

Virginia Native Plant Society Board Meeting
20 September 2023
Zoom Meeting

In attendance:

Nancy Vehrs, President
Kevin Howe, 1st Vice President
Sally Anderson, 2nd VP
Kathleen Stasulis, Treasurer
Mark Murphy, Website and Technology Chair
Peggy Troyer, Fundraising Chair
Barbara Ryan, Conservation Chair
John Hayden, Botany Chair
Laura Beaty, Horticulture Chair
Melody Starya Mobley, DEI Chair
Joe Villari, Director at Large
Kathleen O'Shea, Membership Chair
Ashley Moulton, Publicity Chair
Mary Rhoades, New River
Anna Maria Johnson, Shenandoah
Matt Brooks, Pocahontas
Emilia Godwin, Fundraiser Chair Nominee
Anna Finch, Secretary Nominee
Melissa Korzuch, Treasurer Nominee

Nancy called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Introductions/Announcements/Agenda Changes/Additions

- Blue Ridge PRISM Announcement
- Education Workshop from Joey
- Melody added to talk about paper working on with Joe Villari

Approval of August BOD Minutes

Kathleen Stasulis moved to accept the August minutes. Peggy seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

- The state DACS report was being filed and Karen working on sending it next week, due November 15.
- Viewed the Budget on Shared Screen, similar process as did in past, projecting trends, some increases, as long as go within budget don't need approval, get receipt and send to Karen for reimbursement, overbudget is case by case basis.
- Nancy said budget increase from \$50 to \$75 for items such as business cards that committee chairs can use. Melody asked about standard business cards and Nancy shared she can assist her, uses Vistaprint and some other options that can be a bit more expensive.
- Some questions for Kathleen like how much to be awarded for Art Contest, would be coming from profit we made from merchandise and can add come out of Expenses.
- Melody asked about honorarium or get published appropriate process- put something in writing like a memo to Karen York not a receipt, if more than 600 dollars tax form is needed.

- Anna Maria asked about line about Misc Income for Shenandoah, 4,600 dollars, that was money when the chapter folded and now they are getting it back since reinstated and still have in bank acct.
- And Anna Maria asked about Plant Guides, received \$10,000 to make it, wondering since selling it does the proceeds go to state or Shenandoah chapter? Goes to state but then goes back to chapters. She inquired since doing a reprinting, funds are available, had printed 2,000 originally, will need more, storage can be an issue.
- Kathleen shared upped income and increases of running over budget, and some reduced if under, and bringing some items forward that took a backburner with Covid like Field Trips and more workshops.
- Merchandise items like plant books, pamphlets, ones added last year, Bonfire ones separated out (Shirts come from there.)
- Melody asked about DEIJ session for all chapter presidents and board (would need money for speaker costs via Zoom, DEIJ budget was increased to 1,000, might need more that could be covered in other areas like Field Trips, can talk more about this in the future as well.
- Karen York gets a raise every year, and any payroll taxes increase as well. Increase in postage with mailings.

Sally moved to approve the Budget and allow members to see at the Annual Meeting. Melody seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Fundraiser:

- Nancy mentioned the next Fundraiser will be to support Natural Heritage again, had helped fundraise \$50-60,000 before, and goal to get over the Natural Preserve Fund over \$100,000 total. Runs from end of year to end of January 2024.
- Emilia asked if it is a direct mail; it is by mail and email, and we put on all of our social media communications (Website, Facebook, Instagram). Nonmembers can donate too.
- Thank you cards are written for donations over \$100, and all members receive an acknowledgement letter; a committee can help write the cards as well.
- One year we had an auction that made \$6,025 that Mark administered online.
- Last year we raised \$51,000 for the Shenandoah Mt. Mineral Rights.
- Natural Heritage to draft letter to help make the appeal.
- Mark asked when we would start the appeal, tentative to announce at the Annual Meeting. Nancy Sorrells leaving to South Africa so she won't be available until the end of October to finalize and print the letter. Emilia shared she had some success in November sending out but wondering if we had data of previous years, no hard data but try to get it out before all of the other end of year requests people are receiving.

2023 Annual Meeting:

- 43 people currently signed up, more slower sign ups would like to get to 100 registered.
- Peggy inquired about possibility of people being able to register for field trips the same time they register for the meeting instead of Saturday morning to help plan. There has been some competition with field trips in the past but everyone always has an option for something!
- Kevin said there were a few changes to field trips nothing major and shared screen of the options.
- Encourage other members to go, some date conflicts this year and other reasons.

2024 Annual Meeting:

- Nancy asked if we want to have this same model if enough interest. There was an extensive and passionate conversation with a lot of great suggestions, thoughts and concerns from a lot of the board. Some include: geographic location (how close is it to the member, how far to drive), more planning

time, central location to consider or where most of the members are located, costs like lodging, and to speakers, time to announce it, having popular Botanists from other states be speakers, would a hybrid model work or best to keep that solely for the workshop, and the annual meeting in person, invite more speakers of color and physical disabilities as well, and technology costs, etc. Some chapters could cover costs for members if in budget as well.

- In conclusion, a survey was discussed to survey the membership to put all of these great questions and concerns to help get data about members availability, how far willing to drive/pay, and desire for a meeting. Kathleen O'Shea will compile the questions to send out.
- Historically has been in September but some weather issues and other conflicts of plant sales and things can happen to make it in October.
- For locations, Northern VA for 2025 and Harrisonburg area for 2024 seemed to be the front runners.
- State board decided not a local chapter's responsibility to plan but can have some local people to help who know the area.

DEIJ Committee:

- Melody shared the committee's "Vision and Mission Statement" and it was suggested to put on the website with the general positions since names can change of the people responsible for the duties. Mark asked if we wanted to vote officially on the policy. Anna Maria moved to approve the statement, and Joe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- Planning an all chapter and board DEIJ training/workshop, suggestion to make it 2 hours with pre and post-workshop homework.
- Request to add pronouns to name list so can address member correctly.
- New members in the DEIJ committee, have 17 members currently, would like representation from all chapters.
- Joe invited everyone to the September 27 meeting and to encourage participation. Melody and Joe giving a presentation on problematic plant names that might discourage inclusivity and diversity.
- The DEIJ Committee meets every month, last Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm, and Nancy hosts with her Zoom link. (Changed recently to Joe Villari hosting)

VNPS Membership Brochure

- Virginia Witmer sent several quotes to Nancy and Kathleen O'Shea. \$1,000 is the budget Kathleen will write Virginia about, doesn't take too long to make, they would like it out before the Annual Meeting.

Flora Checklists: Nancy is working with the Flora Board's new director, Jenny Norwood and still need to work on some changes.

Field Trips (statewide): Looking for ideas and can be out of state as well since interest in that again as well. Did five-day ones in the past like to the Smokies.

Additions:

- Jim Hurley not present but Blue Ridge PRISM holding strategic meeting Charlottesville December 12-14 if anyone can go to represent VNPS.
- Nancy S working on *Sempervirens*, send to her before end of the month when she goes to South Africa; and someone who attends Annual Meeting to send a write up of it.
- Ashley said can't attend the VA Conservation Network meeting at Pocahontas State Park, but Kathleen O'Shea can go.
- Annual Workshop- Joey planning with theme of regions.

Tech/Website Updates:

No updates from Mark. We do have 2,756 members currently, and Nancy would like to get it up to 3,000.

Chapter/Committee Highlights:

- Interest in creating an Eastern Shore chapter with much possibilities there for Annual Meeting one day.
- Ashley shared will be a contest for the T-shirt; White Turtlehead is the flower for next year with a competition again for the shirt.
- Will sell pins and ballcaps at the Annual Meeting, then work on holiday sales.

Adjourn: a few minutes before 9:00 p.m.

Next BOD Meeting: December (later was deferred to January 2024) (date and time to be determined) Zoom