



National & Chapter Forum

July 2019

INTRODUCTION

Much of July has focused on technology and communication to help us reach more people and teach them about the importance of native plants. By working together, Membership Chairs and other chapter officers, members, and staff have enabled Wild Ones to reach a great milestone:

4004 PAID MEMBERS!

This is an amazing accomplishment, especially since we had 3316 paying members on August 1, 2018! Take time to celebrate, and keep spreading the word about native plants. We are making a difference, one landscape at a time!

In this *Forum*, see:

1. Lapsed Member Survey Summary
2. Using Social Media to Connect
3. New Membership System
4. Native Plant Resources
5. Reforestation
6. Save the Date – September 9th
7. Quick reminders

*** **Remember:** while the *National & Chapter Forum* is emailed to chapter officers, its information is intended for all members. Please share the *Forum* with your chapter! ***

1. LAPSED MEMBER SURVEY SUMMARY

A survey was sent to 2240 recipients whose membership expired between January 2016 and April 2018. The objective was to find out why some members chose not to renew so Wild Ones could take steps to improve membership retention and growth. Here's what we learned and the actions taken:

- 31% of respondents remained members for just one year and 40% of respondents remained members for 2 to 4 years, which indicates there is an issue early on in their membership. Best Practices for retaining members were created and are posted in the online Chapter Guidebook. A Best Practices for mentoring new members is in the works.
- 65% of respondents attended none to a few meetings. There is an opportunity to increase attendance by redefining the traditional definition of "meeting". Meetings can be live-streamed over the internet for remote viewing, recorded meetings with a link sent to chapter members to "participate" at a later date, or done via online webinars, where you can see, hear, and view the computer screen of someone all the way across the United States. Chapters should also use various forms of communication about meeting times and topics and share event schedules as early as possible so people can mark their calendars.

- 40% of respondents feel they are too busy to be members. Utilizing webinar recording technology would also help members stay connected when it fits their schedules.
- Former members suggested Wild Ones work on meetings (rotate locations, demonstrations, include training for beginners, run professionally, add new and interesting topics); engaging members (social meetings to encourage members to get to know each other outside the garden, having long-term members be friendlier and more welcoming to new members instead of interacting in the same groups they know well); chapters (reach out to members, get involved with community projects, have more plant sales, utilize social media); and communication (have an engaging website, send renewal reminders, share how their donation made an impact). In response, the national office has developed a strong social media network in the past year; ensured renewal reminders are automatically emailed two months before, one month before, and at expiration; is in the process of completely revamping our Members-Only website; is working on a New Member Orientation program; and is compiling ideas and samples of meetings/presentations to keep things fresh. The next steps are up to chapters – please take advantage of the tools and information available from the national office in the Chapter Guidebook!

2. USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO CONNECT

Are you missing out on opportunities to connect with other members and learn more about native plants? Wild Ones has over 2,300 followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Conversations and sharing of information on social media is a great way to network with other members and learn more about native plants. It's easy to sign up for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and get more involved with what's happening. Social media is especially helpful as a networking tool if you live in an area with few members or no local chapter, but it's a great way to share information and advice with other no matter where you live. Whether you are a new member or a vintage one, you will find that Wild Ones members possess a vast amount of knowledge to help your native plant landscape thrive!

Note: If you are not currently a member of Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, you will need to create an account before connecting with Wild Ones.

It's easy to sign up for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and get more involved with what's happening.

- Facebook.com - search for Wild Ones Native Plants Group and ask to join. Wild Ones will approve your request. You can then view posts, create your own post, or comment on others'.
- Twitter.com - search Wild Ones Natives. Click on Follow and you will see Wild Ones' tweets.
- Instagram.com and search Wild Ones Native Plants. Click on Follow to see Wild Ones' posts.

3. NEW MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM

The contract for our new Members-Only website has been signed, and work has begun on the new system! We are extremely grateful to the members and chapters who have donated to our "Tech for Tomorrow" campaign to make this happen. **THANK YOU!** A whiteboard session with the programmer and our T3 tech volunteers enabled us to talk through some of the nuances of the Wild Ones system. Staff, a Technical Advisory Group consisting of chapter officers and national board members, and Tim Lewis, former national president, have reviewed the information to be included on the home page, and are in the process of

double-checking that all the functionality national and chapters need is included. Once the design has been finalized, it will be shared with members so they can see what's coming. This is an exciting time to be Wild!

4. NATIVE PLANT RESOURCES

The Audubon Society has a great online database for determining which plants are native to your area, information about the plants, and resources for purchasing them. The database is overseen by Doug Tallamy, a Wild Ones Lifetime Honorary Director. Wild Ones chapters contributed to the well-maintained list of native nurseries. To use this resource, visit <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>. Type in your email address and zip code, then click Search.

5. REFORESTATION

A logger has finally been found to keep the WILD Center property safe from falling trees! The contract, which runs for three years, has been signed and runs for three years. Not only will this project keep people and wildlife safe from falling dead trees, but it will provide a bit of income as well. Along with grant money, this income will be used to restore the forest habitat after the infected ash trees have been removed. Many thanks to Ron Jones, Fox Valley Area Chapter member, for donating his time to serve as our broker on this project.

6. SAVE THE DATE – SEPTEMBER 9

Do you know what life-changing event happened on September 9, 1919? Lorrie Otto, the inspiration for Wild Ones, was born. Lorrie took on DDT... and won! Whether it was her passionate personality, persuasive speech, or the pail of poisoned birds she took to officials to prove DDT's destruction, Lorrie generated attention about the perils of pesticides and was a major player in getting DDT banned in the United States. Wild Ones chapters and members across the country are celebrating the 100th anniversary of Lorrie's birth. Chapters, please incorporate a birthday party in your September activities. Whether having a cake and streamers, reading excerpts from books about Lorrie's work, or doing a presentation about the banning of DDT, please join us in remembering this remarkable woman who not only played a large role in forming Wild Ones, but also in helping the environment. Don't forget to take pictures at your event so we can share them in an upcoming *Journal* article!

7. QUICK REMINDERS

- **Changing Staff**

Our full staff is in place, and distribution of duties has settled down. Here's a list of who to contact in different situations; please keep it handy to avoid delay of problem resolution.

Kristen Baxter (Office Specialist): General member questions including membership database issues, updates, and information; renewal information; login issues; Butterfly Garden program; Chartering process; literature orders; and miscellaneous questions about Wild Ones and its mission.

kristen@wildones.org

Janet Rothe (Membership Manager): Chapter questions and issues; member surveys and reports; Seeds for Education; Seedling support; *Journal* sponsors; grants; Social Media; new chapter officer training; and Business members. Janet@wildones.org

Elaine Krizenesky (Office Director): National issues including Strategic Plan and its implementation; Wild Store; Annual Report; Legacy Giving; Annual Appeal; Annual Meeting; national member communications (Confabs and the *Forum*); and the WILD Center. elaine@wildones.org

Don't forget the Chapter Guidebook! This is an easy way for chapter officers to get an answer right away so they can get back to your native plants! Just click the green Members Only button in the upper right corner of the public website, wildones.org. The Guidebook is accessible to officers and is arranged alphabetically by topic. It's easy to search the PDF document for key words to find the information you need.

Marv Klein (Insurance Agent): Any insurance-related questions not answered by our General Liability Coverage on the Members-Only page under National_Reports/INSURANCE. mjk@ironbridgeagency.com
888-273-2448 x501

- **State of the Chapter Report (SOCR)**

As announced previously, the SOCR draft is on the Members-Only website under National Reports. Chapter presidents complete this form, which is due by December 31 each year. The final draft has been uploaded and is available for chapter officers to start compiling information in advance. The actual SOCR will be done using a Google Forms and will be sent out in October. This allows people with any type of computer or other device to access and complete the form. It also allows for quick and easy analysis of the completed forms.

- **Wild Ones Policies**

Staff has received a number of questions recently which relate to the organization's policies. It's important that chapter officers (and anyone else who is interested) review the policies regularly so they are familiar with the regulations and requirements of being a Wild Ones chapter and sharing our 501c3 status. Policies and other important information are available in the Members Only site under National_Reports.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and share it with your members. May your flowers be plentiful and your mosquitoes nonexistent!

Wildly yours,
Elaine
(elaine@wildones.org)