



Florida Native Plant Society

Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 10/27/24

Online Zoom Meeting
taken by Melanie Simon – Co-Chair

Melanie Simon called the meeting to order at 06:31 PM

In attendance (21) – 17 of 31 Chapters

*** indicates proxy or guest**

Citrus – Gail Taylor
Dade – Riki Bonnema
Eugenia – David Martin
Hernando – Heather Sharkey
Hernando - Janet Grabowski
Ixia – Cate Hurlbut
Lake Beautyberry – Tina Mertz
Longleaf Pine – Kimberly Bremner
Mangrove – Laura Soule
Martin County - Dianna Wentink
Nature Coast – Diane Caruso

Palm Beach County – Rebekah Kaufman
Palm Beach County – Ethan Aparicio
Passionflower – Melanie Simon – **Chair**
Pawpaw – Karen Walter
Pawpaw - Sande Habali
Pinellas – David Perkey
Sarracenia – Lynn Artz
Sea Rocket – Elizabeth Bishop
The Villages – Bob Keyes
FNPS Executive Director – Melissa Fernandez-de
Cespedes*

Regular Agenda Items

- **Minutes from 9/22/24 meeting**
 - Minutes will be approved at next meeting.
- **Next Meeting November 24th at 6:30pm.**

News/Announcements/Reminders

- **Conference Registration**
 - Melissa F. explained that plans are to post Conference registration in early January so it doesn't conflict with the Annual Campaign.
 - Staff will work with the Council to make sure Chapters get information ahead of time and in a format that will help them advertise to member.
 - If there is anything else that will make it easier to promote or if there are any questions, please reach out to executivedirector@fnps.org.

- **Chapter Payments**
 - Melissa explained that some Chapter payments have been delayed and asked for patience so FNPS can avoid penalties cashing out a CD. Payments will be made after the CD reaches maturity in early December (about 6 weeks).
 - Melissa asked that Chapters check their payment account information and notify Kim if there are any updates.
 - If this causes a problem, Chapters are asked to contact Melissa at executivedirector@fnps.org
- **Florinda Native Plant Month T-Shirts**
 - Melissa F. asked that Chapters let all their members know that the Florida Native Plant Month T-Shirts are back on sale. Please promote these - they are great shirts! There are also racerback shirts and canvas bags. The link is: <https://www.bonfire.com/florida-native-plant-month-1/?srsltid=AfmBOoqIHXBG6GhFWInlEmc5iXZiH-w7k4jSEXzJalmr9dvMzpGgpCVt>
- **Regional Meetings**
 - Prior to the new year, Gene, Mellissa and Melanie would like to have online meetings with Chapter Presidents and Representatives to discuss support needs and as a basis for planning. This will be done with regional meetings (see list of Chapters by Region at the end of the minutes).
 - Melanie S. asked Chapter Representatives to check with their Presidents and let her know what days/times would work best.
 - Pawpaw noted in chat that Fridays and Saturdays are out, but any other days can be worked with. Janet noted in chat that new officers may be elected in January.
- **Zoom vs. GoogleMeet**
 - Since Zoom prices have increased, a switch to GoogleMeet (free with gmail) is being considered. Melanie S. asked if anyone is using it. Laura S. noted that Mangrove has been using GoogleMeet – it is just as easy to use and she thinks the audio is better.
 - Will need to verify whether a gmail account is needed to attend meetings.
- **FNPS Native Landscaping Brochures**
 - It's been noted that the regional Native Landscaping Brochures need some updates. Please check with Chapter officers and members and send Melanie a list of what edits are needed.
 - Changes will need to be made in January for the 2025 printing.
 - Sande noted that Pawpaw (Volusia County) should perhaps be in a more southerly region, and Ixia might need to be included in a more westerly region. Melanie suggested the two chapters discuss this.
- **Volunteer Hours**
 - Melanie S. noted that this month's summary has been delayed pending the handover to Cherice.
 - Will reinforce "bulk" reporting by activity to make it easier to count the number of programs, field trips, outreach events, etc. as these numbers are needed for our annual report and will be valuable for fundraising.
- **FNPS Calendar**
 - We want to make it possible for Chapter to post their activities/events on the calendars of other chapters in their region. Right now everything shows up on the overall FNPS calendar, but the calendars on Chapter websites don't always show the activities/events of nearby Chapters or provide an option to posting to other Chapter calendars. This could be a way to boost participation and reduce the effort currently required to advertise other Chapters' events (currently have to manually add to newsletters).
 - Consensus was this is a good idea and no one objected to the idea.

- It was noted there may be multiple portals to set up the calendar. Many use TeamUp. Palm Beach County uses Trumba. Cherice will look into this.
- **Meeting Reminders**
 - We want to provide reminders to help boost Council Meeting attendance. Options include:
 - Calendar – can set up meetings to populate
 - Email – easiest to set up
 - Text message – some like them, some don't (would need to have opt out)
 - Chat indicated that individuals have different preferences among the options.

Initiatives/Updates

- **License Frame**
 - License Frame is a fundraiser to raise money for brochures and educational materials. Money will go into the State accounts, but Chapters will have some say about how funds are spent.
 - Material – it was agreed that frames should be aluminum, not plastic (not sustainable, doesn't last in Florida).
 - Color – The standard colors available are silver with black lettering and black with white lettering. It was agreed that black with white lettering provides greater contrast/visibility and would be the best choice (consensus in chat). A green frame with white lettering could be an option (should be checked on), but might clash with some license plates/car colors.
 - Verbiage – Needs to be short (so letters are large and readable). Florida Native Plant Society should be spelled out across the bottom – big enough to read (logo lettering too small). Want to tell people what FNPS does/native plants do. Top verbiage should explain what FNPS is about to make it more appealing to members and informative to non-members who see the frame on the road and in parking lots (want to spark interest). Plant Natives limits messaging to Landscaping, not conservation. Discussed top verbiage - Support Wildlife? – use the word Habitat (key word)? If the top area for lettering is as wide as the bottom we could put Support Wildlife / Conserve Habitat. Logo, which may be too small to be easily read, is optional.
 - Price Point – Since this is for fundraising, it was agreed members would be willing to pay a bit more and \$15 would be a reasonable price. Bob K. will check on what the Villages community frames sell for.
 - Quantity – At \$15 we must sell at least 1000 to reach our fundraising goal of \$10,000. This equates to selling a frame to 17 out of 100 members. It was agreed that this seems doable. Chapters noted they may want to buy frames to resell at plant sales.
 - Schedule – It would be ideal to have the frames available before Christmas. Melanie noted that this is a tight schedule, but might be possible if the project moves forward quickly and we don't spend more time discussing options – another run/design is possible in the future – best to keep it simple right now.
 - Distribution – Do not want to ship individual frames (cost), so would ship to each Chapter and Chapters would distribute to individuals who order. Pre-Christmas distribution could be a challenge for Chapters who are not meeting in December (many are having a party per chat).
- **Council Guidance (FNPS Handbook)**
 - Discussed potential changes (changes that have been discussed in the past). to the guidance including limiting officers to those with Chapter Rep or Chapter Officer experience (training issue), having a Vice Chair for each region, March elections, term limitations (number of consecutive 2-year terms), making the Nominating Committee a standing committee (rather than being appointed every year), election schedule, timing when new officers take office, how

Council election voting is conducted (Forum versus Google Forms), and Council purpose and powers. It was agreed that most changes can/should be deferred

- A poll was conducted about Forum use. 45% said they never log onto the Forum or have only logged in for elections (some of those who log on Occasionally or Frequently are on the FNPS Board). Melanie noted that except for minutes, no new Council content is posted on the Forum.
- Melanie will present only the change in election voting (change from Forum to Google Forms),
- **Chapter Challenges**
 - The first step in addressing Chapter challenges needs to be to define the issues and figure out the reasons behind each challenge. For example, challenges finding leadership may be occurring for a variety of different reasons: current leaders' changes in priorities, life changes, or burnout; reluctance to take on legal responsibility; lack of training; inability to find/engage with potential new officers due to low participation; lack of time for working/parenting members; etc. Each reason could point to a different solution.
 - Due to the time, Melanie postponed further discussion of the chapter challenges and will resume discussion and committee formation at a later meeting.

Open Floor

- **Native Plant Month Activities**
 - Melanie invited comments about Native Plant Month activities.
 - Karen W. said Pawpaw's garden tours (6 gardens) went well. A member created cards for each garden with the garden history, native plant lists (QR code), and highlights of some of the plants. Participation varied by park - the tour was on 10/5, so people could have been busy with hurricane prep. They did have good turnout that morning at the Ormond Beach Environmental Center where a Volusia County councilman and city commissioner read the native plant month proclamation. Ormond Beach is becoming a model for cities that use native plants in city landscapes. Pawpaw will also be planting some tissue-grown Rugel's pawpaw and will also be putting in 500 plants in Ponce Inlet.
 - Melanie S. said Passionflower's event focused on new members (joined the Chapter in the past year) and was well attended. New members introduced themselves talked about their interests and each got a package of information, stickers, and a native plant.
 - Heather said Hernando's plant sale and field trip were cancelled. They did have a unique event at a local brewery that created a Liatris Lager for them. The event was a meet & greet with wildflower arrangements and information for a different demographic.
 - Rebekah said Palm Beach County is having people distribute flyers for their November 17 event to trick-or-treaters with a
 - Riki said the Dade Chapter was trying to get a proclamation for the city of Pine Crest and they got some push back. Would like some State-level support reaching out to commissioners.
 - Lynn said Sarracenia decided to wait until next year to do a proclamation when there are new commissioners and they can do a presentation on native plants. They focused on other events, including a No on 2 program.

Motion to Adjourn

- Rebekah K. motioned to adjourn. Cate H. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:20 PM

CHAPTERS BY LANDSCAPING BROCHURE REGION

Panhandle

- Longleaf Pine
- Sweetbay
- Magnolia
- Sarracenia

North Central

- Paynes Prairie
- Marion Big Scrub
- Citrus
- The Villages
- Hernando

Northeast

- Ixia
- Pawpaw

Southeast

- Eugenia
- Palm Beach County
- Broward
- Dade
- Conradina
- Sea Rocket
- Martin County

Central

- Lake Beautyberry
- Cuplet Fern
- Tarflower
- Pine Lily
- Heartland
- Passionflower

West Coast

- Pinellas
- Suncoast
- Serenoa
- Mangrove
- Coccoloba
- Naples
- Nature Coast