Florida Native Plant Society

Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 2/25/24
Online Zoom Meeting
taken by Melanie Simon – CoC Chair

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

In attendance (20) – 17 of 32 Chapters
* indicates proxy or guest

Citrus – Marcie Clutter
Eugenia – David Martin
Ixia – Cate Hurlbut
Lake Beautyberry – Tina Mertz
Mangrove – Laura Soule
Martin County - Dianna Wentink
Magnolia – Maddie Snuggs
Palm Beach County – Rebekah Kaufman
Passionflower – Melanie Simon – Chair
Pawpaw – Sande Habali
Paynes Prairie – Sandi Saurers
Pine Lily - Dana Sussman
Sarracenia – Lynn Artz
Sarracenia – Ann Reams*
Sea Rocket – Elizabeth Bishop
Serenoa – Pamela Callender
Tarflower – Jennifer Ferngren
The Villages – Bob Keyes
Rosi Mulholland*
Jackie Rolly*

Regular Agenda Items

- Minutes from 11/26/23 and 1/28/24 meetings
  - Cate H. motioned to approve the November 26, 2023 and January 28, 2024 meeting minutes. Rebekah K. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- Next Meeting March 24th at 6:30pm.
  - Will be the Membership Workshop (see below)

News/Announcements/Updates

- Nominating Committee
  - Officer Elections (Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary) should be held in March per the Handbook.
  - Will need to delay voting since we don’t have any nominations yet.
  - The job of the three-person Nominating Committee’s job is to propose a slate of candidates.
    - Present and Past Chapter Representatives
    - All FNPS members are also eligible.
  - Officer duties are listed in the Handbook.
  - Cate H. will serve on the committee, but cannot chair it. Need two more volunteers.
• **National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW)** - February 26 to March 1
  o Pine Lily (Dana S.) is partnering with Osceola CISMA to do an Air Potato removal at Peghorn Nature Park. “Potatoes” will be sent to a lab to raise air potato beetles, which will be given to public land agencies for biological control of the vines in other areas. A twofer!
  o Pawpaw (Sande H.) has groups removing Brazilian Peppers in Holly Hill (with CISMA) and removing invasives at Ponce Preserve (have been working every week for the last couple of months to clear 50 acres).
  o Ixia (Cate H.) has worked on removals in 8 locations and has another removal scheduled for next Saturday in St. Augustine.

• **Brochure Print Orders**
  o Brochures are ordered and should be shipped in 2-3 weeks. Brochures will come from 2 printers – Melanie will send out lists and $20 shipping invoices in about a week.
  o Orders do not include the Spanish Good Citizen Guides and inserts since the translations and print files are not done. Will make decision about printing when files are ready.

• **Membership Workshop**
  o The workshop will be scheduled for March 24 and will replace the regular Council meeting.
  o Working on the agenda – it will be sent to Chapter Reps and Membership Chairs (thanks to all for the names). Topics for discussion will include:
    ▪ Using the membership database (reports and terminology) – sharing “tips” and what reports would make management easier
    ▪ Member “touchpoints” (interactions) – what can we do to increase member engagement and participation?
    ▪ New member package (see below)

• **New Member Package** (discussed after the Rescue presentation)
  o Lynn A. noted she has reviewed the draft and will be sending comments in the next few weeks.
  o Several other Sarracenia members have reviewed it as well. They felt a bit overwhelmed and questioned who would read through it and had questions about distribution – would it be available online or would Chapters have to print it out.
  o Melanie acknowledged that she has gotten comments about the length and suggested the following distribution strategy:
    ▪ We don’t want to immediately overwhelm new members, so what would be sent to new members is a one-page letter or email (customized by each Chapter) giving the new members key information about the chapter (meeting times, website, contact info, etc.) and a link to the new members package which would be on the FNPS website under Downloadable Documents.
    ▪ Melanie will also look into getting the package recorded so it can be listened to.
    ▪ The one-page letter will be discussed at the Membership Workshop since Chapter Membership Chairs will be the ones sending it out.

• **Native Plant Definition**
  o There was a meeting about updating our native plant definition (particularly for the new member package). The proposed updated definition is still being reviewed.
  o The current definition reads:
    *For most purposes, the phrase “Florida native plant” refers to those species occurring within the state boundaries prior to European contact, according to the best available scientific and historical documentation. More specifically, it includes those species understood as indigenous, occurring in natural associations in habitats that existed prior to significant human impacts and alterations of the landscape.”*
  o The proposed updated definition reads:
For most purposes, the phrase “Florida native plant” refers to species that, according to the best available scientific and historical documentation, occurred within the state boundaries prior to European contact. Florida native plants evolve and occur naturally in particular regions, ecosystems, and habitats, but may not occur naturally throughout the State.

Melanie explained some of the issues discussed and incorporated in the update. The updated definition still refers to “European contact” as a convenient point in time in terms of plant documentation, although documentation is not definitive and there is no way of knowing what plants Native Americans may have moved. The updated definition introduces several other concepts important to understand: that native plants are not necessarily native to all parts of the state (they are native to specific regions/ranges and habitats/ecosystems), that historic knowledge is still evolving, and that plant populations are dynamic (climate change and humans are moving plants to different areas).

The 2/21 Florida Wildflower Foundation webinar on this topic (presented by Marc Frank, Extension botanist, University of Florida Herbarium) provides a good review.


Arbor Day Update

- Lynn A. thanked Pamela Callender and Gail Taylor for helping garden clubs in their areas.
- Lynn is writing up a summary of what was accomplished which she will circulate. She will also share some “lessons learned”. Melanie suggested submitting the write up to the Sabal Minor.
- A key take-away was the difficulty education garden clubs about which trees are native to their counties.
- Chapter Reps thanked Lynn for her efforts on this collaboration.

Plant Rescues

Tarflower members Jackie Rolly and Rosi Mulholland have been doing rescues in the Clermont/Central Florida area for many years. They are part of a dedicated group that goes out once a week and have put in thousands of hours (and salvaged/relocated thousands of plants).

Rescue/salvage policies and requirements (Jackie R.).

- Generally, removing plants from natural areas is not endorsed; however the Habitat Restoration policy approved by the FNPS Board recognizes an exception if land clearing activities are both imminent and assured, the developer has obtained all applicable permits, and the FNPS team has obtained proper permits.
- FNPS can only salvage plants after the land owner has complied with any county/local codes, obtained all required land clearing approvals, and complied with all mitigation requirements and other regulatory requirements. Note that FNPS salvage operations do not offset land owner/developer mitigation requirements.
- State statues/public policy recognizes endangered, threatened, or commercially exploited plants and protects all native flora from unlawful harvesting on both public and private lands. However, this does not stop the land owner from destroying native plant populations.
- Florida Administrative Chapter 5B-40 identifies the plants considered endangered, threatened, or commercially exploited within Florida.

In order to salvage any plant from private or public land FNPS needs:
• Land owner’s written permission for all plants (often obtained through the owner’s environmental consultant or lawyer), plus
• A Harvest Permit from DPI for endangered and commercially exploited plants (not needed for threatened plants). Permits are valid for one year and now all done online.
• Insurance (FNPS can provide insurance certificate if necessary).

Reasons we salvage plants and seeds:
• To save what we can of our disappearing ecosystems.
• To further endangered/endemic plant research and propagation.
• To help our members learn about our unique habitats and what is at stake.
• To assist in restorations at protected sites.

Finding sites and getting permissions (Rosi M.).

Recipient site or sites
• Need to identify recipient sites before rescuing plants.
• Must be in “public” ownership (State, local or private foundation) to be kept in natural, managed conditions.
• Must be under active management (have staff, budget, and restoration plan).
• Management must be a willing partner who wants (and is committed to) handling rescue plants/seeds.
• Must be able to match to salvage sites: similar habitat types, soil types, and within species range.
• Having multiple recipient sites can be important if a land manager doesn’t want a particular species or if a species is not thriving at the first recipient site you use.
• May also need a partner to hold and harden plants between rescue and transplanting

Salvage sites
• Know what you are looking for (matching habitat, soil, species range to recipient site) – may not be a perfect match, but needs to be a high like:like match.
• Resources (get out the word about what you’re looking for):
  o Chapter members, people in the community, Public land managers
  o Drive around to identify possibilities.
  o County Property Appraiser websites
  o Aerial Photos: Google Maps, Google Earth, Bing
  o Soil surveys (https://casoilresource.lawr.ucdavis.edu/gmap/)
  o Planning and Zoning Offices (especially if you can form a relationship with the staff)
  o Environmental Consultants, Real Estate Agents, Land Use Attorneys.
• Must be willing to engage face-to-face
• You must have a convincing sales pitch.

Rosi used “The Vue” project in Clermont as an example of the process.
• Finding the site/contacting the owner:
  o Heard word-of-mouth about the property
  o Did drive-by (shouldn’t go on property prior to getting permission)
  o Looked up the property on the County Property Appraiser website to see what it looks like (aerial), what’s the history, and who owns it
  o Property is in the City of Clermont, so contacted the City Planning Office and got the name of the land use attorney.
  o Visited and talked to the attorney, who talked to the owner (Note: this doesn’t always pan out – sometimes the owner/owner’s representative doesn’t want to engage).
Land owner had no issues with FNPS looking at the property or conducting salvage.
- Visited the site and confirmed there were species we wanted.
- Confirmed property had a development plan, and that development was imminent.

Doing the paperwork:
- Standard form letter from FNPS signed by Lynda Davis. Can be customized depending on land owner – can be really simple or really complicated.
- Insurance certificate
- FDACS harvest permits (if needed for endangered and commercially exploited) – can obtain fairly quickly, and needs to include a plan for what is being done with the plants/seeds.

Seed collection:
- Some owners may not be comfortable with digging, so seed collection is an option if recipient sites are interested.
- Same requirements and process as for plants (including FDACS permits)

Follow up:
- Old agreements can be useful if working with the same land owner in the future.
- We need to make sure plants, especially endangered, go to a proper recipient site.
- Follow up with recipient sites to make sure specific species are thriving - some species may not do well even if it looks like there is a good site match.
- We ultimately want plants, especially endangered species, to flower and form seeds.

Resources
- You can contact Rosi (rmulholl@gmail.com), Jackie (jackie.rolly@att.net), or Melanie.
- You can contact Melanie if you want to participate in a Central Florida rescue.
- Recording is at https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/_BBvABzWpj7V8PHsm1KaB5QoUS4_9oQp4C7rnCzZBgNATyaGKBOGYtwhOoyCoh67.1z4AmftNnf6L4_vk?startTime=1708903316000

Motion to Adjourn
- Rebekah K. motioned to adjourn. Marcie C. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:51 PM