

Minutes of the TNPS Board Meeting held on March 11, 2025

Zoom meeting

The meeting commenced at 7:00 pm Eastern time. Mitchell Kent, President, presiding. In attendance: Larry Pounds, Sue Bible, Tim Kaltenbach, Ken Rea, Lesley and Jesse Gunn, Karen Hill, Mary Priestly, Bart Jones, Juanita Wade and Anne Ballentine. Allan Trently arrived at around 7:26 pm.

Mitchell welcomed everyone and introductory remarks were made.

The minutes of the January 7, 2025 were presented. There were no question, additions or deletions asked or made. Ken Rea moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Lesley Gunn. Motion carried. Minutes were approved.

(1:35)

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer's report was presented by Jesse Gunn. The first line item Jesse discussed was the Book Royalties. Some of the royalties shown are not accurate due to the Neon program being about a month behind showing what the actual revenues are. Karen Hill elaborates that Lone Pine (the publisher) tends to wait until September to pay the royalties from the sale of books in the previous year. Some of the Revenue number might reflect when the book was out of print. Karen will check. Total Membership Dues shows \$1,870 for the year. Gross Profit shows \$3,490.21. Expenditures total \$3,559.24. The Checking Account showed \$10,461.45. It must be kept at a \$10,000 level. The Savings Account showed \$18,324.11. And TNPS holds two Certificates of Deposit. Jesse noted that the Annual Report has been filed with the State of Tennessee. Forms 1099 have been sent to the vendors and filed with the IRS. The IRS Form 990N has been filed with the IRS. Approval should take about a month. The TN Charitable Donation form will be filed in June after the approval has been received.

(8:00)

Kim Sadler would like TNPS to partner with the Elsie Quarterman festival in May. Two of the TNPS members will be speaking at the festival: Mary Priestly and JoAnne Brichetto. Kim Sadler asked the TNPS to provide \$200 to each of these speakers to cover gas expenses. Kim also requested that about 750 copies of the Cedar Glades booklet be printed and TNPS assist in funding these booklets. Five hundred copies would go to TNPS for sale and 250 would go to schools and nature centers. Kim has requested \$3,000 from TNPS to fund the printing. TNPS would make this money back in the sale of the booklets. Mitchell added that all of the booklets TNPS originally received have been sold, and feels this is a worthwhile cause.

(12:30) Karen added that during the first printing of the booklets the binding fell apart. So people who purchased those booklets with bindings that fell apart have been promised free replacement booklets.

(13:40)

Larry Pounds moved for TNPS to provide \$3,000 in support of the printing of these booklets. Jesse Gunn seconded the motion. Everyone approved the motion.

(14:40)

Karen Hill moved to provide \$200 to the two TNPS speakers at the Elsie Quarterman festival. Anne Ballentine seconded the motion. All approved.

(16:20) Karen noted that the TNPS logo is on the first printing of the Cedar Glades booklet.

(17:30)

OLD BUSINESS

2025 Annual Conference – Bart Jones

We have a signed contract for September 26 thru 28th at Pickwick Landing.

Costs: \$621.94 initial deposit was made; \$1,554.85 will be made in July and \$932.91 to be made a month before the conference. This will pay for the two conference rooms each night, the podium, projectors and screens; plus a \$21% service charge. This totals the \$3,109.70.

Bart is currently basing his calculations on 100 attendees. These numbers may change. The meals will include a snack bar on Friday during registration. This will cost about \$14 person so \$1,400 is allocated for Friday Social Hour. Friday night meal will be a 2 meat 3 vegetable and dessert buffet for \$28 per person, so that's \$2,800 for Friday dinner. Saturday dinner will be a fajita bar for \$32 per person for \$3,200 and a 21% service charge. (Bart later adds a box lunch for Saturday at \$16 per person.) So this will be about \$150 per person for the weekend.

(20:00)

This does not include the rooms. We do have a block of 50 rooms reserved at a rate of \$157 a night. This is a discount of \$30 a night. There will be a link to reserve your room. If we don't reserve 80% of the 50 rooms we will pay a penalty. If there are more than 50 rooms reserved the overage will have to pay regular rates for the room. If we are able to tell them ahead of time we might be able to get a partial rebate on the rooms.

(21:20)

Field trips: John Ross's farm. He is a former member and hopefully will rejoin. It consists of hillsides and rich bottom lands. Another hike will go to Walker Branch right next to Ross's property. There will be two groups going to the properties; one going in the morning to one property and then the afternoon to the other property and swap out. We might have lunch at John Ross's cabin consisting of box lunches.

(22:48)

Communications have been sent to Dwayne Estes and Todd Crabtree about speaking on Friday night and Saturday night. John Manion has agreed to do a two-hour workshop on Saturday of the conference.

Mitchell thanked Bart for a great slate of field trips this year.

(24:37)

Social Media Update – Anne Ballentine

JoAnna Brichetto has asked to be replaced after 12 years of service as Manager of Social Media. Anne Ballentine is now taking that role. Anne thanked Mitchell for making the transition so smooth. Anne foresees doing a Genus of the Month and doing 3 to 4 posts a month on the genus. The Genus of the Month for April will be Oaks. Anne asked for help by providing pictures.

Other people working on social media are Becca Goodwin, Sarah McFarland and Juanita Wade. Thank you.

(29:10)

Education Outreach – Mitchell Kent

East Tennessee – March 28th in Knoxville at the TN Federation of Garden Clubs District 4 meeting. March 29th in Chattanooga is a Wild Ones Plant Sale.

Middle Tennessee – Jesse and Lesley said the Williamson County Master Gardeners Plant Sale will take place the first Saturday in April. The Cedar Glades Festival (Elsie Quarterman Festival) at Cedars of Lebanon State Park is the first weekend in May.

Mitchell states that we are looking for opportunities to join colleges and universities for their Earth Day celebrations. He and his wife will attend the Tennessee Tech event.

West Tennessee – Anne B. has an event on April 5th at the Troll Fest at the Memphis Botanic Garden. Also TNPS will be participating in the University of Memphis' Earth Day festival.

(35:20)

Mary Priestly raises the question if TNPS is partnering with Wild Ones in their Certificate of Native Plants program. Karen answers that TNPS members get a discount for participating in the program, but it's available only in the Chattanooga area. Mary teaches in the program and said there are participants from Knoxville, Nashville and Alabama. Mary feels the TNPS members need to know of this opportunity.

Mary would like some TNPS brochures to take with her to the Sewanee events.

Mitchell wanted to see if the arrangements made between the Chattanooga area chapter of Wild Ones and TNPS would carry across other Wild Ones chapters in Tennessee.

Karen noted that under Discover > Courses on our website there is a description of the Wild Ones certification program and a list of their classes.

(44:30)

Grants – Karen Hill

We are in the middle of our grants program so Karen is hoping at their next meeting they can discuss what has worked and what has not. They will arrive at a timeline for next year. TNPS does have a promise of \$2,000 from Margaret Fletcher for this year. That amount will cover up to four programs at schools. Karen will be able to tell us more after

their meeting. So far the feedback from the schools that have been awarded the grants has been very positive. Anne Ballentine will assist with the Grants program. Ken and Kim are on the committee as well. Karen asked for additional help. Anne B. suggested that her sister help since she has a lot of background in this field. Juanita W. also volunteered.

(51:35)

NEW BUSINESS

Membership Retention – Mitchell Kent

Neon calculates retention and generates reports. They can be generated on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis. Mitchell had it generate a report for Year End in February and reported a 97.42% retention rate.

(53:10)

Proposal for TNPS Scholarship Fund – Tim K.

There is a proposal to formalize a scholarship fund for botany, ecology, and biology sciences students. Tim presents an outline attachment which is a part of these minutes. TNPS would not need to accept the applications or determine eligibility. TNPS would select the schools with programs that support our mission. TNPS would make the funds available through the Financial Aid offices and those offices would select the recipients. TNPS would make an annual gift rather than an endowment. Endowments can often have very high dollar threshold amounts. TNPS can submit gifts in our name and not be locked in to providing a set amount of money each year. Tim suggested TNPS set aside \$5,000 and divide it between five schools.

Tim suggested inviting our membership to contribute and participate. He suggested TNPS match the member's gift. For example, TNPS might set aside \$1,000. A member contributes \$200 to the scholarship fund and TNPS would match that for a \$400 gift to a school.

Juanita suggested intern programs to receive this type funding as well.

Anne suggested this scholarship be noted at the Education Outreach tables. More discussion will be had about this subject at later meetings.

1:16:30

Invasive Species Control – Allan Trently

Allan gave a brief talk on the invasive species known as Cogongrass. He called it one of the worst invasive weeds on the planet. He and Adam Datillo found it in Hardeman County and McNairy County in November 2024. It spreads very quickly by the wind, and also by rhizomes. It can take 3 years of treatment to kill it. It is highly flammable. It is inedible to wildlife. It has no ecological benefit. If you see it, take pictures of it and send them to Allan Trently or Adam Datillo.

1:28:20

TNPS Membership Fee Increase Proposal – Mitchell Kent

Mitchell proposed we increase our dues and presented a chart with suggested increases. These new rates would begin with new memberships effective July 1st. The new rates for current TNPS memberships would take effect upon the member's renewal date. It was initially decided that the Family memberships would be \$40 and Business memberships would be \$200. The half price memberships would be only available to Individuals and Families at Education Outreach events. There were so many changes that needed to be made to the chart that it was decided that at the next meeting we would be presented a new, updated chart and we would vote on the new membership rates at that point. The item was tabled until the next meeting.

1:47:47

Additional New Business

Cullowhee Native Plant Conference Scholarship – Karen Hill

TNPS has always supported a scholarship to for this event. This year the full scholarship would be \$650. Cullowhee handles who would receive the scholarship. They offer it to students, beginning professionals, K thru 12 environmental science teachers, and interns at public gardens, nature centers, and parks.

Mary Priestly moved to fund a full scholarship for this year. Anne Ballentine seconded the motion. Motion was carried.

1:52:00

Native Plant Sale after the 2025 Annual Conference – Anne Ballentine

Anne suggested that TNPS partner with the Memphis Botanical Garden to have a native plant sale on the Sunday after the 2025 annual conference at the Botanical Garden. It was noted that it could not be held at the Conference because vendors are not allowed on the State Parks properties. Mitchell was interested to know what the costs would be to TNPS and what the other arrangements would be. Anne will gather that information for the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 Central, 9:00 Eastern time.