Melanie Simon called the meeting to order at 06:30 PM

In attendance (22) – 17 of 33 Chapters
* indicates proxy or guest

Coccoloba - Lucy Breitung
Conradina - Martha Steuart
Dade – Lydia Cuni
Eugenia – David Martin
Ixia – Cate Hurlbut
Lake Beautyberry – Patricia Burgos
Longleaf Pine - Kimberley Bremmer
Mangrove – Kate Borduas
Martin County - Dianna Wentink
Naples – Sara Dust
Nature Coast – Diane Caruso
Passionflower – Melanie Simon - Chair
Pawpaw – Karen Walter
Pawpaw – Sande Habali
Pawpaw – Susan Anderson
Pinellas – David Perkey
Sarracenia – Lynn Artz
Serenos - Pamela Callender
Suncoast – Virginia Overstreet
Member Pkg. Committee - Gail Taylor*
FNPS Conference Chair – Athena Phillips*
Palmetto Editor – Marjorie Shropshire*

Regular Agenda Items

- Minutes from 10/23/22 meeting
  - Karen W. motioned to approve the revised October 23, 2022 meeting minutes. David P. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- Next Meeting February 26th at 6:30pm

News/Announcements/Reminders

- Palmetto Articles
  - Marjorie Shropshire (Palmetto editor) wanted to reach out to all the Chapters to submit Palmetto articles about projects and activities they are doing. Articles about Chapter projects and activities would make Palmetto a better outreach and fundraising tool as well as highlighting the great things being done by Chapters at the local level.
  - There are usually two-page and 4-page articles. The document with article specifications (article lengths, how to submit, information needed, photo specifications, etc.) is posted on the Council website (https://council.fnpschapters.org/) and Marjorie’s email address is palmetto@fnps.org.
  - Patricia B. will reach out to Lake Beautyberry about a project they are doing at the Library.
• Action Items to mention at Chapter Meetings and include in newsletters
  o Homegrown National Park Initiative - Encourage members to register their yards at https://homegrownnationalpark.org/. Florida currently ranks 35th among the 50 states in documentation of the use of native plants in landscaping.
  o Grants and Awards applications needed by March 3, 2023: Endowment Research Grant, Conservation Grants, Dan Austin Award for Ethnobotany, and Cornelia McNamara Grant. Information is posted on the home page of the Council website (http://www.council.fnpschapters.org) and on the FNPS website (https://www.fnps.org/what-we-do/awards).
  o Research Track Papers and Poster presentation abstracts for the Annual Conference session should be submitted by January 15. Information is posted on the home page of the Council website (http://www.council.fnpschapters.org)
  o Sabal Minor articles – submit by 12/15 to sabalminor@fnps.org

• Chapter Bylaws
  o If Chapter Bylaws are revised, please send a copy to Lynda Davis (executivedirector@fnps.org)

• October Native Plant Month Proclamations
  o Melanie noted that Lake, Wakulla, and Sumter Counties and the City of Dunedin (Pinellas) did proclamations which were noted by Valerie in the last Sabal Minor.
  o Chapter Representatives added Citrus (Athena and Gail), Charlotte (Kate), and Escambia (Kimberly) Counties to the list.

Council Initiatives and Ongoing Business

• New Member Packages
  o No progress to report this month.

• Speakers List (Speakers Bureau)
  o Melanie noted that she has added speaker information and links to recorded presentations to the list and asked that others do likewise. Link to the Speakers List is on the home page of the Council website or at https://drive.google.com/file/d/19_bl5HkzKnjMdNoTv9AJk4emR052guyq/view

• Council Vice Chair and Secretary Vacancies/Handbook
  o Sections of the Council Guidelines (Handbook) were reviewed and revised (see below). Main changes are:
    o Expanding the pool of candidates eligible to serve as Council Officers
    o Simplifying the lists of Officer Duties including the requirement to post meeting announcements/links/minutes on multiple platforms since most rely on email notifications
    o Eliminating the requirement to publish the slate in the Sabal Minor (provides more time to solicit nominations) and revising the elections schedule
    o Reducing the Officer terms from 2 years to 1 year was also discussed, but it was felt that a shorter term with all new officers every year would harm continuity.
    o Kate B. motioned to approve the revisions and Martha S. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
    o Melanie will review with the FNPS Board (particularly the deletion of slate publication in the Sabal Minor) and have the Handbook updated.

• Council Nominating Committee
  o Melanie asked for 3 volunteers to serve as the nominating committee.
Cate H. volunteered to help, leaving 2 positions empty. Need 2 more Chapter Representatives to serve on the committee – this is a short-term assignment and very important to the future of the Council – please step up and email mailto:msimon@fnps.org to volunteer.

Melanie noted that the first task will be writing an email soliciting nominations (to be sent to all FNPS members by Communications)

- **Membership Database**
  - Melanie asked for feedback on the new membership database. Comments were that using it was “painful” and “we look forward to it working better”. Getting membership information continues to be a manual effort and slow. Lists still have to be edited to remove duplicate entries and Gmail contact lists have to be updated manually. Conclusion is managing membership is not any easier.
  - Melanie noted she has requested a way to identify members who renew so they can be recognized and thanked.
  - One difficulty discussed is exporting email lists. An 11/18 email titled “Update on FNPS Membership data access – November 2022” describes a work-around.
  - Cate H. mentioned that the old website says the membership database is disabled, and it would be very helpful (and save time) to redirect to the new site.
  - Member count continues to be an issue. Counts do not seem accurate when compared to manually prepared lists.

**New Business**

- **1/19/23 FNPS Board Meeting Proxy**
  - Melanie noted she would not be able to attend the meeting. Although a couple of Chapter Reps are also board members, she said if anyone would like an opportunity to attend a board meeting they could go as her proxy. Diane C. volunteered.

- **Volunteer Participation**
  - Melanie reported some research she’s been doing on volunteer participation. Sources indicate a decline in volunteerism nation-wide and internationally since the pandemic. “Cause” seems to be a shift in priorities towards family, career, economics (due to inflation), and work-life balance. Related to “quiet quitting” in paid jobs – people only doing bare minimum required, not any extra work.

- **Member Survey**
  - Melanie noted that a number of Chapters do members surveys each year and proposed that the Council put together a survey. Each Chapter could get results of their own members and compare to State-Wide results.
  - Chapter Reps felt this would be interesting and useful and a good idea to remind members that we are all part of a larger organization.
  - Melanie asked Chapter Reps to discuss with their Chapters and bring any previous surveys to the February meeting so a list of questions can be compiled.

- **FNPS Board Landscaping Committee**
  - Patricia B. noted the Landscape Committee has been reactivated. Anyone interested in serving on the committee should reach out to the Committee Chair Mac Camacho-Viera (m.camacho-viera@fnps.org)
  - An email will be sent out to solicit yard recommendations for the annual Landscape Award. Requirements (like % natives) were discussed. Requirements not on FNPS website.
  - Sande H. asked if the committee has considered giving an outdoor yard sign to winners instead of an indoor wall plaque. Patricia said yes.
Yard signs for sale (with FNPS and Chapter logos) and seasonal yard signs were also discussed. Diane C. suggested posting pictures of former winners’ yards so prospective applicants won’t feel their yards won’t measure up. Sande H. noted there are pictures in the old Conference booklets.

**Motion to Adjourn**

Patricia B. motioned to adjourn. Sande H. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

*Meeting Adjourned at 8:27 PM*
Council Officers
The Council Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary collectively comprise the Council Officers. Officers must be current or past Chapter Representatives, Chapter Officers, or FNPS members in good standing.

Council Chair
- Represents the Council on the FNPS Board of Directors and FNPS Board Executive Committee and attend monthly meetings or assigns a proxy.
- Prepares and submits Council reports to the FNPS Board of Directors and FNPS Executive Committee.
- Reports Society and FNPS Board news to Council members.
- Sets the Council meeting schedule and agenda and leads Council meetings. The Council will meet no fewer than 4 times per year and no more than 10 times per year.
- Develops Council strategies and goals and assigns Council or other resources to further the Council goals.
- Ensures compliance with Board bylaws.
- Trains his/her successor.

Council Vice Chair
- Assists the Council Chair and collaborates on Council strategies and goals
- Acts on behalf of the Council Chair in his/her absence.
- Maintains a current list of Chapter Representatives
- Heads the Orientation and Training subcommittee
  - Sends Welcome letter and helps new Chapter Representatives obtain login information
  - Schedules and organizes Chapter Representative orientation and training.
- Trains his/her successor.

Council Secretary
- Assists the Council Chair and Vice Chair as requested.
- Emails meeting instructions and agendas prior to all full Council meetings and posts meeting announcements as directed.
- Records minutes (including all motions and votes) of all full Council meetings, emails minutes to all Council members and posts the minutes on the Council website and Forum,
- Updates attendance spreadsheet on Google Drive and reports volunteer hours for Council meetings.
- Makes or requests updates and revisions to the Council website.
- Publishes, emails and posts all election notifications and other Council reports and polling results,
• Posts and updates Council entries to the FNPS Calendar.
• Heads the Administration subcommittee and ensures the Council Guidelines are reviewed and recommendations for revision are referred to the Council for approval.
• Trains his/her successor.

**Council Officer Elections**

Election of Council Officers will be held annually in March.

- The Chair will be elected in odd years
- The Vice Chair and Secretary will be elected in even years.

Elected officers will serve a 2-year term starting in Mid-May (generally concurrent with the FNPS Annual Meeting).

**Nominations**

The Council Chair will appoint at least three Chapter Representatives or other FNPS members in good standing to a nominating committee, whose duty shall be to propose a slate of candidates.

The nominating committee will review all candidates and propose at least one, but preferably more than one candidate for each office. No member of the nominating committee may be nominated for an office. No person may be nominated without that person’s consent.

**Nominating and Elections Schedule**

The following schedule will be adhered to for Officer nominations and elections:

- **September/October** – Solicit nominating committee.
- **November** – Appoint nominating committee.
- **December 1 to February 15** – Nominating committee solicits candidates at full Council meetings and uses emails to Chapter Representatives and FNPS members to solicit candidates and invite self-nomination [see Nomination Request Email Template on Council of Chapters website/Templates].
- **February 15** – Nominations close. Nominating Committee begins review and slate preparation.
- **February 15** – Deadline for submittal to Sabal Minor (for March 1 issue) for publication of all nominees and a brief summary of the Council election process [see Election Notice Template on Council of Chapters website/Templates].
- **March 1** – Publish nominees and election process on the Council website. Email nominee and election process information to all Council members [see Election Notice Template on Council of Chapters website/Templates].
- **March 15** – Open voting [see Voting Open Email Template on Council of Chapters website/Templates].
- **March 30** – Close voting.
- **April 8** – Announce voting results by email to the FNPS Board, Chapter Presidents, and Chapter Representatives.
- **Mid-April to Mid-May** – Officer-elect orientation and training.
- **Mid-May (concurrent with Annual Meeting)** – New officers take office.
Breakout Rooms

Reaching a Younger audience: Instagram, Twitter, TikTok

Instagram

Tayler – Ixia has Betsy Harris and Adam Arandell

Cuplet Fern

Valerie and Lilly

How to do Effective Facebook posts -

Engaging photos

Short message

Scheduling posts (Helen Honeycut)

Inviting friends (grass roots)

Following like-minded groups and sharing their posts

Sharing content to increase each other’s audiences

Unified effort

- leveraging

Google Alerts (Gail)

Use to find interesting content

Scheduling

Using SEO to interact with other pages (Tayler)

Facebook optimization (Tayler)

The more you interact with other pages (followers)

Speaking to other people (Josh)

Process changing people’s perspective about plants
What Can the Society Do to Help Chapters Succeed?

Preliminary List – 6/26/2022

Prioritization of tasks disseminated to Chapters and recognition of Chapter capacity to take on more work

Help finding resources to address Chapter challenges

Training for Chapter officers (can Mark K. help?)

Publicity and Outreach (State-Wide)

- State-Wide advertising to increase native plant awareness (Florida Federation of Garden Clubs)
- FNPS organization/name not well known
- Partner with other state-wide organizations (see below) to advertise?

Publicity and Outreach (Chapters)

- Ginny Stibolt offered to do another outreach workshop this summer
- It was noted that per the survey, ways to engage youth and younger people are of interest to chapters.
- Local newspapers/newsletters/community calendars (some print, some digital) can provide great free publicity, although it was noted that publication of submitted events is not guaranteed.
- Mark K. suggested all chapters send local publication emails to Melanie to forward to Society media publicity on Lunch & Learns, Conference, and other special events
- Melanie mentioned the conference presentation by Chadd Scott (“Engaging Native Plant Advocates Through Current Events in Conservation”) as providing some good ideas for outreach. Chadd’s newsletters/blog also provide ideas (https://ixia.fnpschapters.org/conservation/previousconservationnewsletters/)
- Hosting a successful conference is a marketing opportunity for host Chapter
- Flyers – Advertise at libraries, nurseries, state parks, other venues. Effectiveness unknown, but could be assessed if there is a QR code on the flyer.
- Passionflower uses two inexpensive 3.5 x 8.5 mini-flyers (one third of an 8.5 x 11 sheet) that tuck inside the membership brochure. One for Chapter information and one for the license plate.

Partnerships with Industry and Community

- Visibility with highway department, developers, landscape architects, HOAs, etc.
- Melanie mentioned work of the “Outside Collaborative” to increase industry awareness and do research so viable native plant solutions can be developed to provide developers, etc. with native plant alternatives.
- Difficulty is availability of native plants. Partner with FANN to address this?
- Reach out to Master Gardeners (UF) – “Florida Friendly” plant list could use revision and is the basis for the statute that provides homeowners with some legal rights to install native landscapes. Florida Friendly list is 50% native, but includes some undesirable plants.
- Patricia B. mentioned that Chapters can review their local government land development codes that mention native vegetation in landscaping, buffers, open space standards. Municode provides a search engine to type in different terms to assist in your search. Municode website that lists the Florida cities/counties that is [https://library.municode.com/fl](https://library.municode.com/fl)

### Membership Tracking
- Make the membership database more accurate and easier to use
- Correct the way sustaining memberships update and consider restructuring pricing to make sustaining membership more attractive

### Member Recruiting
- 1000 people per day moving to Florida! Demographics?
- Do we need different messages/appeals for incoming residents vs. longer-term residents or natives?
- Member recruiting – putting brochures at native nurseries recruits new members, but not necessarily “participating” members (may just join to get discount)
- Yard Tours/Shares – downside is they do not educate non-members or recruit new members.

### Resources
- Need to consolidate and update shared resource documents
- Plant this, Not That videos (Gail T.)

### Improve the plant database
- Should be easier to use
- Should include more practical information (maintenance and tips that could be crowd-sourced from members)
- Include photos of mature plants and winter “look”, seed heads
- Search by common name, search by moisture level not working?

### Education Materials/Brochures
- Chapters need input on new brochures – what will support outreach and education efforts?

### Sharing Information about Events and Activities
- Use Society Calendar of events – enable chapters to post pictures of events and see what other chapters are doing (Lilly?) – does this just add another task for Chapters?
• Set up activities as Facebook events – if all Chapters friend all other chapters this is an easy way to share activities.

Partnering with Other Organizations
• Other private and public organizations have related goals, but could coordinate messages to have more impact.
• How do we coordinate with Audubon, UF/IFAS, Sierra, FWF, International Dark Sky & other like-minded organizations to amplify our message?

Encouraging Participation in Chapter Governance
• Administrative support?

Encouraging Participation in Chapter Activities
• Some lingering reluctance (or refocus on where to spend time) especially with in-person activities. Also some “Zoom fatigue”
• Question: Do younger members/people want different types of activities? Can we research/brainstorm that?

Finding Programs/Speakers
• There is a speaker list link on the home page of the Council website. All Chapters should be adding to the list.
• Melanie working with Valerie to add videos.
• Mark K. noted Kara Driscoll has offered to speak on customized area-specific presentations (in-person or on-line) on native milkweeds.