

Members of Coastal Plain Chapter of GNPS

This is my first email to all members of Coastal Plain Chapter since taking over from Gail Farley as chapter president. I have a lot of information to share so this will be a long email. However, I've organized it with headings so you can skim through it easily. Here are some of the things we've been working on and how they will impact you. I want to be sure you know what is happening in our chapter. *I'll italicize ways that you can contribute.*

Restructuring GNPS:

Our newsletter *NativeSCAPES* has included ongoing information about changes at the state level. The role of the state GNPS board will focus more on coordination and supervision of chapters. More chapters will be forming throughout the state. The Coastal Plan Chapter had been defined by members who sign up rather than geography. However, the Coastal Plain covers more than half the state. It has been a challenge to provide events and member services to people spread so widely. As new chapters form, our geographic footprint will shrink. Plans are already in place to form a new chapter in the Augusta-Savannah region and a couple of people have expressed interest in forming a chapter around Macon and possibly Columbus. Contact chapters@gnps.org if you would like to help form a new chapter.

CP Handbook:

I've been developing a handbook to document what we do and how we do it. Not only will this help members, but it will clarify relations with the new state-level board and help groups starting new chapters. As new chapters form, there will need to be some level of consistency. Contact me (heather.brasell@gnps.org) if you would like to help develop this handbook.

New Email Format:

Tom Collins has helped set up this new system for sharing information with members. I would like to distribute a monthly email with information about upcoming events and projects. You cannot reply to this email, so you won't get overloaded with emails. You can "unsubscribe" if you want to opt out of emails, but then the only source of chapter information would come from the GNPS emails and newsletter. Send me (heather.brasell@gnps.org) any information you would like to include in the next email.

Plant Sales:

Plant sales are almost our only source of income. Amy Heidt and Paul Sumner have led this process for the past few years, propagating native plants for sale and also for educational outreach. Most of the sales have been held at Tifton Farmer's Market. We need to share the load for propagating material and sales. We have seeds we can send to anyone volunteering to help. We will gladly help anyone set up sales in their local community for the CP Chapter or a

new chapter. *Contact Amy Heidt (ameidty@bellsouth.net) if you are willing to help propagate native plants.*

Plant Rescues:

We had one plant rescue in 2019 – along a firebreak. We'd like to organize more in 2020. Our goal for rescued plants is to prioritize using them for conservation projects, community projects and propagation for plant sales, rather than personal gardens. *Contact Karan Rawlins (krawlins@uga.edu) if you know of a place where we could do a plant rescue.*

Events:

We need to have four meetings or events each year. I'd like to plan one in each part of our CP region.

- North: tbd
- Central: South GA Native Plant and Wildflower Symposium in Tifton – March 18. CP-GNPS meeting follows the event.
- West: tbd
- East: Annual meeting around November – details tbd

Additional planned events include

- April 18: A Day in the Woods community event in Alapaha. More information later.
- August 21-22: Second Great GA Pollinator Census at various locations. More information later.
- Sept-Oct: Bees, Butterflies and Beyond Symposium has been held for the last three years at Vincent Gardens in Douglas.

Field Trips:

I'd like to plan at least four field trips, one in each part of CP. These may include field trips organized by other groups such as GA Botanical Society. Four-hour field trips fulfil requirements for the Certificate in Native Plants.

The only trip planned at this time is a must-see field trip to the trout lilies at Lost Creek in Thomasville. This trip, led by Beth Grant for GA Botanical Society and others, will be an all-day field trip to Lost Creek, Greenwood (brief walk on the clay road), and Wolf Creek in Whigham on **Saturday February 15th 9am to 4-5pm**. *Contact Beth Grant (bethgrant@bellsouth.net) or me for details.*

CP Facebook:

We have a Facebook page that hasn't been used very much. At our next board meeting, I'd like to discuss how to use this format for social exchange. *Keep an eye out for more on this in the next email.*

Revised Coastal Plain Plant List:

About six years ago, Amy Heidt and Karan Rawlins developed a plant list, based on the brochure developed by Coastal Wildscapes and GNPS. They focused on native plants readily available for inner Coastal Plain. GNPS has asked us to develop a brochure that will have a consistent format for all chapters. We have started to review our brochure. Amy Heidt will be spearheading this effort, but will be coordinating with native plant nurseries in this region to be sure plants we recommend are readily available. *Contact Amy Heidt or me (heather.brasell@gnps.org) if you are interested in helping with this revision.*

Native Plant Articles for Southern Soil:

During 2019, we wrote articles in *Southern Soil*, a bi-monthly online publication. Heather Brasell, Karan Rawlins, Amy Heidt, Gail Farley, Beth Brant and Amy Carter contributed articles on native plants that are good to include in your garden and that are beneficial to humans or other animals. You can see past articles at www-southernsoil.org. We will continue articles during 2020. *Contact me (heather.brasell@gnps.org) if you would like to write one of these articles.*

Certificate in Native Plants:

A group of us (Amy Heidt, Ellen Corrie, Heather Brasell, Paul Sumner, Karan Rawlins, Amy Carter) are coordinating the Certificate in Native Plants Program based in Tifton. We have planned all of the courses for 2020 and are now recruiting to find attendees. We started the year with Ethnobotany taught by Ben Gahagen, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and Basic Botany course taught by Jason Scott, ABAC. The next course will be Natural Communities of GA, taught by Katherine Melcher, UGA on March 7. *For more information, contact Sean Cameron at GA Botanic Gardens at cscamero@uga.edu or 706-542-6156.*

Current Community Projects:

I know of three ongoing community projects. *If you are interested in helping with these projects, contact me (heather.brasell@gnps.org) and I can connect you with the project leader.*

- St. Mary's Crooked River: Gail Farley, secretary of Friends of Crooked River State Park, is leading a Pollinator Restoration project at Crooked River State Park in St. Mary's. They plan to convert about one acre of mowed meadow into a native wildflower and grass meadow typical of longleaf pine and saw palmettos.
- Tifton, Fulwood Dog Park. A team of CP-GNPS people (Katherine Melcher, Mary Alice Applegate, Amy Heidt, Karan Rawlins) with grant support from local council and volunteers from several other organizations have planted native plants around the fenced dog park area. The planting is complete but ongoing maintenance will be needed until the plants are well established and more plants may need to be added.

- Tifton, Len Lastinger Elementary School. Marilynne Marshall, leader for this project, will be planting a pollinator garden this spring.

The CP board has developed protocols for supporting community projects planting native plants. We want to prioritize sharing of plants before providing cash donations. Of course, we also want the project leader to provide a report and signage with photos so we can promote what we do in local newspapers, Facebook, our webpage and in the GNPS newsletter.

Future Projects:

Revise By-Laws: Changes are needed because of restructuring at the state level. We will wait on the new state by-laws before restructuring our own. *Keep an eye out for proposed changes that will be voted on at the annual meeting.*

Current CP Board:

- President: Heather Brasell – also member of GNPS Conservation Committee
- Vice President: Mary Alice Applegate – also Representative for Central CP
- Past President: Gail Farley – also Representative for East CP
- Secretary: Amy Heidt – also Chair for GNPS Conservation Committee
- Treasurer: Eamonn Leonard – also member of GNPS Conservation Committee
- Conservation: Karan Rawlins
- Membership and Communication: Paul Sumner
- Representative for North CP: Greg Lewis
- Representative for West CP: tbd
- Advisor: Ed McDowell

I would like to *encourage* other members to serve on the board in the future. New people bring new ideas and fresh commitment. If you would like to help guide future CP activities, please consider coming on board. Elected officers serve a two-year term (Pres, VP, Sec, Treas). District representatives serve the current president but do not usually change on a two-year basis. *Contact me if you would like to be considered for board of directors.*

Questions or comments? Contact: Heather Brasell heather.brasell@gnps.org