



**Board Meeting Minutes, Wednesday, April 17, 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm**

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

**Called to order** at 2:00 pm.

**Present:** Margie Gibson, President; Cathleen Norman, Treasurer; Betty Spence, Secretary; Don Graves, Past President; Dinah Demers; Marty Eberhardt; Elroy Limmer; David Philips; Stacy Sollisch

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the Board meeting of March 12, 2024, were approved.

**Board Reports:**

**Treasurer's Report:** Prior to the meeting, Cathleen circulated a Treasurer's report for March 2024. Among other information, she reported that the Gila Native Plant Society checking account as of 3/31/2024 had a balance of \$2,566.11. The Silva Creek Botanical Garden checking account as of 3/31/2024 had a balance of \$37,001.81. The GNPS money market account had a balance of \$11,060.94, and the SCBG money market account had a balance of \$26,421.22. The total asset balance including Edward Jones and other accounts as of 3/31/2024 was \$135,565.31.

Cathleen also reported that the Trails + grant money had been deposited in early April.

**Committee and other reports:**

**Silva Creek Botanical Garden Steering Committee Report:** Prior to the meeting, Marty circulated the following Steering Committee report for March-April 2024:

**Fundraising:** Margie and I met on April 13th with Jennifer Pedneau of the Carroll Petrie Foundation. We told her we would have a detailed plan for the Children's Pollinator Garden in effect by the time we apply for a grant to them in 2025. Ms. Pedneau seemed impressed with the garden and wants us to keep in touch. We told her we would invite her to the opening of the Butterfly Garden. We hope unrestricted funds can be raised through Give Grandly to go towards this expense.

Butterfly Garden: If you haven't seen the new butterfly outline, it looks wonderful! Plantings will be installed this spring.

Children's Pollinator Garden: As discussed later in an agenda item, Ashley Pedersen has sent us a proposal for designing this garden. The boundaries with the Ethnobotany Garden are fluid at this point, and this will be one of the first points of discussion when and if we work with her. Since we already have a butterfly component, we will look at other pollinators, including bees, moths, and bats.

**Creek Trail:** Naava and I met with Bridgette Johns and two others from Waterworks about the trail from the Garden to Silva Creek. Work will resume in May. The grade will be lessened by creating terraces. Our neighbor's bank will be cut into and shored up, assuming they agree to this (which we believe they will). More rocks and fill will be needed than originally estimated. GNPS has been asked to contribute \$500 towards these materials, which is within the Steering Committee's purview. The money will not be needed until June.

**Tank:** Elroy and Don plan to meet with Alex Brown about this.

**Front Entrance:** Work on the design for this will begin this summer.

**Habitat Thicket:** Work on this has been in abeyance due to Susan Campbell's planned and unplanned need to be out of town. Work should resume this month.

I have not been able to collect committee hours yet this month.

Marty also reported that the start date for implementing the Trails + grant from the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division was February 9, 2024, the date we signed the agreement. We have two years to complete implementation by February 9, 2026. We will have to submit invoices to account for the grant, and Naava Koenigsberg has offered to keep track of the garden accounts. Marty also reported that the artwork installed around the tank would be moved to line up along the garden/Silva Creek boundary; the Steering Committee has a bid on the removal work. That would free up the space around the tank for remediation work and keep children from tumbling into the creek. Many rocks near the amphitheater had been moved as part of the trail project.

### **Old Business**

**Give Grandly:** Betty reminded the Board that Give Grandly 2024 had two aspects: the live event on Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 9 am to noon, and the online donation platform due to go live on April 20<sup>th</sup>.

The live event was a great way to spread information about GNPS to people unaware of our existence. She reported that Jim Blurton would do the set-up and take-down. Members of the Education Committee would provide an activity for kids. She asked for volunteers to help cover

the booth with her to give out information on our organization. Marty and David offered to help, and Stacy would see if her schedule would be free on that day.

Because our current need for funds was concentrated on the garden, Betty proposed that a good percentage of the unrestricted donations, perhaps 70%, should go into the garden funds. Dinah asked how much we anticipated receiving in donations. Our goal was \$4,000, but last year we brought in around \$3,000. Some people might specify that their entire donation should go to the garden. It was agreed that 70% of the funds not so restricted should also go to the garden, with the clarification that the decision applied only to this year's Give Grandly event.

**Motion: The Board agrees to allocate to the SCBG checking account 70% of the unrestricted donations received through the Give Grandly 2024 fundraiser.**

**Ashley Pedersen contract:** Prior to the meeting, Marty circulated Ashley Pedersen's proposal for a detailed design of the Children's Pollinator Garden in the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. She then circulated Ashley's revised proposal. Marty explained that, although the revisions would push the completion date to the end of December 2024, they were improvements in two ways: they involved input from her advisers at the Rhode Island School of Design, and that would reduce the need to meet with our committee to once a month. Marty said she had also gotten an agreement from Ashley that the cost of \$7,500 would cover her airfare to come out once to look at the garden space again. We could offer her free room and board on that occasion.

One advantage of having a professional, detailed plan is that it appealed to the representative of the Carroll Petrie Foundation, who we hope will invite us to submit a grant request. We would be doing that in July 2025, for work to be done in 2026, since we have enough to do in 2024 and 2025 with implementing the Trails+ grant. For the same reason, we did not try to apply for a 30x30 grant this year. Margie reported that the Foundation representative had visited the garden recently and was pleased with what she saw.

One of the design ideas, the installation of bee hotels, would have to be eliminated because it would be too hard to maintain them cleanly and safely. After some discussion, it was thought that a small model of a bee hotel might be educational, but big ones were not safe for bees due to the potential of spreading diseases and attracting parasites.

Dinah noted that Ashley had mentioned the need for a registered landscape architect or engineer to review the designs. Marty thought that might not be necessary. The concern was mostly with regard to interactive displays. Dinah also asked whether the design would specify the species of plants to be used, since there could be some problems with sourcing certain plants locally. Marty said that the Steering Committee would be working with her on that in the monthly meetings.

**Motion: The Board accepted Ashley Pedersen's proposal for a design for the Children's Pollinator Garden at a cost of \$7,500.**

Cathleen pointed out that we would need a contract for Ashley to sign; she would work with Marty to incorporate the proposal details into a contract.

**Alex Brown/Deergrass rescue:** Elroy and Don met with Alex Brown, the Town Manager, about the two issues of water tank remediation and deergrass rescue.

Concerning the problem of oil leakage from the water tank, Alex Brown had said that if GNPS could find a contractor to fix the problem, he would get the Town of Silver City to pay for it. Elroy noted that the first step was to find out how much oil was in the tank since we might be able to drain it if there was not too much. He would talk to Rohan Stiles of Adobe Technology about measuring it. We might get the same person to move the artwork from around the tank to make the job worthwhile.

Don said that Alex Brown gave us permission to move the deergrass near the Town's Vista Plata development. He was hoping to get a clearer idea of when the earthmoving work was scheduled, since ideally it would be better to try to relocate the plants in the monsoon season.

### **New Business**

**Sunny Kellerman's Recommended Next Steps:** As a follow-up to our Board Training session with Sunny Kellerman in February, Sunny created a memo with recommendations for possible next steps, and Margie circulated the memo.

Margie asked each Board member to say what aspect of the recommendations they considered the most important. Marty said that creating a formal succession plan seemed most urgent since the Board was supposed to come up with a slate of officers by November this year. Many Board members agreed with that priority. Margie and Don will be on the nominating committee.

It was suggested that a fuller description of the officers' duties than was provided in the Bylaws would be helpful in the search for candidates. Cathleen said a detailed description of what was involved in being Treasurer would have been very helpful when she assumed the role. Margie said that she would write a description of the role of President if the other officers could write theirs. Betty said that, according to the Bylaws, the Secretary's responsibility was to write up the minutes. The other functions she had assumed, such as coordinating publicity and serving as the representative to the state board, were separate functions not attached to the Secretary's job. She also noted that the difficulty in defining the role of the President was that it was so multi-faceted, and it was up to the President to meet many unexpected challenges. Moreover, each President would shape the job differently depending on what they were most interested in. Don said that when he was President, he and Wendy, for example, had been very focused on expanding the educational component and changing the way the plant sale was organized.

It was noted that the description of the Vice President in the Bylaws was very vague, except for the mention that the VP should be on the Programs Committee and fill in for the President in

presiding meetings. Dave suggested that we should not try to pin the description down too much; maybe what the Vice President does would depend on the person's skills and interests.

Dinah said that she had been drawn to the section of the memo about establishing strategic objectives. Moreover, she realized that she was unaware of our committees and what they were doing. It would be good to know what the whole organization consisted of and have contact information. Betty seemed to recall that Wendy had at one time put together a paper on some of the functions; she would search her files for that information. Margie noted that there was a list of the core volunteers on our website under "Who We Are," and Marty had provided a detailed organization chart for the Steering Committee. Dinah said that, if desired, she could try to collate all the information.

Speaking of planning ahead, Betty recalled that it would be the turn of our chapter to host the state annual conference in 2026, and that would be a major effort. Marty suggested that perhaps the nominating committee should also be tasked with finding someone to chair the conference organizing committee. Betty said that she had experience and a lot of information in her files about how we had organized the state conference in 2018 and would be willing to serve on an organizing committee. She hoped Elroy would be, too, since he had been President in 2018. Stacy said that she might be able to be on the committee. Don said that Wendy, as NPSNM Co-President, was putting together a general guide for the chapters on procedures for the annual conferences, including modern registration methods.

With respect to some of the other recommendations, Marty thought that drafting a vision statement would not be difficult. Betty noted that under Margie's guidance, most of the work had already been done on adopting or updating our foundational documents: the Bylaws, Board Policies, and Board Agreements.

**Native Bees Workshop Applicants:** Margie reminded the Board that NPSNM had organized the workshop "New Mexico's Native Bees: Exploring Ecosystem Services, Ecology, and Identification" with bee expert Olivia Messinger Carril, to take place in Santa Fe on July 15-19, 2024. Each chapter was to recommend three participants. To make the choice, we sent a MailChimp to GNPS members on March 18 and asked them to respond to the following two questions:

- \* What do you hope to gain by actively participating in the native bees workshop?
- \* What, in particular, interests you about native bees? Are you willing to share some aspect of what you learn, in some manner, with the Gila Chapter/NPSNM? (a program, workshop, research, etc.)?

The GNPS board was expected to decide on the three participants from the chapter at the present Board meeting, and Margie had circulated the responses of five candidates from our region. Margie reported that, since some of the other chapters had not put forward candidates for the Native Bees Workshop, all five of our candidates had been accepted, and she had informed them.

**Town of Silver City Outdoor Marketing Project – Natural History Information Editing:** Margie said that the Town was now asking for some input from us in coming up with the natural history information aspect of the project. Amy McLane, who was working as a volunteer on the Town's project, wanted someone from GNPS to be on the project committee, but that was probably not going to happen.

**The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 pm.**