

Greetings fellow MNPS Members!

As a volunteer-based organization, most of the operations and activities of MNPS are carried out by current and former board members. The society would simply not exist without their contributions. So, it is with great pleasure that I welcome three new board members—Bradley Simpson, Ashley Bowers, and Liz McDowell.

Bradley is the Habitat Manager for Nature Forward's headquarters, 'Woodend Sanctuary' in Chevy Chase. He has a background in researching and actively managing urban forests. Since joining the board in May, Bradley has led several field trips with a focus on wetlands and volunteered to lead the production of this issue of *Marilandica*. He enjoys sharing his love of plants with others, especially with identification. We're all grateful to have his enthusiasm, knowledge, and skills.

Ashley works for the City of Baltimore on land management issues. In this capacity, she has developed conservation policy and the country's first natural gas pipeline right-of-way conversion to native pollinator meadow as well as securing funding for vegetation management. She joined the board in August and is interested in supporting our monthly programming as we plan for the coming year. I'm certain that her work experiences will guide the board as we consider upcoming legislative efforts.

Long-time MNPS member and past board member, Liz was featured in my Member Spotlight in the Spring 2024 *Marilandica* (mdflora.org). For many years Liz has been leading the Western Mountain Chapter of the Maryland Native Plant Society and running an annual conference. She will continue to work on those projects while advising the board about various issues important to Western Maryland as well as insights on how to get more chapters up and running across the state. Welcome back Liz, I know your contributions will be invaluable.

In addition to welcoming these new board members, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to three outstanding board members who have recently stepped down. We appreciate their significant and ongoing contributions to MNPS. Sujata

Roy, Diane Beadle, and Jil Swearingen—on behalf of the entire society, "Thank you!"

Diane served as Treasurer during which time she helped us review and improve our banking practices. Nowadays, she is focusing on her work with the Community Native Planting Project (CNPP), for which she is president. Diane will be the speaker for our November monthly program (on November 26th) where she will explain how the project helps public and private landowners become environmental stewards by removing invasives and planting natives.

Sujata served on the board for 10 years before stepping down this year. During that time, Sujata served, at various times, as Treasurer, Vice President, and President. While helping with the day-to-day operations, Sujata has been especially enthusiastic about community engagement and has led many wonderful field trips and plant ID workshops. Many of us have been introduced to a new native plant species or learned how to key out a plant with Sujata!

Jil also served on the board for 10 years. She has been Vice President, Secretary, Conference Chair, Monthly Programs Chair, and Editor for *Marilandica*, often simultaneously! Her contributions included organizing countless Monthly Programs, producing seven newsletters, and coordinating six annual conferences. Jil spearheaded the investment in equipment and technical assistance that enables our high-quality hybrid meetings. She continues to support the *Marilandica* editorial team and help find speakers for our Monthly Programs.

You can find more information on the MNPS board at mdflora.org/2025Board. Please reach out if you are interested in volunteering or being part of our hard-working team. I'm so grateful for all of the time and skills that our board members, volunteers, and our membership at large provide to help forward the mission of MNPS, thank you all for what you do!

Lauren Hubbard, PhD



Left to right: Bradley Simpson under the majestic arms of The Angel Oak, a Southern live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) in Charleston, South Carolina; Ashley Bowers at Descanso Gardens, near Pasadena, California; Native plant champion Liz McDowell in Gros Morne, Newfoundland.