



Florida Native Plant Society

Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 03/28/2021

Online Zoom Meeting

taken by Melanie Simon – CoC Secretary

Kara Driscoll called the meeting to order at 06:34 PM

In attendance (29) – 23 of 33 Chapters

*** indicates proxy or guest**

Citrus – Gail Taylor	Paynes Prairie – Sandi Saurers
Coccoloba – Lucy Breitung Fagan	Pinellas – David Perkey
Cuplet Fern – Mark Kateli	Sarracenia – Jeannie Brodhead
Dade – Kurt Birchenough	Sarracenia – David Roddenberry
Eugenia – David Martin	Serenoa – Erica Timmerman
Hernando – Heather Sharkey	Sparkleberry – Carol Sullivan
Lake Beautyberry – Patricia Burgos	Suncoast – Virginia Overstreet
Longleaf Pine – Gabriel Campbell	Sweetbay – Jonnie Smallman
Martin County – Dianna Wentink	Tarflower – Mandy Morgan
Naples – Kara Driscoll - CoC Chair	Tarflower – Julie Becker
Nature Coast – Diane Caruso	Villages – Gary Babic
Palm Beach County – Helen Laurence	FNPS President – Bonnie Basham
Passionflower – Melanie Simon - CoC Secretary	FNPS Executive Director – Juliet Rynear
Pawpaw – Karen Walter	Ginny Stibolt*
Pawpaw – Sande Habali	

➤ **Regular Agenda Items**

● **Minutes from previous meeting –**

Diane C. motioned to approve the January 24, 2021 meeting minutes with one correction. Patricia B. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

● **Sharing News about Chapter Activities**

Suggestion was made to alternate structured “business” meetings (with agenda) and more informal “sharing” meetings

● **Outreach Workshop**

- April 17 from 2pm to 4pm. Eventbrite invitation sent to Chapter Reps and Presidents.
- Each chapter is invited to send 3 members – Ginny stated that members involved in outreach events, membership, social media, newsletters,
- Ginny requested that everyone should bring their outreach ideas. Send an email to gstibolt@gmail.com or council.secretary@fnps.com with requests for discussion items.

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- Melanie S. reported that only 12 chapters have registered participants so far. Registration will be opened up to more than 3 participants per chapter if tickets are still available one week prior.
- Mark K. commented that Cuplet Fern has an event that day. Ginny commented that the workshop will be recorded.
- **News/Announcements**
 - Chapter Reps were reminded to vote on the Forum for Council Chair – voting closes 3/30. Anyone needing help with their Forum login email Council Secretary or webteam@fnps.org.
 - Chapters were reminded to file returns for year ending 12/30/20 with the IRS.
 - May Conference
 - Register at <https://www.fnps.org/conference/2021>
 - Any chapter needing help with their Chapter video can email Valerie Anderson. She has put together an instructional video and can help chapters with different formats.
 - National Native Plant Month
 - Bonnie B. spoke to the group about the letter she wrote from FNPS supporting the Senate resolution to designate April as Native Plant Month (posted on website). Juliet announced resolution has passed. Chapters can send a “thank you” letter to Senators Rubio and Scott.
 - Link to the announcement for National Native Plant Month:
<https://www.portman.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/portman-hirono-praise-unanimous-senate-passage-bipartisan-resolution>
 - Earth Day Event in Spanish about natural Florida and native plants will be streamed on Cuplet Fern’s Facebook and YouTube platforms – April 22 at 4 pm
 - Chapters and members can nominate for Palmetto Awards – see FNPS website for details [Florida Native Plant Society \(FNPS\)](#).
- **Ongoing Business**
 - **Council Orientation/Website**
 - Melanie S. reported that the website update is complete except for the “Resources” page, which Kara is reorganizing. With the new “How To” page on the website and the “Welcome Letter” for new Chapter Reps, the Orientation task is also complete. Comments and suggestions (send to council.secretary@fnps.org) are welcome as the website is used.
 - **Regional Native Landscaping Brochure Reprints**
 - Melanie S. reported that survey responses indicated not many reprints of the brochure were needed (see results posted on website). Since reprints are paid for by Chapters and are expensive for small quantities due to large format, suggestion is that Chapters needing reprints contact other chapters in their regions to see if remaining brochure stock can be shared to meet short-term needs and a larger reprint order can be coordinated at a later date.
 - Karen W. commented in chat to Ixia that they may have enough to share.
 - Kara D. commented she would like to work with Wendy Poag to streamline reprints (including these brochures)

- **New Business**

- **FNPS Strategic Plan**

- Kara D. reported on the strategic planning session done with the FNPS Board. Question put to the board members: "If money were no object, what would you like to see FNPS doing or achieving beyond what we're doing now?" Rather than build on ideas generated at that session, it was decided that the Council should approach the questions with fresh eyes.
- Juliet R. gave an overview of previous strategic planning sessions. She stated that FNPS needs goals (both small and large) and a vision for the future – that even if goals/visions seem unobtainable right now, we never know if/when money may fall in our lap. So think "If only . . . "
- Meeting participants were assigned to 5 breakout rooms with one person assigned as "secretary" to take notes.
- Groups worked in Breakout Rooms for 20 minutes and then reconvened to share their lists.
 - Notes from each of the Breakout Room are attached.
- Comments from chat:
 - Melanie S. - Florida Wildflower Foundation gives grants to schools for plants "Seedlings for Schools"
 - Helen L. - PBC chapter had at one time partnered with Habitat for Humanity so that all the new houses they built had native plant gardens.

Gail T. made a motion to adjourn.

Bonnie B. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:03 PM

BREAKOUT ROOM 1

Participants: Dave Perkey (Pinellas), Dianna Wentink (Martin), Carol Sullivan (Sparkleberry), and Mark Kateli (Cuplet Fern, notetaker)

Discussion point:

“If money was no object, what would you like FNPS to do over the next number of years?”

- **Mark-**
 - Southeast regional conference- banding together Georgia Native Plant Society, Alabama, Mississippi (if they have one), and Texas Native Plant Society
 - Would occur once every 5 years.
 - Different state can float/opt to be the host of the conference
 - There would always be an online component to the conference for distance learning and students.
- **Dave-**
 - Professional, educational videos
 - HOAs- *how and why to plant natives for your yard and region*
 - Grade school- *how to get kids interested in native plants*
 - Alternate videos based on student age groups
 - Plant sales
 - Central location within the county to make it convenient for all to travel to
 - Collaborate with local hardware stores (such as Ace Hardware) for them to carry native plants throughout the year.
 - Hardware store has a business-level membership that supports Pinellas chapter
- **Carol-**
 - Southeast regional conference- would strengthen our recognition, visibility, and awareness
 - Local native plant nursery business incubation incentives are desperately needed
 - For Sparkleberry, the closest nursery is 100 miles away.
 - Collaborate more with Master Gardeners
 - Most residents are retirees and do not want to work during their retirement with a chapter.
- **Dianna-**
 - Develop and standardize plan sale outreaches.
 - FNPS State needs to produce ways to make it easier for residents to buy native plants
 - There are no native nurseries in Martin county
 - Martin county has to go to Palm Beach county to purchase plants to grow for their once-a-year plant sale
 - Frequency of plant sale outreaches is not high enough.
 - Collaborate more with FANN and devise ways how we build native plant nurseries closer to Martin County’s service area.

BREAKOUT ROOM 2

3/28/2021 Strategic Planning

Melanie Simon (Passionflower), David Martin (Eugenia), Jeannie Brodhead (Sarracenia), Kurt Birchenough (Dade), Gail Taylor (Citrus)

Gail – Hire a member who is a writer who can write articles (about native plants and related topics) for papers and magazines around the state and country.

Melanie - Ads on TV (or in magazines) to introduce people to the idea of native plants – not currently on many people’s radar. Change perceptions/landscaping behaviors/plant blindness. Could also do lower-cost campaign on social media with professionally produced ads.

Talked about invasive plants – collaborate to increase awareness

“Educate” buyers in big box stores about the plants they sell – individual stores don’t have control – not enough native nurseries

Jeannie – burn crews (additional?) for national forests and other conservation properties –

David - encouraging and supporting land management, local community support for land management including in urban areas, educate about land management and what land managers do – organize field trips pre- and post- burn

Jeannie – get kids involved! Youth gardening camps/day camps

Melanie – make Volunteer Hour reporting less cumbersome

More FNPS staff!

Expand the native plant database – lots of native plant databases popping up - we should have the best – add extras like printable plant cards for plant sales – could be an intern project or crowdsourcing project with members?

BREAKOUT ROOM 3

COC Strategic Planning session – March 28, 2021

Juliet Rynear (Exec. Director), Ginny Stibolt (Ixia), Diane Caruso (Nature Coast), Virginia Overstreet (Suncoast), Sande Habali (Pawpaw), Lucy Breitung Fagan (Coccoloba)

- More publications – FNPS books (and digital) – maybe 50 pages with ½ color photos, magazines with color photos
- More brochures in the hands of real estate agents, welcome centers, newcomers, (they should be everywhere!)
- Give money and advice (and/or have a troupe of FNPS people to actually do the work) to communities to get rid of non-native invasives, plant natives, save our waterbodies.
 - Could also pay to train municipal workers in invasive removal and restoration
 - Could also pay to train Landscaping companies
- FNPS certifying that non-FANN nurseries are actually selling natives (not imposters). Support local nurseries – Could have a certification process and certify the plants as native.
 - Could also have FNPS nurseries
 - FANN nurseries won't deliver to non-FANN nurseries – we need to make sure that nurseries can get natives that they want/need
 - Deal with non-natives sold at FANN nurseries
 -
- Demonstration gardens – should have these in every property on county properties. Have contracts with the counties so that we don't lose that space.
- Maintenance of native plant gardens is very important – we need to train people about maintenance, when to prune, etc.
- Lobby or talk to people who purchase for Lowes – could we get Lowes to offer at least 20% natives.
- Get more young people involved (especially young children and middle-schoolers). How do we get more children involved in learning about natives (events? Interactive workshops? Contact Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Brownies about a native plant badge, 4H).
 - Offer grants to schools for school gardens
 - Give children the plants to take home after the event/workshop, with care instructions. Could be an edible
- Color photos of mature native landscapes and all the wildlife that they support
 - Include landscape plan, then progress over time and mature landscape

BREAKOUT ROOM 4

COC Meeting-Breakout Rooms 3/28/21

If Money Were NO PROB, what would we like to see FNPS do?

Group: Mandy Morgan-Tarflower, Karen Walter-PawPaw, Jonnie Smallman-Sweetbay, Gabriel Campbell-Longleaf, Bonnie Basham-Sarracenia

1. Get more communities to change planting regulations, make sure HOA's (and county) are aware of the importance of native plants and include them in plans for communities.
 - a. Survey high profile roads in communities, send information to resident on natives vs. invasives in their communities, pay for native plant replacement giveaways, or removal of invasive trees
2. FNPS keep buying Land, expand wildlife corridors
3. After hurricane, native plants were offered by various organizations, Forestry Department, State, IFAS, master gardeners, to replace lost trees in the storm. Native plant giveaways would be helpful.
4. Trying to get younger people involved in the Organization-increase recruitment in schools.
 - a. Provide scholarships for conference (including hotels, food, etc.)
 - b. Student attendance is free-how can we encourage chapters to fund 1-2 students from their chapter for conference.
 - c. Tarflower was funding a board member to go-maybe can reach out to students instead.
 - d. PawPaw was funding hotel, food, etc. for two students. Ask local schools (Stetson) for student recommendations.
 - e. Virtual Option for Conference for those who cannot afford to Attend.
5. FNPS Operations Manager to keep track of all of the various projects happening throughout the state
6. Remove Brazilian Pepper from Major highways! (actually pay contractors to do this) Replace with Native trees and shrubs.

Use plants as mulch
7. Fund pollinator/native gardens in low income communities (large scale or small scale) where they have ability to maintain them.

BREAKOUT ROOM 5

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Proceedings of Breakout Room 5

Participants: Patricia Burgos (Lake Beautyberry), Heather Sharkey (Hernando), Helen Laurence (Palm Beach County), David Roddenberry (Sarracenia), Julie Becker (Tarflower)

Ideas

1. Acquire large landholdings and staff, and manage for the ultimate environmental benefit.
2. Become much more effective in advocacy by increasing training and organization.
 - Hire more lobbyists regionally to mentor us in our advocacy
 - Increase funding for current lobbyist
3. Avail ourselves of top-notch legal assistance in cases of need.
4. Have regional FNPS offices.
5. Push for labeling regulations for invasive plants ---if not control of sales of same.
6. Also for labeling native plants in the stores.
7. Create model ordinances for local-gov landscape standards. Also push for strengthening enforcement of existing ordinances
8. Intensify our advocacy for more-sustainable development and stopping water withdrawals from springs and aquifers
9. Partner with other statewide envir groups. With these groups, issue envir report cards on politicians.
10. Greatly increase FNPS grants to local gov for native-landscaping.
11. Enable all chapters to disseminate Doug Tallamy's concepts
12. Make available funds for every chapter to bring in Doug Tallamy or other big names aligned with our mission.