

MINUTES OF VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
December 2, 2017, Henrico County Library

Members present: Nancy Vehrs, Steve Stasulis, Kathleen Stasulis, Joyce Wenger, Kevin Howe, Cathy Mayes, Leslie Allanson, John Hayden, Peggy Stevens, Peggy Troyer, Janet Pawlukiewicz, Laura Beaty, Johnny Townsend, Courtney Will, Mary Lee Epps, Ruth Douglas.

Members on a telephone call-in: Butch Kelly, Caitlyn Cyrus, Jan Smith, Roxanne Paul.

President Nancy Vehrs called the meeting to order at 10:00.

1. Nancy had a number of cards she passed around to members in attendance for Board members to sign for "get-well" and "thanks for serving on the Board".
2. The agenda was reviewed; no additions or corrections were noted.
3. Minutes of the Board meeting of Sept. meeting: no changes, motion to approve made by Joyce Wenger, seconded by Steve Stasulis, passed unanimously.
4. Treasurer's report. Kathleen Stasulis provided copies. Kathleen mentioned that she was going to Blandy in January to meet with Karen. Nancy noted that membership was down. Mary Lee asked why dues income is lower and membership higher (answer: timing). It was also noted that a \$17,858 donation listed as going to VNPS was actually intended to go toward the Flora app. It is hoped that we can raise \$20,000 by the end of the year.
5. DuPont awards: VNPS applied for an award from this settlement by DuPont for pollution of the South River in Waynesboro. Governor McAuliffe will announce awards at 2:30 on Friday, Dec. 8, at Constitution Park in Waynesboro. Nancy commented that putting the application together was very challenging, but we will continue to look for grant opportunities. The grant application was to get funds to purchase land adjacent to Mt. Joy Pond Natural Area Preserve.
6. Report on New Membership Management Software (Neon). Nancy has heard from the Neon Team that the new software is working well. Renewals will be going out by email and Karen will send via USPS to members without email. There was some discussion about details. Nancy asked that we let her know of any problems. Mary Lee asked if the membership decline could be due to changes in the software. Roxanne mentioned that the software is easy to use for renewals: if there are any errors, Karen York can change our records.
7. 2018 Winter Workshop. Sally Anderson is putting it together. The 2018 workshop will be on the subject of trees and will take place on March 10 at the University of Richmond. Sally Anderson, who was traveling and not present at the meeting, lined up all of the speakers and their topics:

John Seiler, Virginia Tech: Tree Biology; Desiree Narango, University of Delaware: Research related to relationship of trees/insects/birds – Her research is related to Doug Tallamy's work; Lytton Musselman, Old Dominion University: Longleaf Pine Restoration; Ryan Klopff, Natural Heritage: Old Growth Forests.

There was a discussion on the fee charged for the workshop. It was also suggested that a “hold the date” announcement about the workshop be placed on our website.

8. Conservation chair vacancy. Marcia Mabee has stepped down. Marcia will prepare a job description for us as we search for a new chair. Cathy Mayes suggested that WE are the advocates for plants in Virginia. It was suggested that we have an advocacy chair in addition to a conservation chair. Cathy suggested that we work with other conservation groups. Peggy is chair of Land Trust Managers in Virginia now and she will be paying attention to issues they are concerned about. She is working to develop connections. It was noted that VCN is not really in tune with our priorities. There are big changes in the General Assembly this year and it’s a big opportunity for us. Nancy is keeping an eye on committee assignments. Probably the Republicans will keep control of the House of Delegates.

9. Proposed fee increases for Shenandoah National Park. Cathy Mayes spoke about this with her concerns. Fees will more than double for the 17 most popular parks, including SNP. There are concerns about affordability for people whose income levels are low, communities surrounding SNP will lose money from tourists, though Cathy doesn’t think this will be a significant issue. Some people might go to Sky Meadows State Park or the Blue Ridge Parkway, good for Virginia. She noted that 80% of fees taken in for SNP go to the park, which sorely needs money. Cathy recommends that the Board not take a position on this topic, but inform members of the situation so they can write of their concerns to the National Park Service. The general decision was to move forward with Cathy writing a proposal for a document to send to members about this issue.

10. Reestablishment of the Fredericksburg chapter of VNPS. Peggy Stevens is spearheading this and will be working with some of the folks suggested. She will do background work for 6 months then start to formalize a proposal. Cathy noted that all members of a new chapter’s dues go to the chapter. Leslie asked what we can do to attract new younger members: we need more active activities. It was suggested that we establish relationships with high schools that have horticulture programs and consider asking them to do a program for us, and work with colleges and community colleges about internships.

11. Report on Tri-state Conference. A large number of attendees were from Virginia. It was a great event, with thanks to Alan and the Potowmack chapter. Since Alan was not here we will have a presentation about the conference at our next meeting. Nancy mentioned that note cards are for sale by the Potowmack Chapter.

12. 2018 state meeting in Williamsburg. Courtney Will. The meeting will be in Williamsburg, Sept. 14-16, 2018. Courtney said that she is working with the College of William and Mary on this meeting and the meeting sessions will be held at the College. Hotels will be used only for lodging for meeting participants. She is working on getting a contract worked up and also working with CWM faculty and students and Master Naturalists in addition to members of the local chapter, other chapters, and the Division of Natural Heritage. One topic to explore will be diversity in our chapters, using the image of a tree to meet under, as was traditional for African Americans. Ruth commented that she had recently read a good article about diversity being a good starting point, but inclusivity is what we should strive for. It was noted that it would

be helpful to members to have a little blurb in the next issue of the newsletter with the dates of the upcoming state meeting.

13. 2018 Field Trips. None yet, but Sally might put one together for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Butch will not lead a trip this coming year. Shirley might lead a trip to Goshen Pass again. Janet Pawlukiewicz said she and Peggy Troyer discussed field trips on their drive down to this meeting and wondered if we might ask Doug Coleman to lead a trip to Colorado. 14. Natural Bridge State Park. Jan Smith asked if anyone is in touch with this park, the newest in the Virginia State Park system. Johnny Townsend said he has contacts there and he has done inventory work there and there are some interesting areas (hidden gems).

15. Possible partnership with Virginia Botanical Associates. Johnny mentioned that they are giving out small grants, and we could publicize our research grants or we could work together on publicity. Also, Janet Pawlukiewicz commented that many members know locations of plants not recorded for a particular county. Johnny responded that there is a button on the Digital Atlas of Virginia web site "Contribute New Records", with detailed information on how to record a new specimen, and reminded us that to record a plant for a particular county there must be a voucher specimen on file with an herbarium in Virginia.

16. VNPS Grant Committee. Joyce reported that emails have been sent out and another will be sent before Christmas. The deadline for applications is 15 February.

17. Noxious Weeds in Virginia. Ruth spoke about the activities of the Noxious Weed Advisory Committee, a group of stakeholders that advises the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services on this topic. After a change in the Noxious Weed Law the Committee has put together a set of criteria that must be met to propose a new Noxious Weed for the Commonwealth, and will soon be making some recommendations to the VDACS Board for plants to be put on the Noxious Weed list.

18. The meeting ended abruptly at 1:00 as there was another group waiting to use the room.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Douglas