



Board Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, February 14, 2023

The meeting was held at the home of Margie Gibson, President, with some participants attending via Zoom.

Call to order 2:05 pm

Present: Margie Gibson, President; Mary Barrett, Vice-President; Dave Becker, Treasurer; Betty Spence, Secretary; Don Graves, Past President; Wendy Graves, Rick Lass (via Zoom), Beth Leuck, Elroy Limmer; invited: Patrice Mutchnik, Heart of the Gila

Minutes: Minutes of the Board meeting on January 19, 2023, were approved.

Board Reports:

Treasurer's Report: Dave reported that the Gila Native Plant Society checking account as of 1/31/2023 had a balance of \$17,060.16. The Silva Creek Garden checking account as of 1/31/2023 had a balance of \$26,811.99, of which \$1,119.93 related to the Healing Garden.

Dave said that he and Margie had found the process of switching signatories at 1st New Mexico Bank extremely frustrating. He intended to research other banks in town with a view to switching the accounts and would make a proposal at a later meeting.

In the meantime, he proposed transferring some of the funds in the two checking accounts to money market accounts at Edward Jones so that interest could be earned on the Society's money. The accounts would be completely liquid, and funds could be transferred back to checking when a need was anticipated. To begin with, he would like to ask for approval to invest \$1,000 in each of two money market accounts at Edward Jones (Vladimir Gnizozubov office) from each of the two checking accounts.

Discussion: It was generally agreed that it was a good idea to earn interest on some of the considerable monies in the two checking accounts. Rick said that he was opposed on general principles to investing money in accounts where we could not control where the funds went to be sure that the enterprises involved were good for the environment. Mary said that she was sympathetic to his concerns, but investing in ESG (environmental, social, governance) funds had its own downside because of the difficulty in making sure those companies were what they said they were. But more discussion was needed on that topic.

Motion: The Board approved the establishment of two money market accounts at Edward Jones, one for GNPS operations in general and one specifically for the Silva Creek Botanical Garden, each with an initial investment of \$1,000 to be transferred from the respective checking accounts. The motion was passed with one dissenting vote.

Committee and Other Reports

Books Sales: Rick submitted the following report in writing:

There is not much to report about actual book sales- I believe we have only sold one book via our website this year. I will be dropping off copies of our two books and three pamphlets at Mimbres Cultural Heritage site tomorrow. They may be interested in carrying them. I am not sure of the protocol for doing this, as I have thus far only been fulfilling website purchases. Also, I think we should be including a bookmark, or thank you note, or both (and an invitation to join?) when we ship books. Is there a budget item for this. Can we add it to the March meeting agenda?

Discussion: Wendy said that we had history of placing books for resale, and she could explain the procedure to Rick. Margie reported that there were plans to update the bookmark, but the content still had to be decided on.

Publicity: Betty reported that the February 17th program had been publicized by MailChimp to GNPS members, press release sent to Silver City Daily Press and Grant County Beat, short notices to five online calendars and an event post on the GNPS Facebook page. As of Feb. 13th, sixteen non-members had requested a Zoom link to the program.

SCBG Steering Committee Liaison Report: Wendy submitted the following report in writing:

Since the January 19th GNPS Board meeting, the Steering Committee has met five times (1/25, 2/1, 2/6, 2/8, and 2/11), each for a period of 1.5 – 2.5 hours. In addition, a fair amount of email communication has been necessary. Four of these meetings were with Ashley Pedersen, our Landscape Architect graduate student from Rhode Island School of Design. One of these meetings was for Steering Committee members who met in the garden.

We are working on establishing a day and time for a joint meeting of the GNPS Board and the SCBG Steering Committee to review the plan, once the Steering Committee has come to consensus regarding the plan. That meeting is tentatively set for 9 or 10 AM on Wednesday, March 1.

Angela Flanders has retired from the committee. In her announcement she stated, “The botanical garden is a great asset to the community and I hope that it will thrive. My greatest wish for the future of the garden was that a professional design for the entire garden be obtained. I’m so glad that we were able to do that.” Angela’s input will be missed and we will

be looking for a replacement after the plan has been reviewed and accepted by the GNPS Board.

Forest Plan Presentation by Patrice Mutchnick

Margie said that she had invited Patrice Mutchnick of Heart of the Gila to brief the Board on what to expect in the Gila National Forest Plan, what role GNPS had played in getting there, and how GNPS might work with the Forest Service and other stakeholders to implement the Plan in designated Important Plant Areas.

Patrice reminded the Board that GNPS had made comments during the planning phase of the Gila National Forest Plan in 2016-2017. All the national forests in New Mexico had to come up with new plans at that time, and chapters of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico all across the state had submitted comments for their areas. The Forest Service came to appreciate the scientific basis of our comments.

The original concept of Important Plant Areas based on clusters of plants at risk evolved to the concept of Special Botanical Areas, where not just species considered endangered but also rare and endemic species would be protected. The Forest Service in the Draft Forest Plan reduced the areas in the Gila proposed by GNPS and other conservation groups from over 100,000 acres to a bit over 30,000 acres, and the name was changed to Rare and Endemic Vegetation Management Areas, a designation not requiring congressional approval – still a win.

GNPS can advocate for the plants using this mechanism, which provides a platform and legitimacy for monitoring plants in these areas. Patrice intends to go out to these areas in early March and a GNPS member would be welcome to come along. A strategic way to be alerted about new decisions was needed.

Unfinished Business:

Dates for future Board meetings: As a result of the information collated by Rick, it appeared that all Board members would usually be available for meetings on Tuesday afternoons or Wednesday or Friday mornings. It was agreed that the next Board meeting would be at 2:00 pm on Tuesday, March 14, 2023. Board members could participate in person at Margie's house or via Zoom.

Joint meeting with the Steering Committee: Margie reported that the SCBG Steering Committee would like to have a joint meeting with the Board on Wednesday, March 1, at either 9 or 10 a.m. The Steering Committee would have handouts ahead of the meeting and a recorded presentation from Ashley (the landscape designer). Susan Campbell would be present on Zoom and the other Steering Committee members would be there in person. She wondered if a larger space could be found for the meeting besides her living room and possibly a larger television than she had?

It was pointed out that a number of people would be participating via Zoom, so the space in Margie's house should be adequate. It was decided that the Board would meet with the Steering Committee at 9:30 am on March 1, venue to be determined.

Program venue: With respect to holding GNPS evening meetings at Harlan Hall, Margie said that, on the one hand, the University system had proven to be easy to operate, and people listening to the January program via Zoom had said that the sound was excellent. However, she had learned that the cost was going to be \$95 per event, higher than we had thought at first.

Betty said that, despite the cost, it would be a good idea to keep using Room 111 in Harlan Hall for the rest of the spring programs; as Rick had noted, it was not a good idea to confuse people by changing the venue too often. A decision could then be made about the fall programs. Beth said that she was in favor of that proposal. Wendy floated the idea of perhaps using another building on campus, but Beth said that the audio-visual system in Harlan Hall was probably the best that could be found, since it had been recently updated. The AV system in room 111 was probably better than that in the auditorium on the second floor.

Don said that using the lab across the hall from Room 111 for snacks was unsanitary, and Beth agreed. When Southwestern Audubon used the upstairs auditorium there were tables right there in the hall. However, one problem with the large lecture hall was that Bill Norris did not know how to use the system. Wendy said that what she objected to was the lack of access to Harlan Hall; it was unacceptable that Bill had to place a rock in the front door to let people in. Surely for \$95 the University should provide normal access. Dave said that as Treasurer he would consult with WNMU about access, the cost of the auditorium and the possibility of having snack tables in the hall near room 111.

Expired memberships/Event sign-ups: Margie reported that Betsy Kaido, who was now keeping track of memberships for us, thought that we should keep those who had once been members on the MailChimp email list; many were people who had been very active in the organization and perhaps had lost track of their membership renewal dates. She proposed contacting lapsed members and asking if they wanted to keep receiving emails. If they did not respond she would remove them.

Betty suggested that the GNPS MailChimp account could have two audiences: members and non-members. Only members would get emails about elections and any workshops or field trips where participation had to be limited. Dave said that, better yet, there could be three lists: current members, lapsed members and those who had never been members but simply signed up to be on our email list. The emails to lapsed members could close with a friendly solicitation to rejoin. Rick said that, if it was too much work for Betsy, he could help with the entries.

Give Grandly: Dave reported that there had been a second organizing meeting for Give Grandly that morning. He was on the Events Committee and Betty was on the Publicity Committee, and each had volunteered for a task, so GNPS was covered for the necessary two tasks expected of any participating nonprofit.

The new online donation platform was exciting; it had many options, some of which would be useful for GNPS. We could add photos, our story, perhaps a short video. We could set it up to send a personalized thank-you to donors. Perhaps we could set up a separate donation level specifically for garden donations. He would like to have a team come to his house to brainstorm. Margie, Elroy, Don and Wendy volunteered to meet at Dave's house on Thursday, February 23rd at 5 pm. They would then present their proposals to the Board at the March meeting.

New Business:

SCBG Roles, Responsibilities and Memberships Policies: As liaison for the SCBG Steering Committee, Wendy submitted the document, previously circulated by email, entitled "Roles, Responsibilities and Memberships Policies of the Steering Committee and Garden Management Team of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden" for the Board's consideration.

Discussion:

Mary said that it was important to have a Board member with voting authority on the Steering Committee. Wendy responded that there was no need for concern, since the Steering Committee was answerable to the Board and had to submit all its policies and plans for Board approval. Moreover, Elroy was also on the Steering Committee. She herself, as liaison, did not see the need for a vote. In fact, the terms voting and non-voting were somewhat misleading, since the Steering Committee worked by consensus. When a subject came up for discussion, everyone, including herself, could express an opinion; when it seemed that a consensus had been reached, all members were asked whether they were in agreement, and it was then that she did not participate in the decision.

Motion: The Board adopts the document "Roles, Responsibilities and Memberships Policies of the Steering Committee and Garden Management Team of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden."

Snack social event: Margie said that, when it got warmer, she would like to have a snack social event in the garden for members only. It would provide an opportunity for new members to get acquainted.

Bird- and Plant-Friendly Week: Dave said that GNPS might wish to join in the Southwestern Audubon Society initiative to have the Town of Silver City make a proclamation to declare a Bird- and Plant-Friendly Week around Earth Day. Don agreed that it was a perfect bird-plant fit.

Earth Day: Dave reminded the Board that Gila Earth Day was April 22 and the theme was "Investing in Our Planet." GNPS was signed up to have a table. Jim Blurton had agreed to help set it up. GNPS could sell books. Don said that the Education Committee would take care of developing an activity for kids.

Since Gila Earth Day was to be celebrated in conjunction with Continental Divide Trail Days, GNPS might consider organizing or co-leading a plant hike. Don said that he was sure they could come up with a hike, but was not in favor of falling in with the BioBlitz idea, whereby participants would scramble to identify as many species as they could. Beth suggested that the plant hike could be on some portion of the CD Trail.

Dave proposed that GNPS should spend \$50 to be a sponsor of the event.

Motion: The Board agreed to give \$50 to sponsor Gila Earth Day.

Lone Mountain Native Plant Ordering: Mary reported that she had been talking to Patricia Hurley of Lone Mountain Natives. LMN was downsizing and reorganizing, especially to support revegetation projects. However, they were planning on having a spring plant sale and had asked whether GNPS would send an email to its members suggesting that if they wanted plants they could put in an order with Lone Mountain Natives.

Several Board members said that, while Lone Mountain Natives was an important local supplier of native plants, they were not comfortable with advertising for just one of the suppliers that we work with. If we were going to send out an email, it would have to be for all our vendors. Don pointed out that GNPS had worked hard to convince people that the best time of the year to plant was not the spring but the late summer/early fall. To advertise one company's spring plant sale would tend to undercut the message and our own plant sale. Wendy suggested that we could have our vendors' contact information in a prominent place on the website; she would check whether that already existed.

Silver City Museum Invitation: Margie drew attention to the email she had circulated from Cathleen Norman. The Silver City Museum had invited GNPS to be one of three organizations taking part in one of its Community Conversation programs on April 15th, along with the Grant County Archaeological Society and the Copper Cowbells. Each organization would make a 10-minute presentation on how it formed and its mission, projects and accomplishments.

It was agreed that it was a worthwhile opportunity. Don and Wendy volunteered to represent GNPS. Betty offered to research the history of the organization. Margie said she would respond to Cathleen and put her in contact with Don and Wendy.

Other Business:

Annual Picnic: Margie reminded the Board that the annual picnic would be on May 13th at Gomez Peak Pavillion.

Plant Sale: Don reported that potential September dates for the annual GNPS plant sale were already taken. He had found that an August 12th date would be the best time for all our main native plant growers. He proposed that we set the date and pay \$100 to reserve the space.

Motion: The Board agrees to pay \$100 to reserve the parking lot on the corner of Pope and 12th streets for the plant sale on August 12, 2023.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.