



## **Board Meeting Minutes, Thursday, August 25, 2022**

The meeting was held via Zoom.

**Call to order** 3:00 pm

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

**Minutes:** Minutes from the June 23, 2022, meeting were approved.

**President's Report:** Don submitted the following report in writing:

\* July 16: I led the "Know Your Trees" field trip, which attracted 20 participants, mostly newer members. "Know Your Trees II" is scheduled for Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>.

\* July 30/31: Mimbres Hummingbird Festival. Our GNPS booth was well-staffed with GNPS volunteers, who sold books, worked with kids to create colorful hummingbird masks and to make clay native seed balls. We sold a case of *Trees and Shrubs* and several Beginner's Guides, both Perennials and Native Grasses. The vast majority of visitors to our booth were new to the area and wanted to plant natives. This was a very successful venue for GNPS to participate in, and it is advised that we participate in the future. I gave our Native Pollinators and Larval Host Plants presentation on Saturday, and Elroy and I presented together on Sunday.

\* August 2-4: GNPS/Bat Conservation International (BCI) agave planting. Our six landowners were very excited to be planting agave on their properties and worked alongside Wendy and me and the small crew from BCI, resulting in the planting of 300 agave. Jim Blurton volunteered to plant at the Rick and Lora Lass property. On Wednesday afternoon, we celebrated with a cookout at our place with eighteen volunteers, landowners and BCI staff. Although GNPS does not have a conservation committee, this is an example of the types of collaboration and habitat improvement that can be done to help protect important ecological relationships between native plants and their pollinators. There is much interest from additional landowners to participate in phase II.

\* August 5-7: Native Plant Society of New Mexico Annual Conference in Albuquerque. GNPS

had nine members in attendance. We were able to line up at least three speakers for upcoming programs. Book sales at the conference were solid, with 15 copies of *Trees and Shrubs* sold, along with several *Beginners Guides*.

\* August 13: Interview with Donna Stevens for the Earth Matters radio program on KURU. We discussed pollinators, larval host plants, climate change, our GNPS native plant sale on September 10 and my field trip on Native Pollinators and Larval Host Plants on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup> as part of the Gila River Festival.

\* August 17: The GNPS Education Committee (Don Graves, Kathryn Haase, Steve Blake, Les Brandt) met with the faculty of Jose Barrios Elementary School in an effort to increase teacher utilization of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. Our presentation and following discussion was well received. Steve Blake has agreed to chair the GNPS Education Committee.

\* GNPS has been collaborating with the SWNM Seedbank here in Silver City (and beyond) which is overseen by Chris Jepson. We would like to see more native seeds included in the seedbank. and Susan Campbell has graciously donated several species of native seeds that she has collected for the seedbank. I gave Chris Jepson some of our GNPS stickers to attach to these native seed packets. Just another way to support our mission!

\* We are about halfway through our initial printing of 100 copies of the new *Beginners Guide to Landscaping with Native Grasses*. I'll need some for the talk on Landscaping with Native Grasses that I'll be giving on Sunday morning at the Whiskey Creek Zo'calo Nursery and we'll need a good supply for the upcoming GNPS native plant sale. At the meeting this afternoon, I will propose a motion to have an additional 100 or 200 copies made, depending on the wishes of the board.

**Treasurer's Report:** Wendy reported that the Gila Native Plant Society account as of 8/1/2022 had a balance of \$16,071.04. The Silva Creek Garden Account as of 8/1/2022 had a balance of \$22,547.22, of which \$1,138.43 related to the Healing Garden.

**Book Sales Report:** Rick submitted the following report in writing:

We were mostly on the receiving end in the book store this past month. We had the *Beginners Guide to Landscaping with Native Grasses* printed locally and also purchased 16 copies of *Common Southwestern Plants: an Identification Guide* from the Colorado Native Plant Society. Our web sales included two more copies of Carter's *Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico*, bringing it to a total of seven copies since I took over on Earth Day. We have also sold quite a few of everything at the Hummingbird Festival, the NPSNM annual conference, local stores, and other venues. Thanks to Wendy for updating the website with the new additions, the price change to *Trees & Shrubs* and other items.

**SCBG Steering Committee Report:** In her capacity as the Silva Creek Botanical Garden Steering Committee Facilitator, Wendy submitted the following report in writing:

Since the GNPS Board met on June 23, the full Steering Committee has met three times (June 30, July 6, and August 17) and a subcommittee has met twice (July 20, July 27). Another meeting of the full Steering Committee is planned for Wednesday, August 24, where we will begin discussion of a memorials and donations policy for the garden.

The full committee is still waiting on a shovel-ready design for the north end of the garden. Presentation of this plan by Stream Dynamics is tentatively set for the Steering Committee meeting on Wednesday, September 21.

What has been agreed to so far for the north end plan:

The final design is to include recontouring State St. (a one block long, unpaved street on the north side of the garden) to create a wider and less steep-sided ditch between the garden north side and the street, to help with the massive water load during and after large storms. The ditch will be separated from the street by massive (~1 ton) boulders interspersed with hearty native shrubs that can withstand the force of the water.

There will be a first catchment basin at the corner of State St. and Virginia St., which will function as the first place where the sediment load can settle. This feature will also need to be separated from the streets, and massive boulders with native shrubbery has been suggested here as well.

The swales in the north end will be reworked and the west-most swale will have a shallow shelf added for more water infiltration. There will be a fairly large habitat garden in this north end, surrounding and, in part, growing from the west-most swale. There will be a path around the west swale, allowing visitors to walk around the outside of the habitat thicket. There will also be a single, dead-end path that leads to the approximate center of the habitat garden, with a bench at the end, inside the thicket. All paths will strictly adhere to accessibility standards. The part of the habitat garden that is planted is intended to be a 'thicket'—so dense that, once grown, it is virtually impenetrable by large animals such as humans.

There will be a new berm, just high enough to prevent water overflow from the north end, across the path and into the basin around the oil tank. Not knowing if at some point it would be nice to have that water flow to the basin around the oil tank, a pipe (diameter to be determined) will be added, in the closed configuration, that can convey water from the north end under the berm and under the path to the oil tank basin in the future, if we decide that we want or need that.

This design alleviates the need to remove the large elm at the west side of the maintenance driveway.

Future planning needs

In the present contract with Stream Dynamics, they also were to make rough draft recommendations regarding control and capture of water running along Virginia St. Our group has looked at these rough draft suggestions and agreed that the rough idea is sound. A shovel-ready version of this plan will be a new contract. Once we are ready to undertake this planning phase, we will make a formal request from the board.

Also, in discussing the amphitheater roof water, our group decided that a cistern demonstration would be of value to those visiting the garden. To be most relevant to the average visitor, the cistern will be above ground, will be designed to be esthetically pleasing, and will be used to overflow through planned conveyances to various basins in the garden. This will function as an example of water-wise design.

Finally, we are exploring hiring a landscape design expert to put all of this together. In conversation with the Director of the Tucson Botanical Garden (TBG), Marty Eberhardt found three promising possibilities for this. In following up, the Steering Committee will explore a contract with Ashley Pedersen, a Landscape Architecture Master's student at the Rhode Island School of Design. With a glowing recommendation from the current director of the TBG, and with the proposition of using this as the subject of an independent study, we believe this is a great opportunity for the SCBG.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The subcommittee that met twice worked on clarifying the roles, responsibilities, and memberships of the Steering Committee and the Operations Team. We now have a draft policy that describes these groups. The draft has been taken to the Operations Team to see if it meets with their approval, at which point it will be brought to the GNPS Board for final approval.

### **Report of the representative from the Gila Chapter to the Native Plant Society of New Mexico Board:** Betty submitted the following report in writing:

The Board of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico held its summer meeting in Albuquerque on Thursday, August 4, 2022, from 1 to 4 pm, the day before the state conference. Here are some highlights. If any GNPS Board members are interested in reading the full minutes, I will forward them.

The description of officers in the NPSNM bylaws have been amended to reflect the current situation. The chief difference is the creation of a Documentarian and the elimination of a Membership Secretary, since clerical handling of the membership is already taken care of by Lindsey Kirchhevel on an paid hourly basis.

Like GNPS, the state Board is holding elections this November. The Board's slate of nominees will be announced in the fourth quarter state newsletter that comes out on or about October 1<sup>st</sup>, and NPSNM members may vote or offer alternative nominees (with their consent) by November 1<sup>st</sup>. Full explanations of the procedure will be included in the newsletter. As you might expect, the problem is usually not a matter of choosing between candidates but of

finding willing nominees. So far, the NPSNM Board has found nominees for Vice-President, Secretary and Documentarian; the search continues for President and Treasurer.

A new membership recruitment brochure is being designed. Membership is at a record high, with 840 paid members in total. As a result, the NPSNM operating budget is in good shape. The investment accounts are down, but still healthy. There is plenty of money in the Carter Fund to support project grants. New projects are considered by the Board in January, and we are urged to encourage grant applications from our area. The information on applying for grants can be found on the [npsnm.org](http://npsnm.org) website under "Grants and Donations."

There is good news from the El Paso Chapter, which had been struggling. They have found an energetic new President, Dr. Kevin Floyd, and are planning to host the state conference next year. Since the natural environment around El Paso is very much like that around Las Cruces, the El Paso Chapter is investigating the possibility of hosting the conference in Alpine, Texas, north of Big Bend National Park, perhaps in late September or October 2023.

A few more details. Margaret Menache, editor of the state newsletter, is urging members to submit articles and pictures, with a reminder always to provide photo credit. The Conservation Chair, Rachel Jankowitz, drafted a letter, approved by the Board, to the Department of the Interior supporting the closure of federal lands near Chaco Canyon to mineral leasing for 20 years. NPSNM printed new copies of *New Mexico Thistles* and has created a milkweed guide to be posted on the website.

### **Old Business:**

**GNPS Book Mark, Riparian Plant Brochure:** Margie is updating the GNPS book mark. Wendy has the file for the riparian plant brochure; some botanical names need updating, and Don will see to that.

**Edward Jones Investments:** Since we have more money in the general operating fund than we need, Wendy proposed transferring \$5,000 from that fund to the investment account. For the time being, the money could be kept in the Edward Jones cash management fund until the Board decides on an investment strategy.

With regard to the idea that our Edward Jones investments should be more environmentally sound, Wendy suggested that before further discussion Board members might wish to read an interesting online article she found on the difference between ESG investing and socially responsible investing (ESG investing: how environmental, social and governance risks impact performance); she would forward the article to the Board members.

**Native Plant Sale Update:** Don reported that we had a convenient venue for the plant sale and we still had the signs from last year. Volunteers had been lined up. Set-up would be at 8 am. We could use some help from 9 am on keeping people from trying to buy before the official opening at 10 am, which was unfair to others who depended on our announcement. We would

be selling our books and publications at the GNPS booth. We would also be doing the selling for the Robledo Vista nursery.

Margie noted that Betsy had repotted some *Mirabilis longiflora* from the medicinal garden that could be used. Don suggested that we should give them away to people who signed up for membership.

### **New Business:**

**Forming a Committee to Draft Guidelines for Group Use of SCBG:** Don suggested that it would be helpful to form a committee to draft some guidelines for other groups wishing to use the Silva Creek Botanical Garden—for instance, guidance as to what teachers should and should not do when bringing a class to the garden. He thought that just five or six bullet points would be sufficient. Margie said that she would ask if any members of the Operations Team were willing to be on such a committee.

**Changing the VP Description in the Bylaws:** Betty had suggested that the description of the Vice President in the Bylaws should be changed so that the VP was not solely responsible for coming up with programs. The role should be focused more on helping the President. That might make it easier to find someone to take on the responsibility. It was felt that the VP should at least serve on the Program Committee.

Margie suggested that some other updates were probably necessary, since the current version of the Bylaws dated from 2009. Betty noted that, according to Article XI, amendments to the Bylaws approved by the Board should be submitted to the members in October and voted on by the membership in November. Margie and Betty would work up some amendments and bring them before the Board for approval.

**Forming a Program Committee:** The idea of forming a Program Committee was approved. The Program Committee could consult widely for ideas of presentations and presenters. Even if the President or others came up with ideas for programs, there was still need for a Program Committee to manage contact with presenters and host the meetings.

**Motion: A Program Committee shall be formed to manage GNPS evening programs.**

**Forming a Field Trip Committee:** In the past a Field Trip Coordinator had been appointed to determine destinations for field trips and lead them, but since there was currently no likely candidate, it made sense to have a committee to handle field trips. It was agreed that it was good to have it separate from the Program Committee.

**Motion: A Field Trip Committee shall be formed to manage GNPS field trips.**

**Suggested Program Speakers/Topics:** Don reported that speakers had been lined up to give presentations in October and November. In addition, he proposed ideas for speakers and topics for programs in the following spring, for consideration by the Board:

## Evening Programs Scheduled for October/November 2022

### **October 28<sup>th</sup>: Mary O and Jeff Parker of Explore in Focus**

“Wildflowers of Colorado”

The San Juan Mountains of Colorado near Silverton and Ouray, host thousands of wildflowers each July. Jeff and Mary O. Parker will share images and tidbits about these beauties during their presentation. They’ll also talk a bit about why the flowers grow so prolifically in those mountain basins and high-meadows.

### **November 18<sup>th</sup>: John Gorey, Wildlife Biologist**

“*Cirsium grahamii*: A Rare Purple Jewel in the Gila Wilderness?”

In 2021, John Gorey was doing invasive plant surveys in the Gila Wilderness when he came across an unusual purple thistle. After keying it out as *Cirsium grahamii* he discovered that it had not been collected in nearly 20 years. Thanks to the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, he received funding in 2022 to scour the wilderness for the thistle and unlock some of its secrets, and he will discuss his findings at the November meeting.

## Evening Programs Scheduled/Proposed for January- June 2023

(? Indicates willingness to present, but no firm date yet set.)

### **? Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup>: Richard Spellenberg, Professor Emeritus, New Mexico State University**

Author of *The Sunflower Family: A Guide to the Family Asteraceae in the Contiguous United States*.

### **? February 17<sup>th</sup>: Ann Audrey, Environmental Consultant**

“Native Trees for Silver City: Ten Best Practices for Using Native Trees in Urban Environments to Improve Climate Change Resilience”

### **? March 17<sup>th</sup>: Andrew Tree, GNPS Member and Wildflower Photographer**

“A Phenological Journey Over a Year of Wildflowers on Boston Hill”

### **? April 21<sup>st</sup>: Marisa Morillos, Graduate Student, New Mexico State University**

“Changes in Native Plant Communities through Time in the Organ Mountains”

### **May 19<sup>th</sup>: Hannah Marx, Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, Curator of the Herbarium, Museum of Southwestern Biology, University of New Mexico.**

“Alpine Systems: Evolution and ecology of alpine plant communities and observations on the effects of climate change”

### **June 16<sup>th</sup>: Mary Harner, University of Nebraska, Kearney**

As interconnected systems, rivers reflect landscape modifications and are influenced profoundly by human activities and ecological change. This presentation focuses on applications of digital technologies to document and convey riverine landscape change, featuring examples from the Platte River in Nebraska and Middle Rio Grande and Gila River in New Mexico. Collectively this work seeks to share science and stories about rivers that connect

us.

Discussion: Those who had heard Hannah Marx's talk at the NPSNM conference said that she should be reminded to keep her presentation to 45 minutes. Otherwise, the proposed presentations all looked interesting and represented a nice mix of topics.

**Motion: The Board approves the proposed topics for GNPS programs, subject to date confirmation from the speakers.**

**Formal Request to Town of Silver City for restroom (s) in Virginia Street Park (across the street from SCBG):** Wendy said that the idea of making a formal request to the Town to erect a restroom or restrooms in the area near SCBG was inspired by the need to provide facilities for volunteers working in the garden and to prevent others from using the garden as an informal facility. Margie agreed that it was very necessary. Elroy pointed out, however, that creating such a restroom would be very expensive for the Town. Betty remarked that even the public restroom erected at Main Street Plaza was usually kept locked to prevent people from using it to sleep or take drugs, etc. The motion was passed with four in favor and one opposed.

**Motion: GNPS shall make a formal request to the Town of Silver City to set up restroom(s) in Virginia Street Park.**

**Preparing for Elections of Officers and a Board Member at Large:** According to Article VII of the Bylaws, elections for officers should be held in November, and it was the responsibility of a nominating committee formed from the Board to present a slate of candidates to the membership a month ahead. Willing candidates for President (Margie) and Secretary (Betty) had been found, but candidates for Vice President and Treasurer were needed. In addition, it was felt that a replacement should be found for a Board Member at Large, since Susan Thompson had withdrawn. There was some discussion of emailing an appeal for candidates to the membership, but it was decided that first a nominating committee should be formed and should be given a little time to come up with candidates.

**Motion: Don, Wendy, Betty, Margie and Elroy were constituted the Nominating Committee.**

**Possible Website Maintenance:** Wendy said that, as the Board members knew, she had been in correspondence with Madeleine Woodward about managing the GNPS website, and Board response had been favorable. Would the Board wish to set a limit on the number of hours she worked per month? After discussion, it was decided that it would make sense to hire Madeleine to do our website maintenance at her hourly rate of \$21.40 without setting a limit on the time she spent throughout the end of the year. At that point, after seeing how much time the job tended to take, the Board could decide how to budget the expense.

**Motion: The Board hires Madeleine Woodward to manage the [gilanps.org](http://gilanps.org) website at an hourly rate of \$21.40.**



**Holiday Gathering:** It was agreed that Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, would be a good date for a potluck holiday gathering of GNPS members and friends at The Commons. The venue could be opened at noon and serving start at 1 pm.

**Motion: The Board agrees to rent The Commons from noon to 4 pm on December 11, 2022, for a potluck holiday gathering of GNPS members and friends.**

**Other Business:**

Don explained that the *Beginner's Guide to Landscaping with Native Grasses* was selling fast and there was a need to print more before the plant sale.

**Motion: The Board approves the printing of 200 more copies of the *Beginner's Guide to Landscaping with Native Grasses*.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.**

**Appendix:**

**Motions passed by exchange of email since the June 23rd meeting**

**Motion passed by exchange of email on June 24, 2022: The GNPS Board agrees to support the Gila River Festival 2022 at the sponsor level of \$500.**

Explanation: The Gila Resources and Information Project (GRIP), which puts on the Gila River Festival, is a leader in environmental protection for our Gila region, and GNPS traditionally supports the Festival. There are three levels: Friends (\$150-300), Sponsor (\$500, and Major Sponsor (\$1000).

**Motion passed by exchange on email on July 13-14, 2022: The GNPS Board agrees to commit \$303 for 100 copies of the *Beginner's Guide to Landscaping with Native Grasses* to be printed at Copies on the Run.**

Explanation: After much hard work, our *Beginner's Guide to Landscaping with Native Grasses* is almost ready to be copied. Many thanks to Margie Gibson, Jackie Blurton, Denise Friedrich and a host of others who worked so hard to make this second *Beginner's Guide* a reality. The cost to print the Guide will be \$3.03/copy.

**Motion passed by exchange of email on August 18-19, 2022: The GNPS Board agrees that the Silva Creek Botanical Garden mission statement shall be changed from "The Silva Creek Botanical Garden promotes knowledge and stewardship of native plants of the Gila Region of New Mexico" to the new mission statement, " The mission of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden is to foster appreciation of the beauty, ecological roles and cultural significance of native plants."**

Explanation: The SCBG Steering Committee would like to revise the mission statement of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden so that it could better guide the planning process. The new mission statement seeks a broader interpretation of what the garden could and should become. The term “ecological roles” refers to the relationships between the plants and other organisms, since the garden is more than an assemblage of native plants, beautiful as they may be—it is its own small ecosystem. The medicinal plant garden emphasizes cultural significance.