



Board Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, February 22, 2022

The meeting was held via Zoom. Board members participated from their homes.

Call to order 3:00 pm

Present: Don Graves, President; Wendy Graves, Treasurer; Betty Spence, Secretary; Mary Barrett, Margie Ann Gibson, Rick Lass, Beth Leuck, Elroy Limmer, Susan Thompson

Minutes: Minutes from the January 13, 2022, meeting were approved with the following correction: Under the heading of "Silva Creek Botanical Garden", the sentence "She asked Mary Barrett, who agreed, to help working up the information on membership." was amended to read "She asked Mary Barrett, who agreed, to help working up the information on the Gila Chapter."

President's Report: Don informed the board that he did not plan to run for President again in November. Of course, as Past President beginning 2023 he would continue to serve on the Board for at least another two years. He also planned to be involved in GNPS educational projects, which unfortunately had languished during the Covid period.

Treasurer's Report: Wendy reported that the Gila Native Plant Society account as of 12/31/2021 had a balance of \$14,159.17. The Silva Creek Garden Account as of the end of 2021 had a balance of \$23,678.51, of which \$1,138.43 was the Healing Garden portion.

Wendy said that she did not intend to run for office as Treasurer in the November election, although she would continue to be involved in the Gila Native Plant Society.

Representative to the Board of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico: Betty reported that the first 2022 session of the state Board had held by Zoom in two parts on Jan. 16 and 22. The state organization did not have a large structure. It served as the umbrella non-profit 501 (3) C for all the chapters, and that entailed quite a bit of paperwork. Among other things, membership applications for all the chapters go through the state organization. Membership was up in 2021 in all chapters except the El Paso Chapter, which was struggling.

One of its main functions was to approve grants from the Jack and Martha Carter Conservation Fund, which was held in an Edward Jones account. In the past the grants only amounted to \$1,500, but the NPSNM Board would now consider grants for three levels of funding, up to \$5,000. (See <https://www.npsnm.org/nps-sponsored-grants-donations/>.) This year there had

been only six applications, all of which had been found worthwhile and were approved, whereas in pre-Covid years as many as 20 had been funded. If we learn of good projects being contemplated, we should encourage the planners to approach NPSNM for grants. Two grants approved involved the Gila region, one for removal of tamarisk and another for a field study of a rare native thistle.

Silva Creek Botanical Garden:

The Operations Team would like to have a further allocation of funds in order to take down or trim more of the non-native Siberian elms infesting the edges of the garden. A motion to approve additional funds was taken and passed.

Motion: The Board approves an additional allocation of \$3,000 for Siberian elm removal in the SCBG.

The front half of the kiosk bulletin board had been provided with material. Margie said that a person had been found to do some translation of material into Spanish. Margie would like to find a volunteer to develop some material for the back half of the kiosk, particularly materials that would interest children. Betty would send a MailChimp with a photo by Elroy informing members of the kiosk and asking for volunteers.

Old Business:

Ninth Natural History of the Gila Symposium: Beth said that the Symposium would start at noon tomorrow, Wednesday Feb 23rd, and continue throughout the day on Thursday. Presentations would be both live and available via Zoom; the schedule and the links to the presentations were on the Symposium website (<http://wnmu.edu/gilasymposium>).

There would be a number of presentations on plants and on forestry. Of special interest was the keynote speaker on Thursday afternoon, Stephanie Garcia Richards, New Mexico Commissioner of Public Lands, who would talk about the 30 x 30 initiative.

Don and Wendy would set up a GNPS table in the lobby with our literature. Betty had volunteered to help with registration and would come and collect our materials at the end of the Symposium.

Beginner's Guide to Landscaping with Native Grasses of the Gila Region: Don reported that Denise Friedrich had agreed to do 15 black-and-white illustrations of grasses for the Guide. He himself was working on the descriptions. When the draft was completed he intended to run it by some of our most knowledgeable people.

Waterworks/Plants List:

Susan and Mary had attended a meeting concerning the proposed Silva Creek Trail from Penny Park that would run past the Waterworks and SCBG. Susan reported that the main difficulty was how to get the trail safely across route 180 from Penny Park. Mary said that the meeting

had been mostly an information-gathering exercise; a number of agencies and organizations were involved.

Don recalled that he had sent a letter to Bridgette Johns of SWNM Act with the GNPS's views about landscaping of the Waterworks property. SWNM Act would like help in developing a list of plants for the property. We needed to get together and walk around the property to see what plants might work. Some of the board members had expressed an interest in being involved.

New Business:

GNPS Table Blanket: Don said that he proposed purchasing a table blanket including a GNPS logo that could cover a GNPS table at various events and would be easier to handle than the current banner.

Fab 5 (Host Plants): Wendy reported that the SCBG Operating Team was discussing an idea they labelled "Fab 5," which involved identifying a group of five native host plants that GNPS could use in the garden and promote in the community, perhaps getting a contract grower to produce them for us. Possibly we could afford to give them away for planting.

Pup Swap: Susan had come up with the idea of instituting a "pup swap" – in other words, an exchange of agave pups between individuals with an excess and those wishing to plant some. Elroy noted that some people might even be looking to get rid of larger plants. One of the values of agave is that they support vulnerable populations of nectivorous bats. We have at least one such species in our area, the Lesser Long-Nosed Bat.

Another agave-related activity might be to assist Bat Conservation International in their plan to plant more agaves in southwest New Mexico and southeast Arizona. The agave for the project were being raised by Steve Plath's nursery in Safford, but Beth noted that the agave pups needed around two years before they were ready for transplanting. Don said that he would talk to Steve Plath to find out the timeline, and Susan planned to contact Dan Taylor of BCI.

Evening Programs: Don reported that our evening programs via Zoom had been very successful. There were 60 people attending the January presentation and some 56 screens at the February talk, some with two people, which probably meant some 70 altogether. The joint Birds and Brews and the winter botany field trip had also attracted many participants.

The evening programs were set for the second quarter 2022. Dara Saville would present a talk in April on herbal medicine, and Russ Kleinman would give a presentation on penstemons in May. It would be valuable to set up a Program Committee to plan evening programs, field trips and other GNPS activities, and it was desirable to get more members involved as volunteers.

Picnic on May 15th: Don said that he had booked the Gomez Peak Pavilion for a potluck picnic on May 15th for our members and had invited the Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society

to join us. As we had done in the past, GNPS would pay the reservation fee and provide beverages, and Audubon would provide hot dogs and condiments.

Common Grasses of Grant and Catron Counties: A new edition of that booklet was out. It was very different in approach from the Beginner's Guide we were working on, but Ron Groves thought it would be of interest to our members and should be added to our online book list. It could be purchased for \$5.00 from the Upper Gila Watershed Alliance and sold for \$10.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:11 pm.

Appendix:

Motion passed on February 10, 2022, by exchange of emails

The Board agrees that the Gila Native Plant Society will participate in the 2022 Give Grandly event at the cost of \$100 and will reserve a space for a table on May 7th next to Makers Market to receive donations.

Motions passed by exchange of email since Feb. 22nd meeting

Motion: GNPS will allocate an additional \$3,000 for tree removal/trimming in SCBG. \$500 of this will go toward the current bill, and \$2500 will be available for future trimming and removal.

Explanation: The sooner the SCBG Operations Team can get the non-native Siberian elms out, the sooner they can start planting native species. Moreover, the elms drop thousands of elm seedlings that have to be removed during garden work days. However, given the cost of removal and in order not to raise concerns in the neighborhood, the removal will be a gradual process. The contractor used in the past has done an excellent job, including chipping.

Motion: GNPS will spend \$400 to purchase 50 copies of the updated version of *Common Grasses of Grant and Catron Counties* by S. MacDonald for resale.

Explanation: Our online bookstore manager, Ron Groves, is requesting 50 copies of the newly updated *Common Grasses of Grant and Catron Counties* by S. MacDonald. We have carried the first edition for many years, as it helps support a worthy nonprofit, the Upper Gila Watershed Alliance (UGWA). Our cost is \$8 each and we will sell them for \$10 each.