



Florida Native Plant Society

**Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 11/28/2021**

Online Zoom Meeting  
taken by Melanie Simon – CoC Secretary

Patricia Burgos called the meeting to order at 06:30 PM

**In attendance (22) – 17 of 33 Chapters**

**\* indicates proxy or guest**

Citrus – Gail Taylor	Pawpaw – Karen Walter
Citrus – Jeffrey Bippert*	Pawpaw – Sande Habali
Coccoloba – Lucy Breitung	Pinellas – Dave Perkey
Conradina - Martha Steuart	Sea Rocket – Elizabeth Bishop
Cuplet Fern – Al Squires	Sarracenia - David Roddenberry*
Eugenia – David Martin	Sparkleberry - Carol Sullivan
Lake Beautyberry – Patricia Burgos - <b>CoC Chair</b>	Sweetbay – Jonnie Smallman
Longleaf – Gabriel Campbell	Tarflower – Nihal Hafez*
Martin County – Dianna Wentink	Tarflower – Jennifer Ferngren
Nature Coast – Diane Caruso	FNPS President – Bonnie Basham*
Passionflower – Melanie Simon - <b>CoC Secretary</b>	FNPS Education Committee - Wendy Poag*

## Regular Agenda Items

- **Minutes from 9/26/21 meeting**

Karen W. motioned to approve the September 26, 2021 meeting minutes. Lucy B. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Next Meeting - January 23, 2022**

Chapters concurred In lieu of a December meeting Patricia will send out an email update.

- **FNPS Board News (Patricia B.)**

- Budget discussions are ongoing. Expect approval in December.
- Executive Director search is ongoing. There were 23 applicants – that list was reduced to 7 candidates who have now been interviewed.

- **License Plate Sales**

- Melanie S. reported there was an uptick in sales in October, but have been few sales so far in November. The total plates sold is now around 325 of the 3,000 needed by next October to move to production. Need to sell an average of 250 plates per month to meet the goal.

- Chapters should continue to advertise the license plate on their websites, Facebook, and other communications and outreach. Now is the season to advertise giving a license plate voucher as a gift.
- Valerie Anderson created several Facebook posts showing members with their cars with Photoshopped Florida Native license plates. She will do the same for anyone who wants it and it would be a good promotional idea to have one for each Chapter with the President or another officer – someone most members would recognize. Chapters should send photos to Valerie at communications@fnps.org.
  - Resolution - at least 1080x1080
  - Lighting - just good natural light, not in deep shade or the background lit up and the back of the car in deep shadow
  - Angle - creativity is good here - I just need to be able to see the existing plate clearly enough to put the new one on top
  - The person should look happy or at least be doing something kind of interesting. Could be a group of members or a family. Could be without people and include a testimonial. Valerie could also Photoshop the car into a natural area like FWF does. Be different and creative.
- Melanie S. noted that when she shared the Photoshop post with her Facebook friends several non-members responded that they had or would buy a plate.
- David M. noted (in chat) that Eugenia is planning to print a large banner for their outreach at Gardenfest, a huge plant sale in Vero Beach in February.
- Jeffrey B. said he would talk to the other administrators of the Florida Native Gardening Facebook group and see if they can mount a campaign to sell plates.
- Melanie S. noted that revenue from the plates will go to FNPS mission-related goals (not administration) which means they could be used to fund additional brochure printing which would benefit chapters.
- Bonnie B. noted that the license plate fee (\$34 in addition to regular registration fee) is refundable if we don't reach the 3,000-plate goal. If we do reach the goal, for as long as the plate is in production, \$25 of each plate sold or renewed is paid to FNPS.
- **Good Citizen Guide and Regional Inserts**
  - Digital versions of the regional inserts are posted on the FNPS website (under Resources/Downloadable Documents). Not currently printable, but Wendy P. said that is this goal. Regional map included with the inserts is not correct.
  - Patricia B. shared the table she sent to the printer showing how many copies each region is getting and explained several times the methodology and math she used to determine region quantities. Patricia explained that it is up to the regional coordinators to decide how to divide up the total quantity received by the region – she is not dictating how many copies go to each chapter. Distribution could be on the basis of size, or could be an equal number to each chapter – Patricia hopes that whatever is decided the distribution is equitable.
  - David R. asked to clarify that inserts will not have to be printed by chapters as they have already been printed by FNPS. Patricia confirmed this.
  - Melanie S. asked if chapters were supposed to receive extra inserts since 12,000 inserts were printed and only 10,000 brochures were printed. Patricia replied yes and said this was because the gatefolds were more expensive to print, and her region understood gatefold/insert quantities may not be one-to-one. Wendy P. explained extra inserts were printed so they could be used as stand-alone handouts and so chapters could get inserts for other regions if they have events where there are attendees from other areas. Wendy suggested gatefolds could potentially be stuffed with inserts for multiple regions for large events.

- Discussion ensued about how many inserts were received by each coordinator. Each shrink-wrapped bundle contains 100 inserts.
- Melanie asked if there was a document that would help chapters confirm they got the correct quantities or at least what chapters were sharing each region's allotment. Patricia reiterated distribution was up to the coordinators.
- Discussion ensued about who has the brochures for Sea Rocket. Martha S. said she was confused about whether she was supposed to have Sea Rocket's brochures – she, David M., and Linda Eastman all received shipments for her region, but none worked with Sea Rocket on insert content. Patricia said Martha received 500 gatefolds and that 250 were to go to Sea Rocket. Karen W. said Pawpaw worked with Sea Rocket on the content and she and Sande H. thought they were supposed to share the 600 gatefolds and 1,000 inserts they got with Sea Rocket. Karen believes she has Sea Rocket's brochures with Central East Coast inserts and will coordinate with Elizabeth B. Martha will also coordinate so Sea Rocket can get some South Central East Coast inserts as well since Pawpaw included some south Brevard places on the inserts, but Sea Rocket covers the northern part of Brevard as well. Patricia explained the confusion arose because the region map is not accurate, she didn't want to make Marjorie redraw the map, so she subtracted print quantities from Region F and added them to Region J for Sea Rocket.
- Patricia asked coordinators (not all of whom were at the meeting) to let her know if they didn't get the proper numbers so she can follow up with the printer.
- Wendy P. said she and Patricia need to be sure the printer shipped correct numbers to each region. She characterized this distribution as a "test run" and stressed the distribution kinks need to be worked out before the next distribution. Patricia said if anyone doesn't want to continue to be a regional coordinator they should let her know.
- **GCG Distribution Strategies**
  - Dianna W. asked other chapters to share their plans/strategies for brochure distribution. Since copies are limited she wants to make sure they are not wasted.
  - Jennifer F. (in Chat) said Tarflower does not plan on having them out on their table for people to grab and forget about. GCGs will be handed out to interested, but unknowledgeable, folks at events.
  - Melanie S. said she and Mandy from Tarflower have been talking about setting up a table at an upscale farmer's market in Orlando as that market may draw a demographic that would be particularly receptive to the messaging. Also looking to distribute at a Conservation Symposium in April.
  - Karen W. (in Chat) said that Pawpaw works closely with a local nursery that has many new resident clients. They have agreed to judiciously hand out the brochures and they want to be a sponsor.
  - Patricia noted that with the GCG we want to try to expand distribution beyond the "choir" and get it to folks who just moved to Florida, are not familiar with natives, and who are concerned about the environment.
  - Patricia reiterated that they are trying to create a digital version, but there is still concern about preventing the ability to edit the document to preserve quality. Room is being left on the insert for a chapter or sponsor name. Chapters are encouraged to get sponsors/donors to pay for printing.
  - Jeffrey B. noted that pdf files can be edited, but epub and azw3 formats cannot without special software. He pointed out that it would be very useful if people could access the brochure on their phones for reference or to show people when they aren't carrying a physical copy.
- **Facebook Administrator**
  - Melanie S. reported there was recently an incident where both Ixia Facebook administrators were removed because one of the administrator's accounts was compromised. Valerie Anderson managed to get the chapter Facebook page reinstated, but it was difficult because she was not an

official administrator. To safeguard your chapter Facebook page it would be a good idea to add Valerie as an administrator for backup in case of future issue. Chapter Reps should pass this on to whoever administers Facebook for them.

- **FNPS Annual Conference**
  - Melanie S. noted that the conference is scheduled for May 19-22 in Jacksonville. It will be hybrid.
  - Melanie S. reminded everyone that if they have been thinking of sponsoring a student or young professional interested in native plants now is the time to start looking into that again.
  - More information will be coming on Facebook and the FNPS website so the conference can be promoted to members and other interested people.
- **Homegrown National Parks**
  - Melanie S. noted there is a new website up that grew out of Doug Tallamy's idea that by stringing together private land with native plants that support pollinators and wildlife we can, in effect, create a new national park. On the website you can register your property if you are planting natives. It would be great to get everyone registered so all can see how this movement grows.
  - Website link is <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/about-us>

## Ongoing Business/Subcommittee Reports

- **Chapter Activity Matrix**
  - Melanie S. created a pdf and link to the Chapter Activity Matrix on the Council website home page. The matrix is a valuable resource for chapters who want activity ideas or want to find other chapters doing particular activities so they can start out with ideas and tips and learn about potential pitfalls. Link to the Chapter Activity Matrix is on the home page of the Council website or can be accessed directly at <https://council.fnpschapters.org/data/uploads/documents/initiative-documents/2021-chapter-activities-matrix.pdf> .
- **Speakers List**
  - Melanie S. encouraged chapters to keep adding speakers to the list to build this into a useful resource/help for chapters who are looking for ideas for speakers and program topics or who need a last-minute replacement for a speaker who cancelled.
  - Link to the Speakers List is on the home page of the Council website or can be accessed directly at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/19\\_bI5HkzKnjMdNoTv9AJk4emR052guyq/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/19_bI5HkzKnjMdNoTv9AJk4emR052guyq/view?usp=sharing)

## New Business

- **Nominating Committee**
  - Need 2-3 people to serve on a nominating committee for Council Vice Chair and Secretary elections in March.
    - Past or present Chapter Representatives can serve as Council officers.
    - Officer duties are at <https://handbook.fnps.org/council-of-chapters/council-officers/> (or access from Guidance tab on the Council of Chapters website).
  - The nominating Committee will solicit candidates for the two positions in January. Nominations close February 8.
    - The election schedule and process are at <https://handbook.fnps.org/council-of-chapters/council-officer-elections/> (or access from Guidance tab on the Council of Chapters website).

website).

- CoC Election nomination request email, election notice, and voting instruction templates are on the Templates tab on the Council of Chapter website.
- Contact Patricia at [councilchair@fnps.org](mailto:councilchair@fnps.org) if you can serve on the committee.

- **Volunteer Hours Reporting**

- Melanie S. reported on the research done on FNPS volunteer hours reporting and the recommended changes and timeline.
- The primary reasons volunteer hours are very important to FNPS, a volunteer-based organization, are as qualifications for grants and other nonprofit support. Having a record of volunteer hours:
  - Validates nonprofit status
  - Demonstrates an active and engaged team supporting the mission, providing service to the community and State; and
  - Demonstrates the ability to mobilize a workforce to fulfil grant requirements and complete projects.

The key thing the volunteer hours records should show (because potential financial supporters look for it) is a trend showing improvement and growth over time.

- Even though FNPS membership has grown, reported hours have declined from over 47K in 2017 to only about 23K in 2020 and 2021 (projected). In 2020 only 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of chapters fully reported hours. 2020 volunteer hours are valued at over \$600,000.
  - Recommendation is to retain and modify the current system (minimal cost and manpower required versus a new system) hours. Proposing to reduce the current 10 input fields, 17 categories and 17 activities to 5 input fields, 0 categories and about 12 activities.
  - Goals of the modifications are:
    - Simplify so reporting is less difficult and time-consuming;
    - Clarify so reporting is more consistent and provides a better picture of effort on mission-critical work;
    - Educate so the need, importance, and methodology are better understood; and
    - Regularly monitor and report hours for greater transparency and to motivate participation in this required support for FNPS.
  - Timeline:
    - Approval by FNPS Board in December.
    - Finish reporting all 2021 hours by January 31, 2022.
    - Train in January.
    - Make system changes the first week of February (hours reporting system will be down)
    - Start reporting 2022 hours on February 8, 2022 using the simplified system.
  - Proposed Training dates are scheduled for:
    - January 23 at regular Council Meeting
    - January 27 at 6:00 pm
- Save the dates and ask whoever does reporting within the chapter to save the dates as well. If these dates don't work let Melanie ([council.secretary@fnps.org](mailto:council.secretary@fnps.org)) know so a different training date can be planned. Will also record the training.
- Training will include going through the new activity list, including what gets included in each activity, who should report hours, and how hours can be reported more easily.
  - Sign-in and link for reporting will remain the same. Karen W. (in Chat) asked if reporting will be

more accessible to all members rather than a password protected link. Melanie said yes, and that the reporting can already be accessed without a password using a link:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfCkvfxVGxxYBIAGJevuiq6S8rht0\\_kAMBXofSno4Gkd01MWA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfCkvfxVGxxYBIAGJevuiq6S8rht0_kAMBXofSno4Gkd01MWA/viewform)

- Melanie stated a lot of the recommendations came from conversations with people in about 15 chapters and thanks those that took the time to help.
- Patricia reiterated that Chapter Reps need to encourage their chapters to report hours report the 2021 hours by the end of January and 2022 hours starting in February using the modified system.

## Open Floor

- Jonnie S. asked Melanie if she copies Chapter Board members on Council emails. Melanie explained she only copies Chapter Representatives and Chapter Presidents only if there is no assigned representative. Chapter Representatives should feel free to forward any of the emails they receive.
- David R. advised that Sarracenia does not currently have a Chapter Rep. Melanie thanked David for the information.
- Gail T. mentioned that new officers need to advise FNPS when officers change at [info@fnps.org](mailto:info@fnps.org). Melanie said that when she sees a new Rep on the FNPS site she sends them a welcome letter telling them how to get the logins they will need and where to find the Chapter Rep orientation information.
- Lucy B. said Coccoloba is working on a bylaw revision and asked chapters what their bylaws say about a quorum for board meetings.
  - Wendy P. is working on the FNPS bylaws revision. She said FNPS bylaws revisions will be presented at the May conference and Chapter bylaws revamping will follow. She noted (in Chat) that “not less than one half of the total number of directors shall constitute a quorum” is often used.
  - David P. noted (in Chat) that Pinellas has “A simple majority of the elected Board shall constitute a quorum at any meeting. Decisions requiring a vote shall be made only when a quorum is present.”
- Sande H. said Pawpaw is at offering grants for community gardens. Pinellas, Citrus and Suncoast currently offer grants.
  - Gail T. said it is important to use Latin names for plants so there are no mistakes about what plants are purchased. Sande said they are solving that problem by purchasing the plants.
  - Gail said another issue is making sure there is a plan for ongoing maintenance.
  - Al S. advised Sande to check the Mangrove Chapter site for their grant application.
  - Patricia reminded everyone that one chapter (Nature Coast) had their funded garden ripped up when staff changed.

## Motion to Adjourn

Al S. motioned to adjourn. Lucy B. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Meeting Adjourned at 8:09 PM**