



**Board Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, September 10, 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; Dinah Demers; Marty Eberhardt; Elroy Limmer; David Philips

**Absent:** Don Graves, proxy given to Margie Gibson; Stacy Sollisch, proxy given to Dinah Demers

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

**Board Reports:**

**Treasurer's Report:** Since the Board meeting in June, Cathleen had circulated Treasurer's reports for the close of June, July and August. Among other information, she reported that the Gila Native Plant Society checking account as of 8/31/2024 had a balance of \$1,426.2. The Silva Creek Botanical Garden checking account as of 8/31/2024 had a balance of \$92,182.48. The GNPS money market account had a balance of \$11,303.53, and the SCBG money market account had a balance of \$26,996.90. The total asset balance including Edward Jones and other accounts as of 8/31/2024 was \$195,510.58.

Cathleen noted that for the itemization on the Treasurer's Reports she had reverted to the simplified version that Wendy Graves had used as Treasurer.

**Committee and other reports:**

**Silva Creek Botanical Garden Steering Committee Report:** Since the Board meeting in June, Marty had circulated two Steering Committee reports:

Report as of 7/14/2024

The Butterfly Garden is looking wonderful. Two more Zoe Wolfe benches will be installed in late August. Don't forget the opening on September 14.

The Habitat Thicket is also looking great. More benches and the bridge will be installed in August.

Tank: We still await word from the town on draining the tank.

Design: We'll be meeting with landscape architect Steve Morgan on July 16 about his conceptual design for the front entrance.

Children's Pollinator Garden: We had two days of meetings and workshops with designer Ashley Pedersen regarding a design for the Children's Pollinator Garden. Ten people with backgrounds in children's education, garden education, and pollinator education met for an initial session, and a smaller group refined their ideas. Ashley will get back to us by Zoom next month with some drawings. This process will continue for some months; the end date is February 1.

Watering: The remarkable Naava Koenigsberg is heading up a new watering team. This new model seems to be working well.

Report as of 8/14/2024:

**1-The Children's Butterfly Garden:** Benches have been constructed and will be installed at the end of the month. Plantings are being finalized. The opening is scheduled for 1:00 pm on September 14. All board members are encouraged to attend. The opening is a joint project of GNPS and Heart of the Gila and will be targeted at members of both organizations and other interested parties, especially families. It will include a butterfly activity, music, a Pollinator Power puppet show, and short speeches from Patrice and Naava. Garden tours will be available at the end, around 2:15 or so.

Needed from the board:

Someone(s) to put 2 pop-ups up and down. Jim Blurton is not available. Someone also has to get them and store them from his house after the plant sale.

Volunteers (2-3 besides steering committee) to help out and be generally available. 12:00-3:00.

**2- Main entrance:** Steve Morgan is working on a plan, after input from the Steering Committee. We expect to have his plan and a new budget in September. Additional fundraising will likely be necessary.

**3- Front Yard Garden:** Judith Phillips will be coming to see the site in preparation for putting together a landscape plan on October 24-25.

**4- Tank/wall/mural:** The Town of Silver City has dropped the ball on this. We are pursuing other alternatives that do not require draining the tank. We plan to take care of it and notify the town that we are doing so. Meanwhile, Diana Leyba is now writing a grant for the mural. We will be contributing to this grant writing effort.

**5- Children's Pollinator Garden:** The committee will be meeting with Ashley at the end of the month to review her plans. This process will continue until we have a final product around February 1st.

**6- Habitat Thicket:** Bridge will be installed this month. We are working on the several interpretive signs that we hope to have installed by the opening October 26. This will be different from the butterfly garden opening... it will be an open house, with tours, from 10 am-2pm.

**7- Fundraising:** We will be doing a fall fundraising campaign as we did last year. We will probably need to target it at the front entrance. We may be able to apply for additional funds from Trails Plus for this, as well, but we need a plan and estimate first.

**8- Graphic Design:** In the next couple of weeks, the board should look for a contract from artist Joel Armstrong for graphic design, and possibly a contract for fixing the tank w/o draining it.

## **Give Grandly Final Report**

Prior to the meeting, Betty and Cathleen circulated the following final report on GNPS participation in Give Grandly 2024:

GNPS thank-you letters were sent to the 15 matching fund donors. We picked up the check from the Grant County Community Foundation that included the matching fund and donations made to us through GCCF on the multiple donation sheets. GCCF entered the info from those donors on our Give Grandly webpage, so that they received our electronic tax receipt/thank-you message.

Cathleen and I did the math on Give Grandly receipts, and here are the final results:

Total donations: \$3,683.40

Donations earmarked for the Silva Creek Botanical Garden: \$1,125

Unearmarked donations: \$2,558.40; we agreed that 70% of that (\$1,790.88), would also be allocated to the garden this year.

Altogether, Give Grandly will add \$2,915.88 to the SCBG checking account and \$767.52 to the GNPS checking account.

## **Report of the chapter representative to the Board of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico**

Betty reported that a NPSNM Board meeting had been held in Taos on July 25, 2024, on the day before the state conference. Board members had learned that the organization was in good financial shape at the half-year point, and membership had reached a new high. The Conservation Committee chaired by Sylvan Kaufman had sent a number of letters to the U.S. Forest Service, BLM and elected officials advocating policies favorable to native plants in New Mexico. All the chapters reported activities. The El Paso Chapter had joined forces with the Cactus Club of El Paso to share meetings, since there was a considerable overlap in membership. The state organization was still looking for candidates for President and Vice-President for a term beginning January 1, 2025. She was a candidate for Recording Secretary, and Dinah had agreed to replace her as chapter representative.

## **Publicity Report June 11-September 10, 2024**

Prior to the meeting, Betty circulated the following report on GNPS publicity efforts since June 11<sup>th</sup>:

As you know, since June 11 Margie and I have drafted a whole string of MailChimp emails to members about field trips, work parties and other events. For the upcoming Children's Butterfly Garden re-dedication event a Steering Committee team put together a press release, and I submitted posts for the usual online calendars. Some posters were put up around town, and Naava Koenigsberg notified the Silver City elementary schools.

We went all out for publicity for the native plant sale, and it was a real team effort. Mary Ann Kressig posted our 2024 native plant sale poster (updated by Margie) around town, along with Save the Date cards. Rick Lass put up posters in the Mimbres area and Deming members Jim and Jerri Jackson posted down there. Our vendors Whiskey Creek Zócalo and Country Girls

Nursery displayed our posters and Spadefoot Nursery put it on their Facebook page. The Bird Alliance of Southwest New Mexico publicized it in their newsletter. Don did two interviews on KURU radio shows. I arranged paid advertisements in the NPSNM newsletter, Desert Exposure, the Mimbres Messenger and the Silver City Daily Press. We had a press release in the Daily Press and the Grant County Beat and posts on four online calendars. And, of course, we sent MailChimps to GNPS members.

## **Unfinished and General Business**

### **Officers**

Margie reported that we now had a full slate of candidates to serve as GNPS officers for a two-year term beginning January 1, 2025:

President – Donna Stevens  
Vice-President – Cara Staab  
Treasurer – Cathleen Norman  
Secretary – Betty Spence

The membership would be informed of the proposed slate of officers by October 15 and would be asked to vote on them at the November evening meeting. Only members present at the meeting, either in person or via Zoom, would be able to vote.

**Motion: The Board approved the slate of candidates to be submitted to the members.**

It was suggested that the new candidates should be provided with some background information, including the recent minutes, the latest Treasurer's Report and the materials agreed on following the Board training session. Margie pointed out that all these materials were available on the GNPS website. Dinah said that she thought that it could be made easier to find things on the website and was willing to work on that.

### **Bylaws**

Prior to the meeting Margie had circulated some proposed amendments to the Bylaws. The Board reviewed each of the proposed changes. David noted that some of the formatting was inconsistent because of all the changes over time, and he volunteered to correct the inconsistencies.

**Motion: The Board agreed to submit the amended Bylaws to the membership by October 15 for a vote at the November evening meeting.**

### **SCBG Collection Policy**

Prior to the meeting, Marty had circulated the SCBG Steering Committee's proposed wording for a collection policy for the garden, as follows:

Collection of Living Things in the Silva Creek Botanical Garden

There shall be no public collection of plant parts, including whole plants, flowers, cuttings, seeds, or any other plant part, as well as no collection of insects or other wildlife.

Exceptions to this rule will include:

- 1) People volunteering during work days in the garden may take home plant parts that are being disposed of.
- 2) People involved in research or educational activities may apply to the Steering Committee for a collecting permit. Applications should include the reason for the collection, proposed dates of collection, species collected, including the plant part, if applicable, and proposed number of plant parts or animals collected. The Steering Committee reserves the right to amend or deny the request based upon the integrity and ongoing needs of the garden.
- 3) If a request is denied, the Steering Committee can provide the applicant with ideas of other sources for their collections, such as private seed collections or nearby public lands.

After discussion, it was agreed that the exceptions allowed were sufficient. Marty said that, for instance, Susan Campbell had offered some of her own seeds to meet the needs of the Seed Library. It was questioned whether we could refer people to public lands, which had their own rules, and it was suggested that the phrase “such as private seed collections or nearby public lands” was unnecessary and could be deleted.

**Motion: The Board approved the proposed collection policy with that amendment.**

### **Book Discounts**

GNPS had received a request from the museum in Hillsboro for a 20% discount on *Common Southwestern Native Plants: An Identification Guide*. It was pointed out that this was not one of our publications but was a book we had to purchase ourselves. Margie said that there was a need for a general policy governing discounts; she would write up a proposed policy for discussion at the next board meeting.

### **Event: Re-emergence of the Children’s Butterfly Garden**

Marty gave an update on plans for the event. She said that the Children’s Butterfly Garden opening might have more children attending than at first expected, since a memo intended for José Barrios and Aldo Leopold had gone out to the whole school system. The event would be very kid-oriented, with a puppet show and butterfly tagging. At the end, she, Margie and Elroy would give tours of the garden.

After discussion, it was agreed that Dinah and Betty would cover the GNPS table, while Cathleen would serve cake. The tables, canopies and other materials were in the garden shed.

### **Holiday Party**

Margie reported that we had reserved the Women’s Club for our holiday potluck on Sunday, December 8, 2024. It had been decided to start the event at 12:30 pm instead of noon to give those going to church services more time to get there.

## New Business

### **Candidates for NPSNM President and Vice-President**

Margie reported that Don and Wendy Graves, the current Co-Presidents of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, had asked the GNPS Board to help solicit candidates for the positions of NPSNM President and Vice-President. She would ask if they wanted us to put something in the GNPS 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Bulletin.

### **NPSNM Social Media**

Betty explained that at the NPSNM Board meeting in July the Otero Chapter had submitted proposals to revitalize the state organization's social media. Although there had not been time to consider them all, it had been decided that a committee could be formed to come up with some proposals to present to the NPSNM Board meeting in January 2025. Russell Davis, President of the Otero Chapter, was willing to chair such a committee, and there was a request for participation from the other chapters. Margie suggested that we could put out a call for a volunteer in the Bulletin. Betty offered to draft the wording.

### **Using the GNPS Endowment Fund**

Margie said that question had been raised of utilizing the substantial GNPS endowment fund that had been created many years ago and had been allowed to accumulate.. Elroy gave the history of the fund. Betty asked whether the fund generated some recurrent liquid assets, such as dividends or interest, that could be used while not affecting the principal. Margie suggested that it would be helpful to put together a committee to propose how much of the fund to use and for what purposes. She would ask Wendy Graves if she would be willing to be part of such a committee.

### **Pet Policy**

Margie proposed that GNPS should have a policy excluding pets from our events. David pointed out that service animals would have to be an exception. Dinah explained that by law event organizers could not ask attendees to show specific documents proving that their animal was a service animal, although one could ask if the animal was trained for a specific purpose. Although pets on a leash were allowed in the garden, there was no reason they could not be excluded during an event.

**Motion: The Board agreed to adopt a policy stating that pets other than service animals were not allowed at GNPS events.**

### **Plant Sale – Member Benefit**

Margie reported that some GNPS members had talked to Don about having special member benefits at the next native plant sale. Two possibilities would be to send GNPS members a discount voucher by email or to let GNPS members in early. After discussion of the pros and cons, it was concluded that neither method was feasible. Since the plant sale was arranged so that vendors sold directly to customers, GNPS could not expect them to give discounts. It was hard enough to keep potential customers from trying to get in to the sale early; to allow a select group, such as GNPS members, to go in before others could cause chaos.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.

#### **APPENDIX: Actions taken by exchange of email since June 11, 2024**

##### **Actions taken by exchange of emails since June 11, 2024**

**The final report on Give Grandly 2024 finances was submitted to the Board on July 15, 2024.**

##### **Motion taken by exchange of emails on July 23-24, 2024**

**The Board agrees to sponsor the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Gila River Festival at the sponsor level of \$500.**

Explanation: GNPS has traditionally supported the Gila River Festival, and this year's program on September 26-29, 2024, coincides with the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Gila Wilderness.

##### **Motion taken by exchange of emails on August 27-28, 2024**

**The Board approves the proposed contract with Joel Armstrong as graphic designer for the signage for the Habitat Thicket at the Silva Creek Botanical Garden at a cost of \$2,000.**

Explanation: The Steering Committee members have been working hard on Phase One of the Master Plan, and they found a graphic designer for the signage in the botanical garden. The Trails+ grant covers \$1,019 of the cost, and the remainder is available from the SCBG accounts.