



MONTANA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

PO Box 8783, Missoula, MT 59807-8783

Board of Directors Meeting
Westech, Helena, MT
Saturday, March 7 2020
10 am- 3 pm

MSC- Board actions that were motioned, seconded and carried.

1. **Attending:** Elizabeth Bergstrom, Gretchen Rupp, Beth Madden, Bob Person, Peter Lesica, Caroline Kurtz, Betty Kuropat, Rachel Potter, recording first part of meeting and Karen Porter second part. Calling in: Bob Srygley, Ryan Quire.
2. **Vice President's Report-** Gretchen for Ryan
Reports from Board members unable to attend sent through other proxies.
3. **Secretary's Report – Rachel**
 - Minutes of the June 2019 Membership Meeting and the October 2019 Board of Directors meeting were approved. MSC.
 - No progress made on Board Policies and Procedures.
 - An updated Board Contact list will be circulated via email. Rachel is leaving meeting for New Orleans at 1 pm. Karen will take over minutes.
4. **Treasurer's Report – Gretchen for Shannon**
 - 2019 Final Budget – For a summary, see 2019 Final Budget.pdf. For line by line details, see 2019 Final Budget.xcl. While we budgeted for a \$10,650 variance (income minus expenses), the ending variance was only \$3,762 due in part to increase in membership income and donations and a decrease in small grant expenses. Final savings and checking account balances for the year are in the 2019 Final Balance Sheet.pdf. Total income was \$15,424, while expenses were \$19,186, leaving \$42,418 in the bank on December 31, 2019.
 - Finalizing 2020 Budget - Using the MNPS 2020 DRAFT Budget, the Board reviewed and revised (MSC) the “Proposed Expenses” column with the following changes:
 - Operating Expenses increased from \$150 to \$200;
 - Small Grants Funds increased from \$6,000 to \$7,500;
 - Chapter Projects line item is preserved but reduced to zero for this budget;

- Under Special Projects, we added the entry “Whitebark Pine Conference Support” and funded it for \$1,000.
- 2020 Budget to date- income and expenses up to February 25, 2020 are shown in the March 2020 Budget.pdf.
 - We’ve collected over 70% of our membership income in the first 2 months.
 - Donations are being tracked as they are made this year, instead of split out and reported at the end of the year.
 - We’ve been invoiced and have paid final instalments for two 2019 Small Grants (\$750 each).
 - We’ve made the donation to the UM Herbarium, and they’re very appreciative. They are using that donation to fund a lichenologist (Tim Wheeler) to confirm the identifications and update nomenclature on almost 1000 lichens. The herbarium hopes to then database and georeference those collections so they’re accessible for the greater community through the herbarium website.
 - The payment to Valley of Flowers has been made for the 2020 Annual Meeting Deposit.
 - So far we’ve had \$526.21 come in from Plant Conservation Conference registrations. Denise Montgomery is tracking the individual registrations.
 - Income and Expenses that aren’t covered above are visible in March 2020 Budget.xcl. Click on the Ledger Sheet to see individual entries, arranged by category. For explanations on what each category includes select the 2020 Budget sheet and click on the small red triangles in some of the cells of the first column.

5. Newsletter Editor Report – Caroline Kurtz

The Spring Kelseyia will include the new contractor policy. It will be good to illustrate to members more about how we operate. Please send Caroline links to compelling natural history items about plants. She also needs more articles for Gardener’s Notebook including personal stories. Suggestions for sources are Hailey Moore, Sandy Blake and Caroline Clemans. Bladderpod project is not yet ready for an article.

6. Membership Report – Beth Madden for Maria Mantas. Please see Maria’s detailed written report with statistics at “Membership_Report_2020.pdf”.

- **Membership update** Maria is now fully managing the membership database and reporting. Sasha Victor continues to be a great help with entering renewals and new memberships from the post office. Shannon has been a great help too. Maria and Bob are working together to get on-line memberships entered on a regular basis.
- **Membership statistics** – Membership numbers are currently low because renewals are still coming in. As of March 1 we had 418 membership households and 583 members. Peter will be sending out a 2nd renewal reminder this month. On the positive side: lifetime memberships are the new rage! One year ago we had 67 lifetime members. In October it rose to 72. Today we have 86!
- **Membership Discussion**
 - Counting the Number of Members for Family and Lifetime Memberships:

As a reminder, last fall we agreed that family memberships would always count as 2 members. Children still would get the benefits, they just won't be counted in the statistics.

- Lifetime Memberships: The Board approved the following fee structure as proposed by Maria (MSC): \$300/ Lifetime- Individual; \$400 Lifetime – Couple. Changes will take effect when we revise the rest of the fee structure. Board meeting discussion:
 - Thank you for the great report, Maria.
 - Maria generally revises membership lists before Kelsey publication. If you need interim updates, let her know.
- **Reporting.** Maria is slowly changing the format of these reports as she sees fit. If you ever wish to see the data differently or want Maria to run a special report for you, please let her know.

Donations to MNPS (See Maria's complete report at "Donations to MNPS Report to BOD March 2020.pdf") Summarized here:

- We are receiving increasingly more donations over time. As I mentioned at the fall board meeting, I believe that the ease of donating on-line is a big part of this. In 2020, we have received \$450 so far.
- Bob has included a checkbox on-line and we have added a checkbox on the renewal cards allowing donors to opt out of having their name recognized in the newsletter. It seems a lot of people want to be anonymous.
- For the first time we acknowledged donors in the winter Kelsey and we will continue to do so once a year in that issue.
- I sent tax letters to all donors at the end of 2019, and Gretchen wrote thank you notes.
- Discussion/Action item:

I wish to remind chapters that donations direct to a chapter are to be handled separately from the state donations. Each chapter should thank the donor and send a tax letter (If you would like a tax letter template, please ask). However, this begs the question regarding reporting all MNPS donations and income to the IRS. I believe we broached this subject at the fall meeting and talked about the chapters sending information to Shannon, but I don't think we have yet come up with a system. I suggest we table this discussion until the fall meeting with Shannon present. In the meantime, we ask Chapters to keep track of your own donations and other income.

Board discussed this but took no action.

7. Webmaster Report – Bob Person.

Bob is working with Denise Montgomery on registration for the Conservation Conference (*later- cancelled due to pandemic*). Work with Maria smoothing out membership is ongoing and progressing.

8. 2020 Annual Meeting- Beth Madden

Later- Cancelled due to COVID-19 so while agenda and budget approved, not recorded here. What has survived is a fantastic raffle with a stay at Old Faithful and more as a fundraiser for MNPS.

9. Committee Reports

Conservation Committee – Elizabeth Bergstrom and Peter Lesica

- Conservation Conference- April 8-9. Later- cancelled due to pandemic. A discussion point of note is that the Conference was initially envisioned as a way of engaging and educating agency personnel. With budget cutbacks and travel restrictions, there is less agency involvement. Redefining goals may be in order.
- Douglas bladderpod (*Physaria douglasii*) occurs in only one place in Montana, and most of the population is in an ATV recreation area. In 2019 MNPS members assisted by Forest Service people mapped the occurrence of the plant in order to develop a protection plan. The Kootenai National Forest has no botanist and no sensitive plant list at this time. Steve Shelly, the FS regional botanist, will retire soon (he retired on May 29). There is a Kootenai National Forest ecologist but sources suggest he is interested in forestry not rare plants. The MNPS project to protect this plant will have to remain on hold until a new regional botanist is in place.
- Native Plant Conservation Network phone call. Some unique ideas. Many State Native Plant groups have paid staff.
- Species of Concern (SOC) –Elizabeth Bergstrom for Andrea Pipp
To date, this group is assembling what other states/groups are doing, including conversation with California Native Plant Society. There are established protocols for what is a rare plant. Their next focus will be: how do other societies establish relations with rare plant groups. For plans here in-state, they plan to visit at least one rare plant site. They hope to design a flexible program/plan to bring to the Board on how MNPS can have a rare plant program – focused on a sound structure and including 1-year and 5-year goals.

Nominating committee - Peter and Gretchen. All three incumbents for Vice President (Ryan Quire), Eastern Director-at-Large (Jennifer Lyman) and Secretary (Rachel Potter) have accepted nominations and will be on the ballot. Rachel will send the ballot to Caroline for the Kelseyia and to Bob to put on the web. Rachel will tabulate results.

Awards committee- Peter

There were two nominations. Cathie Jean will be awarded an Outstanding Service Award. Presentation time and place unknown due to cancellation of Annual Meeting and Conservation Conference. No Special Achievement Award will be given in 2020.

Small Grants Committee Report – Betty Kuropat

See “2020ReportBOD_20200307.pdf for details.” Summarized here plus 2021 discussion:

- **2019 Update.** We awarded 3 grants in 2019:
 - Outdoor Education Center and Demonstration Garden- Flathead Conservation District – Extension granted until June, 2020. \$750 outstanding.
 - Plant diversity in bedrock meadows – Viktoria Wagner, complete.

- Yaak Valley weed control, revegetation, and monitoring; AND huckleberry monitoring after timber harvest - Yaak Valley Forest Council, complete.
- **2020 Grant proposals** –The Board has reservations about all the projects, but they also all have compelling aspects. All were approved for full funding in 2020, budgeting \$5250 for 2020 Grants plus \$2250 for final 2019 = **\$7500**. MCS.
 - Plants for Birds Demonstration Garden at Story Mill Community Park - Sacajawea Audubon Society - \$1500 for native plants only.
 - Huntley Project Museum Native Plant Memorial and Educational Gardens - Huntley Project Museum. \$1500.
 - Reestablishing native plant communities' post-herbicide treatment in the Centennial Valley, Montana – Centennial Valley Association. \$750.
 - Revitalizing Sweetgrass for the Fort Belknap Indian Community – Fort Belknap Indian Community. \$1500.
- **2021 Grants**
 - The board requested the committee consider soliciting proposals for a category or type of project. Specifically, develop a Native Plant Educational Trunk or similar curriculum. A native plant curriculum was funded in 1998. Revising, sharing with chapters is one place to start.
 - The committee is interested in and will discuss reviewing past funded native plant gardens. While site visits are ideal, a certain amount may be learned initially from questionnaire to gardeners. This could be used as a spring board to revitalizing the Landscape Committee.

10. Other Business

- A discussion emerged of how the MNPS can continue as an organization with fewer people willing to volunteer and take leadership rolls. It was decided to devote the Summer Board meeting to this discussion alone and cover other topics through email. Some points made:
 - This is a problem for every small membership group.
 - Many have paid staff.
 - Scale back as did the American Penstemon Society.
 - Volunteers are very engaged with the Citizen Science Subcommittee of the Conservation Committee. Is it because it is Citizen Science or some other aspect of that group. How do we emulate that elsewhere?
 - We have previously discussed the need to reach out to more young people. Ryan has made a big effort to do this but did not get positive feedback. Too busy, jobs, families, dogs.
 - Accept that we have what we have.
 - Ryan- Universities, one or two students in college-
 - Treasurer: Last 2 or 3 years have budgeted for deficit spending, but keep doing better. That's a good sign for the organization.
 - Beth suggested we reach out to other non-profits. Gretchen will put together a list of question to present to other organizations. In the meantime, we will all reach out and query other groups as we encounter volunteers or staff.

- Summer Board meeting will concentrate on this topic.
- 2021 Annual Meeting –Rachel Potter
Rachel Potter reported that Flathead and Western At-Large Chapters are working together to plan this event. They are investigating camping settings, all currently within the Yaak region. They welcome ideas. She queried whether we thought the Society is ready to go back to the “old-fashion” camping style or closer to town. The Board generally felt that camping was fine so long as it was within ~1/2 (???) mile of a town with motels. One possible site is the Turner Mountain Lodge, a ski area.
- Native Plant Conservation Strategy -Elizabeth Bergstrom and Andrea Pipp
Elizabeth has taken over from Maria Mantas as MNPS’s representative to the “Montana Plant Conservation Strategy Partnership” that formed last fall and includes a number of agencies and organizations. MNPS funded the steering committee Partnership, through the MT Natural Heritage Program, \$5,000 for this first year of drafting a process for moving forward on a state-wide strategy. The partnership met in April 2019, to discuss the history and vision for creating a strategy for statewide native plant conservation – and they formed subcommittees to write specific strategies for various aspects of an overall conservation strategy for the state.
- Whitebark Pine Conference – Request for Sponsorship
After a short discussion based on a request for sponsorship from Cathy Jean and her earlier-provided flyer on the September 2020 Five Needle Pines Conference, the Board voted to support the conference at the \$1,000 level. MSC
- Potential Revision of Membership Dues – Gretchen
Dues as well as % donated to chapters will be on the fall agenda.

11. Chapter and Areas-at Large Reports

There is indication from Jennifer Lyman that the defunct Artemesia Chapter (Yellowstone-Redlodge area) could be reconstituted. The Board directed Gretchen to write an encouraging letter about that possibility. We would still have the Maka Flora Chapter in the northeast part of the state, and the Eastern At-Large chapter.

- Calypso Chapter:
Karen Porter reported that two events have occurred to date: (1) a discussion/demonstration of herbaria, held in Butte, and (2) showing of the film “Biggest Little Farm”, held in Dillon.
- Valley of Flowers Chapter:
Gretchen reports they are mostly focused on preparations for the Annual Meeting, but they have had several successful Trivia Nights attended by MSU students, and Earth Day 50th Birthday plans are underway.
- Kelsey Chapter: - Bob
Bob reported that there are no regularly scheduled meetings, but some events are planned, including looking at mosses on Mount Helena led by Andrea Pipp; a wildflower walk; possibly an art workshop or journaling with Ms. Fournier. Andrea has already provided 2 evenings focused on preparation of lichen samples from the Milton Ranch project.

- Clark Fork Chapter:
Peter reported that the chapter held a recent Arboretum walk, and a joint meeting with the local Audubon Chapter. There is a plan for a meeting with five artists. Peter also reported that he has the DVD by Doug Tallamy on permaculture native plants in urban settings
- Flathead Chapter:
A few winter programs and a lot of field trips are planned. Mostly, they are focusing on planning for the 2021 Annual Meeting.
- Western-At-Large Chapter:
Betty Kuropat reported that Jack Nesbit will be speaking in Libby and then leading a field trip to a burn area. No other event yet on the calendar. *Later- postponed.*

12. Wrap-up

- Deadline for the Field Trip Booklet is April 10, 2020. *Later- not produced in 2020 due to field trip uncertainty.*
- Adjourn 3 pm.