



Virginia Native Plant Society Quarterly Board Meeting

March 18, 2024
Zoom Virtual Meeting
7 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Nancy Vehrs, President
Kevin Howe, 1st VP
Sally Anderson, 2nd VP
Melissa Korzuch, Treasurer
Mark Murphy, Director at Large, Technology
Anna Finch, Secretary
Emilia Godwin, Fundraising Chair
Barbara Ryan, Conservation Chair
W. John Hayden, Botany Chair
Joey Thompson, Education Chair
Kathleen O'Shea, Membership Chair
John Townsend, Director at Large Natural Heritage
Jim Hurley, Director at Large Invasive Plant Education
Melody Starya Mobley, DEIJ Chair
Virginia Witmer, Publications Chair
Joe Villari, Director at Large
Robert Boehringer, New River
Carol Carter, Jefferson
Emily Southgate, Piedmont
Anna Maria Johnson, Shenandoah
Alan Ford, Potowmack
Matt Brooks, Pocahontas
Lucile Kossodo, John Clayton
Jennifer McCarthy, Blue Ridge Wildflower Society
Betsy Washington, Northern Neck
Tom Smith, VNPS Volunteer Lobbyist
Phyllis Fevrier, Upper James River Chapter
Suzan Erickson, South Hampton Roads Chapter

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

Introductions/Announcements/Agenda changes/Additions-

-John Hayden will update the wildflower part. (come at the end when he will announce the winner of the vote)

-Nancy added the SePP (Southeastern Plant Conservation Alliance) conference for board approval for \$1,000 support as a fundraiser, can send one person to attend the conference as well. We do have Conference sponsorship money- have extra since have been supporting Natural Heritage conferences in the past.

Alan Ford moved to approve and both Anna Maria and Joe seconded it.
And it passed unanimously.

- Resurrection of Investments Committee. Kevin, Mark, some other people were on it; to help with CDS, Kevin has some history and could help temporary. Melissa as treasurer will be chair. General members with expertise would be helpful or if know any history/policy. Send suggestions to Melissa. Anna Finch moved to resurrect the Investments Committee, Kathleen O'Shea seconded, and it passed unanimously. The committee will meet once a month and the Investments Committee will go forward.

Approval of Minutes-

For September 2023 & January 2024 Board Meetings – Nancy/Anna – circulated, accepted as presented.

Treasurer's Report –

To be circulated by Melissa three items added to it. 4 different docs- now Melissa has access to the bank accounts; woo hoo! Karen helps. And might need to move a few items around like Cullowhee to conference, will just be last two months moving forward, in good shape, and was accepted as presented.

2023 Final Fundraiser Report – Emilia –

Kudos on a great campaign! From Jan to today, another \$13,000 more came in, \$88,575 is the total now! Some sizable donations. An \$85,000 check was sent to VA Natural Heritage Program.

2024 General Assembly Legislation Report – Nancy, Barbara instead to present

-A very busy session compared to last year! Barbara went over highlights on her report submitted and attached to the minutes, like invasive plants signage.

A work group will be convened in Richmond to follow up on HB528 regarding native landscaping in areas with Homeowner Associations (HOAs). The group is seeking a VNPS representative who can work with this HOA group. Kathleen O'Shea volunteered to serve, and Betsy Washington offered to assist.

Annual Workshop March 21 & 28 – Joey Thompson-

-Big thanks to Mark for setting up the web page and registration. It went smoothly and suggested donation there, please everyone share it more again this week right before the workshop, people make last minute decisions to attend, going over speakers, and will announce winner of tee-shirt contest. The VNPS workshop announcement went out statewide to all members by email, and 260 people have signed up so far.

2024 Annual Meeting –

September 20-22 at Massanetta Springs Conference Center in the Harrisonburg area. We signed the contract. Kevin will help with field trips and talk to Anna Maria/Shenandoah Chapter about more ideas. It will be more complex registration because hotel lodging will be handled by VNPS.

2024 Research Grants – Kevin Howe-

- received 7 applications/proposals totaling \$65,000 dollars. We generally like to spend \$15-20,000. A few more reviews coming in. Two are more outstanding than others so far, Emily and Sally reviewers two of them, and then committee of reviewers make agreement and suggest to Board to accept 2 or 3 proposals can do via email. Defer decision for now. Hopefully the committee will have recommendations and board vote can be conducted by email later this week. And officially include in next quarterly meetings that vote took place via email.

Statewide Field Trip(s) for 2024 – Kevin –

-2 Wednesdays in May:

Dragon Run, 3-hour kayak trip, 50-dollar donation requested, and optional walk.

Hickory Hollow Natural Area May 16 and Sunday May 19 in the afternoon, will start take reservations soon, Kevin will send to Mark to put on website, and might have something else in the fall, and some other considerations like Bull Run Mountain, SW Pinnacle Barrens, Savage Dunes, thanks to Kevin, our field trip expert.

T-shirt Art Contest for 2024 Wildflower of the Year White Turtlehead – Ashley Moulton

Ashley not present due to getting married, we send our congrats! The contest is going on right now- please vote! Notice went out to membership- all paying members, this morning, vote by Wednesday at midnight and will announce Thursday at the annual workshop! Cool designs, way to go, with Mark's technical assistance. Awardees will all get cash prize for 1st, 2nd, 3rd places.

Nominating Committee for 2024 –

Terms expiring in 2024: President, Botany, Fundraising (currently filling an unexpired term), Membership, and Technology. The committee is headed by Sally. Mark for Technology will be winding down as his term expires at end of year, might need a paid staff person. If you know a technology person who has time, send names to Sally for committee. Betty Truax, Peggy Troyer, and Melody Mobley are on the committee so far. Mark can always help someone get started and has templates/stuff he has recorded to help, Virginia offered help with transition too.

Technology/Website Updates/Issues – Mark Murphy

-nothing to report except what said above, 73,000 group members and a lot of followers reach a lot of people on FB and Instagram.

Chapter/Committee News as Time Permits-

Melody- DEIJ still having trouble getting members to attend, regular meetings on the last Wednesday of the month. Melody was honored with two movies and filmed participation in Natural Resource Protection, and one is called ForestHer on PBS. Another longer documentary will coming out with her, The Dark White Forest. Link to her website: <https://www.starya.org/documentary> We congratulated her too and she invited people to come to the viewings. Emily Southgate shared she was inspired by Melody and asked some librarians in Marshall to post fliers for walks who were pleased to learn more about VNPS, and talk this summer.

-Alan for Potowmack shared they had a social event- wanted to meet four times/year since most meetings are online. Twenty-five people showed up, keep trying to get more people like in June at Green Spring Gardens, and offer more Zoom online meetings due to various reasons. Lucille shared it is the same with John Clayton- a lot of members don't want to drive at night and can be reached via Zoom. In person can have more of a personal touch though that is important to consider as well.

Melody shared she is recruiting/maintaining members and can do Zoom meetings too as speaker. She can drive in person if one hour or closer.

2025 Wildflower of the Year – John Hayden:

-Wildflower vote- 45 votes, tie for second Turks Cap and Indian Pipe, winner is Mayapple!

-Emily shared that Loudoun County turned down a Data Center, 50 people spoke, problem with amount of energy they take; talking and letters helped.

Deadline for Next Issue of *Sempervirens* – June 1

Next BOD meeting: **June – Virtual through Zoom** – date/time to be determined

Adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Attachment:

**Conservation Chair Report
VNPS Board of Directors Meeting
March 18, 2024**

- **Activities:**
 - During January, February, and early March. attended biweekly Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) Legislative Committee meetings and closely tracked General Assembly developments re invasive plants, native plants, conservation landscaping, tree conservation, and data center reform.
- **General Assembly Outcome: it was a very eventful session, with many successes and some disappointments. Still awaiting Governor's signature on several key bills.**
 - Our registered lobbyist, Tom Smith, was very active tracking all legislation, testifying, attending hearings, and meeting with legislators throughout the session.
THANK YOU TOM!
- **Bills tracked and current status:**
 - **Invasive/native plant-related bills:**
 - **HB47 and SB306 Sale of invasive plants, retail signage (VNPS was VCN Lead)**
 - Would require retailers to post a sign near display warning customers if a plant being sold for outdoor use is an invasive plant. Language to be developed by VDACS with the Invasive Species Workgroup
 - Reconciled substitute bill S 306 passed House 56-41 and Senate 25-13
 - **Awaiting Governor's signature by 4/7/24**
 - **HB1167 Ban on sale of English ivy**
 - Passed House 54-45 and Senate 21-18
 - Would have allowed local jurisdictions to ban the sale of English Ivy
 - **Vetoed by Governor on 3/13/24**
 - **HB320 Pesticide control exemptions**
 - Would exempt from the provisions of state pesticide laws and regulations any unpaid volunteer who uses or supervises the use of any nonrestricted herbicide with the express authorization of a local political subdivision for the sole purpose of controlling invasive plants or noxious weeds on properties owned by such local political subdivision.
 - Passed House 74-25 and Senate 39-0
 - **Awaiting Governor's signature by 4/7/24**
 - **HB528 HOA restrictions on conservation landscaping**
 - Provides that no association shall prohibit an owner from installing managed conservation landscaping, defined in the bill, upon such owner's property unless such prohibition was recorded in the declaration for the association.
 - **Continued by House to 2025 in General Laws by voice vote**

- **VNPS rep to serve on workgroup?**
- **Budget Amendments**
 - Budget amendments for invasive species management plan funding for DCR, DoF, DWR, and VDACS were approved, as well as increased support for NAP acquisition, Natural Heritage
- **Cave Board repeal**
 - **[SB299](#) (VNPS was VCN lead in opposition)**
 - Stricken on 1/16/24
 - Would have repealed provisions relating to the establishment of the Cave Board and transferred the duties of the Cave Board to the Board of Conservation and Recreation.
- **Trees:**
 - **The big news is that [HB1100](#) and [HB529](#) both passed House and Senate and are awaiting the Governor's signature**
 - These bills enable localities to set reasonable standards for conserving and replacing trees during site development
 - **VNPS has signed onto a letter to the Governor encouraging passage of these bills:**
https://docs.google.com/document/d/13INikHsNihWBbKL1x_Vxrhq6oi5tbBey/edit?usp=sharing&oid=116408553548736644627&rtpof=true&sd=true
- **Data Center Reform: All 17 bills designed to address data center growth have been continued to 2025, pending results of a Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) study** on data centers and energy usage. Interest is developing for localities to pause approvals of new data centers until the JLARC study is complete. See https://www.loudounnow.com/news/general-assembly-punts-power-line-data-center-bills-to-jlarc-study/article_ecb08b0a-c52b-11ee-980c-ebb23b79d897.html

Respectfully submitted,
 Barbara Ryan
 Conservation Chair