Florida Native Plant Society

Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 01/23/2022
Online Zoom Meeting
taken by Melanie Simon – CoC Secretary

Melanie Simon called the meeting to order at 06:36 PM

In attendance (24) – 21 of 33 Chapters
* indicates proxy or guest

- Citrus – Gail Taylor*
- Coccoloba – Lucy Breitung
- Cuplet Fern – Al Squires
- Dade – Kurt Birchenough
- Eugenia – David Martin
- Heartland – Gregory Thomas
- Lake Beautyberry – Patricia Burgos
- Magnolia – Ethan Voegele
- Mangrove – Kate Borduas
- Martin County – Dianna Wentink
- Naples – Andee Nacarato*
- Nature Coast – Diane Caruso
- Passionflower – Melanie Simon - CoC Secretary
- Pawpaw – Karen Walter
- Pine Lily – Tayler Figueroa
- Pinellas – David Perkey
- Sarracenia – David Roddenberry
- Sea Rocket – Elizabeth Bishop
- Serenoa – Pamela Callender
- Suncoast – Virginia Overstreet
- Sweetbay – Jonnie Smallman
- FNPS President – Bonnie Basham*
- FNPS Treasurer – Susan Carr*
- FNPS Exec. Director – Shelley Sharp*

Regular Agenda Items

- Minutes from 11/28/21 meeting
  Al S. motioned to approve the November 28, 2021 meeting minutes. Gail T. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- Next Meeting February 27th

Announcements

- Council Chair Resignation
  - Bonnie B. announced she accepted the resignation of Patricia Burgos as Council Chair this week and that Melanie Simon would be chairing Council meetings for now.

- FNPS Annual Conference
  - Bonnie B. explained the difficult decision based on health/safety concerns to make the Annual Conference virtual rather than in-person/hybrid.
  - Bonnie showed the flyer (Melanie S. will send it out with the minutes) and talked about the
lineup of excellent speakers and topics including a keynote by Nancy Bisset, Anne Mackay and Carolyn Schagg who will talk about getting the Florida Wildflower Foundation started in a time when there wasn’t much awareness of native plants.

- **Interim Executive Director**
  - Shelley Sharp introduced herself as the Interim FNPS Executive Director. She specializes in interim executive leadership for nonprofit organizations and her role over the next few months will be to help the Society organize to become more effective.

- **FNPS Year-End Financial Summary**
  - Susan Carr, FNPS Treasurer, provided a summary of preliminary 2021 financials.
    - **FNPS Income**
      - 3 types of income:
        - Unrestricted – funds can be used for any type of expense as determined by the Board
        - Temporarily Restricted – funds can only be used for a specific project, function or capital purchase or within a limited timeframe
        - Permanently Restricted – restriction is imposed by the donor (endowment)
      - Total 2021 Operating Income (unrestricted + temporarily restricted) was $366.4K
      - Largest income source was net (gross – Chapter share) membership dues - $169.6K
      - Unrestricted contributions (up in 2021 with very successful year-end drive) were $91.9K
      - Temporarily Restricted contributions and Grants were $80.8K
      - Conference Income was $21.7K
      - Other income was $2.4K
    - **FNPS Expenses**
      - Total 2021 expenses were $348.5K
      - Largest expense was salaries (3 employees) $150.7K
      - Professional services (including accountant and contractors) were $67.4K
      - Office Expenses (including printing and postage) were $33.0K
      - Information Technology was $26.6K
      - Assistance & Grants were $19.7K
      - Program (project) Supplies were $15.1K
      - Conference expenses were $5.9K (very low because it was virtual)
      - Other Expenses (including travel, insurance and equipment) totaled about $30K
    - **Operating Fund** is like a bank account – income in, expenses out
      - Board tracks this throughout the year and makes adjustments if numbers are not what was predicted (in budget)
      - On an annual basis there can be a surplus or a shortfall (added to or deleted from Operating Reserves). Board decides how much should be retained in the Operating Reserves as “rainy day” funds to keep the organization running.
      - Operating funds (cash reserves) are currently over $400K
    - **Balance Sheet** - Total Assets are $696.8K total Liabilities are $8.2K so FNPS is in a very good financial position. Assets and Operating Reserves have increased annually since 2018.
      - Bonnie noted that we almost doubled attendance with the virtual conference. Although in-person is not as profitable, we need to view it as for education rather than for fundraising.
- **License Plate**
  - David Martin noted that license plate sales have not picked up and gave a summary of efforts and ideas to sell the plate outside FNPS membership.
  - Bonnie Basham strongly urged that we stop focusing on the design of the plate and focus instead on the benefits. There is so much we can do with an income stream from the plates ($75K+ per year) including education and furthering the mission. The options are limitless. Perhaps it is not the plate design we would have chosen, but it is what the legislature approved and we will not get a second chance. We can change the plate design in the future, but only if we are successful at selling 3,000 vouchers and get the plate into production this year. We’ve got to make this work.
  - David M. reinforced that we have limits on what we can do, particularly in education, due to lack of funds. A steady, predictable income stream would allow FNSP to do so much more.
  - Diane C. noted that the message about benefits is one that has resonated at her chapter.
  - Bonnie B. is willing to go to meetings at every Chapter to make a pitch for plate sales. Email an invite to her at president@FNPS.org.

- **Volunteer Hour Reporting**
  - Melanie S. reminded everyone the system is being updated for 2022 reporting.
  - There will be two training sessions: Thursday, January 27 and Sunday, February 13 at 6:30pm.
  - Chapter Representatives were asked to put the name and email address of the Volunteer Hours Coordinator for their chapters in the chat.
  - Patricia B. asked if training will be recorded. Melanie replied they will be.
  - Melanie S. noted that with the Volunteer Hours Reporting revision the Council Secretary will also report hours for regular Council meetings. Individual Chapter Representatives will not need to report meeting hours, just the hours they spend on duties as officers or working on initiatives. This will be covered in the training.

**Council Business**

- **Guidance Review/Revision**
  - Melanie S. noted that Guidance specifies attending at least 4 Council meetings each year and that in 2021 there were 11 chapters that did not meet this obligation.
  - Melanie S. said she has started going through Council Guidance to identify any changes that are required.
    - The only item noted so far is the requirement to publish and announcement with the slate of candidates and election process for Council elections in the Sable Minor. Since only Chapter Representatives can vote in the election, there is no need to publish this to the entire FNPS membership. She suggested that this be replaced with an email to Chapter Representatives. This will also provide close to a month longer time for nominations.
    - Lucy B. motioned to change the Council Guidelines to remove the Sabal Minor publication requirement and adjust the nominations schedule. Greg T. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
  - Melanie will continue to review the Guidelines and asked that anyone else who notes something that needs to be changed please email her.

- **Nominating Committee - Council Vice Chair and Secretary Elections**
o David P. and Karen W. reviewed the duties of the Vice Chair and Secretary
  • David P. noted the Vice Chair is responsible for assisting the Chair and for new Chapter Rep orientation and training
  • Karen W. noted that the Secretary is responsible for a broad range of tasks including agenda input, emailing the agenda and meeting instructions, minutes, keeping track of attendance, and website updates.

o David noted that past Chapter Representatives are eligible to be nominated, Melanie Please email karenlw72@gmail.com or dnperkey@gmail.com to nominate someone or self-nominate. We need

• **Officer Election Voting**
  
o Melanie S. explained that to vote in the elections, Chapter Representatives must be registered and have a Forum ID and password.
  • The list of “registered” Chapter Representatives is on the FNPS website Contacts page (https://www.fnps.org/contacts). If your name does not appear on the Council of Chapters list, please email info@fnps.org and advise them that you should be listed as your chapter’s representative.
  • To obtain a Forum ID and password please email webteam@fnps.org.
  o The voting period is March 15-30.

**Open Floor**

• **FNPS Bylaws Revision**
  
o Lucy B. noted her chapter is revising their bylaws and asked about the status of revising the FNPS bylaws.
  o Bonnie B. responded that changes have been drafted, but the Board can only vote on them at the Annual Meeting which should be during or shortly after the Annual Conference in May.

**Motion to Adjourn**

Al S. motioned to adjourn. Karen W. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:02 PM