

Virginia Native Plant Society  
Annual Business Meeting Minutes  
Saturday, September 20, 2025  
4-H Conference Center at Smith Mountain Lake

Call to order & Introductions

President Nancy Vehrs called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm with a quorum in attendance or through proxy.

Approval of 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes

- Jane Kirchner moved to dispense with the reading of the 2024 Annual Meeting minutes. Peggy Troyer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
- Peggy Troyer moved approval of the 2024 minutes. Jenny Norwood seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Presentation of the Annual Budget

The 2026 budget was approved by the Board of Directors and Nancy presented it to the membership.

Election of Officers (Terms beginning November 1, 2025)

- First Vice President: Kevin Howe
- Conservation chair: Vacant
- DEIJ: Aaron Kershaw
- Education: [Maeve Coker](#)
- Membership chair: Jennifer McCarthy
- Publications chair: Virginia Witmer
- Director at Large for invasive plants educator: Jim Hurley
- Director at Large: Johnny Townsend
- Publicity: Ashley Moulton

Emily Southgate moved to accept the slate of nominees as presented. Peggy Troyer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

President's Highlights of the past year:

-VNPS is currently celebrating its 44<sup>th</sup> year, and Nancy noted that she is now in her 13<sup>th</sup> year as president.

- Have 2956 statewide members and 13 chapters
- Raised more the \$50,000 for the Virginia Botanical Association Digital Atlas of Virginia Floras as our 2024 fundraising.
- Highlighted Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*) as the 2025 Wildflower of the Year.
- Publicity Chair Ashley Moulton oversaw our fourth art contest for the design of the WOY T-shirts sold directly through our vendor Bonfire.
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- For the fifth year we held our annual workshop virtually through Zoom. A big thanks to Education Chair Maeve Coker for finding the speakers and coordinating the event. This year's topic, "Advancements in our understanding of Virginia flora," was presented over two Wednesday evenings, March 19 and 26. Each speaker had been a recipient of a research grant from the VNPS.
  - Dr. Mary Jane Epps, an associate professor at Mary Baldwin University at the time.
  - Hannah Machiorlete, an ecology research assistant at Archbold Biological Station in South-central Florida who conducted her research at the College of William & Mary.
  - Dr. Harvey Ballard, a Professor of Plant Biology at Ohio University
  - Dr. Carrie Wu, an Associate Professor of Biology at the University of Richmond.
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Each session was recorded and available through Vimeo on the VNPS website.

#### 2025 Research Grants Awarded:

- Dr. Harvey Ballard, Professor of Plant Systematics and Evolution and Director of the Floyd Bartley Herbarium of Ohio University, received \$11,805 for continuation of the violet species complex found throughout Virginia and North Carolina.
- Dr. Doug DeBerry (a research assistant professor in Environment Sustainability Program) and Sam Dutilly (a graduate student of Dr. DeBerry) of The College of William & Mary received \$8,482 to fund the study of the "Vascular Flora of Fones Cliffs, Virginia and Novel Habitat Enhancement Method for Preservation of Sensitive Joint Vetch."

Legislation: A small VNPS team follows actions of the General Assembly and works with the Virginia Conservation Network to stay informed in the GA's fast-moving environment. Though we did not play as active a role in this year's invasive plant signage legislation, the governor signed a bill requiring signage at nurseries that identifies invasive plants that are offered for sale. The bill had directed an effective date of January 2026, but the governor amended the bill to push back the requirement until January 2027. Last year he vetoed a more stringent bill. We are grateful to our volunteer registered lobbyist Tom Smith and Conservation Chair Barbara Ryan who followed legislation and interacted with legislators on our behalf.

We held only one statewide field trip this year: a kayak trip on Dragon Run on the Middle Peninsula organized by Kevin Howe. We hope to offer more next year.

This Annual Meeting is only our third multi-day event held in person since the pandemic. Nancy expressed gratitude to Sally Anderson, Kevin Howe, and Karen York for their diligent work in pulling together this annual meeting. She also expressed appreciation to Secretary Jen Crawford, Treasurer Melissa Korzuch and Jennifer McCarthy for their support and volunteer efforts.

#### Website and Social Media Outreach:

- Many thanks go to our Publicity Chair Ashley Moulton who maintains our Instagram presence. We now have 8128 followers, up from 7306, an 11% increase since last year.
- Our VNPS Facebook Group has grown from 95,000 members a year ago to more than **107,000** members now, nearly a 13% increase. We have a very active administration group that includes Laurie Dodd, Scott O'Brien, Lauren Taylor, Brian Magurn, Sam Kirby, and me. Many thanks to this great group of dedicated volunteers. This Facebook group can average hundreds of member requests per week, and the administrators are VERY busy. We are constantly on the lookout for spammers and trolls. Identification requests are the most frequent posts.
- Increased Facebook page followers to 32,000, an increase of about 2000 over this time last year. We have added two more contributors, Education Chair Maeve Coker and Piedmont Chapter Board Member Laurie MacNaughton, and have recently increased our posting output. Ashley Moulton and I had been the only admins for a while, and our posts had become sporadic. I am trying to convince someone who lives in the Blacksburg area to join the team to increase our geographic diversity.
- Maintained an active and current website thanks to David Gorsline. He maintains our events calendar, post statewide content, and assists chapters with posting content such as newsletters, and so much more!

*Sempervirens* editor Nancy Sorrells has continued to produce an award-winning quarterly 12-page newsletter with a broad mix of content. Our third issue of the year was printed this past

week, and I sent it to all members electronically through the Leaf Letter. Those who still receive paper copies will also receive it in the US Mail in the next couple of weeks.

The proudest achievement for VNPS this past year was this month's revival of the former Fredericksburg Chapter as the Central Rappahannock Chapter of the VNPS. The chapter will hold its first official meeting next month and elect officer. Nancy expressed gratitude to Stacey Churchill for her work in coordinating this effort. She had a solid steering committee, and the chapter is off to a rousing start. Let's hear it for lucky chapter number 13!

Adjourned: 7:42 pm

Approved October 3, 2026