Florida Native Plant Society

Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 5/28/2023
Online Zoom Meeting
taken by Melanie Simon – CoC Chair

Melanie Simon called the meeting to order at 06:32 PM

In attendance (30) – 23 of 33 Chapters
* indicates proxy or guest

Citrus – Jeffrey Bippert
Coccoloba – Ben Johnson
Conradina – Martha Steuart
Cuplet Fern – Sandy Boylston
Eugenia – David Martin
Heartland – Greg Thomas
Hernando – Heather Sharkey
Ixia – Cate Hurlbut
Lake Beautyberry – Tina Mertz
Longleaf Pine - Kimberley Bremner
Magnolia – Josh Rowe*
Mangrove – Laura Soule
Martin County - Dianna Wentink
Martin County – Pete Grannis*
Martin County - Carly Batts*
Naples – Vanessa Goold
Nature Coast – Diane Caruso
Passionflower – Melanie Simon - Chair
Pawpaw – Sande Habali
Paynes Prairie – Sandi Saurers
Pinellas – David Perkey
Pine Lily – Tayler Figueroa
Sarracenia – Lynn Artz
Sea Rocket – Jill Whitson
The Villages – Bob Keyes
Solinvita – Shari Frisinger*
FNPS Conference Chair – Athena Phillips*
FNPS Landscape Committee – Patricia Burgos*
Lisa Stanley – Vice Chair

Noted documents are posted on the Council Website: https://council.fnpschapters.org

Regular Agenda Items

- Minutes from 3/26/23 meeting
  - Cate H. motioned to approve the March 26, 2023 meeting minutes. David P. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- Next Meeting June 25th at 6:30pm
  - No meeting planned for August

News/Announcements/Reminders

- Miscellaneous Announcements
  - FNPS email addresses for Lisa Stanley and Megan Prats are on the Council website Contacts page.
  - Boggy Creek Airboats in Kissimmee has a new native butterfly garden and are offering a 10% discount to FNPS members (questions? Email m.camacho-viera@fnps.org)
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- **FNPS Annual Membership Meeting – June 17 – 10am to 11:30am**
  - This is the opportunity for all members to catch up on the major events of 2022, learn who the very deserving Palmetto award winners are, find out who is getting a Conservation or Research grant, and vote on incoming Board Members. It is important that all members attend.
  - FNPS has sent emails to members, but Chapters need to promote the meeting. Please include it in newsletters, emails, meeting announcements, etc. A graphic for the meeting is on the Council website.
  - The meeting will be held YouTube just like the Lunch and Learns. The join link is https://youtube.com/live/G116GrQ9uBU and is also posted on the Council website.

- **Volunteer Hours Reporting**
  - Thanks to Chapters who have been reporting – 2023 hours total about 21,500 as of 5/14. 91% are Chapter hours.

- **2023 Annual Conference**
  - Melanie noted there will not be a full-scale conference in 2024 due to a number of reasons: lack of time to adequately plan (especially when it comes to making an in-person conference economical for both FNPS and participants), the amount of staff and volunteer time required, and low participation.
  - Other formats (perhaps smaller in-person events in more remote locations, science event, something more mission-related) are being discussed by the Conference Committee.
  - Athena P. provided some of the statistics from the conference: there were total 401 registrations—about 6% of membership; 9 of 33 Chapters were sponsors; 266 people tuned into at least one of the 30 sessions – 23% watched 3 sessions or less. Registrations were lower than in previous years.
  - Athena also summarized the financials. The conference will make about $10k. Income included: $7,450 from sponsors, $3,638 from the silent auction, and $769+ from merchandise. All more than in previous years.
  - Analysis of the 3 field days is pending, although none of the field day events completely sold out.
  - 35 Conference attendees responded to a survey: 91% said the conference met or exceeded their expectations; 32% liked the virtual format; 15% would prefer in-person, and 53% would like hybrid.
  - The full conference report is posted on the Council website.

**Council Initiatives and Ongoing Business**

- **New Member Package**
  - No progress to report this month. Will take this up again over the summer.

- **2023 FNPS Member and Supporter Survey**
  - Melanie announced we will be launching the Member and Supporter Survey on June 1. Delay was due to bringing in a UCF to administer the survey and do analysis using their software.
  - We need all Chapters to send out an email inviting their members and supporters to take the survey. There is (2023 Member Survey Distribution Request) with an email template and the survey link and QR code on the Council website.
  - Survey link is https://ucf.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7NJ5FFP7K8xYwn4
  - There is not an end date noted on the announcement, but we are shooting for the end of June. Deadline may be extended if we don’t have enough responses to represent a good sample of our membership. We lose the graduate student at the end of July.
o Dates for initial email and a June 15 reminder are on the email template.
  o We will review response rates at our next meeting.

New Business

- **Phishing**
  o Tarflower advised that they have been receiving phishing emails, but Jennifer is not here to provide details. Sande H. noted that Pawpaw board members have been getting emails that on the surface look like they are from other members. Sande says you can tell they are not from the members and they come in with a known name, but the email is different in you look closely. Patricia B. noted she has gotten phishing emails purportedly from Catherine Bowman, Past President of FNPS.
  o Lisa noted (in chat) that if you receive a suspicious email you should not forward it, click on any links or pictures, respond to the sender, etc. Risk with these emails is to you and what you have on your computer. She offered to provide a second opinion if you receive an email that looks suspicious – you can email her at lstanley@fnps.org or text her at 813-444-8374.

- **Pawpaw Library**
  o Suzie Shaeffer provided a great overview of the Pawpaw lending library and shared how she provides a really professional library without a big investment of time or money.
  o Suzie has catalogued the Pawpaw book collection (using LibraryThing – really easy to do new books as Amazon has the info and you can just pull it in) and made the books accessible online (TidyCat) and borrowing them simple. The library website is https://www.librarycat.org/lib/PawPaw.FNPS
  o Members reserve online and Suzie brings reserved books + other available books to the meetings.
  o They use paper cards/pockets for check-out which was important when they lost internet connection.
  o The cataloging and website program (TinyCat) costs $3 month to make the catalog (free to small organizations without a paid librarian and an annual library book budget under $500) available to members. Library is accessible on cell phones.
  o Pawpaw has expanded their collection and now has 89 books covering scientific topics, butterfly gardening, landscaping, conservation and a few children’s books. She shared statistics LibraryThing provides about library size, books by category, etc.
  o The library books all have barcodes (from TinyCat)
  o The library is a nice member-only benefit and could be a motivator for people to join FNPS because the cost of membership is much less than the books.
  o Links to info/tools for setting up a chapter library like Pawpaw’s:
    - https://www.librarything.com/home
    - https://www.librarycat.org/
    - https://www.librarything.com/more/store
  o Suzie does a “Library Spotlight” at meetings and in the newsletter.
  o Suzie would be happy to walk anyone through setting up a library. Her email is storyhat@gmail.com

- **Landscape Awards**
  o Patricia B. announced that applications are now open for the Landscaping awards.
  o Award information is at https://www.fnps.org/what-we-do/landscaping
  o Website has categories, fees, submittal requirements, submittal instructions, plus application forms.
  o There will be a 5-person judging panel and a point system for determining winners.
  o Deadline for applications is August 31st. Winners will be announced October 1st
  o Awards are open to everyone – not just FNPS members. No minimum size requirements.
  o Rules: Minimum 2 year grow in and no listed invasives.
Percent native planting varies by category.

No distinction between individual and professional landscaping. Martha S. stated she feels this is not fair, but Patricia noted the committee felt the 2-year grow out requirement will compensate.

Carly B. asked about the 2-year growth and asked Patricia to find out if the judges would allow leniency for a garden her chapter has worked on that is close. Patricia will confer with the committee and respond to Carly.

Patricia provided a press release that can be used for newspaper and other promotion. The release is posted on the Council website. There will also be an article in the upcoming Palmetto that has additional verbiage.

Questions? Email pburgos@fnps.org

Council Orientation and Training

Lisa S. is taking over updating the Council Rep list and sending out Welcome letters (with orientation and how-to-get login information). She will catch up with letters Melanie has fallen behind on sending out.

Melanie noted that the Chapter Rep list with email addresses and phone numbers is now available from the Membership database (https://forms.fnps.org).

Send Lisa any ideas about orientation/workshop ideas.

Council Survey

Last year we did a short Council Survey with 3 questions about Chapter status, Chapter challenges, and training/workshop suggestions. We will do that survey again as it will provide useful information, especially about trends over the last year.

Lisa S. will be doing the Council Survey.

Open Floor

Cedar Point Garden

Laura S. pointed out that the FNPS website “Gardens with Natives” has the Cedar Point garden in Englewood listed. This garden was wiped out by Hurricane Ian and should be removed.

Melanie will contact Shirley Denton.

Florida Federation of Garden Clubs

Lynn A. noted she is working on a project with the FFGC to plant trees in January. She is on their Board and is specifying native trees, preferably one of Doug Tallamy’s keystone species. She wanted to see if FNPS is interested in collaborating on tree selection and sourcing.

Patricia B. suggested (in chat) that FANN might also be a good partner.

Melanie responded this sounds like a good opportunity and will work with Lynn to bring it to the attention of Lynda Davis.

Next (June) Meeting Agenda

Melanie noted the agenda for the next meeting will include survey follow-up, strategic planning (input for the August session) and Insurance (Lynda Davis).

Motion to Adjourn

Heather S. motioned to adjourn. Cate H. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:54 PM