Florida Native Plant Society

Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 9/24/2023
Online Zoom Meeting
taken by Melanie Simon – CoC Chair

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

In attendance (29) – 18 of 33 Chapters
* indicates proxy or guest

Citrus – Gail Taylor*
Coccoloba – Ben Johnson
Eugenia – David Martin
Heartland – Greg Thomas
Ixia – Cate Hurlbut
Lake Beautyberry – Tina Mertz
Lake Beautyberry – Neta Villalobos-Bell*
Longleaf Pine - Kimberley Brenner
Mangrove – Laura Soule
Mangrove – Linda Manley*
Martin County - Dianna Wentink
Martin County – Emily Hartdegen*
Martin County – Pete Grannis
Nature Coast – Diane Caruso
Palm Beach County – Rebekah Kaufman
Passionflower – Melanie Simon – Chair
Passionflower – Donna Bingaman*
Pawpaw – Karen Walter
Pawpaw – Sande Habali
Pawpaw – Susan Anderson*
Pine Lily – Tayler Figueroa
Pinellas – David Perkey
Sarracenia – Lynn Artz
Tarflower – Jennifer Ferngren
Tarflower – Justin Atherton*
The Villages – Bob Keyes
FNPS Executive Director – Lynda Davis*
FNPS Communications Director – Valerie Anderson*
FNPS President – Mark Kateli*

Regular Agenda Items

• Minutes from 7/23/23 meeting
  o Karen W. motioned to approve the July 23, 2023 meeting minutes. Cate H. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

• Next Meeting October 22nd at 6:30pm.

News/Announcements/Reminders

• Council Survey
  o Still missing responses from Magnolia, The Villages, Dade, Sparkleberry, Tarflower, Broward, Naples, and Pine Lily
  o Survey Link: https://forms.gle/E7Qyv4S1WXGxYDQy6
• **Vice Chair and Secretary positions**  
  o Positions are still open - please consider volunteering a few hours a month – Melanie needs backup

• **Conservation and Research Grants**  
  o Application Deadline March 1, 2024

• **Dicerandra Workday**  
  o Workday planned as part of Native Plant Month at site SW of Ocala near Dunnellon  
  o October 25 or 26 – date and details will be confirmed by the end of the month  
  o Advise Melanie if you are interested in receiving more information

• **Insurance**  
  o Will be looking into Chapter insurance. If you know about insurance and would like to help please contact Melanie.

• **Membership**  
  o Launching a “Rejoin” campaign in November targeting lapsed members.  
  o If you’re interested in helping please contact Melanie.

• **Volunteer Hours Reporting**  
  o It will be tight to match the hours reported in 2022. We can match/exceed 2022 hours easily if a few more Chapters report their mission-related activity hours (programs, field trips, workdays, etc.). Melanie will work with you to make reporting quick and easy.

• **Native Plant Month (October)**  
  o Graphic banners and other tools for promoting NPM were emailed to Chapter leadership by Valerie A. Proclamation templates are also posted on the Council website  
  o Don’t forget to tag your October events on the TeamUp October Native Plant Calendar.  

• **“Plantober” Campaign**  
  o Mark K. has planned a “Plantober” fundraising campaign for October. He has prepared kits so Chapters can easily “cut and paste” social media postings on a variety of platforms. He suggests posting each Monday/Wednesday/Friday/Sunday or Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday throughout the month.  
  o Mark will send a link to the posts, reels, etc. to Melanie for distribution.

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**Council Initiatives and Ongoing Business**

**2023 Members & Friends Survey**

Melanie updated the survey results. The average overall results presented in July provided valuable information, but analyzing the responses by membership type/status, respondent age, and Chapter has revealed more informative results.

The update explained what analyses were done and how to interpret the results, but did not go through all the results in detail. Chapters will need to peruse the reports to see how results varied for their members versus the totals and other Chapters as well as by membership type and age. This will help Chapters learn more about their members, giving them ideas about how to engage and retain
current members as well as how to attract new members, including younger members. The breakdowns should be akin to results if the Chapters had done their own surveys.

The sample size affects the precision of the responses. For the overall survey results the margin of error is small ±2%, but it is larger for the membership type, age, and Chapter breakdowns because the sample sizes are smaller.

Due to size, the analysis is broken down into 3 reports. All can be downloaded from the Council website home page at https://council.fnpschapters.org

- **Survey Report 1 - Respondents** - Membership Status, Age, Volunteerism, Meeting Times
  - 2,413 responses: 74% current members, 4% lapsed members, and 22% non-members
  - 29% of total current members took the survey and the percentages of each membership type (Annual, Sustaining, and Lifetime) are aligned with the percentages of total FNPS members.
  - The average age of respondents is 62.4 years. Responses were broken down by membership status and age. The average age of Annual member respondents is 64.4 years – lifetime members are older while Sustaining, Lapsed, and Non-members are younger.
  - Tables and charts show the breakdown of responses by Chapter including by membership type, percent of current members responding, and average age.
  - Overall, 51% of respondents are retired, 31% work full time, and 17% are doing part-time, seasonal, contract, or other work. Employment percentages vary by membership type.
  - 71% do not fill any volunteer roles. 37% volunteer at the Chapter and/or State level.
  - Most FNPS volunteers are aged 57+, although in the U.S. people aged 35-44 are most likely to volunteer. Volunteers by Chapter are shown in a table.
  - Many who don’t volunteer indicated interest and willingness to do so if contacted, given meaningful tasks at convenient time, and get training.
  - 5% not available on weekdays, 10% not available on Saturdays, and 20% not available on Sundays.
  - Preferred meeting times varied by membership type and age. Most current members preferred Saturday morning while younger respondents preferred weekday evenings. Preferences are charted by age and Chapter.

- **Survey Report 2 - Interests** – Topics and Activities
  - Rankings of interest in Topics and Activities are shown in tables and charts. These reveal how current, lapsed, and non-members rated them compared to the survey total. Generally, topics and activities were rated highest by current members, lower by lapsed members, and lowest by non-members. Exceptions are noted below.
  - While Landscaping got the highest average interest rating, interest in this topic was higher among non-members and lower among lapsed members compared to current members. This could be a “Gateway” topic for new member recruitment.
  - The percent of respondents very or somewhat interested in Landscaping, Ecosystems/Natural Florida, Supporting Wildlife, and Plant Identification/Propagation were highest (96-97%), making these the most popular topics overall.
  - The percent of respondents very or somewhat interested in Habitat Conservation, Sustainability/Climate Resilience, Rewilding/Restoring Property, and Plant Conservation ranged from 85-92%. These topics were rated higher by younger respondents.
  - Field Trips got the highest average interest rating among all respondents. Interest in this activity as well as Education Workshops and Educational Speakers was high among current members.
Plant Sales, Plant Rescues and Habitat Management were rated higher by non-members indicating they represent good places to recruit new members.

All activities except Educational Speaker programs and Yard Tours were rated higher by younger respondents than by older cohorts.

Lapsed Members indicated the most interest in Plant Sales, Field Trips, Yard Tours, Educational Workshops, and Field Trips to non-Natural Area. Lapsed members also rated Outreach, Plant Rescues, Habitat Management, and Advocacy higher than current members.

Charts show how each Topic and Activity were rated by Chapter respondents compared to the survey total, non-members, and other Chapters.

### Survey Report 3 - Membership – Benefits, Belonging & Satisfaction, Renewing/Rejoining/Joining

- Current member benefits ratings are higher than the survey total ratings, especially significantly for the Palmetto, Sabal Minor, and Chapter Activities. Current and older members most value the Palmetto.
- Current member ratings are more valid for assessing member benefits since Non-Member ratings are low because they are not aware of or have never used some of the benefits.
- Above 80% of respondents rated all benefits except Private Facebook Pages slightly to very valuable. Private Facebook Pages was the only benefit rated higher among Non-members. Note that most Non-Member respondents are members of the Florida Native Gardening Facebook page.
- Younger members most value Nursery Discounts, Plant Rescues, Outreach Opportunities, and Private Facebook Pages.
- Current member ratings are higher than the survey total ratings for all Belonging & Satisfaction statements.
- 84% of current members are somewhat or very satisfied with their involvement with FNPS. 97% feel their Chapter is Contributing to the FNPS mission, and 93% feel they are making an impact to Florida and that their Chapter/FNPS is important in their life.
- Charts show how each Benefit and Belonging & Satisfaction question were rated by Chapter respondents compared to the survey total, non-members, and other Chapters.
- 90% of Annual Members said they intend to renew. Lapsed members and Non-members are mostly undecided (maybes) about rejoining/joining.
- Reasons given for renewing/rejoining/joining and not renewing/rejoining/joining are provided.
- Reasons provided indicate Chapter activity level and camaraderie are important factors in renew/rejoin decisions.

Melanie would be glad to go through the survey results with any Chapter who wants help interpreting the results.

### Open Floor

- **Strategic Planning**
  - Lynda D. provided and update on the ongoing FNPS Strategic Planning process. FNPS Board met in August to discuss and start drafting Vision, Mission, and Value Statements.
  - Still working on summarizing all the discussions to date, but Lynda plans to discuss the results with Chapters. This is especially important for the Values, as FNPS has not documented these before.
Next step in the process will be to document Programming – at both the State and Chapter levels.

One of the goals is to narrow the focus and be clear about the priorities – especially given that both staff and volunteers are spread thin – so we can put resources in the most effective places.

- **Florida Federation of Garden Clubs (FFGC)**
  - Lynn A. asked about whether any Chapters have been contacted about helping Garden Clubs select or source a native tree for the Florida Arbor Day -1/19/24 – planting.
    - Cate H. said yes.
    - Gail T. contacted two clubs and provided information about what and where to plant as well as who could help
    - Pamela Calendar has been very helpful per Lynn
    - Kimberley B. would be happy to reach out, but has not been contacted
  - Lynn said there are a few Garden Clubs with no plans to plant trees. Since FFGC has grant money for trees they may reach out to an FNPS Chapter where the Garden Club is not participating.

**Motion to Adjourn**

- Karen W. motioned to adjourn. Cate H. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Meeting Adjourned at 7:40 PM**

Note: Can also make presentation recording available – it is about 30 minutes long.