

Sabal minor

A bi-monthly newsletter for the members of
THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



Volume 18, Number 3 • May–June 2016

Message from the President *by Anne Cox, FNPS President, 2014-2016*

As my two years as FNPS president come to a close, I look back at our accomplishments and see the changes we have made moving us forward: a smaller board, the council of chapters, a president-elect, three new contractors (development director, executive assistant and social media coordinator) to name a few. I also look at the stability of the Society through our finances, active chapters and dedicated members, the annual conference, the *Palmetto* and the *Sabal minor*.

The *Sabal minor* is our bimonthly newsletter for chapters and members. My goal during the past two years has been to report highlights of the board and council meetings to inform our membership about the business aspect of the Society. The board reports are posted on the forum for our members who want more information: <http://www.forum.fnps.org/index.php/topic,1169.0.html>.

The **2016 FNPS retreat** was held March 11–13 at Camp Kulaqua near High Springs. More than 40 board and council members attended the weekend presentations, workshops and meetings. Overnight accommodations were excellent in one of three new woodland lodges. The bonfire on Saturday night was accessed through a replicate mine on site. More information on workshops and presentations by **Donna Bollenbach** are on page 4 of this issue. As well, **Mark Kateli** (Tarflower Chapter treasurer) recently wrote an article on his view of his first FNPS retreat, addressing workshops and presentations, so be sure to read it on the FNPS blog at http://fnpsblog.blogspot.com/2016/03/camp-kulaqua-my-first-fnps-retreat_24.html. I encourage members to visit the blog for a wide variety of FNPS activities on native plant gardening, natural areas, legislation, conferences and more.

The **FNPS annual conference** will be held at the Daytona Beach Resort and Conference Center, May 18–22. Don Spence, Pawpaw Chapter, is the chapter conference chair. Please check out the conference link on the FNPS website at <http://fnps.org/conference>. Registration is now open; click on “Register” to get started. Limited lodging is still available at the conference hotel, accessible from the FNPS conference web page.

The **annual membership meeting** will be held at the annual conference in Daytona on Saturday, May 21 at 7:45 a.m. at the general assembly meeting. Endowment and conservation grant awards, Palmetto awards, bylaws revisions and election of FNPS officers will be presented at this meeting. See you all at the conference.

The **FNPS Palmetto awards nominations** are posted on the website at <http://www.forum.fnps.org/index.php/board,79.0.html>. Winners of the awards will be announced at the conference. Winners will be contacted before the conference to assure their presence.

Many of our members are on the **FNPS botanical trip to Cuba** (April 30–May 7, 2016) as you are reading this *Sabal minor*. Please ask about this trip at the conference as FNPS plans many more field trips in Florida and abroad. Let **Devon Higginbotham** know your preferences for locations.

I will be visiting all the chapters in the coming year. Chapters visited so far include Palm Beach, Cocoplum, Pawpaw, Sparkleberry, Paynes Prairie, Suncoast, The Villages, Ixia, Tarflower, Sea Rocket and Beautyberry. Andy Taylor gave a presentation to the Nature Coast Chapter in January and the Mangrove Chapter in April. Thanks, Andy, for presenting on my behalf. After the 2016 conference in Daytona Beach, please contact our new president to schedule a visit to your chapter to give a powerpoint presentation about the Society.

Committees. Board reports from the March 13 meeting are available for all members on the forum at <http://www.forum.fnps.org/index.php/topic,1169.0.html>.

Bylaws Subcommittee (Co-chairs: Jan Allyn and Daphne Lambright). See report on page 3 of this issue.

Communications (Chair: Shirley Denton, Suncoast Chapter).

- **Branding.** Business card templates are available. Please contact **Donna Bollenbach**.
- **Membership database.** The new database is complete. Board members and chapter member managers can easily access membership lists from the website. Please contact **Shirley Denton** if you need assistance.

Conservation (Chair: Juliet Rynear, Heartland Chapter). See report on page 2 of this issue.

Conservation grants will be awarded at the conference.

Council of Chapters (Director: Dave Feagles, Serenoa Chapter). Council meetings are posted on the FNPS calendar and GoToMeeting information will be posted to the forum a week before meetings.

Director of Development (Andy Taylor, Suncoast Chapter). Andy is working with Conference Chair **Don Spence** to obtain sponsors and donations for the annual conference. Please contact Andy or Don for more information.

(continued on page 2)



Marjorie Shropshire enters the “mine” amphitheater at Camp Kulaqua



Members gather inside the “mine” amphitheater

Making the most of social media: Facebook *by Donna Bollenbach, Suncoast Chapter*

As the new social media director and committee chair, I would like to introduce myself and let you know how we can support each other in promoting the mission of the Florida Native Plant Society.

I am the Suncoast Chapter president and the assistant director of the council of chapters. Most of you know me as the graphic designer for the landscape brochure. In addition to being an avid supporter of FNPS, I have a degree in journalism, and I love writing, photography and social media.

So what is social media, you ask? Social media is the collection of online communications resources to promote interactive communication with each other (internal) and the public (external). The key is the word “interactive.” Good social media encourages people to read, respond to (comment/like) and exchange information (share). It may also encourage people to act, such as to click on a link for more information, come to an event, sign a petition or buy into an idea.

While there are many avenues of social media, FNPS and its chapters are primarily focused on Facebook, websites, blog, Meetup, and a little bit of Twitter. In this article, I would like to look closer at Facebook. It is the most popular social media site and FNPS hosts two pages.

Our public page features our logo and a banner that reads “Florida Native Plant Society Environmental Conservation.” The posts are usually:

- shared from the Facebook pages of other chapters, such as announcements about plant sales, upcoming meetings and events, and photo albums taken at fieldtrips and yard tours.
- information received via “Google alerts” (timely news) about Florida native plants, which may include links to articles in a newspaper or magazine, a new book, or a science-based study involving native plants, many of which mention FNPS or a local chapter.
- items submitted to me via email by those who do not use Facebook (see below).

- items posted by other FNPS Facebook editors (Marjorie, Andy and others)

Now, how about those banner images? Have you ever wondered where the Facebook banner images come from? Well, they may be pulled off the FNPS website, a striking image submitted with a post, an image from a blog submission, a photo from an existing album, or pulled from my own collection (when I’m stuck).

I would like to open the opportunity for all FNPS members to submit images for the Facebook banner, but keep in mind the following:

- The image must be able to crop to a vertical format of 851 pixels x 315 pixels, or approximately 4in x 1.5in. This is very long and thin, only some images will work. Images should also be in focus, and the subject should be sharp.
- If of native flora, the image should be appropriate for the season.
- Pictures of people in nature or at FNPS events will also be considered, but make sure you have the permission of the people in the picture to be used publicly.

FNPS has a second Facebook page entitled “Florida Native Plant Society Secret Group” with no logo. The internal page is an exchange of ideas that we want to share with each other, but not necessarily information that we want to share with the public. Examples of things one might post to the internal page are requests for volunteers, information on where to find a certain native plant, locations of plants in the wild that you do not want to make public, and ideas for FNPS meetings or events.

If you need any help posting to the Facebook page, or have any issues with a post, or if you do not use Facebook or other social media and you have news that you feel should be shared via FNPS social media outlets, please send an email to fnps.online@gmail.com.

In the next issue of the *Sabal minor*, I will discuss the FNPS blog.

(Pres. message, cont. from pg 1)

Finance (Chair: Devon Higginbotham, Suncoast Chapter). The corporate donor policy was presented to the board and is being reviewed by an attorney. Thanks to the donor policy committee for their hard work. The policy is posted at <http://www.forum.fnps.org/index.php/board,27.0.html>.

Land Management Partners (Chair: Danny Young, Pawpaw Chapter). The LMP schedule for 2016 is posted at fnps.org/participate/lmrs. Please contact **Kevin Love** for the scheduling of these reviews. Other information about LMRs is available at fnps.org/committee/partners. Reviewers are requested to take high resolution photos and write an article for the *Palmetto*. Please contact *Palmetto* editor **Marjorie Shropshire** at pucpuggy@bellsouth.net if you plan to submit an article.

Membership (Chair: Jonnie Spitzer). FNPS brochures are being reordered. **Chapters: please come get replenished at the conference.**

Nominating (Chair: Winnie Said, FNPS director-at-large). Nominations for board positions will be presented and voted on at the conference. The list of nominees can be found on page 4 of this issue.

Policy and Legislation (Chair: Gene Kelly). See Donna Bollenbach’s article on page 4 of this issue.

Science Advisory (Chair: Paul Schmalzer, Sea Rocket Chapter). Science endowment grant awards will be presented at the annual conference.

Conservation committee report *by Juliet Rynear*

Ten applications were received for the 2016 Conservation Grant awards. The committee reviews each proposal and selects one or more that best meet the award criteria and further the mission of FNPS. The grant awards are completely funded by donations. Thank you to the following for your support!

- Annie Schmidt
- Dade Chapter (in honor of Joyce and Don Gann)
- Nature Coast Chapter
- Pinellas Chapter
- Sea Rocket Chapter
- Suncoast Chapter
- Tarflower Chapter (in honor of Dick Deuerling)

2016 BOD and ExCom Meetings

- MAY 19 Board meeting, conference venue, Daytona Beach
- MAY 19 Council of chapters meeting, conference venue, Daytona Beach
- MAY 21 Annual members meeting, conference venue, Daytona Beach
- JUL 28 Board meeting, 7 p.m., teleconference
- AUG 13 Board and council of chapters meeting, 9:30 a.m. (all day), FFA Leadership Training Center, Haines City

Check the Society calendar at fnps.org/events/eventlist for details, updates, directions and meeting instructions. All dates subject to change.

The *Sabal minor* has gone all-digital

In an effort to reduce costs and waste, the *Sabal minor* will now be delivered via email only. Chapters are encouraged to print copies to have on hand at monthly meetings.

Membership ideas *by Jonnie Spitzer, Membership Committee Chair*

FNPS is an organization that depends on its members. Why?

If there are NO members, there is NO organization and our mission goes unfulfilled. If we do not pursue NEW members and do not pursue RENEWAL memberships our organization will lose members and become ineffective. But **if we PURSUE new members and ACQUIRE new members, our organization GROWS and we become effective in our mission.** Every chapter needs to put membership on the TOP of their list at every meeting and event.

It was requested at the retreat that I send these suggestions to the chapters. If your chapter has been acquiring new members, you are doing fine; but if you are losing members, try this method and see what happens. Take this list with you to every meeting, and have your chapter president or designated membership chairperson or enthusiast follow these simple steps:

1. Every person that comes to your meeting needs to be greeted. Shake their hands or hug them — yes, hugged and welcomed — by your greeter, president, or everyone on your board.
2. Have a visitor sheet, and at the time they sign in, purposefully hand them a membership brochure and say, “Thank you so much for being here. We know you will enjoy the program. If you have questions, ask anyone and we will help you out. We would love for you to become a member and join our chapter. There is an application at the back of the brochure.” (More brochures will be available at the conference.)
3. At the beginning of each meeting, make sure you state the FNPS mission. Consider having everyone say it with you; my chapter does and they all know it now.
4. Have the visitor sheet with you as you make your announcements and ask the visitors to stand up. Thank them for being there and say “Welcome to the _____ Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. Thank you for joining us.” (I usually ask them to give their name and a reason for attending the meeting.) Continue by saying “You can become a member this evening and support the Florida Native Plant Society with a membership donation of \$35 for an individual, which will support our mission. You can fill out the form at the table and we will send it in for you.” (Your treasurer usually performs this task.)

You will be surprised how well people will respond to these steps. Do them at EVERY meeting.

All chapters have different methods of handling a meeting, but we are not gaining members as we should. Please put membership high on your list. ASK people to join and make it easy for them.

You will be hearing from the membership subcommittee on a regular basis. **We will be announcing prizes for the highest percentage of new members and have some other incentives.** Feel free to email (jspitzer1120@gmail.com) or call with any issues or concerns you have regarding membership.

Be motivated always.



Registration is
NOW OPEN for the
**2016 FNPS ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

Visit
www.FNPS.org/conference
for details and to register.

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

Sarracenia Chapter recently completed the online guide, “**Wildflower and Native Plant Highlights of the Ochlockonee Bay Bicycle Trail**,” for the 4.8-mile section in the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in Wakulla County. The guide can be viewed or downloaded at <http://sarracenia.fnpschapters.org/data/uploads/obbt.3.28.16.pdf>. The chapter has given the county access to the document and hopes to see a print version produced soon.

Sea Rocket Chapter will host **Tom Shupe** at its May 25 general meeting. Tom works with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as a district wildlife biologist and will be speaking on bears and coyotes. The meeting will be held at 6:30p.m. at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary in Titusville.

On June 11, the chapter will hold the **Ace Pond Tour and Native Plant Sale**, 10a.m.–3p.m. at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary. Call 321-264-5185 for more information.

The chapter is thrilled to host **Laurilee Thompson** for their June 22 general meeting. Laurilee is the owner of Dixie Crossroads restaurant in Titusville and the founder of the Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival. She is deeply involved in environmental issues and will share her insights on those currently facing us. The meeting will be held at 6:30p.m. at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary.

Suncoast Chapter was mentioned on a local TV channel as a partner for the Terrace Community Middle School’s project to restore native plants. The chapter provided a grant to the school to plant natives and is a partner in the outdoor education program at the school. See “Chapter Happenings” in the March–April edition of the *Sabal minor* (http://fnps.org/assets/pdf/sabalminor/sabalminor18_2_2016.pdf) for details on the project.

Suncoast chapter had its first native plant walk at Lettuce Lake Regional Park, led by **Shirley Denton** and assisted by **Joel Jackson**. Despite the threat of rain and thunderstorms, more than 10 people participated in the walk.

Nine chapter members camped in primitive cabins for two nights at Cayo Costa State Park. No electricity and cold showers did not deter members from enjoying the beauty and biodiversity of this pristine coastal habitat. **The chapter’s fall campout will be at Jonathon Dickenson State Park, October 27–29.** All FNPS members are welcome to join. If interested or for more information, contact **Devon Higginbotham** at archiveproperties@gmail.com, or reserve your own site at reserveamerica.com.

Send your “Chapter Happenings” to fnps.sabalminor@gmail.com.
The deadline for the July–August, 2016 issue is June 1, 2016.

Bylaws subcommittee report *submitted by co-chairs Daphne Lambright, Jan Allyn and Carol Sullivan (emeritus)*

The bylaws subcommittee made its recommendations for revisions to FNPS’s bylaws. The changes represent a reorganization to simplify the bylaws and eliminate redundancy. In some cases, paragraphs from different articles were combined into a new article. In others, duplicate language appearing in more than one article was consolidated into one article.

During the April BOD meeting, the board voted to recommend the following changes: 1) extend the secretary’s position to three consecutive two-year terms, and 2) allow voting proxies with the stipulation that they be selected by committee chairpersons or directors and be limited to no more than three per year.

The recommended revisions are posted on the forum at <http://www.forum.fnps.org/index.php/topic,1277.0.html> and will be voted on at the membership meeting at the conference.

Society updates *by Donna Bollenbach, Suncoast Chapter*

The following is a summary of the FNPS retreat in Camp Kulaqua, submitted as an example of what other chapters can share with their members to keep them informed of the progress, changes and decisions at the FNPS state level.

The mission of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of Florida's native plants and native plant communities. But did you know...

- Since our founding in 1980, the dedication and passion of our members have been instrumental in the acquisition of more than 500,000 acres of land that support Florida's plants and plant communities.
- Nearly 40 peer-reviewed journal articles have been written as a result of the research supported by our research grant awards.
- Together, the conservation and research grants have provided more than \$100,000 in funding for research and conservation projects throughout Florida.
- The dollar value of the volunteer hours by FNPS members for less than half of the chapters reporting was nearly \$100,000? Many of the hours were not captured; an estimate of the real dollar value of our FNPS volunteers is probably closer to \$300,000 per year when we include all workdays, land reviews, education, gardens, fieldtrips and legislative involvement.

Why is this important? Because **potential members and donors (including grantors) need compelling reasons to support our organization.** It is important to include this data in our outreach materials or requests for donations. When you volunteer to do anything for FNPS or your chapter outside the normal planned group activities, **please send your chapter representative or board member an email with the hours you spent on the project** so they can include them in their reports.

New members should use the "Join Now" link on the website, but **if you are renewing your membership, wait for an email with the link to renew online.** Please do NOT use the "Join Now" button as it creates extra work for our administrators.

At the FNPS retreat, **Ellen Broderick** gave an excellent talk on **attracting families and children** to our events by having special activities for them. She prefaced her talk with a description of why it is so important that we find ways to develop a love for nature and an understanding of native plants in young people, which seems obvious given the lack of outside activities among our youth today. Incorporating these ideas into our own chapters would be easy and fun. I am sure there are several current and retired teachers in each chapter who could create an activity for children from about 4–8 years old for upcoming plant sales and outreach events. Such an activity would bring families to our area and may result in increased sales.

Activities for children and families should be engaging. Ideally, such an activity should include real plants, be cheap and durable, teach a specific idea, and be easy. Encourage parents to allow children to answer questions on their own to promote self-discovery. Ideas include a treasure hunt, newspaper seed pots, scavenger hunt and bingo. More ideas can be found online at Wildones.org and Notes From Nature.

Given the political climate, **FNPS is evolving to take a more direct stand on some legislative issues that are in-line with our mission,** especially as it relates to the development or surplusing of conservation lands that protect critical native plant habitat. One example is the development of a bridge in St. Lucie County that will have a negative impact on protected lands. While FNPS decided it is not in their best interest to be a part of the legal suit against the city, they did agree that at the point that federal permits are being considered for this project, they will write a letter advocating denial of the permits and perhaps make a donation toward legal fees if the permits are granted.

That said, members will continue to receive requests to contact legislators on bills that are in conflict with our mission. When responding, please keep in mind a few simple guidelines:

Notice of officer election

Nominating Committee members **Winnie Said, Scott Davis and Lynn Sweetay** recommend the following slate of officers to be voted on by the FNPS membership at the annual membership meeting on Saturday, May 21 at the FNPS annual conference.

For positions whose terms expire on an even calendar year, the nominations are:

President: Catherine Bowman (currently president-elect)

Secretary: Martha Steuart (currently serving in this position and committed to serving another term)

Vice President of Finance: Devon Higginbotham (currently serving in this position and committed to serving another term)

For positions for which there are vacancies, the nominations are:

Vice President of Administration: Lassie Lee (FNPS member since 2001, committed to serving the remaining year of the existing term)

Director at Large: Ina Crawford (currently serving as Vice President of Administration)

Chairs of Education and Landscape Committees: These positions are currently open. Please contact any of the members of the board if you are interested or know of anyone you think may be interested in serving as chair of these committees.

1. Do not say you are representing the Florida Native Plant Society unless you are specifically told it is OK to do so by a board member. These issues must be voted on and approved by the board. Otherwise, you should comment as an concerned citizen.
2. Keep it brief and professional.
3. Send it via email directly to your legislator, not through an automated email response. Pre-formed automated responses are lumped as an opinion of "ONE." (It's not fair, but they are.) After the first few are received, the rest are not usually read.
4. If your legislator votes favorably, send him/her a thank you.

The following is a list of ideas and comments from the retreat that chapters should consider when promoting membership and chapter events:

- **New member packet:** Should we develop one? If so, what should it include—newsletters, brochures, article reprints?
- **Renewals:** How are we handling renewals? Are we still sending postcards? Phone calls? What works?
- **Elevator speech:** What is our 2–3 minute elevator speech to promote membership. (See above for ideas.)
- **Meetup** (a paid website used to announce meetings and events to members and the public): Can we share our Meetup page with other chapters? Do we want to offer that to any nearby chapters?
- **Fundraiser alert:** Be careful to **never refer to any fundraiser as a "raffle."** It is not allowed under non-profit rules. Use "auction" or "door prize" instead.
- **Plant sales:** Presales have been very successful for some chapters. Even if your chapter does not do pre-sales, you should ask everyone who buys plants from your chapter to provide an email so that you can poll them and ask what they would like to see at the next plant sale. You may even offer to hold the plant for them for a limited amount of time. Consider holding plant sales as a "Native Plant Event," not just a fundraiser.
- **Yard Tours:** Some chapters choose to do guided tours, while others provide maps to allow participants to take a self-guided tour. Your chapter could do as little or as much as you want to promote the Society, sell items and educate at each location. Some chapters partner with garden clubs where only one or two of the yards are native.

As you know, not everyone reads the *Sabal minor*, and not all chapters have a representative at each retreat, so please share these ideas and updates with your chapter. Feel free to reprint this in your chapter newsletter, as well.