



Candidate Statements –

FNPS 2022 Annual Meeting of the Membership

Secretary

Bonnie Basham

Sarracenia Chapter (Crawfordville, Wakulla County), FNPS member 2016-present

FNPS is an incredible member-driven organization! Together, we have expanded our membership and welcomed new groups of Floridians who share our goal of the restoration, conservation and preservation of Florida native plants and native plant habitat.

I have been honored to serve as your President for these past two years. I thank each of you for the part you have played in expanding your Society and our mission. There are exciting new vistas ahead with our new President and new board members. It is my desire to continue to contribute to the growth of FNPS as a member of the board.

As FNPS continues to grow, it is essential that we maintain our corporate record as the basis of good governance and an accurate legacy of our board decisions.

I am offering my service as Secretary to the board because I know how important it is to the Society, and those who come after us, to have clear and concise records of meetings and the decisions made during all meetings.

I have served as Secretary to numerous other organizations, and I bring a combination of experience, listening skills and a passion for governance to this very important board position.

I would be honored to serve as the Secretary of the FNPS Board of Directors.

Directors

(Listed alphabetically by last name) Please note that people whose names are shown in red are currently on the FNPS Board as Standing Committee Chairs. They must run for Director positions to be eligible for continuing on the Board if the new by-laws are passed. They will be on the Board automatically if the new by-laws do not pass.

Patricia Burgos

Lake Beautyberry Chapter (Eustis, Lake County), FNPS member 2001-present

I have been a member of FNPS since the early 2000's and count myself lucky to have found a group of caring, passionate and well-versed individuals from all different professional backgrounds. I spent my early years working at my local chapter – Lake Beautyberry and then ascended to chapter representative where I am today. I wish to become a Director At-Large so that I can step up my participation at the state level. I would like the opportunity to work with the other Directors to advance the FNPS mission and in particular I am enthusiastically looking forward, as a Director to increase the streams of revenue, to increase the FNPS educational offerings, and to diversify our membership.

I have been a conservation biologist for over 30 years working with the public as a museum naturalist, a fieldtrip leader, a program manager and most recently as a land manager overseeing restoration and conservation work for over 6,000 acres of public lands. Currently I am using my Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning as a county planner looking at local and landscape level development and how it affects the environment. I work in a county that is very actively developing and I am doing my best to preserve the natural areas and encourage developers to work with native vegetation. I have always been interested in the interface of the built and natural communities and hope to bring my knowledge, experience and passion to the Director position. I hope you vote for me and join me in ushering FNPS to the next level of education, advocacy and protection.

Thank you.

Shirley Denton

Suncoast Chapter (Thonotosassa, Hillsborough County), FNPS member 1987-present

I started out in mathematics which rapidly morphed into computer programming and then into ecology. I have a PhD in Plant Ecology which I have used professionally working for many years in a research position and then as an environmental consultant. I was lucky to be in a position where I designed environmental studies, did plant species inventories and rare plant surveys,

and provided land management recommendations. I also became known for studies on wetland hydrology as they affect wetland “health.” I have a native yard, and I love exploring Florida’s wonderful natural places.

Over the years, I have been the Science Advisory Committee Chair, FNPS president, Membership Committee Chair, Website Committee Chair, Nominating Committee Chair, and currently Communications Committee Chair. I have been very active in technical developments intended to help FNPS better serve its members including the website, the membership management system, the forum, and making sure that up-to-date membership data is accessible to all FNPS leaders. I am proud to be the principal author and developer of the Native Landscape Plants and Ecosystems sections of the FNPS website. I am also active in my chapter and at times have been Chapter President, Vice President, Newsletter Editor, and Field Trip Chair.

I would like to have the opportunity to have an elected Director position on the FNPS Board of Directors. The revised bylaws that the membership will be voting on at the Annual Meeting bring both challenges and opportunities. They remove the original standing committee chairs from automatic positions on the Board, and they specify a new Advisory Board which needs to be further specified in how it will work and how it will interact with the FNPS Board. I’d like to be one of the people who makes that Advisory Board fully functional and capable of keeping FNPS in the forefront of plant conservation and science. I’d also like to continue to improve FNPS’ data management and web capabilities. I would also like to see FNPS create specific structures for managing our growing data archives. AND, I will always strive to see FNPS forward strong, accurate scientific and conservation messages.

Thank you for considering me for a Director position.

Tim Keating

Passionflower Chapter (Minneola, Lake County), FNPS member 2020–present

I have been a supporter of the use of native plants since I first encountered the concept and budding movement in the early ’80s. By that time, I had done odd jobs tending residential landscapes and by 1984 was brought on as a foreman by a nascent landscape company, Cahill Landscape Design.

But, having begun fighting for the environment in the 1970s, including six years as an Environmental Commissioner in my hometown (the youngest appointed official in the town’s history), I shifted focus back to environmental advocacy, co-founding Rainforest Relief (RR) in 1990, and directing that organization for 25 years.

As RR wound down, I returned to landscaping in 2008 as a designer, using only native plants. Over the next 10 years, I became Jersey City’s staunchest advocate for green-infrastructure and

native-plant landscaping. A design and installation completed in 2017 in Pershing Field Park, set the bar for native plant rain gardens in the city.

I became a board member of Pershing Field Garden Friends and later co-founded Leonard Gordon Park Conservancy, continuing to advocate for native plants and green infrastructure. The Master Plan for Leonard Gordon Park, completed in 2019, reflected the results, with numerous areas designated for rain gardens and a commitment to re-grading and re-planting parts the heavily sloped park to mitigate runoff, as well as the city turning to my newly-formed company, Earthbilt Landscapes, for a number of native-plant designs.

Moving to Central Florida has ushered in an exciting, challenging chapter for me, embarking on this new J-curve of learning the native plants and how to best incorporate them into landscapes, restoration, and advocating for their use and continued thriving in the wild. I look forward to working with the Florida Native Plant Society to help keep Florida beautifully wild.

Eugene Kelly

Hernando Chapter (Brooksville, Hernando County), FNPS member 1998-present

Gene has BS and MS degrees in Biology and 35+ years of professional experience working in both the public sector (Southwest Florida Water Management District and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) and private non-profit sphere (The Nature Conservancy). Conservation biology and environmental planning have been the primary focus of his work, with a lot of emphasis on land conservation and natural resource management. Studying and planning for the implications of climate change have been a big focus in more recent years. In addition to his professional experience, Gene has dedicated 20+ years of volunteer service to the Florida Native Plant Society, including in his current role as a member of the FNPS Board of Directors and Chair of the Policy and Legislation Committee.

His service on the BoD and professional experience have imparted a comprehensive understanding of the threats and challenges facing native plant conservation in Florida, and familiarity with the Society's priorities and direction. Now in semi-retirement, Gene is ready-willing-and-able to serve an additional term on the BoD and asks for the support of the membership so he can continue to help represent the interests of the Society and native plant conservation to the Florida legislature, state and local government, and anywhere else our engagement can be effective and make a difference for native plants.

Travis MacClendon

Magnolia Chapter (Blountstown, Calhoun County), FNPS member 1991-present

[excerpted from his resume by Shirley Denton] Travis MacClendon graduated from the University of Southern California with an M.S in Scientific and Technical Management. In 1982 he left the United States Air Force having reached the rank of Major. He then worked for two major Aerospace corporations as a computer systems analyst, and then retired at the age of 52. Interesting work assignments were with the Patriot Missile System, the F-14D Fighter Aircraft, Star Wars, and the Joint Strategic Targeting and Reconnaissance System. Interesting work places were the Pacific Ocean and under a mountain in the United States.. He also wrote an environmental column for a monthly newsletter while living on Long Island.

Mr. MacClendon has been a life-long amateur ornithologist and has journeyed frequently to all continents of the world in pursuit of listing birds. He also expends much energy of a mad dogs and Englishman type in the field trying to key out vegetation. He now resides in Blountstown (Calhoun County) where his passions (in conjunction with his wife Karen) include restoring a large old field aiming at a long-leaf pine forest, building an incredible bird viewing wall, and creating a herbarium of plants native the Calhoun County, recording many that were previously unknown in the county.

Mr. MacClendon has held various offices in the Audubon Society at local and state levels to include chapter President. He has been the Conradina Chapter President, and VP of Finance for FNPS. He started a legacy program which was carried further forward by a later occupant of that position, Devon Higgenbotham. He welcomes tasks that will use his analytical skills, his considerable sense of humor, his birding skills, his focus on conservation and restoration, and his love of exploration and wonder.

Chris Moran

Magnolia Chapter (Tallahassee, Liberty County), FNPS member 2020-present

I have over 30 years experience as a CPA in Florida. I have spent the majority of my career working with not for profits and Local Governments. I have audited dozens of trade associations from the Florida Bankers, Florida institute of certified accountants, Florida Builders association, to many smaller ones. Being in Tallahassee makes it critical to becoming an expert in the industry. I have a vast amount of experience as an auditor, and a consultant, and as a member of associations. I have served on at least 5 other not for profit boards (Tallahassee Symphony, Riverkeepers, Rainbow center, several sports boards etc) I have recently opened a Plant nursery, and we want to specialize in Native plants.

I think I can bring a vast amount of experience on best practices and the board oversight operations of a statewide association. I still have many connections in law firms and lobbyist organizations. I am excited and would consider it a real honor to serve on the board.

Thank you for your consideration

Virginia Overstreet

Suncoast Chapter (Tampa, Hillsborough County), FNPS member 2008-present

I am the President of the Suncoast Chapter and also represent the Suncoast Chapter on the Council of Chapters. I have been a Florida Master Gardener Volunteer since 2001 and a Florida Master Naturalist since 2018. I enjoy helping homeowners select native plants for their landscapes and teaching them about the difference types of wildlife that are supported by the plants in their gardens. I enjoyed working on the regional insert for the new "Good Citizen Guide to Natural Florida". I would enjoy working on the FNPS Landscape Awards

I don't have a scientific background like many members of FNPS, but I have a strong enthusiasm for native gardening to support wildlife and to conserve water.

Sean Patton

Serenoa Chapter (Sarasota, Sarasota County), FNPS member 2018-2019, 2022-present

"Honestly, I never imagined I would be running for FNPS leadership -- I graduated from New College of Florida in 2015 with a degree in Marine Biology, studying the organisms that rely on our native flora as opposed to the plants themselves. I was first introduced to those native plants that would eventually become the cornerstone of my career during my first post-grad position in private lake management, regulating invasive plants and "nuisance" natives alike. For those two years of working as a private biologist and witnessing traditional land and lake management techniques, I observed crucial gaps in our conventional methods which inspired my development of the Multimodal Biological Control system. The MBC system includes utilizing a diversity of native plants, animals, and strategic design to promote the restoration of native habitats and reduce the use of herbicides and pesticides.

Stocking Savvy, my ecological research and restoration company was born from this model and continues to this day. I am proud to say that our team has restored hundreds of thousands of native plants and fish to the wild. In addition to managing my company, I am a member of the Society of Wetland Scientists and coordinator of the Sarasota Manatee EcoFlora Project, which involves cataloging every plant in those counties and teaching the public about the importance of native plants. Currently, myself and my staff are staunch advocates of native plants and all the wonderful species they support. We channel this advocacy through physical plantings, public education, scientific research, and restoration of our native ecosystems in both the public and private sectors.

While I may not have been working with FNPS and our great diversity of native species as long as many others, I offer a unique perspective through my focus on wetlands and aquatic plants,

as well as an ecological approach to restoration and protection of our native plants. Currently, no aquatic specialist is on the board of FNPS, despite the immense value of our state's aquatic habitats and the increasing need for aquatic-focused education and action. I feel this specialty, combined with my business, restoration, and youth advocacy background, makes me a strong candidate to help push for the preservation and restoration of our native plants. If elected I will push for more education, protection, and restoration of our watersheds and wetlands especially on a homeowner and landscape level.

I hope you all will "leaf" a few votes for me, Sean Patton and that we "May Pop" into the next era of the Florida Native Plant Society!"

Wendy Poag

Lake Beautyberry Chapter (Altoona, Lake County), FNPS member 2002-present

I was born in Central Florida and grew up adventuring the state from coast to coast and the forests in between. My parents taught me to appreciate the diversity in the plant and animal world and to notice the smallest of details.

My backyard has been the Ocala National Forest for the last 40 years--- so scrub, sandhill and flatwoods are my neighbors. I have explored many miles on the back of a horse. I love the flora and ecosystems of the coast as well since tidal systems fascinate me.

In my younger years I worked for IFAS in plant disease research --- evaluating and experimenting--- which I enjoyed. I have been propagating Florida's native plants for over 20 years and am certified as a Horticulture Professional.

I am a Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner through the Society for Ecological Restoration.

I currently work for Lake County's Office of Parks and Trails as their naturalist/land steward/recreation coordinator.

At this point in my life I am fortunate to have been able to complete both a BS in Landscape and Nursery Horticulture and an MS in Forest Resources and Conservation with a focus on ecological restoration through U of F.

I currently serve on the Research Committee of the Florida Wildflower Foundation and as Education Chair for FNPS.

Within FNPS, I have been on the Board as Education Committee Chair since _____. I have been working to provide resources for newcomers to Florida and native plant gardeners. I have also been working to get downloadable/locally printable versions of educational documents including documents in Spanish. I was on the 2021-2022 by-laws committee.

I am interested in continuing as the FNPS Education Chair and I have an ongoing interest in society governance.

Thank you for considering me for a Director position.

Paul Schmalzer, Ph.D.

Sea Rocket Chapter (Titusville, Brevard County), FNPS member 1984–present

Paul A. Schmalzer, Ph.D. is a plant ecologist who has worked at Kennedy Space Center, Florida since 1982. His work has included impacts of rocket launches on the environment, barrier island vegetation, flora and rare plants, historical vegetation, fire ecology of scrub and wetlands, and restoration of long-unburned scrub vegetation. He is author or co-author of 54 published papers, 45 technical reports, and numerous presented papers. He served on the Selection and Management Committee for the Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program, a local government land conservation program, from 1990 to 2021. He has been a member of the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) since 1984 and has served as Chair of the Science Advisory Committee since 2006. He has led field trips for the Sea Rocket Chapter since 2008 and is the current Chapter President.

Statement: The Florida Native Plant Society is the only state-wide organization in Florida that focuses on the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. FNPS was established to promote science-based conservation. I believe that it is important that science be represented in the decisions of the FNPS Board of Directors and therefore request consideration as a candidate for a Director position on the Board.