

**Virginia Native Plant Society
Potowmack Chapter Board Meeting
19 January 2017**

The meeting was held at Green Spring Gardens Park. It was called to order at 7:35 P.M. by Alan Ford, president. In-person attendees were Laura Beaty, Margaret Chatham, Scott Knudsen, Donna Murphy, Pat Salamone, and Bob Yacovissi; on the phone were Lori Bowes and Michael Reinemer.

MINUTES

The minutes from the 4 August 2016 board meeting were approved. There were no official minutes from the 6 October 2016 board meeting; since there was not a quorum present at that meeting, no decisions were made and no votes were taken. A summary of discussions was provided to board members.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Scott will send a report after the meeting. The issue with the Virginia Department of Agriculture Consumer Services (VDACS) has been resolved; we are required to register with them because we solicit donations. The more than \$5000 the chapter accepted in donations for the Plant NoVA Natives campaign (as "seed money" to make the printing of the PNN guide self-sustaining) required us to submit a different form than we did previously. The \$10,000 from Alan's Cox Conserves Heroes award also raises our annual donations. In succeeding years we will probably be back to normal.

MEMBERSHIP

Bob is continuing his investigation into the income we receive from membership dues and donations, trying to match what happens at the state organization with the dues and donations the chapter receives. He found that the dues match up well but there are some issues with donations; when chapter members add a donation to their dues payment, the donation does not always get properly credited to the chapter. This is a systematic problem with the state organization that should be improved once the planned customer relationship management (CRM) software system is implemented. Bob moved that the chapter address this issue going forward but not retroactively; we will not attempt to untangle past donations. Scott seconded the motion and it passed by a unanimous voice vote.

The data show a steady decline in the membership numbers. In January 2016 we had 435 members. During 2016, 52 new members joined. But we ended the year with 416 members, so 71 members did not renew their memberships in 2016. The board discussed various options for reducing the number of non-renewing members.

Once incentive we will offer is that in future, we will send advance notice of walks (a very popular membership benefit) to a member list based on our records rather than sending the advance notice to the Yahoo ListServ group which includes many non-members. This will give members the first chance to sign up for walks, which often fill up. Currently this will be done in a somewhat manual way (Bob will provide member email addresses to Alan who will send out the notices) but the future CRM system should allow for more automation. Alan and Bob will work with Donna to coordinate the announcements.

PROPAGATION

Laura asked whether there would be money available if we need to replace or repair propagation bed infrastructure (e.g., the shed roof) in the coming year. There is money in the budget for propagation expenses and if we need more than that we can use funding designated for special board actions.

PROGRAMS

Donna provided the board members with a copy of the current program planning sheet, including a summary of needed funding versus budgeted funding. We can afford 11 honoraria but might need as many as 16. The board discussed possible ways to overcome this deficit. Very often, speakers or walk leaders who are VNPS members do not take honoraria; the board agreed that we should codify this policy, on the principle that a member of the organization should not need an honorarium for doing something to support that organization.

One option for saving money elsewhere so we can spend more on program expenses is to hold the board meetings at a library or county government center, which do not charge a fee, instead of at Green Spring. Alan will look into this for future board meetings.

Bob proposed that we give a free membership to non-members who give talks or lead walks (in addition to their honoraria) and to the interns we sponsor, in the hope that they will continue as members after the first year.

2017 ANNUAL MEETING

VNPS and MNPS have drafted an agreement on profit/loss sharing between the two organizations based on their share of the attendees. West Virginia doesn't have much money so they will not have financial responsibility. The planning committee is making good progress. They are developing lists of locations and potential leaders. Lara Call Gastinger will lead a journaling workshop. There will also be presentations on iNaturalist, GIS, and possibly the Flora of Virginia app, if it is ready in time.

MISCELLANEOUS

- The Plant NoVA Natives team is now working on revisions for version 3 of the guide. This version will add Laura's phenology chart and will remove some plant species that are not likely to be available in the trade.
- The state organization has established an early education task force to look into how to interest school-age children in botany. They would like to have a member from each chapter.
- The Eco-Savvy Symposium will be held at Green Spring Gardens on 18 February. VNPS will have a table.
- The Flora of Virginia project has requested a donation for the Flora of Virginia app. Laura moved that we donate \$250 from our "special board actions" fund; Scott seconded the motion, which was approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- The board agreed with Alan's suggestion that we sell copies of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's book *Great Natives for Tough Places*, replacing Cole Burrell's other publication.
- Helen Hamilton has self-published a *Guide to the Ferns and Mosses of Virginia's Coastal Plain*. We have a few copies for the chapter to sell.

ADJOURNMENT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The board meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 P.M. The next meeting is scheduled for 2 March at 7:30 P.M. Subsequent proposed meeting dates for 2017 are 4 May, 6 July, 7 September, and 2 November.

Respectfully submitted, Patricia P. Salamone, Secretary