



Board Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, June 11, 2024, 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;

Absent: Stacy Sollisch, proxy given to Margie Gibson; David Philips

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the Board meeting of May 14, 2024, were approved.

Board Reports:

Treasurer's Report: Prior to the meeting, Cathleen circulated a Treasurer's report for May 2024. Among other information, she reported that the Gila Native Plant Society checking account as of 5/31/2024 had a balance of \$3,621.53. The Silva Creek Botanical Garden checking account as of 5/31/2024 had a balance of \$89,407.00. The GNPS money market account had a balance of \$11,156.75, and the SCBG money market account had a balance of \$26,649.34. The total asset balance including Edward Jones and other accounts as of 5/31/2024 was \$189,616.99.

Cathleen also reported that the final check for Give Grandly donations would be available on June 20th. Book sales had been slow. Rental for Room 111 in Harlan Hall was paid up to date. She appreciated Naava Koenigsberg's help with the grant accounting. She noted that we needed to do a W-4 form for our two garden contractors.

Committee and other reports:

Silva Creek Botanical Garden Steering Committee Report: Prior to the meeting, Marty circulated the following Steering Committee report as of June 11, 2024:

Elroy and Margie met with Alex Brown and he will renew our \$15,000 service contract. Margie and I met with Carl Colonius, our grant manager for the Trails + grant, in the garden. This site visit went well.

Front Entrance: Several of us met with Steve Morgan, the Landscape Architect who is donating a design pro bono. He'll get back to us with some sketches in the near future.

Tank: The company our volunteer Shannon Cimarron found, Safety Kleen, declined to empty the tank when contacted by the Town of Silver City. However, another company works with the Town. Alex Brown said they will test the oil next month and decide if they will take on emptying the tank.

Butterfly Garden: Planting continues.

Habitat Thicket: Maintenance continues. Sign frame is up. Bridge will be done this summer and benches will be installed.

Pollinator Garden: The committee that has been put together for this, including educators, will begin to work with Ashley Pedersen next month. She will be here July 12-14, 2024.

Marty also reported that the Trails+ grant manager announced a visit at very short notice and did not seem terribly interested in the details, but he seemed OK with what we were doing. Margie was working on designing a symbol for the garden signage. The Steering Committee was looking at the tiles Zoe Wolfe has made for the benches and planned to approve them the next day. Artist Elli Sorensen was contemplating a new art project using minerals and rocks from the region. Her work would be shown at the Ingalls Leyba gallery, and Elli was willing to have part of the proceeds go to the Silva Creek Botanical Garden.

Elroy said that, if the Town contractor was not able to test the oil in the tank, GNPS member Curtis Shimp, who retired from Mobil Oil, thought that he could get it done. We have been told it is road oil, but it may have been in the tank for some 35 years and have hardened.

Give Grandly: Prior to the meeting, Betty circulated the following report on Give Grandly 2024 results:

Give Grandly 2024 brought in a total of \$254,857 for its 65 participating nonprofits. The Gila Native Plant Society garnered a gross amount of \$3,665; the actual total will be a little less, because not every online donor offered to pay the credit card and processing fees. Donors earmarked a total \$1,125 specifically for the Silva Creek Botanical Garden.

The net online donations have been appearing in our GNPS checking account as they came in, under the name of Bonterra. Grant County Community Foundation is preparing checks for the amounts given directly to them on behalf of the nonprofits, plus the \$500 matching fund. The checks will be available from June 20th. At that point we can do the slightly complicated calculation of what should be put in the garden account.

I have the names and addresses of the matching fund donors and will send thank-you letters on behalf of GNPS. One more thing I need to do is to fill out a survey for GCCF, and to do so I need to get answers from the Board to three questions:

1 – Is our organization planning to participate in Give Grandly next year? [This is not a firm commitment, rather a probability.]

2 – Would a representative of our organization like to be on the steering committee for Give Grandly 2025? [I myself do not wish to do that.]

3 – Would we be willing to pay a registration fee of \$150 or \$200 to cover the use of the GiveGab platform and other advertising costs? [There was a shortfall this year. GiveGab, operated by Bonterra, is considerably more expensive than platforms Give Grandly has used in earlier years, but it has distinct advantages: it transfers online donations almost as soon as they are made; it enables donors to make donations up to 10 organizations without having to enter their billing information more than once; and it allows for videos.]

After discussion, it was agreed that GNPS was planning to participate in Give Grandly 2025, and we would be willing to pay somewhat more in registration fees, but we did not wish to have a representative on the steering committee.

Old Business

GNPS Operating Budget: Prior to the meeting Margie circulated two documents: The first was the GNPS Operating Budget for the period July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, showing the amounts budgeted and the amounts actually spent or received. The second was the proposed Operating Budget for the period July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. These documents are appended to the minutes.

She explained that the new operating budget was based on actual expenditure during the previous period plus 15%, except in the area of Communications, since Wendy Graves had found GNPS a much less expensive website provider. She noted that overall revenue was greater than forecast and expenses lower.

In the discussion that followed, it was noted that we had taken in considerably less than anticipated in book sales. Margie said that we were to some extent saturating the market with the publications we had available; moreover, we did not sell books last year at the annual NPSNM conference. As she had put in the notes, information was lacking as to how many of the *Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico* had been sold at events. Don said that a new system had been put in place to figure the numbers of each publication sold at events. Marty noted that membership revenue was down from the amount anticipated, but Don said that overall the trend was up in recent years.

Motion: The Board approved the proposed operating budget for the period July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

The Carter Fund: Margie proposed that, before the end of the 2023-2024 fiscal year, GNPS should donate an additional \$1,000 to the Jack and Martha Carter Conservation Fund, which is used by the state organization to fund worthwhile projects involving native plants. She explained that \$2,000 had been allocated in the 2023-2024 budget but only \$1,000 had so far been donated. Don will give Cathleen the address.

Motion: The Board approved a contribution of \$1,000 to the Carter Fund.

Board Officers: Margie reminded the Board that one of the most important pending tasks was to come up with a slate of officers to be voted on at the November meeting and serve for a term of two years beginning January 1, 2025. She herself was not going to serve again as President. Betty had agreed to be a candidate for Secretary again, and Cathleen was considering serving again as Treasurer, but there was an urgent need for a President and Vice-President to share the duties that Margie had been carrying. Don had talked to Dave Philips about being President; he had not yet said yes or no. Don said he didn't want to seem to be harassing Dave, but he would bring up the subject again.

Marty said that, since the Gila Chapter would be hosting the NPSNM state conference in 2026, we would need a conference chair. After some discussion, Elroy volunteered to take that role if he could get a committee to help him; he had done it twice before, in 2010 and 2018. Don was willing to be on the committee. Betty was willing to handle registration. It was suggested that Jim McGrath could be asked if he would handle field trips. Elroy said that they should start by kicking around the theme for the conference; Don proposed as an idea "Native Plants and Pollinators."

New Business

Digital Projector: Prior to the meeting, Don had circulated the following email explaining the rationale for having GNPS purchase its own digital projector:

After borrowing the Southwest Bird Alliance digital projector for many years, I would like the Board's opinion on purchasing an Epson Powerlite 1761W. This is the same projector that the Bird Alliance has. The Amazon price is \$843, with the same refurbished projector much less. Wendy and I have had good luck in the past with used laptops, but I would like the Board to weigh in. I like the small size and light weight of the above projector and the light quality and color rendition seemed very good at the Open Space event last week. I am not wedded to this projector, but we should purchase one before the next such event. It is not convenient to have to contact the holder of the projector, arrange to pick it up and then to get it back again. I look forward to the discussion!

A discussion ensued: Dinah asked about the cost of used projectors. Don noted that they usually came with no warranty. Elroy said that the technology changed so fast it made sense to buy the latest model; we might ask Russ Kleinman what he used with his classes. The Board was generally in favor of purchasing a digital projector but felt that more research should be done to determine the model we wanted.

Other Business

Other publications: Betty asked whether there was interest in printing our own copies of the *New Mexico Thistle Guide*, which was available for download in pdf from the NPSNM website. Don suggested that the guide was too technical and the color printing would be too expensive.

Instead, once a year we could mention its availability on the NPSNM website in a MailChimp to members and on Facebook. Margie mentioned that the guide was also available on the GNPS website.

Dinah said that she was working on a list of deer-resistant native plants.

Square for sales: Don said that Stacy had been looking into the possibility of having Square for credit card sales. However, it required a cell phone, and that could be expensive. Dinah mentioned that Mint Mobile was not too expensive.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

APPENDIX 1: Operating Budget Comparison Budgeted/Actual for the period July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024

APPENDIX 2: Operating Budget for the period July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025