

Virginia Native Plant Society
Potowmack Chapter Board Meeting
March 03, 2022

Opening and Attendance

The meeting was conducted via Zoom with the assistance of Mark Murphy, Vice President in keeping with the best practices during the Covid outbreak.

The meeting is called to order at 7:00 pm by Alan Ford, Chapter President

Board Members

Mark Murphy, Vice President
Scott Knudsen, Treasurer
Patrick Siren, Secretary
Laura Beaty, Propagation / Plant Sales Committee Chair
Margaret Chatham, Newsletter Committee Chair
Nelson DeBarros, Botany Committee Chair
Donna Murphy, Member at Large
Margaret Fisher, Member at Large

Forum and Announcements

- Northern Alexandria Plant Sale will be 30th of April, featuring 10 vendors. The previous Fall plant sale saw a record number of plants sold and the organizers are hoping to see the pattern continue in the Spring.
- Another sign of increasing demand for native plants, the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District's Bare Root Seedling Sale reportedly sold out in a single day, even after having increased their inventory
- Nelson DeBarros' walk, previously scheduled for April 30th, will be rescheduled for a date TBD in Mid May.
- The Chapter plant sale in May will coincide with the Greenspring Spring Plant Sale on the 14th

Officer and Chair Reports

Treasurer

Chapter Treasurer Scott Knudsen reports that the Treasury is caught up on scheduled duties.

Membership

Membership Committee Chair David Gorsline reports that the chapter is up to 599 members, a slight increase since the beginning of the year. Our members currently make up approximately 26% of VNPS membership across the State (2,333 members).

Propagation

Propagation Committee Chair Laura Beaty reports that she has been busy working towards a number of improvements for the propagation beds at Greenspring Gardens. She has secured an estimate for replacing the shade cloths covering the Potted Shade and Rock Bed areas, and has distributed it to the Board members for consideration.

The propagation team's top priority, however, is preparing for the first plant sale of the year. Early-work days will begin in March with an emphasis on repairing/replacing worn benches and deteriorating materials, organizing the hospital area and getting the beds presentation-ready. The propagation team is considering the option of planning a work day to take care of the more infrastructure-focused tasks but Laura will also announce ad-hoc work sessions when she becomes available.

The first plant sale will be held April 6th

Laura reports that she has purchased plants to restock some of our more popular offerings including various ferns and milkweed. The ferns, some 250 bare root plants, have been potted and are looking healthy. The milkweed should arrive mid-April and will need to be potted. Work dates to be announced.

New Business

Plant Rescue

The Northfax West plant rescue had been in a holding period as the start of construction had been announced. However, the equipment has not yet arrived and we have been given permission to continue with the plant rescue until it does. Plant rescue leaders may continue collecting plants, however, no further events will be announced to the public, bringing the project to a close.

Budget Advisory Status Report

Chapter Vice President Mark Murphy Reports that the initial Budgetary Committee meeting has been held, primarily to discuss the goals and objectives of the group.

The Committee's initial conversations focused largely on potentially establishing reserve funds for FY 2023, recommended expenditures for surplus funds, and identifying recurring budget items. Recommendations include improvements and repairs to the propagation space, sponsoring new and additional internships, and grants and donations to other mission-aligned programs.

Speaking for the Committee Alan Ford informed the board of the importance of considering other Northern Virginia jurisdictions in the Chapter's search for new internship and grant opportunities. By way of example, Ford recognized Arlington County Parks, City of Falls Church, Alexandria City as areas where the Chapter might seek out new mission-aligned groups or programs for consideration.

Chapter President Alan Ford had two items to present to the committee:

1. The Treasury needs a method for tracking "support in-kind" donations so that the Board has an accurate account of the chapter's expenditures, as well as what assets are available for the Chapter's use.
2. A clarification that the budgetary committee has his support to consider a reserve fund for the support of Plant Nova Natives Social Media Campaign that would be in addition to the PNNSMC funds held by VNPS Potowmack being used to fund the next printing of the Plant Nova Native Guides.

The committee has agreed to take on the task of developing a budgetary structure that better reflects the relationship between VNPS Potowmack and Plant NOVA Native guides.

Margaret Fisher of the Chapter Board suggested that the Chapter investigate internship opportunities that could also promote diversity and inclusion in the field. Chapter President Alan Ford responds that the chapter's past relationship with such programs and organizations is such that we provide funds to meet the needs of their internship and that organization uses those funds and qualifies the candidates as they see fit. President Ford emphasized that if the chapter can identify organizations whom we are comfortable sponsoring he feels that it would be best for the chapter to maintain this style of relationship.

Diversity and Inclusion Survey

In opening, Chapter President Alan Ford recognizes the Plant NOVA Natives Social Media Campaign for their efforts to bring Diversity and Inclusion to the forefront of the community's attention, encouraging organizations within their network to to self-evaluate their own efforts in

this area and take action when necessary to engage with underserved communities. In presenting this topic formally to the Board, President Ford recommends we start with the PNNSMC's Diversity and Inclusion Survey which asks that organizations take inventory of their policies and actions aimed at building or encouraging inclusive practices.

Lastly, the Chapter President asked for thoughts and comments from the board about how the Chapter can support Diversity and Inclusion within our organization.

The Board largely favors starting with an internal policy that makes a commitment to taking inclusive action and ensuring that the Chapter is making a conscious effort to reach out to under-represented populations in our communities, focusing first on taking action before making a firm public policy. Suggestions for action include hosting tabling events in and around community centers, identifying potential spokesman who are already in the field of conservation, working with Park Authority Supervisors to help promote their own diversity-minded programs, and consulting with other organizations who have successfully created programs aimed specifically at underserved communities.

President Ford concluded the discussion with a commitment to continue researching these and other opportunities and will report back to the Board.

Upcoming Events

Speaker: Phenology and Climate Change w/ Clare Walker, March 10

Tabling Event at Riverbend Bluebell table event, April 9

- Alan Ford and Scott Knudsen to man the table.

Chapter President Alan Ford also extended his thanks to Donna Murphy, of the Chapter Board, for the hard work she has done to organize so many recent talks and other programs.

Cinderbed Road Project/Newington Conservation Site

Fairfax County Department of Transportation plans to put a lighted bike trail through a stream valley near Franconia Metro adjacent to a globally rare magnolia bog and acidic seepage swamp. Supervisor Lusk has taken the stance that the environmental issues raised by the project are unfortunate and to be avoided in the future, however, the project will continue. The county has already spent millions on ADA-compliant designs that were sponsored by Federal funds, which will have to be returned if the project is abandoned. Despite this and the apparent late stage of the contracts at play, the county has not yet secured the land rights to the proposed development area. Those rights are known to be held by a well-established HOA in the area.

Chapter President Alan Ford informed the board that there are approximately a dozen or less such habitats remaining in the wild and asked the Board if this is an issue on which VNPS Potowmack should provide input or take further action.

Potential Actions might include signing on to letters being written by local activists and organizations, bringing legal action against the project for failing to do due diligence in their ecological survey, petitioning the project to relocate the road, and/or petitioning the HOA to withhold the land rights.

The Board is awaiting more information but has stated its support for finding impactful actions that the Chapter can take to stop the destruction of this rare habitat.

Closing

Chapter President Alan Ford adjourns the meeting at 8:35pm