

**Virginia Native Plant Society
Annual Business Meeting Minutes
Saturday, September 16, 2022**

Call to Order & Introductions

President Nancy Vehrs called the meeting to order at 11:14 a.m. with a quorum in attendance.

Approval of 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes

- Susan McLaughlin moved to dispense with the reading of the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes. Peggy Troyer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- Anita Tuttle moved approval of the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes. Peggy Troyer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Presentation of the Annual Budget

The 2023 budget was approved by the Board of Directors and presented to the membership.

Election of Officers and Board of Directors (Terms beginning November 1, 2022)

- First Vice President (2025) – Kevin Howe
- Conservation (2023) – Barbara Ryan
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (2025) – Melody Mobley
- Education (2025) – Joey Thompson
- Publications (2025) – Virginia Witmer
- Publicity (2025) – Ashley Moulton
- Director-at-Large, Invasive Plants Educator (2025) – Jim Hurley
- Director-at-Large, Natural Heritage (2025) – Johnny Townsend
- Director-at-Large (2023) – Joseph Villari

Marjorie Prochaska moved to accept the slate of electors as presented. Catherine Tucker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ruth Douglas, long time Invasive Plant Educator, is stepping down from the board. She will be recognized for her long-time support of VNPS at some point in the future.

President's Report Highlights of Past Year (Nancy Vehrs)

- Currently celebrating our 40th year!
- Reactivated the Shenandoah Chapter this month thanks to the leadership of Anna Maria Johnson.
- Total membership has grown to 2536 and 12 chapters.
- Raised more than \$60,000 for the Natural Area Preserves Fund at our annual fundraiser last fall. Successfully held an online auction that supplemented member donations.
- Appointed our first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair Melody Mobley.
- Buttonbush, *Cephalanthus occidentalis*, was 2022 Wildflower of the Year.

- Because of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, held our annual workshop “How Plants and Geology Interact” virtually through Zoom for the second year.
- Held an additional educational presentation on May 25 entitled "Beyond Colonial Notions: New Plant Kinships" with Nikki Bass and Justin Robinson.
- Under the leadership of Conservation Chair Barbara Ryan, the board approved an updated conservation statement that is posted on the website.
- The board adopted an investment policy and recently appointed a standing investments committee.
- Recipients of 2022 Research Grants:
 - An Assessment of Native Grasslands of the East-Central Piedmont of Virginia submitted by Devin Floyd, Center for Urban Habitats & Mary Jane Epps, Mary Baldwin University. Grant Amount: \$14,750
 - Native Lianas of Virginia's Appalachian/Blue Ridge Forests: Environment and Ecology submitted by Lynn Resler, Virginia Tech, Grant Amount: \$5,305.
- Worked with Delegate David Bulova of the Virginia General Assembly to explore options for phasing out the sale and use of invasive plants in Virginia. Delegate Bulova’s legislation in the 2022 session failed in subcommittee on a party line vote. We are working with Delegate Bulova again on possible legislation for 2023.
- The Board recently endorsed a petition initiated by member Lauren Taylor to “Stop Home Depot from Selling Invasive Plants.” The petition is posted on Change.org and is approaching 52,000 signatures.
- No statewide field trips were held because of Covid, and this Annual Meeting is our first statewide event held in person.
- Website and Social Media Outreach:
 - Increased our Instagram presence to nearly 4200 followers, more than a 42% increase since last year.
 - Our VNPS Facebook Group now has nearly 39,000 members, effectively tripling the number at this time last year. The Facebook group is averaging 300 new members a week.
 - Increased Facebook page followers to 26,749, an 8% increase over this time last year. We would welcome additional administrators since only Ashley Moulton and I post on the site.
 - Maintained an active and current website. There were 225K users and 487k page views during a recent 12-month period. We now have 72 total videos with more than 2,800 views since 1/1/2022.
- *Sempervirens* editor Nancy Sorrells has continued to produce a beautiful and informative newsletter with a goal of quarterly 12-page issues.

Announcement of 2022 Annual Fundraiser

Protect Shenandoah Mountain Fund: Mark Miller, Virginia Wilderness Committee Executive Director, spoke to the membership about protecting and preserving four key wilderness areas on Shenandoah. Although the Forest Service owns this land, private individuals and companies own the underground mineral rights and can develop and extract those minerals. This year our fundraiser will

help to fund the purchase of mineral rights transferring them to the Forest Service enabling them to designate those key wilderness areas as a National Scenic Area of Virginia.

40th Year Retrospect

Not addressed due to time constraints.

2024 Annual Meeting

Hopefully COVID will be under control and we will return to the regular 3-day weekend.

Items for the Good of the Order

Jerome Prochaska entertained us with a humorous story of being the husband of a wildflower enthusiast and being a non-plant person going on wildflower field trips.

Adjourned: 12:07 p.m.