



Board Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, March 14, 2023, 2:00 pm

The meeting was held at the home of Margie Gibson, President

Call to order 2:00 pm

Present: Margie Gibson, President; Mary Barrett, Vice-President; Dave Becker, Treasurer; Betty Spence, Secretary; Don Graves, Past President; Wendy Graves, Rick Lass, Elroy Limmer; absent: Beth Leuck

Minutes: Minutes of the Board meeting on February 14, 2023, were approved.

Board Reports:

Treasurer's Report: Dave reported that the Gila Native Plant Society operating account as of 2/28/2023 had a balance of \$15,495.21. The Silva Creek Botanical Garden account as of 2/28/2023 had a balance of \$25,773.07, of which \$1,119.93 related to the Healing Garden.

Committee and Other Reports as submitted

Publicity: Betty reported that the March 17th program had been publicized by MailChimp to GNPS members, press releases 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. The Boston Hill Wildflower Ramble was publicized only by MailChimp to members, as the number of participants was limited to 12 people plus the leaders. As of March 13th, 11 members had signed up for the field trip.

Unfinished Business:

Give Grandly: Dave reported that March 31st was the deadline for placing financial information on the Give Grandly website. That would be accomplished as soon as any change in our financial institution was finalized. April 22nd was the date that the website would go live to receive donations, so we had up until then to post our publicity; he would appreciate collaboration on that.

Programs: Don reported that Hannah Marx had agreed to come and give her presentation live in May. It appeared that the April and June presentations would be online. Don agreed to introduce the April program since Margie and Mary will both be gone.

Margie reported that WNMU was willing to accept a rental fee for room 111, Harlan Hall, of around \$60 instead of \$95. With respect to access, Bill Norris had advised her that we did not want to depend on the WNMU maintenance department, so it seemed that we were stuck with using the rock in the door. Bill said he would make sure someone had the key to get in when we needed it.

With regard to the fall programs, Margie said that Elroy and Betsy Kaido were willing to do a presentation about the history of the garden in October. Don said he planned to ask John Gorey if he could do another program, this time on the new species of thistle he had found in the Gila Wilderness. Normally we did not have a program in September because of conflict with the Gila River Festival, but the Festival was not happening this year, since the organizers were planning for a big event for the Gila Wilderness Centennial in 2024. Wendy noted that, although the NPSNM conference was scheduled for the end of September, the third Friday of September fell earlier, on Sept. 15th, so we could have a program without conflicting with the conference. Don suggested that he could ask Mallory Davies, a graduate student at Colorado State University, if she would be willing to do a program on her nectivorous bat research.

Field Trips: Don reported that he and Wendy had done a reconnaissance in the Floridas and had found a spot where the poppies were fantastic, out on a decent BLM road. There were also many barrel cacti. He proposed a pop-up field trip the coming Sunday. People could gather at 9:00 am by the Valero gas station north of Deming and caravan from there. [Later the field trip was postponed to Tuesday, March 21st, because of weather.]

Bookmark: Margie presented a draft version of the GNPS bookmark for consideration (attached). It would be used to send out with book sales and as a hand-out at events. Asked if it was one-sided, she said yes, that it was cheaper to print that way. Mary asked whether the Gila Native Plant Society material shouldn't go on the top, but Margie felt that the design would not look as good. Mary's suggestion to replace "needs less water" with "drought tolerant" to continue the string of adjectives met with approval.

There was some discussion about the paragraph "Donations are tax deductible/To join go to gilanps.org." Some thought that the emphasis was backward, although it was useful to have the tax-deductible mention to make it clear that GNPS was a nonprofit. Betty pointed out that the website was good for more than just signing up for membership. The final version of that paragraph [later confirmed by email exchange] was as follows:

Please join us

www.gilanps.org

Donations are tax-deductible

Motion: The Board unanimously approves the design of the bookmark as revised and agrees to have it printed at Copies on the Run in the amount required.

New Financial Institution: Because of the frustrations of dealing with the 1st New Mexico Bank, the Board had been open to the suggestion of switching GNPS operating accounts to another bank. Prior to the meeting, Dave had circulated an analysis of the options.

He reported that he had contacted three financial institutions—First Financial Credit Union (FFCU), Washington Federal Bank (WaFd), and Western Bank—for information about opening two business checking accounts for GNPS and the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. All three would be an improvement over the current situation, but he was recommending that the Board authorize the opening of new accounts at FFCU and gave the following reasons:

“(1) FFCU has the most straightforward documentation requirement;
(2) their teller was the most friendly and helpful of the people I spoke with, and was able to answer all but one of my questions – indicating that even tellers at FFCU are knowledgeable;
(3) as a credit union, they are a non-profit, just like the NPSNM, and thus potentially more responsive to our concerns;
(4) with 16 locations in New Mexico, they are smaller than WaFd (which has branches in eight states), but larger than Western Bank (which has four locations in NM and AZ);
(5) Margie and I both already bank at FFCU, which may further smooth the account-opening process.”

Discussion: A question was raised about the security of a small bank, but it was noted that GNPS deposits were well within the limit covered by the federal government. [Later it was confirmed that, since FFCU was a credit union, the National Credit Union Administration covered deposits up to \$250,000 per depositor; GNPS was unlikely to exceed that limit.]

Dave pointed out that, although the FFCU had the most restrictive limit (\$5,000) on how much money could be moved out to linked external accounts via online banking, it should not be a problem; if funds in a higher amount were to be moved to Edwards Jones accounts, it would be simple to use a check for the transfer.

Dave confirmed that there would be no monthly charges on the accounts.

Rick mentioned that he had had a good experience with FFCU. The only problem encountered was that it was difficult to make an international wire transfer; however, that was not likely to be an issue for GNPS.

Motion: The Board unanimously approves the establishment of the GNPS and SCBG operating accounts at First Financial Credit Union and the transfer of the funds from 1st New Mexico Bank.

Dave then circulated the letter needed to open the accounts for the signature of the Board members.

New Business:

SCBG Master Plan: Now that all the Board members had seen the Master and Interpretive Plan for Silva Creek Botanical Garden that Ashley Pedersen had presented, Margie suggested that the Board might consider approving the concept of the Plan.

Rick asked if the SCBG Master Plan could be put on the website. Wendy said that we couldn't do that until the Board had approved the Plan as a long-term project and then talked it over with the Town.

Dave said that it was important to have some ideas about costs while Alex Brown was still the Town Manager, since he had heard that Alex was leaving at the end of 2023. It was time to extend the current contract with the Town. Elroy noted that the Town had provided water for the garden, paid for the water, picked up garbage, and would put in electricity.

Wendy emphasized that the Master Plan would be implemented in phases. The Silva Creek Steering Committee was working on cost estimates for the north end wildlife area and for some of the next phases, namely the reworking of the Butterfly Garden and the front gate area. We could not expect the town to cover the whole cost of the Plan, but there was a possibility of applying for grants in the future.

Motion: The Board unanimously approves the concept of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden Master Plan and commends the Steering Committee and Ashley Pedersen for all their hard work.

Representation: Margie said that it was important that the Board should be informed of planned meetings with others outside of GNPS, such as meetings with the Town Manager or the Forest Service, before those meetings took place. Elroy recalled that in some organizations he had been a part of there had been a real problem with an individual who went off on his own without consulting others and claimed to be representing the organization.

Dave said he agreed that when anyone in the Gila Native Plant Society intended to go to a government office or agency representing the organization, the Board should be informed of the purpose in advance for its approval. In that regard, he reported that he was planning to go out with Patrice Mutchnik to see one of the Rare and Endemic Vegetation Management Areas defined in the Gila National Forest Plan. Mary said that he should be aware that Patrice was representing the Heart of the Gila, not GNPS. Dave said he was sensitive to that issue. He felt it was important for GNPS to have direct contact with the Forest Service.

After some discussion, Rick suggested wording, and the Board passed the following motion:

Motion: The Board unanimously agrees that only the President or the President’s designee is authorized to represent or speak on behalf of the Society.

Liability Release: Wendy said that, as Co-President of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, she had asked Dave to look at the liability waiver form we use for field trips, among other things so that we could use one sheet for signatures. Betty noted that, since NPSNM arranged liability coverage for the entire organization, it was really a matter for the state organization. It was pointed out, however, that the practice of the chapters was not uniform. Wendy recalled that in the minutes of the January 2022 NPSNM Board Meeting it said: “Barbara Fix is designing a new liability release form”; as it happened, Barbara was a New Mexico lawyer.

Other Business:

Bulletin: Margie asked who would write a thank you to Ron Groves in the next Bulletin for the years that he had managed book sales. Wendy agreed to write the item. Margie also thought that there should be some information about the Garden Master Plan; it was agreed that it should be mentioned in the President’s Report section. Don added that there should also be an announcement that there would be frequent and diverse field trips in the spring, summer and fall.

New Membership Form: Wendy reported that NPSNM had finally designed and printed the new membership brochures, which were now available.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.

Motions adopted by exchange of email since March 14, 2023

Motion adopted by exchange of email on April 2-4, 2023

The Board unanimously approves the grant application from John Gorey to research a potentially new endemic thistle species in the high Mogollon Mountains and awards him a grant of \$500.

Explanation:

In 2022 John received a grant from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico to research locations of the rare Graham’s Thistle (*Cirsium grahamii*). In the course of that search he discovered an unusual thistle, and he has received tentative confirmation from plant experts that it may be a new species endemic to the high Mogollon Mountains of the Gila. He received a \$1,500 grant from NPSNM to search for more specimens, and he requested \$500.00 from GNPS in order to do a more complete search for both *Cirsium grahamii* and the potentially new thistle. This additional money will allow the project to have roughly five extra days in the field

and the ability to pay for an additional field tech for searching the Mogollon Mountains. John will make a presentation to GNPS on his findings at a date to be determined in 2024.

Motion adopted by exchange of email on April 10-17, 2023

The Board approved the transfer of the remaining balances at 1st New Mexico Bank in the GNPS operating account and the Silva Creek Botanical Garden account (except for the amounts needed to cover outstanding checks) to the respective money market accounts at Edward Jones. The motion was passed with one no vote and one abstention.

Explanation: The GNPS and SCBG money market accounts at Edward Jones are currently earning 4.5% interest. By transferring the funds to those accounts, GNPS can be earning interest on the roughly \$27,500 currently remaining in the two 1st NM Bank accounts. Funds can easily be transferred as needed from these liquid money market accounts to the respective checking accounts at First Federal Credit Union.

The no vote and abstention stemmed from a concern to place our funds in accounts that favor socially and environmentally responsible investments. However, the remaining Board members felt that the matter, while important, required considerable research and would in any case affect the longer-term investment funds. Meanwhile, it was fiscally responsible to earn interest on the funds that should remain readily available.

Other Decisions

The Board agreed to the recycling of an old MacBook loaned in the past to the Southwest New Mexico Audubon Society.

Explanation:

Approximately 12 years ago GNPS loaned a older MacBook to SWNMA for presentations. It no longer works well and cannot be upgraded, and Rachelle Bergmann of SWNMA offered to take it to electronic recycling on her next visit to Tucson.