



## **Board Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, March 12, 2:00 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; David Philips; Stacy Sollisch; absent: Elroy Limmer

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the Board meeting of January 11, 2024, were approved.

### **Board Reports:**

**President's Report:** The President said that she had been contacted by the Carroll Petrie Foundation about funding for the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. At the GNPS table at the Natural History of the Gila Symposium, two books were sold, and there was an opportunity for some good conversations. Bat Conservation International was hoping to set up a greenhouse to raise agaves and was looking for someone to run it, since they wanted more agaves to plant than the Gila Watershed Partnership in Safford and Borderlands Nursery and Seed could provide. It was agreed, as Don pointed out, that we did not have the volunteers to run such a greenhouse.

**Treasurer's Report:** Since the January board meeting, Cathleen has circulated Treasurer's reports for January and February 2024. Among other information, she reported that the Gila Native Plant Society checking account as of 2/29/2024 had a balance of \$2,670.32. The Silva Creek Botanical Garden checking account as of 2/29/2024 had a balance of \$40,455.62. The GNPS money market account had a balance of \$11,006.90, and the SCBG money market account had a balance of \$26,321.66. The total asset balance including Edward Jones and other accounts as of 2/29/2024 was \$136,773.85.

### **Committee and other reports:**

**Silva Creek Botanical Garden Steering Committee Report:** Prior to the meeting, Marty circulated a chart showing the membership of the SCBG Steering Committee and the allocation of responsibilities for the various parts of the garden. She also circulated the following Steering Committee report dated March 5, 2024:

Fundraising: We've been told we'll get the Trails + grant check at the end of March (!).

Margie and Marty met with a representative from the Carroll Petrie Foundation, who contacted us after reading Margie's article in the NPSNM newsletter about the Master Plan. They are interested in pollination. We talked to the rep about funding a construction-ready plan from Master Plan designer Ashley Pedersen for the Children's Pollinator Garden. The timing will not work for this as Ashley must do it this summer in conjunction with the Steering Committee. However, the foundation may be interested in a proposal for the pollinator garden in 2025, to be constructed in 2026. The Foundation representative plans to visit the garden this year.

Funds can now be raised for Ashley's design, which we think will cost \$7,500.

Habitat Thicket: The winter months have been quiet on this project. The bridge will be built this spring when Susan Campbell returns from Tucson, as will other final aspects, including interpretive signs (see below). Susan has been working on the text for these.

Butterfly Garden: Alonso Romo has correctly reconstructed the butterfly and paths. Planting will occur this spring.

Creek: The YCC crew will finish the pathway in May.

Wall and Mural: Margie, Marty and Elroy met with Alex Brown about the tank leaks. He said he'd look into it and get back to us. As of this writing, that has not happened. We are looking at signing a contract to construct the wall this fall. We mentioned that we hoped to renew our contract with the town; it expires in June. Mr. Brown was concerned about the environmental costs of fixing the tank leaks and said he'd have to see about them first.

Front Entrance: Meetings have been held concerning the shade sails and the placement of signs. Steve Morgan, a retired Landscape Architect, has agreed to consider providing a design in consultation with the Steering Committee this summer.

Interpretive Signage: The Steering Committee is working with Margie on symbols for the three themes, using Mimbres designs. Susan Campbell has written much of the text for signs in the Thicket, which will be our pilot signage area. We have contacted several graphic artists for the graphics, and will likely want to work with Joel Armstrong, whom we'll contact in April when we agree on text. We have been working on font and design ideas, using examples from other botanical gardens.

Children's Pollinator Garden: Naava Koenigsberg has agreed to head up this committee, which she can do when the Butterfly Garden is finished. As described above, we plan to work on a plan for it with Ashley Pedersen this summer.

Front Yard Garden: Margie Gibson has agreed to head up this project. Margie and Marty emailed a well-known Albuquerque designer, who has agreed to provide a design for this

garden pro bono, possibly this fall. This would then be a 2026 project, like the Children's Pollinator Garden. We will talk to Judith Phillips at the NPSNM meeting in Taos in July.

Ethnobotany Garden: There is strong community interest in this project, which we expect to take a long time to plan with many stakeholders. Construction would most likely not occur until at least 2028. Naava intends to head up this project.

Garden Maintenance: The Garden management team (= management of maintenance) met. Dinah Demers will coordinate them and has come up with a nifty online schedule. Since the \$2600 needed for a gardener this year was not in their budget, approved by the Steering Committee, they asked the Steering Committee to submit a memo about a contract for 2024. The gardener, Eric Brown, is already working for Waterworks and is highly recommended by them.

Bookkeeping: Naava has agreed to keep track of garden bookkeeping. This will, of course, require coordination with the GNPS Treasurer Cathleen Norman. Cathleen and Naava are in conversation about the best program to use.

January-February hours for 4 people: 140

**Report from the Gila Representative to the NPSNM Board:** Prior to the meeting, Betty circulated the following report:

The NPSNM Board met at the Sevilleta NWR Field Station for an all-day meeting on January 13, 2024. The Treasurer's report showed that the organization was in good financial shape. Membership, at 843, is the highest it has ever been. Among other actions, the Conservation Committee submitted a letter of support on behalf of NPSNM for the Building Native Habitats with Federal Projects Act introduced by Senator Heinrich. The Committee is creating a conservation webpage on the state website. A motion was passed to proceed with digitizing to the web all the past state newsletters that can be found. The books created by NPSNM on milkweed and thistles are available on the state website in a pdf form that could be taken to a local printer. However, since it is cheaper to print in bulk, the state would like to know if there is demand for them.

The NPSNM Board approved a Science Teacher of the year \$500 award and grants of \$600 to each of five herbaria in the state. The Taos chapter is hosting the annual conference in 2024 and will receive \$500 to be awarded to the Conservation Champion the chapter selects. Grants totaling \$11,680 were awarded to seven of the eight applicants for native-plant-related projects in 2024, including a grant to UGWA for its Seedlings to Saplings project.

Two issues were discussed at length. The proposal to switch to sending the state newsletter entirely by email was rejected for several reasons: That had been tried in the past, and it was found that membership and advertising both declined. The printed newsletter was the only physical evidence of the existence of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico; it was carried by

many libraries and was the primary way in which our many out-of-state members participated. Members who did not wish to receive a paper copy could so inform the organization and be taken off the mailing list, but they would have to access the newsletter on the website. The proposal to introduce automatic renewal of membership as an option on Paypal was considered favorably, but with caveats. It was decided that further research was needed. NPSNM would be interested in the opinion of chapter members.

After discussion, it was agreed that the state organization should pursue the possibility of automatic renewals. With regard to the milkweed and thistle books online, it would be simpler to have them printed locally from the PDF if we wished to carry them.

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

GNPS has registered and paid the registration fee of \$100 to participate in Give Grandly 2024. Our Treasurer is working on providing the information and confirmation needed to verify her status as our financial representative.

Our next step will be to update the GNPS page on the givegrandly.org website; Marty and Betty (and anyone else who is interested) will review it after the meeting today. The website will be open for donations from April 20 to May 20, so early in April we will plan to publicize the event to our members.

At this point we also need to fill out a questionnaire on our requirements for our booth at the live event on May 6. Gila/Mimbres Community Radio (KURU) will be conducting short interviews with participating nonprofits on the day of the event, and we can discuss who might be available to do that for us. We are urged to have a colorful booth and, if possible, an educational activity for children or adults.

Don confirmed that we have all our own equipment for the booth.

### **Ongoing Business**

**Tech Person:** Stacy had agreed to be the person handling technical issues during our evening programs. She will have a training session with Wendy Graves.

**Board Agreements:** Margie reminded the Board that we had considered a document containing Board agreements during our board training session with Sunny Kellerman on February 15, 2024. She circulated an updated version and pointed out the changes agreed on at that time. Cathleen suggested that we could adopt the document now as a policy.

**Motion: The Board Agreements as revised on Feb. 15, 2024, were unanimously adopted.** [The text is annexed to these minutes as Appendix 1.]

**Field Trips:** Don reported that Andrew Tree was willing to be responsible for organizing field trips, but only the type of botanical field trips he was interested in. For instance, he was not

interested in organizing landscaping tours. He was researching lower-level locations for an early spring field trip. Landscaping tours were very popular last year, and we could repeat the locations for the many people who were interested but unable to participate. Margie noted that John Gorey was interested in taking more adventurous people to the upper Mogollons.

### **New Business**

**Gardener Contract:** Marty explained the rationale for a contract with Eric Brown to do work at the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. As reported at the January meeting, the maintenance team needs paid support for watering and weeding during the warm months. Eric Brown does gardening work for Waterworks, and he comes highly recommended by them. They pay him \$20/hour as a contractor. The Steering Committee has been asked by the management team to request \$2,600 for this purpose in 2024. This includes 26 weeks of work, starting April 1.

In response to questions, she clarified that his work would average about five hours per week. The 26 weeks would run through the growing season, April through September. Betty asked whether the contract with Eric Brown would leave anything for the work parties to do, since working on the garden was a favorite activity for many member volunteers. Margie assured her that there would still be plenty for volunteers to do, but it would take a great burden off the maintenance team.

**Motion: The Board approved a \$2,600 contract with Eric Brown for gardening work for six months at the Silva Creek Botanical Garden.**

**Sunny Kellerman's Recommended Next Steps:** Consideration of this follow-up to the Board Training session was deferred until the next Board meeting.

**Town of Silver City Outdoor Marketing Grant:** Margie said that GNPS had written a letter of support for the Town's grant application. The Town was now asking for some input from us. Don said that the project included a new Town map that does show the garden, although the name was misspelled as Silver Creek Botanical Garden. Margie said that we would also like to have a sign at the intersection of 180 directing people to the garden.

Dave said that he understood the Town would soon be printing more maps. He would talk with people at the Visitor's Center about the map and promoting the garden. The Visitor's Center was trying to work with groups coming to visit, among other things by putting together a packet including the garden brochure. He would inquire whether the VC could sell *Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico*. Stacy said she would contact Amy McLane to clarify what input the Town wants from GNPS on their Outdoor Marketing project. Amy was working as a volunteer on the Town's project and had helped write the grant application.

**Deergrass rescue:** Don said that the construction of the Town's new Vista Plata development of affordable housing threatened to dump fill on a precious deergrass area. He and Wendy were looking for people to help rescue and replant the grasses. After discussion, it was decided that

Elroy might be helpful when he returned from his trip, and that it would be necessary to get permission from the Town.

**The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.**

## **APPENDIX 1: Text of the Board Agreements Adopted at the Board meeting**

### GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY BOARD AGREEMENTS

Adopted March 12, 2024

As a board, we realize that working together can be facilitated by adopting and following practices and agreements that are designed to maintain relationships and support our group and individual effectiveness. It is our intention to create a culture in which we have:

- A safe, nonjudgmental environment for open, responsible, and constructive communication,
- A context of partnership,
- Mutual trust and respect,
- The ability to count on each other to do what we say and by when we say we'll do it, and
- The ability to be effective and productive.

To this end, we agree with one another that we will:

1. Be compassionate with others and ourselves.
2. Respect others and their time. (Make sure people have time to talk before beginning a conversation.)
3. Listen when others speak. Speak one person at a time during meetings. (No side conversations.)
4. Communicate our contact information to other board members.
5. Use a means of communication that is appropriate to the person.
6. Respond to all messages within 24 hours unless we have notified the board of our unavailability.
7. Complete our commitments and communicate progress.
8. Attend all meetings unless we have communicated our absence in advance.
9. Begin our meetings on time and end on time.
10. Respect other board members by turning off all cell phones, pages, etc., during board meetings.

11. Speak as one voice. Once decisions are made, each of us owns the decision, and we present a united front.
12. Have fun!

**APPENDIX 2:**

**Decisions taken by exchange of email since January 11, 2024**

**Motion taken by exchange of email on February 7-8, 2024**

**Motion: The Board agreed to a \$3,200 contract with Alonso Romo DBA NM Stone to redo the flagstone pathway around the Butterfly Garden**

Explanation: The SCBG Steering Committee explained that, as mentioned at the January board meeting, the YCC crew that did the work on laying the flagstone and pathways for the garden did not do a good job. That was free labor, but we need to pay someone to do it correctly. Naava Koenigsberg got two bids for the work, one for \$4,800 from Rohan at Stites Enterprises DBA Adobe Techniques. The second bid, which the Steering Committee would like to go with, is from Alonso Romo for \$3,200. This expense was not in the original budget. However, Naava Koenigsberg managed to save money on some other items in that budget.

**Motion taken by exchange of email on February 22-23, 2024**

**Motion: The Board agreed to sell *Common Southwestern Native Plants* for \$25 and *Conspicuous Butterflies of the Gila National Forest* for \$10.**

Explanation: We had priced *Common Southwestern Native Plants* at \$24 and *Conspicuous Butterflies of the Gila National Forest* at \$8. However, when selling books at tables, it is difficult to come up with dollars for change, and the prices still seem reasonable.