Florida Native Plant Society

Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 02/27/2022

Online Zoom Meeting

taken by Melanie Simon – CoC Secretary

Melanie Simon called the meeting to order at 06:33 PM

In attendance (20) – 16 of 33 Chapters

*** indicates proxy or guest**

Coccoloba – Lucy Breitung
Heartland – Gregory Thomas
Lake Beautyberry – Patricia Burgos
Longleaf Pine – Kimee Bremmer
Mangrove – Kate Borduas
Martin County – Dianna Wentink
Naples – Sara Dust
Nature Coast – Diane Caruso
Passionflower – Melanie Simon - **CoC Secretary**
Pawpaw – Karen Walter
Pawpaw – Sande Habali
Pinellas – David Perkey
Serenoa – Pamela Callender
Sparkleberry – Carol Sullivan
Suncoast – Virginia Overstreet
Tarflower – Jennifer Ferngren
Tarflower – Nihal Hafez*
The Villages – Gary Babic
Guest - Gail Taylor*
FNPS Exec. Director – Shelley Sharp*

Regular Agenda Items

- **Minutes from 1/23/22 meeting**

  Lucy B. motioned to approve the January 23, 2022 meeting minutes. Patricia B. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Next Meeting March 27th**
  - Melanie asked that anyone who has an idea for a brainstorming/discussion topic for the next meeting should email her. She suggested new member packages as a possible topic.

Announcements

- **2022 FNPS Annual Conference**
  - Melanie S. reminded everyone that registration is now open for the virtual conference.
  - Registration is $50.
  - Shelley S. said the entire conference schedule is up on the website. She encouraged Chapters to plan in-person events like virtual field trips, yard tours, etc. on Friday, May 20. There will be a Jeopardy game on Friday night and full days are planned on Saturday and Sunday.

- **2023 FNPS Annual Conference**
  - Melanie S. announced that FNPS is looking for a Chapter or region to host the 2023 conference. Right now it is anticipated it will be hybrid.
  - Hosts will need to do event planning and scheduling (including catering), arrange field trips, help find/arrange speakers and workshops, and find a venue. An affiliation with a university is a plus. FNPS will handle the hybrid part of the conference.
  - Shelley S. said that universities can be good venues with reasonable costs. Universities are not the only option. FNPS would like to reach high school and university students as well as members. FNPS would like to announce which Chapter or region will be hosting next year and a theme at this year's event and put out a call for speakers.
  - *Please email Shelley at executivedirector@fnps.org if interested in hosting or know of a venue.*

Ongoing Business

- **Nominating Committee**
  - David P. reported that there are still no candidates. *Anyone interested in the Vice Chair and Secretary positions should contact David (dnperkey@gmail.com) or Melanie.*
  - Melanie noted that her term as Secretary ends in May and offered to fill in as Chair for the rest of Patricia's term so there is some continuity in Council leadership. However, the Vice Chair and Secretary positions need to be filled to provide support.
  - You can self-nominate or nominate someone else (they will be contacted to get their consent).
  - Lucy B. asked about officer duties. Melanie provided a brief description:
    - Secretary duties include keeping track of current Chapter Reps and attendance, doing the minutes, sending out emails and other communications, assisting the Chair as needed, maintaining the website and calendar.
    - Vice Chair assists and is backup for the Chair (setting agendas, running meetings) and Chair of the Orientation and Training Committee. Melanie has been filling this role which includes sending out welcome letters containing directions to the training information on the Council website and how to get logins.
  - Position descriptions are in the FNPS Handbook (on the FNPS website) and on the Council website (Guidance tab). https://handbook.fnps.org/council-of-chapters/council-officers/
  - Melanie said 8 hours/month is a fairly accurate estimate of the time commitment for the Secretary duties. Vice Chair is less than that on a regular basis.
  - Melanie noted that being a Council officer is a great way to get to know people in other Chapters and get a broader view of FNPS. Shelley noted it is a good gateway position to State-wide service.
  - Melanie will train and work with anyone who wants to step into one of the positions.
  - Voting is March 15-30 on the Forum. Contact Melanie if you don't have a Forum login.

- **License Plate**
  - Melanie noted that License Plate sales have not picked up, but it is vitally important we encourage members to purchase the plates and look for ways to sell the plate outside FNPS membership.
  - Shelley explained that since she joined the organization she has come to realize how important the plate is for the Society. Shelley asked that even if people don't like the look – please urge them to reserve a plate because it so important to the Society. In a few years the plate could be redesigned.

- Lucy B. asked about the revenue from the plate. Shelley replied the plate could be an incredible source of funding with a $60K+ plus revenue stream every year. These funds could greatly expand the things the Society can do including education programs, native plant certification program, conservation projects, additional staffing, more publications - the options are almost limitless.
- Patricia B. noted that most Chapters don't have the plate on their website*. Shirley Denton will help chapters put an image and link on their websites - contact Shirley at s.denton@fnps.org or ecotypes@outlook.com.* Shelley noted that Shirley has a beautiful graphic ready to post.
- Pamela C. asked about materials for promoting sales at event. Melanie noted there are graphics and flyers with QR codes in a folder with a link on the home page of the Council website. *Shelley offered to get Chapters help for promotion – email her at executivedirector@fnps.org.*
- Melanie noted there is no risk to making a reservation – fees will be returned if the plate does not go into production.
- Diane C. asked about how to get the license plate Photoshopped onto a photo. She has contacts with hunters and a racecar driver who would participate, but Val has been too busy. *Shelley said to contact her at executivedirector@fnps.org and she will get support*. Doing a Photoshop for someone who has a broad social media presence is valuable.

- **Volunteer Hour Reporting**
  - Melanie S. expressed thanks to all the Chapters whose coordinators attended training and to those who have gone through the training video as well.
  - Training materials are on the Council Google Drive – Volunteer Hours Reporting folder accessed through the Data Distribution portal – and any questions can be emailed to Melanie.
  - Melanie stressed that bulk reporting group activities (Education Programs, Field Trips, workdays, Outreach Events) requires minimal effort and these are the hours provide the data most needed to get future support.
  - Melanie hopes to have reports of 2022 to-date hours to review next month.
  - Shelley S. said she is impressed by the sheer magnitude of volunteer hours and encouraged reporting so FNPS can exceed $1million in impact in 2022. This data will be very valuable when FNPS seeks grants, sponsorships and other support from charitable organizations.

New Business

- **Gardens on the FNPS website**
  - Shirley Denton has requested that every chapter review the map of native plant gardens listed for their area on the FNPS website (https://www.fnps.org/natives/gardens) and update, add, or delete.
  - There is a document on the home page of the Council website listing the information that Shirley needs each garden. *Send any garden update information to s.denton@fnps.org.*
  - Shelley S. asked that Chapters let her know of hiking trails and any of the gardens in their areas that are wheelchair accessible. FNPS is considering reaching out to Scouts or other groups and feels it would be a service to the community to identify accessible areas.

- **Brochure Printing**
  - Melanie advised there is a limited publications budget for 2022 available. The budget needs to cover translations, design layout, and graphics for additional brochures as well as printing.
  - Chapters will need to realistically assess how many brochures they need for the coming year based on the number of brochures left from the last distribution, the number of outreach events they plan to attend, partnerships with developers and other community organizations.

- Melanie asked if Chapters were willing to pay shipping costs (will depend on the number shipped, but estimated to be around $20 order of magnitude) or wanted to distribute as we did last time (ship to regional location and each chapter picks up from there). Mangrove, Tarflower, Passionflower and Longleaf Pine would be willing to pay shipping.
- Lucy B. asked what publications would be available. Melanie replied she is trying to get a definitive answer, but thinks it is the Good Citizen Guide gatefold and insert and the Mow Less brochure, both in English.
- Since the budget is limited, Chapters who want a lot of copies could also have the option of paying for the additional copies (above what can be accommodated by the available budget). The cost per brochure goes down the larger the number printed. For example, the GCG gatefold is $1.24 a copy if 1000 copies are printed and $.28 a copy if 10,000 are printed so it is advantageous for chapter to leverage their funds by adding requests to the overall print order rather than printing themselves.
- The Villages, Pinellas, Pawpaw, Suncoast, and Passionflower commented they are out of brochures or have events coming up that will use up their stock. Nature Coast has a large quantity left.
- Lucy B. suggested Chapters laminate brochures and have them at events for people to take a picture of instead of handing out paper copies.
- *Melanie will send out a survey to get preliminary print requests and then work out what can be provided with the existing budget and pricing if Chapters would need to pay for additional copies.*
- Patricia B. stated that there are some changes that need to be made with the Mow Less and that she is finishing the Spanish translation. There is still work to do to get this print-ready, so it is not currently a print option
- Kate B. asked about printing from a jpeg, and Melanie replied that to maintain quality Chapters need to use high-quality print files and she is still trying to find out which brochures, if any, have print files available for distribution.
- Shelley S. mentioned that there is an opportunity to approach community organizations for grant funding or community foundation funding to pay for brochure translation and printing. Melanie asked that someone provide Chapters with guidance about how to find these organizations and how to approach them. Shelley suggested community foundations and United Way are good places to start. Melanie questioned whether FNPS wanted each Chapter to do translations on their own and pointed out that most Chapter boards are already stretched.
- Jennifer F. mentioned that Tarflower may have funds they could contribute to a printing fund.

- **Coloring Book**
  - Kimee B. asked if FNPS has a coloring book or just the coloring pages on the website. Consensus is there are just pages.

- **Bylaws**
  - Melanie has received a few updated versions of bylaws and reminded everyone to take a look at the list and *confirm they have not changed their bylaws or send updated versions* to Melanie.

Open Floor

- **New Chapter Officers**
  - Lucy B. asked who to send a list of new officers to after their elections. Melanie said that information needs to be sent to info@fnps.org.

- **Plant Lists**
  - Kate B. asked if there is any use for the plant lists that Mangrove compiles on their walks. Patricia B. responded these are very valuable to land managers and should be shared with them.
- **New Executive Director**
  - Shelley S. reported the position description for a new Executive Director is being finalized and Chapters will be asked to post the position on their websites.

Motion to Adjourn

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

Meeting Adjourned at 7:47 PM