

Coastal Plain Chapter of Georgia Native Plant Society

2020 Annual Report

Mission

The mission of the Coastal Plain Chapter of the Georgia Native Plant Society is to promote the stewardship and conservation of Georgia's native plants and their habitats through education and with the involvement of individuals and organizations.

General

2020 has been a year of both retreat and growth. Covid-19 forced us to cancel many planned events and hold off on planning others. However, we have used the time to work on improving communications, have moved plant sales to online format, and have been able to continue working on projects that allow physical distancing.

Chapter Meetings/Events

We had planned five meetings/events for 2020. However, because of Covid-19, three of these meetings were cancelled – *Southwest Georgia Native Plant and Wildflower Symposium* in Tifton with a short CPC business meeting scheduled for March, *A Day in the Woods* in Alapaha scheduled for April, and *Bees, Butterflies and Beyond Symposium* in Douglas scheduled for October.

- CPC was a co-sponsor with GA DNR (2020) for the *Great Georgia Pollinator Census* event held at Gaskins Forest Education Center in Alapaha in August 21-22.
- The annual meeting will be held online on November 7 from 9-11 a.m.
- Regular CPC Board meetings are held online and minutes distributed to members via email.

CPC plays an important role in helping organize the GNPS annual meeting, held in Macon. Volunteers take responsibility for on-site setup and clean-up. We also have a table for distributing information about the chapter. Although this event does not count as one of our chapter meetings, it provides an opportunity for informal networking within the chapter and with other GNPS members throughout the state.

Financial Report: Treasurer Eamonn Leonard

See separate report.

Membership Report: Director Paul Sumner

On October 29, 2020, the membership in the Coastal Plain Chapter was 84. The chapter membership grew by one member over the past year. A positive note for the chapter is since 2015 membership has grown by 43 members.

Communication with members has increased during the year.

- **Monthly Email:** A monthly email is sent from the president to all members and also to GNPS board members. Members are invited to contribute to this newsletter/email.
- **Facebook:** Paul Sumner manages our Facebook page. He has greatly increased postings with photos of events. Members are encouraged to send photos and information to Paul.
- **Website:** Paul Sumner has started overhauling our CPC page on the GNPS website (<https://gnps.org/chapters/coastal-plains-chapter/>). Look for more information on this page. It will include listing of current board members, publications, and information about coming events. We also have a domain name: cpcgnps.org. This takes you to the chapter page on GNPS website.

Conservation Activities Report: Director Erin Cork

Several CPC members are active in GA Plant Conservation Alliance, partnering with several organizations such as GA DNR to assist with plant rescues, collect seeds from natural communities, propagate plants for restoration, and monitor populations of threatened and endangered plants.

Two plant rescues have been conducted so far this year.

- April: Three CPC members rescued plants from private property in Alapaha. Plants were located in three areas threatened by forest management practices – disking and herbicide application. Because of short notice, this was conducted as a “pop-up” rescue. Plants included passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*), groundnut (*Apios americana*), and sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*). Rescued plants were potted on site to maximize survival. They will be used for community projects and plant sales.
- October: Three CPC members assisted in a DNR plant rescue from a field site in south GA, where pitcher plants were threatened by development. Plants were hooded pitcher plant (*Sarracenia minor*) and parrot pitcher plant (*Sarracenia psittacina*). Plants were potted on site and will be returned to DNR conservation sites next spring.

Community Projects

Several of our community projects will be featured presentations at CPC virtual annual meeting on November 7.

- **Crooked River State Park in St. Mary’s:** CPC members partnered with Friends of Crooked River State Park in St. Mary’s to convert about one acre of mowed meadow into a native wildflower and grass meadow typical of longleaf pine and saw palmettos.

- **Fulwood Park Pollinator Garden in Tifton:** CPC partnered with the City of Tifton to design, develop, and maintain a native plant pollinator garden around the new dog park in Fulwood. Plantings met specifications for the *Connect to Protect Garden*.
- **Len Lastinger Elementary School in Tifton** is the latest school garden project: CPC has partnered with elementary schools, two in Tifton and one in St. Mary's, to develop native plant pollinator gardens that meet the specifications of Georgia Botanical Garden's *Connect to Protect* program.

Education and Outreach

Plant sales are used as an opportunity to educate the public about native plants and to recruit new members. Native plants are sold at events, at Tifton Farmer's Market, and on-line. Plants are propagated for plant sales and use in community plantings and restoration projects.

Starting in 2019, CPC members partnered with the Georgia Botanical Garden in Athens to plan and run a *Certificate in Native Plants* program in South Georgia. In 2020, in-person courses were cancelled for late spring and summer. However, virtual courses started in fall. Future courses will be organized and administered through SBG in Athens.

The CPC manned a booth in the Len Lastinger Elementary School "STEM Wild Night," held on December 3, 2019 in Tifton. The booth featured information about host plants and butterflies as well as photos of all the native plants recently planted at Fulwood Park.

Several members of the Coastal Plain Chapter were interviewed for an extensive article on native plants written by Christine Tibbetts for the March 2020 edition of *Southwest Georgia Magazine*.

CPC member Mary Alice Applegate gave a talk on incorporating natives into the home landscape to the Magnolia Garden Club in Tifton. The October 2020 outdoor meeting also included a guided walk around the Fulwood Park Pollinator Garden.

Publications

Amy Heidt has been overhauling the brochure *Landscaping with Native Plants in the Coastal Plain*. This contains a list of plants that are available in nurseries and suitable for planting in Coastal Plain gardens. The chart includes plant requirements for sun and moisture as well as other information useful to gardeners. The brochure is in final stages of review.

Other publications, available on CPC page of GNPS website, will be revised in the coming months.

- Conserving Native Wildflowers and Plant Communities in Georgia
- Landscaping and Gardening with Native Plants in Georgia's Coastal Plain

CPC members contribute articles about native plants for publication in the bimonthly online magazine *Southern Soil*. Articles published so far this year featured coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) by Heather Brasell, red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*) by Karan Rawlins, and spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) by Greg Lewis. Beth Grant has an article in waiting on milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.). Each article describes characteristics of a single native plant species, provides suggestions for how to grow and use it in landscaping, and explains its importance to pollinators and other wildlife.

Heather Brasell has written four articles related to forestry and conservation that have been included in NativeSCAPE: Prescribed Burning and Conservation, Dealing with Invasive Species, Logging and Conservation, and Logging Impacts on Wildlife Habitat.

Current Coastal Plain Chapter (CPC) Board

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