary

Kara Driscoll called the meeting to order at 06:36 PM

**In attendance (28) – 22 of 33 Chapters**

**\* indicates proxy or guest**

Citrus – Gail Taylor  
Coccoloba – Lucy Breitung  
Conradina – Martha Steuart  
Cuplet Fern – Mark Kateli\*  
Cuplet Fern – Al Squires  
Dade – Kurt Birchenough  
Eugenia – David Martin  
Heartland – Gregory Thomas  
Hernando – Heather Sharkey  
Hernando – Janet Grabowski\*  
Ixia – Nick Freeman  
Lake Beautyberry – Patricia Burgos  
Longleaf Pine – Gabriel Campbell  
Magnolia – Jan Blue

Martin County – Dianna Wentink  
Naples – Kara Driscoll - **CoC Chair**  
Nature Coast – Diane Caruso  
Palm Beach County – Helen Laurence  
Passionflower – Melanie Simon - **CoC Secretary**  
Pawpaw – Karen Walter  
Pawpaw – Sande Habali  
Pinellas – David Perkey  
Sarracenia – Jeannie Brodhead  
Sarracenia – David Roddenberry  
Suncoast – Virginia Overstreet  
Sweetbay – Jonnie Smallman  
Wayne Baker – **CoC Vice Chair**  
FNPS President – Bonnie Basham

➤ **Regular Agenda Items**

● **New Chapter Representatives –**

Two new Chapter Representatives were welcomed – Heather Sharkey from Hernando and Nick Freeman from Ixia.

● **Minutes from previous meeting –**

*Karen W. motioned to approve the November 22, 2020 meeting minutes with one correction. Lucy B. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*

● **News/Announcements**

- Chapters are reminded that they can now file IRS Form 990 (including 990N) for year ending 12/30/20.
- Chapters are reminded that the deadline for Landscape Award nominations and Conservation Research Grant applications is 3/5/21. Information is on the FNPS website under “Awards and

Grants” on the “What We Do” tab. Grants are open to the public – must be sponsored by a Chapter.

- FNPS Board has several positions opening up this year:
  - Bonnie B. said open positions are President-Elect, Secretary, and Director At-Large.
  - Bonnie B. would welcome having anyone serve on the Nominating Committee for these state-wide positions.
- **Ongoing Business**
  - **Council Orientation/Website**
    - Melanie S. reported that the Chapter Rep “Welcome Letter” explaining how to get needed logins has been emailed to new reps and revision of the “How To” section of the website is still in progress with the help of Karen W., Lucy B., and Diane C.
  - **May Conference**
    - Diane C. reported on the conference committee discussions/decisions:
      - Conference (virtual) will be May 14 (live introduction at 7pm) through May 16.
      - Registration will be open in a couple of weeks.
      - Price will be \$35 for the conference, including all workshops.
      - Volunteers and students will be free.
      - There will be a virtual auction – working on details. Donations from Chapters are invited/encouraged.
      - Committee has brought up the idea of “mini field trip” videos, but only for the auction. Gail T. and Heather S. suggested field trip videos might be included in the conference.
      - Email was sent out to Chapters by Valerie Anderson with some “how to” instructions for Chapter videos.
    - Melanie S. noted that since the conference is virtual there will be no FNPS Board or Council meetings.
    - Kurt B. noted that there was interest in submitting a montage to recognize Don and Joyce Gann (Dade founding members). Dade contributes to a conservation grant in their names. Kara D. suggested emailing the Conference Committee and Dr. Paul Schmalzer. Bonnie B. will work with Kurt to organize a moment of remembrance or other tribute. David M. noted how important the Gann family has been to conservation.
  - **Council Surveys/Educational Materials**
    - Melanie S. reported the final results of the Council Survey about Chapter challenges are posted on the home page of the website. 82% of Chapters responded. Working on setting up workshops to address some of the top challenges.
    - Melanie S. reported that about 50% of Chapters responded to the Educational Materials survey. Roughly two-thirds want Spanish versions of brochures and a little less than a third are not sure. 69% are interested in a native plant coloring book and 94% are interested in digital brochure files with room for Chapter information for download and printing. Results have been sent to the Education Committee (Wendy Poag).

## Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 01/24/21

- Melanie S. reported that reprints of the Regional Native Landscaping brochures are still up in the air. Original printing was 10,000 copies per region for about \$.15 per copy. Survey responses have indicated a much lower demand (1,000 copies per region or less) so pricing for a smaller run has been requested – cost per copy will be higher, so chapters who responded they want copies will be contacted once the cost is known.
- Patricia B. noted that per Wendy Poag the “Mow Less” brochure (including a Spanish version) is being worked on. Other brochures are being worked on as well. Completion dates not known. Melanie S. will repost Mow-Less proof on website.
- **Nominating Committee – Council Chair Election**
  - Janet G. reported that nominations for the Council Chair position will be open after this meeting.
    - Chapter Representatives and Presidents will receive an email with a survey link to make nominations.
    - Current and past Chapter Reps can be nominated.
    - You can nominate someone else or self-nominate.
    - Please respond to the survey by January 30<sup>th</sup> so the slate can be prepared and advertised before March 15 voting on the Forum.
- **Council Meeting Dates**
  - Survey on meeting day/time preferences did not yield a clear alternative to Sunday evening per Melanie S. Respondents preferred Tuesday or Thursday evenings, but Chapter meeting dates posted on the FNPS website indicate there are already Chapter meetings scheduled on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings of the month.
  - Friday, Saturday, and Sunday are the only days of the week without Chapter meetings in the evenings. We will keep the meeting dates on Sundays for now until we can figure out a better day/time.
  - Kara D. and Wayne B. want to change the frequency of the meetings to bi-monthly, with more “conversational” optional meetings on alternating months. Al S. pointed out the types of meetings used to vary with an in-person meeting quarterly. No vote is needed to do this as there are no restrictions on the scheduling/types of Council meetings.
  - Follow-up: Next regular (mandatory) Council meeting will be on March 28, 2021
  - Follow-up: Melanie S. is trying to set up a couple of workshops on challenges noted frequently in the survey and Kara D. will get with Pat B. to set up something on Regional Meetings.

### ➤ **New Business**

- **Forum**
  - Melanie S. asked everyone to make sure they have a Forum login prior to election voting.
- **Sales Tax**
  - Lucy B. said Coccoloba is starting to sell native plants that are edible (not vegetable plants) at their plant sales. She asked what other Chapters are doing regarding sales tax on edible native plants.

- Bonnie B. said there shouldn't be any difference. She can't remember there being any way on DOR reporting to differentiate between edible and non-edible plants – she would recommend treating them the same. Kara D. pointed out that the sales tax paid at Home Depot is the same on a native plant and a vegetable plant.
- Heather S. worked in the Dept. of Agriculture and selling a plant as a “food product” is different and you don't want to do that as it is a whole different legal realm with a lot of different regulations.
- **Speaker Compensation**
  - Lucy B. asked what other Chapters do about speaker compensation. Are they paid? In what form?
    - Melanie S. - Passionflower normally does not compensate – most invited speakers are doing it as a public education component of their jobs or to sell books. Have paid travel expenses if speakers ask.
    - David R. (in chat) – Sarracenia pays expenses for speakers needing lodging.
    - Kurt B. (in chat) – Dade does \$50 for all speakers (discussed an increase, but not in budget). Probably half of the speakers donate back to the chapter or work for the government and can't accept.
    - Gail T. (in chat) – Citrus pays speakers who come in from out of town (they are a rural area).
    - Patricia B. (in chat) – Beautyberry provides \$50
    - Virginia O. (in chat) – Suncoast pays \$50 for in-person meetings – has not paid any online speakers.
    - David P. (in chat) – Pinellas pays speakers and honorarium in addition to expenses.
    - Karen W. (in chat) – Pawpaw has given local speakers a chapter membership and out-of-town speakers expenses.
    - Dianna W. (in chat) – Martin pays whatever the speaker asks for and works it out in the whole budget. Usually a speaker is offered to be a guest at someone's house if they need to stay overnight.

## ➤ Open Floor

- Dave P. reminded everyone that Pinellas is having a virtual fundraiser to buy the Gladys Douglas property on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> evening. There will be bands, speakers and silent auctions. The County, City and other donors are trying to buy this sensitive area and Pinellas is trying to raise \$5K to get a matching donation. Kara D. suggested forwarding the event information to friends with wider audiences.
- Kara D. reminded Chapter Reps to watch for announcements about roundtables and workshops and to let Council governance know if there are any subjects they want a session about.

Wayne B. made a motion to adjourn.

Al S. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Meeting Adjourned at 7:42 PM**