



Virginia Native Plant Society Quarterly Board Meeting

June 24, 2024
Zoom Virtual Meeting
7 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

At 7:00 p.m. President Nancy Vehrs called the meeting to order with the following in attendance:

Nancy Vehrs, President and Chapter President, Prince William Wildflower Society
Kevin Howe, 1st Vice President/Grants Manager
Sally Anderson, 2nd Vice President
Melissa Korzuch, Treasurer
Mark Murphy, Director at Large, Technology
Anna Finch, Secretary
Emilia Godwin, Fundraising Chair
Barbara Ryan, Conservation Chair
John Hayden, Botany Chair
Kathleen O'Shea, Membership Chair
John Townsend, Director at Large, Natural Heritage
Charles Smith, Director at Large, Native Plant Site Registry
Melody Mobley, DEIJ Chair
Virginia Witmer, Publications Chair
Ashley Moulton, Publicity Chair
Laura Beaty, Horticulture Chair
Joe Villari, Director at Large
Robert Boehringer, New River, President
Carol Carter, Jefferson, President
Emily Southgate, Piedmont, President
Anna Maria Johnson, Shenandoah, President
Alan Ford, Potowmack, President
Matt Brooks, Pocahontas, President
Jennifer McCarthy, Blue Ridge Wildflower Society, President
Pat Quinn, South Hampton Roads, President
Jan Smith, Upper James River, President
Janet Davis, President Nominee
David Gorsline, Director at Large, Technology Nominee

Introductions/Announcements/Agenda changes/Additions: Before the recording of the meeting, Carol Carter asked a question about compiling Chapter Reports to be answered by the board at the end of the meeting.

Nancy Vehrs announced and congratulated Melody Mobley for being inducted into the Forest Service's Hall of Fame and also awarded with the Society of American Forestry National lifetime achievement award.

Approval of Minutes of March 2024 Board Meeting – as circulated by Anna Finch.

Sally Anderson asked for clarification and amendment for Conservation section of members like Betsy Washington and Kathleen O'Shea offering to work in a support group. Barbara Ryan moved to approve the minutes with the amendment revision and Joe Villari seconded. Motion passed to approve with amendment.

Treasurer's Report –as circulated by Melissa Korzuch and Melissa said finances looking well. Melissa gave highlights included taxes extended to November 15, and new electronic check signing procedure will be helpful for Karen York, Office Manager, as well. Members who have check signature authority currently are Sally Anderson, Nancy Vehrs, and Melissa.

Melissa reminded members to submit budget items/edits for the 2025 Budget by June 30. Melissa would like to prepare in July.

Relaunch of the Investments Committee- will be meeting in July, and committee members include Joe Villari, Kevin Howe, and Melissa.

Nancy Vehrs thanked Melissa for moving us forward as Treasurer.

2024 Annual Meeting – will be September 20-22, 2024, at Massanetta Springs Conference Center in the Harrisonburg area.

There have been planning ideas for speakers for both Friday and Saturday, such as some suggestions from Anna Maria Johnson in the local area, and another one as well.

Kevin Howe is lead on field trips for the meeting; Kevin said it went well to sign up on the morning of at last year's Annual Meeting.

Anna Maria also suggested Sunnyside Retirement Center as a spot for a field trip. It has nice trails and has golf carts too to help with mobility, and Massanetta has them as well. Kevin is working with local Shenandoah Chapter and Natural Heritage for possible field trip sites.

Nancy Vehrs wants to have another meeting about Annual Meeting in the next week or so for planning committee. Nancy said we signed a contract and can reduce numbers by certain date to keep in mind. (120 people is ideal to attend). Kathleen O'Shea asked what is the goal of the meeting. Nancy said to organize final details. Kevin Howe, Nancy, Sally Anderson, Kathleen O'Shea, and Melody Mobley were interested in attending the planning meeting, and Anna Maria Johnson and local Shenandoah chapter to help as well. The hard part will be hotel setup with us doing that portion and charges with registration. Nancy to setup a meeting soon.

Certification of 2024 Research Grant Vote by board members via email – Nancy Vehrs shared:

- \$14,750 for "An Assessment of the Grasslands in Eight Counties of the South-Central Virginia Piedmont."
- \$6,098 for "Conservation genetic analysis of Ozark Milkvetch (*Astragalus distortus*; Fabaceae), a Critically Imperiled Virginia Native Plant."
- \$5,390 for "A Taxonomic Treatment of the Violets (*Violaceae*) of Virginia and North Carolina."

Nancy moved for a Motion to certify to document the electronic vote. Alan Ford moved and Melissa Korzuch seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Statewide Field Trip(s) for 2024 – Kevin Howe mentioned a kayak trip on Dragon Run for July and in the fall.

Another possibility is Bull Run Mountain Natural Area Preserve- Melody Mobley asked if it is ADA accessible, but it is not.

Maple Flats will be a field trip at Annual Meeting.

Nominating Committee for 2024 – Sally Anderson, Chair of Nominating Committee, shared the terms expiring in 2024 are: President, Botany, Fundraising (currently filling an unexpired term), Membership, and Technology. More updates:

New President Nominee Janet Davis said it is an honor to fill Nancy's shoes and was welcomed by the board.

John Hayden will stay on as Botany Chair.

Joey Thompson shared that his term has one more year and he would like to step down if possible as Education Chair.

Emilia Godwin is considering staying on with Fundraising Chair.

Kathleen O'Shea is stepping down as Membership Chair.

Joe Villari will be stepping down as Director at Large and Vice Chair of DEIJ Committee as well, so need replacements for those.

Mark Murphy, Director at Large, Technology, is stepping down. David Gorsline will be replacement, and we will hire someone else to do other parts of the job.

Melody Mobley, Betty Truax, and Peggy Troyer are on the Nominating Committee with Sally Anderson. If have any suggestions for open positions, let Sally know.

Conservation/Legislation – Barbara Ryan- some updates since her last report in March. Invasive Labeling Bill was approved by both houses and Governor vetoed it and some others as well. There will be a workgroup for dialogue for HB528 regarding native landscaping in areas with Homeowner Associations (HOAs).

Barbara went over new report/updates. Barbara attended VA Invasive Plant Coalition (VIPC) Policy Action Group (PAG) meetings. Blue Ridge PRISM had a three-day meeting in Charlottesville last December as part of that PAG group. Barbara is the VNPS Rep for Virginia Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC).

Emily Southgate shared about Loudoun Invasive Removal Alliance and Fairfax groups for advocacy against invasive plants and can share with Barbara more information. There were also discussions about tree ordinances.

Charles Smith shared about a document by DEQ going into effect July 1 with Flora Project, VNPS and DCR as resources, to revise and greatly improved the Virginia Stormwater Management Handbook. main site: <https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/deq-va/index.aspx> and document site: <https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/deq-va/doc-viewer.aspx#secid-1520>

Charles encouraged people to educate others to push for native species and sharing the document.

Carol Carter asked to encourage every chapter to have a Membership meeting every year so people can see these issues for community action. Could be a topic for a Workshop to come for people to learn

and how to help. Or create a kit and invite speakers like Charles to share and to empower people with knowledge to push at their local level for native plant advocacy. Barbara said another series of amendments happening related to Resource Protection Areas. Some organizations like Master Gardeners and others are making great changes in regards to native plants.

Action item Barbara presented to board: Should VNPS join VCN Tree Coalition as a Tier One member (defined as “state-level organizations who lobby in GA”) and for Barbara to be our representative? Carol Carter moved to approve and Sally Anderson seconded, and the action passed.

Update on Merrimac Farm Wildlife Management Area Registry Site – Charles Smith walked the site and reported that some stream restoration work will be done in a disturbed area. It will have minimal impact and will be monitored.

Other Registry Sites – Charles stated that some updates to come on Virginia Native Plant registry sites. Registry working with Natural Heritage and can highlight properties and restoration.

Registry site information can be found here: <https://vnps.org/virginia-native-plant-registry-sites/>

Technology/Website Updates/Issues – Mark Murphy welcomed and introduced David Gorsline to the board who will help with some of the duties like blogs and learning the ropes. Mark said we will have to hire technical support from Liesl Lukacs (of Vinebuzz) for further IT assistance, and this will be a cost to the society. Liesl worked with Sue Dingwell to create the current website. Mark will provide Melissa Korzuch with information for budgeting purposes. There will be a transition of duties between now and when Mark steps down between Mark, David, and Liesl. More information to come on who is doing what.

Chapter/Committee News as Time Permits-

DEIJ- Melody Mobley shared that her report will come later. Melody thanked President Nancy Vehrs for leadership as President and DEIJ support. Melody suggested Aaron Kershaw for one of the open Board positions and will work with Sally Anderson on the Nominating Committee.

Melody shared it is still a challenge to get all chapters represented at the DEIJ meetings; they are the last Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm- 1 hour, they correspond via email as well for shorter meeting time.

Melody would like to do an Essay contest for students about the importance of Native Plants idea, and more money for the budget- would like to give out pins/small monetary prizes to essay winners.

September 29 in Berryville- Melody was hired for program to give a presentation, would love members to come support Melody on that day.

Emily Southgate shared that donations to the memorial fund for Jocelyn Sladen raised more than \$5,000 dollars. Fund is still open for donations/programs.

Deadline for Next Issue of *Sempervirens* – July 15, a little later now and has been pushed back a few days.

Carol Carter requested moving forward for one compiled report of all Chapter Reports prior to BOD meetings instead of a lot of emails with separate chapter reports. Melissa Korzuch offered to help Anna Finch compile these.

Next BOD meeting: **September – Virtual through Zoom** – date/time prior to annual meeting to be determined.

Adjourned at 8:43pm.