BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

March 22, 1986, University of Central Florida, Orlando.

Much of the day was spent on details of the society’s new organization. An attorney has been employed for incorporation and tax exemptions. Membership applications and stationery have been printed and renewal forms and membership cards are in progress. A budget was approved. It was agreed that only members would be on the mailing list unless exceptions are approved by the board. Requests for information which come in to the Crow-Segal office are referred to appropriate officers or members.

The search for an executive director is under way. This position will be part time in the beginning. The job is being advertised and it is hoped it can be filled at the July board meeting.

The board approved by-law revisions which will be presented to the membership at the May meeting. One major change would be to delete the executive director from the executive committee and add a second vice-president. Another change, effective in 1987, would be to replace district directors with chapter representatives, one to be chosen by each chapter.

A system of awards was approved and will be given to members for service to FNPS.

Jane Brooks, Secretary

May 2 and May 3, 1986, at the sixth annual FNPS Conference, University of South Florida, Tampa.

Most actions focused on the discussion of suggested policy for percent native plants to be required in landscaping projects. The following was agreed to: during the first year, 50% of the trees should be native, plus 10% each year after until 90% of the trees are native. During the first year, 25% of the shrubs should be native, plus 10% each year after until 65%. During the first year 10% of the herbs should be native with no additional requirements at this time. The board agreed that a yearly reassessment could be made if this turned out to be unrealistic.

Sydney Brinson presented a comprehensive list of native plants recommended for landscaping in Florida. The list was compiled by many FNPS members across the state, and will be used by state officials. An addendum letter to the list is being drafted so this list is not abused.

Reed Noss presented two plant recovery programs from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He also reported on eight additional plants that are proposed for listing as endangered or threatened. These proposed endangered plants are: Lupinus aridorum, scrub lupine; Chionanthus pygmaea, pygmy fringe tree; Eryngium cuneifolium, snake root; Hypericum cumulicolana, highlands scrub hypericum; Polygonaella basiramia, wireweed; Prunus geniculata, scrub plum; and Warea carteri, Carter’s mustard. In the threatened category is Paronychia chartacea, paper white-wort.

The Articles of Incorporation were circulated for review.

The Senate bill (SB 147) was killed that would have prohibited the sale of melaleuca, Brazilian pepper, and Australian pine in the state. The legislative committee will develop a package and/or a presentation dealing with the sale and removal of the “terrible three”.

The possibility of the FNPS sponsoring a Native Plant Exposition in the future was tabled until the next board of directors meeting in July.

The formation of the Association of Florida Native Nurseries (AFNN) is progressing. The AFNN plans to publish plant lists in the fall of 1986.

The search for an Executive Director is proceeding very well, with several well qualified applicants being considered. The Board of Directors will interview three of the best candidates in their July 12 board meeting at the University of Central Florida. The anticipated hiring date for the Executive Director is August 1, 1986.

The Department of Environmental Regulation is sponsoring American Rivers month in June, 1986. Go canoeing and enjoy our native plants along the shoreline. It is all right to enjoy the fauna, too!

Amendments to the bylaws were approved. The new slate of officers and directors was approved. (See the inside front cover for the new officers and directors.)

Outgoing president Sherry Cummings presented the Silver Palmetto Award to the most valuable board member, Terrance (Terry) Mock. Sherry also presented two Green Palmetto Awards to outstanding FNPS members for their contribution to the state organization beyond their local chapters. These went to Georgia Tasker and Dave Wilson.

- Cindy Connery Boone, Secy.

CONSERVATION GUIDELINES

Conservation is one of the major goals of the Florida Native Plant Society, but so far no explicit policy has been developed. As Conservation Chairperson, I would like to receive more input from the general membership about what the conservation goals and activities should be. To stimulate thought on this topic, I have prepared the following tentative guidelines as a proposed policy statement and action plan for the Society’s role in Florida’s conservation movement. The guidelines below are organized by specific topic. I welcome comments from all members so that these guidelines can be revised and formally submitted to the Board of Directors for approval.

General Goals:
1. To encourage the preservation and restoration of sustainable examples of all of Florida’s native ecosystem types.
2. To encourage, for each of Florida’s native ecosystem types, the perpetuation of ecosystem structure, function, and integrity, where:
   a. structure refers to characteristic species composition, diversity, and relative abundance patterns, encompassing complete food webs, genetic diversity within and among species, and all aspects of the physical habitat.
   b. function refers to the suite of ecological and evolutionary processes associated with that structure, including nutrient cycling, hydrological regimes, fire, other natural disturbance processes, and evolutionary change.
   c. integrity refers to the emergent qualities associated with natural structure and function, and includes wilderness character, naturalness, and beauty.
3. To foster the preservation and recovery of populations of plant species native to Florida, in their natural habitats, and in natural relative abundance patterns. Devote special attention to endemics, rare species, and other taxa particularly threatened by human activities.
4. To encourage the use of native plant species in landscaping, thus saving individual plants that would otherwise be destroyed by development, inhibiting the spread of exotic species, and promoting conservation of water, nutrients, and energy. Discourage removal of native plants from the wild, except during legitimate salvage programs.

Specific Areas of Concern

Managed Areas: Encourage public and private land and water management agencies to manage areas in accordance with the above goals, to the extent that their legal mandates and financial
limitations permit. State and national parks, state preserves, and state reserves should be managed strictly for preservation and restoration of natural systems. State recreation areas and wildlife management areas, water management areas, national preserves, national wildlife refuges, and national forests have broader multiple-use mandates, but because private lands are rapidly deteriorating, ecological preservation and restoration should be the primary functions of all public lands.

We specifically must encourage public land stewards to devote more attention and effort to natural systems protection and management. An ecosystem approach to land and water management should mimic the natural environmental limitations permit. State and national acquisitions on the part of federal, state, and local agencies throughout Florida. Focus on the most ecologically critical areas, and on optimal buffering and interconnection of these areas.

Corridors: Support implementation of the proposed statewide wildlife corridor system. Because many plant species are dispersed by animals (from ants to bears) and because many large, wide-ranging animals are important regulators of ecosystem function, corridors that maintain animal populations will also generally benefit plants. Encourage intensive research to determine optimal design of specific corridor segments and preserve networks. Encourage application of the corridor and buffer zone concepts at multiple scales (e.g., municipal, county, regional, and statewide).

Exotics: Encourage removal of exotic plant species from public lands, as an essential element of native ecosystem restoration. Also encourage removal of exotic animal species, especially in those cases where the animals (e.g., feral hogs) are degrading native vegetation.

Endangered Species: Encourage vastly increased efforts to identify, list, protect, manage, and recover populations of endangered and threatened plant species in Florida, on the part of federal (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service) and state (Department of Agriculture) agencies. Support major land acquisitions to protect listed species, and encourage all land-managing agencies to address more adequately the needs of these species in land management plans. Support revision of federal and state endangered species laws to better protect all listed species on private lands.

Communicate information on rare plant populations and communities directly to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory.

Removal of Native Plants from the Wild: Encourage nursery operations to develop their stocks from captive propagation, with only seeds and limited cuttings taken from the wild. Live, whole plants should not be removed from natural areas except as part of a legitimate scientific collecting effort, and then only under stringent guidelines such as those produced by the “Plant Conservation Roundtable” (Campbell, McMahan, and Morse, editors).

Conduct salvage projects (“rescue from the bulldozers”) only in sites that are scheduled for imminent destruction, and then only after all attempts at conservation of those sites have failed. Do not allow economic motivations for sale of salvaged plants, or aesthetic motivations for landscaping with natives, to undermine the primary objective of preservation of plants in situ (i.e., in natural ecosystems, where they fundamentally belong).

Environmental Pollution: Support stricter air and water quality standards in order to protect native ecosystems from eutrophication, acidification, toxicity, and other effects of pollution. Encourage agencies to consider the effects of pollutants on natural systems and nonhuman species, rather than only the effects on human health.

Cooperation with Other Organizations: Cooperate with other organizations on issues of shared concern, such as public lands, endangered species, and growth management. Encourage cooperation among local FNPS chapters on conservation issues.

Appropriate Conservation Strategies for FNPS

Each conservation-oriented organization contributes in its own unique way to the pluralistic effort of protecting Nature. The Florida Native Plant Society must develop and refine strategies that complement the efforts of other groups. The proper role of our society in the Florida conservation movement should be a focus on native plant species and communities and the perpetuation of these elements in the larger landscape.

Appropriate general strategies to implement our goals include:

1. Education of Florida citizens, including public officials, legislators, and other policy-makers, to the values of native plants and natural ecosystems.

2. Advocacy of a land ethic, in the sense of Aldo Leopold, to be applied to all land and resource management decisions.

3. Direct action to demonstrate appropriate protection, stewardship, and restoration strategies, and to protect natural elements at every opportunity.

Specific methods to implement these strategies include:

1. Environmental review of land management plans, environmental impact statements, policy statements, endangered species recovery plans, etc., with detailed comments submitted to appropriate authorities.

2. Letters of support or criticism sent to agency administrators, legislators, and political leaders on general or specific natural resource issues (including legislation, policies, and funding priorities).

3. Articles and letters to newspapers, magazines, and newsletters on conservation issues, advocating our conservation goals.

4. Participation in meetings and public forums to clarify and advocate our position on conservation issues.

5. Exemplary action on the part of individual members to demonstrate the land ethic in stewardship, landscaping, business, politics, and attitudes on environmental issues.

Responsibility

Responsibility for implementing the above strategies belongs to the Conservation Committee and other interested FNPS members. Specifically, the Conservation Chairperson is responsible for addressing issues of statewide to global concern, with help from other committee members as appropriate. Issues of local (e.g., county) concern might be better addressed by local FNPS chapters. Level of concern might not be always straightforward, but can be estimated by the level of significance or endangerment of the natural elements in question. For example, a management plan for a park containing federally endangered plant species or high-quality endemic communities of global significance should be reviewed and commented on by the Conservation Chairperson. On the other hand, issues such as local tree ordinances, landscaping codes, and county land-use plans should be addressed by local chapters.

Every FNPS member is responsible for alerting the Conservation Chairperson to issues of major conservation significance, and for demonstrating a personal commitment to the quality of Florida’s environment at all times.

• Reed Noss, Conservation Chmn.