

CONPS Board Meeting Agenda

February 13, 2021 10 am - 1 pm

Zoom Virtual Meeting

Present: Alan Moores, Ann Grant, Anna Theodorakos, Audrey Spencer, Chrissy Alba, Denise Wilson, Deryn Davidson, Gayle Hemenway, Jim Pizarowicz, Joni Wagner, Kathy Okon, Kelly Ambler, Lara Duran, Linda Smith, Mo Ewing, Suzanne Dingwell, Tom Zeiner

Motions

Action items

Tabled for next meeting

1. **Close out Ann Armstrong Fund** - (Mo, 10 min)

- Bob Powell, 6 or 7 years ago, wanted to raise money because City of Boulder was going to build bench to commemorate Ann Armstrong, 19th century botanist - \$1362 in fund. The city never built bench and has no plans to. Should we liquidate Ann Armstrong fund? Bob Powell agrees, with money going to Alice Eastwood scholarships. Mo recommends that we close out fund and contact all donors of the money first. **Chrissy will provide overview of how we've used Alice Eastwood fund to Mo in next 2 weeks. Deryn moved to close out Ann Armstrong fund, with Mo contacting Ann Armstrong fund donors and providing Alice Eastwood information from Chrissy. Jim seconded. All in favor - motion passed.**

2. **CoNPS website rebuild - restricted access for members** (Mo, 15 min)

- Mo and Sue Dingwell have begun reviewing the website, which was originally set up as communication for CoNPS members. Currently, the website is not effectively educating the public and our membership about native plants. Mo is also looking at Google Analytics to see how people are using the website - most hits are on homepage, then announcements, then gardening information. Mo provided a look into the updated website - the success of the updated website will depend on how many members we will get to provide original content. The updated website will likely go live in a few months, with the understanding that new content will be added each month, highlighted in the "new" section. The goal is that this exciting and changing content boosts membership - reaching people who haven't been reached before.

- Our membership software can restrict parts of the website to members only. We've set that up with Aquilegia in the past, so that there's a benefit to membership. Mo asked board for feedback on restricting new content to members only. Kelly agreed, especially for in-depth, detailed content. Deryn asked whether non-members could get "teasers", so that non-members could see what they're missing. Mo said that doesn't seem possible with this platform, but the article index and photos/text can function that way. Denise added that you'd have to make two versions - teaser and full. Mo mentioned that Denver Audubon's approach is to not restrict any content - another approach is to restrict 2 most recent videos. Denise encouraged positive language to promote membership throughout. Conclusion is that Mo and Sue will look for creative balance to provide a sense of membership benefit and also serve as an education resource to the public. Thank you, Mo and Sue - this new website looks great!
- **Mo (and Aquilegia) can use recommendations for authors/ content providers - please send to Mo and Kelly!**

3. **Proposal to hire a CoNPS executive director** (Mo/Ann, 30 min) *Please see Executive Director Proposal*

- 2020 was the best financial year for CoNPS ever, and we have amassed an amount of funds that Mo and Ann would like to propose the hiring of a part-time executive director (20 hrs/week) for a period of 2 years (total costs \$38,850/ year). Funding would come from a combination of organizational profit, general endowment and transferring only half of the operating funds "rainy day fund" into endowment.
- The Executive Director would be responsible for fundraising, with the short-term minimum goal of fundraising for their own salary (both well-organized donor program and grants). The position would expand according to the director's success at fundraising. They would also create programs to increase membership and supervise existing staff. Ann has talked to executive directors and contacts at other organizations, such as Audubon and WRV. The consensus was that the numbers were reasonable for a part-time executive director.
- One reason to hire an executive director is that CoNPS has a lot going on, dependent on volunteers (especially volunteer board members supervising paid staff). An executive director can also expand our influence and perform more outreach as the representative of the organization. This is a risk, but the key is finding the right person.
- The job description will need to be written to express the minimum fundraising goal of \$35K a year. We wouldn't hire someone unless we were certain and enthusiastic about the candidate,

with the the understanding that we can efficiently terminate the position if they are not working out in that role. We will be looking for someone who is charismatic and energetic but also willing to commit for a certain amount of time. The employment contract will include measurable intermediate employment objectives.

- Gayle asked about the vision for this position - to increase the visibility and influence of CoNPS, growing our brand, reaching out to other audiences, being able to do more for our mission. Kelly asked if we would include increasing visibility of CoNPS in the job description and also if ED would be involved with Aquilegia? A part-time director would not take on the publicity campaign at first - the job description reflects a part-time position. The answer to the latter is no. Lara wanted to know whether they were looking for a new person or an experienced person in that role. The salary as stated would not attract experienced candidates. Ann answered that we would be looking for someone looking to make a name, relatively new in their career. Tom noted that it would be beneficial to look for someone with a personal mission that aligns to CoNPS and native plants. Chrissy asked whether part of the position description could include the expectation that the ED would grow their position to full time. Other qualifications would be experience supervising staff and networking. **Mo and Ann will develop detailed job description with emphasis on qualifications and accountability metrics, as well as a recruitment strategy.**
 - **Vote: Do we wish to hire an ED? Jim moved and Tom seconded. All approved - motion passed.**
 - **Vote: Do we agree to not transfer operating funds surplus into general endowment? Tom moved and Jim seconded. All approved - motion passed.**
 - **Vote: Do we agree to reducing the operating funds cushion from 50% of expenses to \$15K? Tom moved. Jim seconded. All approved - motion passed.**
 - **Amy and Deryn volunteered to assist with the position description and recruitment strategy.**
 - We still have to determine who the ED will report to - in many orgs, ED reports to entire board.
4. **Financial reports** (Mo, 15 min) *Please see CoNPS 2020 P&L, Balance Sheet, P&L Jan-Dec 2020*
- Profits from Jack Carter's Southwestern Plants book program go into Mission fund - \$2187 profit in 2020 has been transferred into Mission fund. Endowment showed profit of \$13864.33. Operations showed \$27773.30 profit. We did well with donations and virtual workshops this

year. We saved on venue costs and were able to reach more people. Expenses were very low in 2020.

- Membership is up, and Mo has projected conservative increases in 2021. Merchandise Sales is significantly higher because we are offering native plant sales this year. Projections come from estimates from Denise and Kathy.
- Employee expense is higher in order to reimburse staff for hours actually worked.

5. **New logo** (Sue, 15 min)

- The most effective logos are simple, have fewer colors, easy to reproduce. The details of our current logo get lost. The *Aquilegia caerulea* could be transferred into a simple line drawing or silhouette (more graphic) and font can be updated. Denise disagreed, with the perspective that it takes years to develop a credible, familiar brand. We are only just starting that with our current logo. However, this is a moment when we are doing new and special things - so this might be a time to refresh what we have while keeping it recognizable (keeping the columbine but perhaps more abstract, the color palette would remain the same). This effort requires coordination between marketing, website, graphic artist, and logo artist. Tom asked whether we are asking for actual new logo or just a new image for columbine.
- Lara suggested perhaps offering a contest (with financial award \$100-\$250) to show we value their time and work) to get some different interpretations. We could connect with students to participate in contest for the columbine logo graphic - reach younger audiences. Amy suggested setting up a logo committee - **Kelly, Lara and Denise are willing to be part of the team and will determine the parameters for the contest. Denise will ask for more volunteers through e-news.**

6. **OC Vacancies** (OC, 10 min).

- We need 2 more members for Operating Committee (OC). The OC operates by consensus. The OC is offering it up to the board first, then to other society members. Board membership is not required. Currently the OC makes decisions that the president of the society would make that don't require full board approval (ex. staff hours) or are time-sensitive. Mo observed that if we get an ED, the role of the OC will change.
- Mo thinks that we have vacancies on the board and should recruit. We didn't have an election during last year's meeting, but that is something we need to do this year.

- Amy volunteered to update board contact list with terms, so that we understand what vacancies we have on the board. Amy will look for OC write-up to provide to board and members, will also send out notice via email with draft minutes.
- We will open up OC vacancies to current board for a couple of weeks - contact any OC member if you are interested or if you know anyone. We will reach out to non attending board members by email to let them know about the vacancies. The OC will convene in a couple of weeks to decide whether vacancies should be extended to full CoNPS membership.

7. **Aquilegia Editorial Team update** (Kelly, 5 min)

- Kelly is pleased to announce that we have 2 very talented additions to the Aquilegia team: Alan Moores and Gayle Hemenway as production manager, as well as number of new volunteers to assist with editing. Kelly will include introduction of team in next issue and e-news.

8. **Additional Mission Grant reviewer** (Chrissy, 10 min)

- Amy and Chrissy are only two members of Mission Grant committee currently, looking for at least 1 new member. That role does not need to be filled by a board member. Leo might be willing to do it.

9. **45th Anniversary of CoNPS in 2021** (Brainstorm, 15 min)

- Ideas: Write an article for summer issue of Aquilegia about history/ future of CoNPS, perhaps a jointly written article (suggested Ron Whitman for the history). Observe anniversary in conference schedule, incorporate into theme? Do some volunteer appreciation at conference. Include in title slide at the beginning of the webinars and virtual garden tours. Incorporate the date in current logo. Kelly will try to create a 45th anniversary version of the logo.

10. **New CitSci Projects** (Ann, 10 min)

- Citizen science is gaining momentum within CoNPS. Two efforts: iNaturalist working group 1x/quarter with Maggie Gaddis in Southeast Chapter - upgrade identifications to become research grade. The CoNPS project on Budburst had suffered from low participation, but we have seen greater interest in this topic this past year. The Budburst website is easier to use now and has a connection to iNaturalist for identification. The phone app will be launched in March. CoNPS will update our portal this year and have a couple of projects: a statewide project with 12 well-known species and encourage people to set up local projects, such as the project in Loveland. Lara has connection to iNaturalist, also put the word out for EdMaps for invasive species.

1. **CoNPS Annual Conference** (Denise, 10 min) *Please see Board Report CoNPS 2021 Annual Conference*

- Many thanks to our robust organizing committee! The conference will be held in Trinidad on September 11-13. Committee will finalize theme at next meeting. Trinidad has great field trip options! Auction and photo contest will be on our website again this year. Denise will bring in the board if we need to switch the venue to virtual this year, currently investigating whether CoNPS can stream and be live at same time. Denise will try to get conference rates at a couple of motels - more info this spring. Denise has sent out a "save the date" with time-sensitive camping info already. **Denise will book the group campsite from 9/9-9/13, will find out max # of campers allowed (60).**
- There is such an advantage to having a virtual option, it might be worth recording talks to stream. We need to hire a videographer. CoNPS is required to use venue's AV person.

11. **Native Plant Sales** (Denise, 10 min) *Please see CoNPS Native Plant Sale Volunteers*

- The native plants for May 15 (May 22 freeze backup date) plant sale will come from Little Valley Wholesale - CoNPS will place order based on 2018 and 2019 orders, then put sale up on CoNPS website. For HPEC and Harlequin's we will offer a discount coupon. Denise is looking for a way to offer timed pickups to avoid crowding. Leftovers could be used as part of a membership drive. Denise is trying to find a way to secure plants the night before at the multiple locations. Denise would like to mark up the plants less than 50% so that customers have a reason to buy from us.

12. **Membership Drive ideas** (Denise, 10 min) *Please see Board 213021 Membership Drive Ideas*

- MetroDenver chapter leadership brainstormed some ideas to bring in more members, such as free plant offer and our low-water guides. We should be putting out more brochures and promoting membership when people are registering for events online. If you have any other ideas, please share with Denise! These ideas will be probably tabled with new ED.

13. **Legal Counsel Advice for CoNPS recorded virtual presentations** (Denise, 10 min)

- The copyright attorney provided advice on writing instead of recorded talks.

14. **Meeting recordings and copyright issues** (Boulder, 10 min)

- This has been an ongoing issue from presenters, concerned about photo credits and wider sharing of recorded presentations.

15. **Webinar report** (Kathy, 5 min) *Please see 2021 Webinars to Date*

- Some of our webinars have already run to sold-out crowds. If you have ideas for special speakers, please share with Kathy.
16. **Ed and Outreach Committee** (Amy, 2 min) *Please see Education and Outreach Members*
- Since David Julie's departure as chair of the E&O committee, the committee has not had any leadership. In the past the leadership of the E&O committee funneled requests from clubs, schools, etc. for presentations/ outreach to E&O volunteers, very important in sharing our mission. And demand is growing! Our next step is to reach out to the long list of existing E&O members to propose the idea of a shared leadership team, per Kathy's proposal.
17. **Ed and Outreach Committee Program and Outreach Ideas** (Kathy, 6 min) *Please see Program and Project Ideas for CoNPS E&O Committee*
- Word of mouth is the most powerful way to grow the organization, and E&O members are key in getting the word out. Kathy laid out possible ideas for programs and would like to work with E&O committee to develop programs for specific focal areas and for topics in which volunteers have interest and expertise. Kathy proposed charging for adult and school programs and give a percentage to reimburse speakers. We would use evaluations to determine whether volunteers could keep presenting. Outreach presenters could amass points throughout the year for recognition and appreciation.
 - **Amy will reach out to E&O members and update e-news to update current committee roster.**
18. **Waiver and Release of Liability** (Mo, 5 min) *Please see Photo Release and Waiver & Release of Liability*
- Mo and Kathy added specific COVID-19 language to existing waiver for field trips and events. We will be moving forward with this new version for this year's field trips.
19. **Field Studies outcome of Jan planning meeting** (Lara, 3 min)
- This committee purposefully collects data, often on rare or endangered plants, across the state and seasons. Participants are vetted for skills and expertise. The committee came up with 4 targeted areas: Mueller State Park, Douglas County, bryophyte study, post-fire plant inventory for East Macos. The committee will be working with land managers/ regulatory bodies to get permits and confirm locations and projects, and then work with Linda to post on calendar.
20. Landscaping with CO Native Plants Conference currently has 598 registrants!

Next meeting - Saturday, April 10, 10 am - 1 pm, Zoom link to come