



**Illinois  
Native  
Plant  
Society**

*Illinois Native Plant Society*

P.O. Box 60694, Chicago, IL 60660

**Minutes  
State Governing Board Meeting  
May 13, 2024**

**Call to Order:** Emily Dangremond called to order at 6PM.

**Board Members Present:** Emily Dangremond, Susanne Masi, Eric Ulaszek, Kevin Scheiwiller, Brian Charles, Carolyn Villa, Kelsay Shaw, Becky Crouteau, Ingrid Felsl, Paul Marcum, Karen Larson, Floyd Catchpole, Trish Quintenz

**Quorum present, yes/no?** Yes.

- Review draft minutes from March retreat and April meeting
  - March retreat draft [minutes](#)
    - Emily added notes, if others have edits to the minutes from the retreat, please let Lailah know or edit document directly.
    - Kelsay made a list of needs for website, partnering with existing websites, (e.g. Illinois Wildflowers).
    - Paul noted Chapters should use website to full potential and some Chapter presidents do not have access to the website. Can Kate make this more user friendly, e.g. Calendar access would be ideal.
    - Making sure the website is up to date.
    - Emily added some notes to minutes about who attended which break out sessions during the retreat.
    - Emily asked if there are any other comments.
    - Kelsay motioned to approve the minutes, Susanne seconded. All approved aside from Carolyn who abstained.
  - April minutes were reviewed. Emily provided high-level summary of topics discussed.
    - **Emily to contact insurance agent – action item.**
    - Action items discussed during each board meeting will be sent to board member the day after board meetings in the future.
    - Beck motioned to approve the minutes, Paul seconded. All approved aside from Kelsay and Lailah who abstained.
- Annual Gathering - NE chapter, Kevin Scheiwiller
  - Being hosted by NE Chapter, July 12-14<sup>th</sup>, 2024
  - Board to assist with registration on website.
  - Kevin is the Vice President of NE Chapter.
  - Final contract to be signed.
  - Hosted at Benedictine University, Lisle, IL can hold 100-150 ppl, but may cap at 100, dependent on contract.

- Friday: 5PM to 10PM; light dinner, cash bar, grantees presentations.
    - 4 to 5 speakers, 10 minutes each, AV will be provided.
  - Saturday: Field trips, 9AM to 3PMish. Event space from 5PM to 11PM, dinner buffet, cash bar, board meeting, Pat Armstrong keynote speaker.
  - Sunday: Field trips, 9AM to 1PMish.
  - Susanne asked about lodging, dorm rooms at university are \$60/night, bring own bedding. Also, plentiful hotels nearby.
  - Registration: Usually register on website, but also have used a SOD on the website, would like registration to be open 2 months in advance. **Kate to assist with setting up the annual gathering registration form and announcements on the INPS website, which will eventually include details for field trips, lodging, payment, agenda, directions, all pertinent details, etc.**
  - Trish asked about cost of the event, Kevin said likely \$100/person.
  - Trish noted save the date should be announced soon.
  - Auction could be a way to get additional funding for the event if needed.
  - **Lailah will email Save the Date to members. Kevin to draft the email to be sent for Save the Date and will send to Lailah via INPS Gmail.** Email should request items for silent auction, items for example could include books, art, field tools, trees, plants, gardening tools, etc.
  - One person would be in charge of the auction.
  - Because the NE Chapter is hosting, they will bear financial responsibility. How this has typically been done, although state board can contribute.
  - Trish mentioned to not forget caterers, and all proceeds will all go to the NE Chapter. Payment will be made online via Paypal, and Becky will reimburse NE Chapter, but can be complicated as new members get a discount. Registration form can be setup to make clear what funds should be reimbursed to NE Chapter vs. which go to the board or other Chapters.
  - Becky will be out of town during meeting. May need to transfer some funds up front to cover costs. Will need to know where to send checks.
  - Paul also mentioned to factor in the fee associated with PayPal.
  - Discussion of agenda for Saturday, board meeting typically held before the keynote speaker. State Board will handle the board meeting.
  - Expectation for field trips, multi-site trips vs. one site. Paul said it varies, and depends on site and who is leading the field trip. Make sure there are options for folks with less mobility or for people who cannot tolerate heat as much.
  - Also timeliness of getting people back at the time indicated on sign up form.
  - Floyd also mentioned there could be an indoor option.
  - Emily asked if the Morton Arb was an option, Kevin said yes, Schulenburg Prairie will be a site.
- Treasurer-Becky Croteau
    - [May 2024 Report](#)
      - Becky provided summary of report.
      - **Board agrees Becky should reimburse herself for expenses incurred for the Illinois Charitable Organizations Report, fee and past due fines of \$119.40.**
    - **Action Items** [document](#)
      - Document sent to board.
    - April 2024 [Financial Considerations](#)
    - Brief report on recent actions
    - Transition from Courtney to Becky as the official treasurer

- Lailah to provide minutes required for bank transfer (February minutes, signed by me in PDF), Becky will email me what she needs for the transfer.
- Need to decide second person to be on the PNC bank account. They will have to physically go to the bank to be put on the account. Emily volunteered to be the second person, but there are no PNC banks in Vermont. To be discussed. Susanne would also be on the account. Has to be transferred on the same day. Susanne will coordinate with Becky to complete the transfer. Emily will be added to the account at a later date.
- SIU Credit Union, recommended to close this account out and transfer to our PCN account and invest. Emily said let's close the account. Courtney can send a check to PNC bank to transfer all money and then close the account. Chris can close the account.
- Chris originally set the SIU account up to print Harbinger.
- Emily motioned to transfer remaining funds from SUI Credit Union to PNC and Chris Benda will close out SIU account. Paul seconded, all approved.
- Kate said still cannot connect PayPal to Gravity Forms as account is connected to Chris Benda's so no access. Chris will transfer PayPal account and will ensure its connected via INPS and not a personal account for example.
- Should officers have to provide personal information? Blind Files for officers?
- Investment Recommendations – to be discussed at a future meeting. Perhaps a high yield savings account.
- Membership—Kelsay Shaw
  - Membership levels and types, review types to be a more manageable number to make more sense. Kelsey sent a proposal as to what he thinks should be changed.
  - Wants to raise rates and make the higher membership levels be more marketable.

**PROPOSAL, emailed to board on May 13, 2024:**

*Rate increases are going to be needed to be sure that we can meet the new pressures of operating and increasing outreach to increase membership benefits, this I'll cover at the end. There is also a need to stream-line the types of memberships that are available to simplify the process for new/renewing members and to clarify what each membership type is. Currently we have 12 types of memberships. I'd like to cut it back to 4 individual/family types and 1 business and 1 student. I'd like to break them out and show the new costs as follows:*

- *Individual— \$45; one person for one year*
- *Family — \$65-\$75; for up to three people living at the same address; any other family member living at that address will have to have their own membership*
- *Patron/Supporter—\$150; for up to two individuals —\*\* a way to encourage this level, as we have very few, would be to make it more attractive. It needs to be beyond regular membership, like free entry into all chapter-held conferences, or two year cover or something I'm not thinking of.*
- *Lifer— \$500? Here is where there is a significant issue. Picture if you will, a 50- year old man, with a max average age of a man in Illinois being 74 (ish). Under current rates, the remaining "length of membership" would be 24 years for a total of \$600, so a Lifer membership would save him \$100, makes since. For that same person, being a woman, that age is a further 5 years for a total of \$725, a savings of \$225. Makes even more since. However, with the proposed rates seen here, it would save them more than 40% to 50% for that same time period(s). We also have very few, percentage wise, of this group and there is no tangible benefit for them to become a Lifer, outside the savings, with the annual Individual rates being so low by comparison. This level needs to be evaluated. I tend to think that a value of a life membership is worth*

some where between \$750 to \$1000 if a “perk” for life members can be determined. A possible way is to make find a palatable % of total based on life expectancy

- *Student— \$15 no change; non-voting, free entree to all conferences, this level is for persons who can prove student-ness(?) or we can rework it to represent our hopes for the youth to take a more active role without cost.*
- *Business/Institutional— \$150 or \$250 (for chapter or Statewide); 2-4 members, non-voting. For ad space at events (?) for the year of membership a further \$100 for chapter level events and \$250-500 for state-wide events. These members get first dibs on ad spots and access to a free table at one event at the level of their dues, so either chapter or state level. Any “institutions” can have students display posters/boards and projects at conferences through member holder to get exposure for work.*
- *All other levels that currently exist shall be converted to “Donation” Levels. A nice plaque for the level of donation would be awesome.*

The above is an outline of what Kelsay thinks represents where our membership is as of today. According to Kelsay, most of our members are in the lower three levels and as the cost of being an organization is increasing, we need to adjust where we are and what we expect from our members. Kelsay plans on addressing membership benefits for the different levels in the near future, but for the moment Kelsay said we need to adjust our membership revenue to improve our standing, as it is our main source of renewable income. Kelsay also mentioned he thinks INPS must be financially responsible so we can offer benefits to being a member.

- Kelsay plans to write up a final proposal.
- Emily forwarded Kelsay’s email, board to review, and will discuss next board meeting.
- Kelsay will need to transfer to the PO Box, but who and where should it be setup? To be determined.
- Agent service was discussed. Kelsay thinks we should use this more often instead of the PO. Trish will look into this and what else they can assist with.
- Should we retire the use of checks and the use of a mailbox in the near future?
- Website issues-Kate Ahrens
  - Potential paid position ([proposal](#))
    - Kate discussed her proposal to update website, based on our needs.
    - Advertisements on our site proposed.
    - Provided various examples of other native plant societies as well as academic websites.
    - New site would have searchable article format for Eringea and the Harbinger.
    - New membership platform/platform, automations will be helpful.
    - Resolve payment issues.
    - Kate provided an example of what site would look like on back end.
    - Wants the site to come up when searching online more readily.
    - Website priorities.
    - Updates by others too, static vs. dynamic content. Would want help from each chapter. So paid position would only be static content and chapters would handle own their own.
    - Would redesign first and then teach others how to handle dynamic content.
    - Obviously would redesign while current website continues to be used in the interim.
    - Training is needed on current Wordpress, but would also be needed on update for Chapters, but would be simpler. Want this to be super easy.

- Becky stated that work is needed on the website, dates weren't current, and issues with formatting. Kate said not all plugins "play well together".
- Floyd said a lots needs to be done.
- Kate said she wants to know sooner than later, hopefully we can vote soon.
- Discussion:
  - Emily asked if we should get quotes from other people.
  - Floyd is in.
  - Becky said Kate's depths of knowledge is impressive. Becky thinks Kate will be economical.
  - Kelsay said he thinks it will be way more expensive if we got other bids.
  - Kelsay said we need to agree on timetables and that's it.
  - Karen said its better to have someone in the organization.
  - She would only be paid upfront or would she be paid for maintenance?
  - Karen motions to accept proposal for website rebuild, seconded from Becky. All in favored, Lailah abstained.
- Expertise, Time/effort requirements
- IL Botanists' Big Year (ILBBY)-Daniel
- INPS Social Media-Daniel
  - Ingrid Felsl Instagram page for ILBBY.
  - Asked what is currently happening on Instagram and who is managing these for the state board. Paul said 3 or 4 chapters have a Facebook page, but not sure about Instagram. Not sure who is managing that. **She would like to connect the state Facebook account with the Instagram account. We need to provide Ingrid with login to state Facebook account.**
  - **KeyPass or cassi saari or Connie Cunningham may have the login information. Emily will follow up on this.**
  - **Lailah to share INPS state logo with Ingrid.**
  - **Shared photo folder for state board, Lailah to share with board.**
  - Ingrid thinks this would be important.
- Code of Conduct - Emily-no updates since last meeting; need to set dates for new draft.
  - **Have a meeting to discuss with Trish and Carolyn before next board meeting.**
- Next meeting is June 10th at 6 pm CDT.

New Business: None

Meeting adjourned at 8:17PM by Emily.