Florida Native Plant Society

*Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 06/27/2021*

Online Zoom Meeting
taken by Melanie Simon – CoC Secretary

Patricia Burgos called the meeting to order at 06:31 PM

**In attendance (21) – 19 of 33 Chapters**

* indicates proxy or guest

- Broward – Stephanie Dunn*
- Citrus – Gail Taylor
- Coccoloba – Lucy Breitung
- Cuplet Fern – Al Squires
- Dade – Kurt Birchenough
- Heartland – Gregory Thomas
- Lake Beautyberry – Patricia Burgos - **CoC Chair**
- Longleaf Pine – Gabriel Campbell
- Magnolia – Ethan Voegele
- Martin County – Dianna Wentink
- Nature Coast – Diane Caruso
- Passionflower – Melanie Simon - **CoC Secretary**
- Pawpaw – Sande Habali
- Paynes Prairie – Sandi Saurers
- Sarracenia – David Roddenberry
- Sea Rocket – Elizabeth Bishop*
- Suncoast – Tina Patterson*
- Sweetbay – Jonnie Smallman*
- Tarflower – Nihal Hafez*
- FNPS President – Bonnie Basham*
- FNPS Exec. Director – Juliet Rynear*

**Regular Agenda Items**

- **Welcome to Ethan Voegele, new Chapter Rep from Magnolia**
- **Minutes from 5/23/21 meeting**
  
  Al S. motioned to approve the May 23, 2021 meeting minutes. Gail T. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Next Meeting July 25**
  
  Networking meeting. Topic: Speakers list and hybrid meetings. Want to generate ideas to update a list of speakers all chapters can use when planning programs. Since many chapters now use Zoom, distant speakers can now be invited to speak, so the discussion will also focus on ways to set up and run hybrid meetings (one example: speaker on Zoom and in-person audience). Hybrid meetings will also benefit members who may not be able to make it to in-person gatherings.
  
  - Melanie S. will invite Valerie Anderson to attend

- **News/Announcements**
  
  - Bonnie B. announced Governor DeSantis signed the bill to cancel 2 of 3 proposed toll roads – a huge win for FNPS and environment. Bonnie thanked everyone who wrote letters and helped make the system work.
• Patricia B. noted that if anyone wants to keep updated on what our lobbyist, Sue Mullins, is working on, Gene Kelly writes up a Legislation Committee summary report and posts it on the FNPS Forum
  • Report is posted on the FNPS Forum/FNPS Administration/Board of Directors (note added)
• Patricia B. reported on the June 17 Board of Directors meeting.
  • By-laws committee formed to update the FNPS by-laws. Susan Learner will chair the committee and it will be a year-long process.
  • Board Development committee formed. Mark Kateli will chair.
  • Volunteer Hours Reporting committee formed. Melanie S. is on committee.
  • Any Chapter Representative interested in serving on one of these committees can contact Bonnie.
  • Membership is up to 5,200.
  • Annual Conference had 695 attendees and raised $17,000.
  • Conference next year will be in Jacksonville. Will be in-person, but will be offered virtually as well.
• Chapter Leader Survey was emailed by Juliet. This is strategic plan input and it is very important to hear from all chapters and all parts of the State. Chapter Reps are asked to encourage their chapters’ leadership to respond to the survey.
• License plate pre-sales have started and we have a year to sell 3,000 against stiff competition.
  • Melanie S. posted images, verbiage and a simple flyer on the website.
  • Diane C. noted her son told her about a blog article (Craig Pitman) that said there is interest in the license plate among Florida natives as a way to differentiate themselves from people who have moved to the state from elsewhere.
  • Melanie S. recommended people interested in purchasing be directed to the FNPS website (there is an Order Now button at https://www.fnps.org/support/license NOT to the DMV website).

Ongoing Business/Subcommittee Reports

• Chapter Activity Matrix
  • Gail T. has summarized the discussion from the 5/23 Council meeting notes into an activity matrix and is contacting Chapters who were not in attendance to collect their information. A few other activities have also been added to the matrix. The purpose of this is to provide a tool chapters can use to find chapters with experience who can advise them if they want to start planning an activity they have never tried before.
  • Please respond to Gail’s request and email Gail (fgtaylor55@gmail.com) with additional information.
  • After Gail has heard from Chapter Reps who were not at the May meeting, Melanie will post the draft matrix on the Google Drive so Chapters can review and revise their responses.

• Good Citizen Guide Regional Inserts
  • Patricia B. provided an update: there are two parts to this project – the fold-out Good Citizen Guide with general information about natural resources and how to be Florida-friendly and region-specific inserts with natural community descriptions, places to visit, and garden
recommendations

- Looking to wrap up by mid-July
- Have collected most photo permissions
- Still need input from some regions – Patricia B. will reach out to these regions
- Regions/chapters will have a chance to review the drafts

- Chapters need to provide counts of how many copies of the Guide they need - FNPS plans to provide copies free of charge to all chapters.
  - Gail T. pointed out the guide and inserts will be available in both English and Spanish, so copy requests are needed for both versions.
  - Gail T. noted that copy requests should be sent to the regional coordinators.
  - Gail T. noted that chapters may want to include requests for copies of the inserts for regions that border them.
  - Melanie S. pointed out the current chapter/region/coordinator map needs to be updated.
  - Patricia B. will follow up to update the map and provide instructions and contacts for submitting copy requests as well as a deadline.
  - Chapters with questions or issues (like Chapter Rep out of town) can email or text Patricia.

New Business

- **New Member Packages**
  - Melanie S. noted that she is starting to develop a new member package for Passionflower. Feels new member packages (whether mailed or emailed) provide a warm welcome and personal contact which should help engage (make new member more likely to participate) and retain members.
  - A Poll was conducted to find out what chapters are doing or would like to do (note: results were updated to include Passionflower response)
    - Currently sends out digital information packages to new members: 19%
    - Currently sends out packages to new members in the mail: 25%
    - Does not currently send out a package, but would like to: 50%
    - Would not be interested in sending out new member packages: 6%
  - Gail T. provided a copy of the Citrus package – Melanie S. has posted this and other relevant information on the Council Google Drive (accessed from the FNPS Data Distribution/Member Data portal with a chapter login).
  - Want to post packages/information from other chapters and convene a working group to review and prepare a “template” that chapters can easily personalize (pick and choose what they want to include) and use. This will lessen the load on individual chapters and provide a good resource for all chapters.
  - Melanie S. asked chapters with packages to email or mail copies to her to post on the Google Drive. Email package to council.secretary@fnps.org or request mailing address.
  - Gail T. commented it was important to note the Citrus package is out-of-date and that she feels it is important include a list of nurseries and books available at local libraries.
  - Nihal H. provided a list of Facebook groups.
Grants for Community Gardens

- Diane C. reported that her chapter is reviewing grants. Discussions followed:
  - Donating funds to projects in neighboring counties (Al S. noted Cuplet Fern works in/with neighboring counties, Citrus and Suncoast only give grants in their own county)
  - Someone who is looking for grants to install food gardens in low-income communities (gardens may be food, but have native pollinator plants)
  - Grant compliance - Greg T. asked about up-front stipulations. Al S. said Mangrove has grant conditions. Gail T. said the Citrus grant application is on their website and can be downloaded
  - Gail T. stressed it is important to specify plants using Latin names so grant recipients don’t buy non-natives with the same name. Greg T. concurred
  - Diane C. noted it is important to have someone monitor the grant garden sites.
  - Patricia B. and Diane C. noted that the reality is that sometimes grants will just go south and a chapter may have to walk away.
  - The benefit of having the Council so chapters can collaborate (not have to re-invent the wheel) was noted.

Open Floor

- Florida Friendly Landscaping App
  - Lucy B. said the new Florida-Friendly Landscaping app (Apple and Android) looks pretty good and wondered if FNPS is considering developing an app.
    - Patricia B. said nothing has been mentioned to her knowledge, but she will mention this to the board.

- Director and Officer Liability Insurance
  - Lucy B. is interested in how many chapters have Director and Officer Liability Insurance.
    - Suggested Melanie S. send out a survey to find out whether any chapters have or have considered getting insurance.
    - Issue will be investigated and reported back

- Request for Future Informal Meeting Topics
  - Patricia B. requested chapters submit any topics or ideas they have for future informal meetings

Meeting Adjourned at 7:43 PM