



Board Meeting Minutes, Thursday, January 11, 1:00 pm

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

Call to order 1:10 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 via Zoom

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the Board meeting of November 14, 2023, were approved.

Board Reports:

President's Report: The President welcomed the new Board members, Dinah, David and Stacy. She drew attention to the Annual Report for 2023, which had been circulated prior to the meeting; annual reports from the chapter were required by the Native Plant Society of New Mexico and could be found on the Gila Chapter webpage on the state organization's website: <https://www.npsnm.org/about/chapters/gila/>

In December GNPS received a Trails+ grant from the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division in the amount of \$49,865 for Phase One of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden Master Plan. A press release on the grant was placed in the Silver City Daily Press on Dec. 29, 2023. In return for the letters of support we received from the Town of Silver City and the Gila Resource Information Project (GRIP), we have in turn been asked to write letters of support for some of their projects. Tom Stewart, NPSNM Treasurer, asked us to explain to other chapters how to find a Trails+ grant.

GNPS has awarded gift memberships to Denise Smith and Rick Lass in appreciation of their services. Denise was incredibly helpful to us in preparing the Trails+ grant application, and Rick continues to handle our book sales.

Treasurer's Report: Since the November board meeting, Cathleen has circulated Treasurer's reports for November and December 2023. Among other information, she reported that the Gila Native Plant Society checking account as of 12/31/2023 had a balance of \$2,066.43. The Silva Creek Botanical Garden checking account as of 12/31/2023 had a balance of \$33,014.77

much of that from donations to the Phase One Capital Campaign. The GNPS money market account had a balance of \$15,865.66, and the SCBG money market account had a balance of \$21,134.58. The total asset balance including Edward Jones and other accounts as of 12/31/2023 was \$125,470.72.

For the benefit of the new Board members, Cathleen explained the setup and purpose of the accounts. She would be preparing an annual financial report for the state organization. She had been Treasurer only for a short time and was still getting a grip on some areas of the GNPS finances—PayPal was an especially complicated area.

There was a need for a separate break-out of the spending on Phase One projects in the garden. Margie said that Naava Koenigsberg had volunteered to keep track of the spending from the Trails+ grant.

Committee and other reports:

Silva Creek Botanical Garden Steering Committee Report:

In order to bring the new Board members up to speed, Marty gave an overview of the history of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. Elroy noted that he and Betsy Kaido would be doing a presentation on the history of the garden at the evening meeting on February 16th.

Marty explained that, as planning for the garden became increasingly complex, the SCBG Steering Committee had been established to set policies—which could be found on the GNPS website at <https://gilanps.org/garden-past-projects/silva-creek-botanical-garden-policies/>. However, its major accomplishment had been the creation of a Master Plan for the garden, for which it had enlisted the help of a graduate student in landscaping design who had had extensive experience with a botanical garden in Tucson. The main aspects of the Master Plan could also be found on the website at <https://gilanps.org/scbg-home/silva-creek-botanical-garden-master-plan/>.

The Steering Committee then had to identify the aspects of the plan that should be implemented in an initial phase. Those were the the Habitat Thicket, the front entrance, the Children’s Butterfly Garden and a wall and mural surrounding the historic water tank. The Habitat Thicket was chosen because work had already begun, and the front entrance, of course, was a key focal point. The Butterfly Garden and the wall and mural involved contributions of others that had a time limit; Heart of the Gila would contribute help and fundraising efforts for the Butterfly Garden, and Diane Ingalls Leyba was applying for a grant to do a tile mural around the tank wall. YCC youth would be helping with the mural creation and would camp across the creek at the Waterworks property. Some educational programs would be needed.

Brigitte Johns in charge of the Waterworks project had been very helpful, for instance, by suggesting that we apply for the Trails+ grant. We also have a strong collaboration regarding the portion of the trail that would run along the two properties. GNPS and the Waterworks

should have a long-term relationship. The YCC crew would resume work in May on the part of the trail leading into Silva Creek. Waterworks had asked us to pay for one load of material at a cost of \$500. This amount was within what the Steering Committee was authorized to approve.

We have two years to accomplish the goals in the Trails+ grant. If we can fulfill our goals, there is a chance to get another Trails+ grant two years down the road. We need to report how we use the funds; some of the required matching is in volunteer hours. Margie noted that we had collected \$37,000 in donations, including the \$5,000 GNPS matching funds. Marty reported that, with donations plus the grant, we have more than reached the fundraising goal set for Phase One of the Master Plan.

Our contract with the Town for maintenance of the garden would be up in June and needed to be negotiated. She thought we should explore the possibility of having a Town employee assigned to take care of both projects.

At one point an Operations Team, later a Garden Management Team, was set up to handle the work at the garden, but that arrangement was not working out well. Just watering and weeding, for instance, had proved to be too onerous a job for a small team. A discussion ensued about the pros and cons of drip systems, without reaching a conclusion. Marty suggested that we should have a paid 5-hour a week contract position, covered by Town funds, to handle the watering and weeding. Margie said that we would still want to have volunteer work parties to involve our members. Marty added that there needed to be a Coordinator to coordinate the work of the volunteers and to make sure that there were no conflicts between projects ongoing at different parts of the garden. Margie explained the Dinah volunteered to be the coordinator, which primarily involves keeping a calendar of planned events and team members' out-of-town plans.

A problem had come up with the Butterfly Garden. The work done there by the YCC crew was done poorly and needed to be redone. That was unusual, because we had had much good work done by YCC volunteers – right from the beginning of the garden, as Elroy pointed out.

On a few other points, Marty said that the Steering Committee was hoping to find a graphic designer for the interpretive signage. The cost of metal frames for the signage might go up. In answer to a question, she explained that the Steering Committee consisted of Marty, Elroy, Naava Koenigsberg and Susan Campbell. At Cathleen's urging, Marty mentioned her work experience with a number of botanical gardens.

Marty said that the Steering Committee was also looking ahead to Phase Two, which might include the expansion of the Butterfly Garden into a broader Pollinator Garden, the development of the front yard garden and work on pathways. The fundraising committee consists of Denise Smith, Marty, Margie and Stacy. Stacy said she would like to clarify what approach she should take as a fundraiser. She also said that she had an idea for the front entrance that she would like to talk over with Elroy.

A discussion ensued about the oil leakage from the water tank, which would have to be fixed before work could begin on a wall and mural. It was the Town's responsibility, but maintenance in the city was stretched quite thin, and the private firm of Adobe Techniques, although good, was also quite busy with major projects. Margie suggested that we should meet with Alex Brown, the Town Manager, over the issue, but Marty said that, before talking to Alex, we should confer with Brigitte Johns of Waterworks.

David asked about the possibility of scheduling events in the garden. Don explained that, since the land was Town property, it was the Town's public works department that was in charge of scheduling events for Town spaces. We did not have the legal right to book events other than our own educational tours and the like.

Give Grandly: Prior to the board meeting Betty circulated the following report:

On December 15, 2023, the Board voted by exchange of email to participate in Give Grandly 2024, the big fundraiser for local nonprofits, and to appoint Betty as GNPS representative, with Marty Eberhardt as backup. For the past years we have participated, along with over 50 other local nonprofits, and we have done well with donations and in publicizing what we do.

The first Give Grandly 2024 planning meeting was held on Wednesday, January 10, 2024; Betty represented GNPS and will serve on the Give Grandly Publicity Committee. The live event will be held on Saturday, May 4, 2024, and the givegrandly.org website will be active from April 20 to May 20 to receive donations. Nonprofit organizations may register on the website starting February 8th, and the registration fee is \$100, payable by check made out to the Grant County Community Foundation and mailed to GCCF, P.O. Box 767, Silver City, NM 88062. The Grant County Community Foundation coordinates the event but does not take any part of the fees, which go to pay for the website, advertising, permits, etc., needed to run the event. Once we have registered and paid, we can begin to design our page on the website.

Betty also gave a brief history of Give Grandly, in which GNPS had participated for years.

Native Plant Sale: Don reported that we had reserved the parking lot across from Gough Park for Saturday, August 17, 2024. We should have all our major vendors: Lone Mountain Natives, Spadefoot Nursery, Gabriel Feldman and Gila Watershed Partners from Safford. Whiskey Creek Zócalo would probably not participate this year; they seemed to be less interested in the nursery side of their business. He and Wendy had visited the Santa Ana Pueblo nursery, and it was possible that they might come.

They had talked to Borderlands nursery in Patagonia, but Borderlands preferred to have people order online, and when there were enough orders they would deliver. A discussion ensued, in which the following points were raised: It would not be fair to promote Borderlands online ordering when we refused to promote Lone Mountain Natives. In past years, we had organized our plant sale in that way, but had decided that it was better for people to see the quality of the

plants they were buying. We no longer tried to make our plant sale a money-maker for GNPS, but preferred to encourage native plant growers; in fact, we spent money on advertising. We had also switched from a spring plant sale to one held during the monsoon, since that was a better time to plant in our area.

Don noted that we had never done anything educational to lead up to the plant sale. We should get the Education Committee involved in devising activities for kids and evening programs for adults.

Ongoing Business

Board Training: Margie recalled that the Board Training with Sunny Yates had been postponed, and reported that there were two possible dates open for rescheduling. After discussion, the Board decided on the date of Thursday, February 15th, from 12:45 to 4:30 pm,

Other Business

Don noted that there were constant requests for the name of a person or firm that did native plant landscaping. So far as we knew, there was no one in the area who did that work. That would be a great problem to solve.

Dinah asked whether we had a garden handout that gave tips on native plant landscaping. Was there money to create such a brochure? The response was that, yes, funds could be made available, but it would require someone to work on putting together such a brochure.

Dinah also asked if Silver City had a Master Gardener's Program. The response was that the Extension Service did have a gardening program, but it promoted old-fashioned, non-native gardening, unlike some of the extension programs elsewhere.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.

ANNEX

Decisions taken by exchange of email since November 14, 2023

By exchange of email on December 15-16, 2023, the Board decided that GNPS would participate in Give Grandly 2024 and appointed Betty Spence as representative, with Marty Eberhardt as back-up.