



Botany 2022 was an extraordinary year in many ways! This was our first foray into a hybrid format and our first in-person conference since the world changed! On top of all that, we were in a complicated venue. (As Johanne has said repeatedly, “Ten years ago when we started to plan for Anchorage, it seemed like a great idea!”)

We had:

- 1263 attendees....896 in person and 362 attending virtually.
- 7 Special Addresses – including the Plenary Address by Cassandra Quave
- 6 Symposia and 1 Special Session (organized by SHC)
- 8 Colloquia
- 683 Papers
- 277 Posters
- 49 Lightning Talks
- 19 Workshops
- 13 Field Trips including daily trips to the Alaska Botanic Garden

The traditional social events and, new this year, multiple Affinity Group meet-ups throughout the week helped provide a diversity of events for our attendees. These were well received, although we may consider different timing of events in the future.

Unfortunately, we have a \$13K loss of which half will be shared among the participating societies (half of the loss is assumed by the conference account). There are several reasons for this loss including:

- The Virtual Platform, AV, and support cost about three times higher than pre-COVID years. We used the in-house AV rather than our traditional team due to the logistics of meeting in Alaska. It would have been even more expensive to ship the equipment and the team to Anchorage.
- We offered dorm rooms at the University of Alaska as a cost-savings primarily for our students. As the dorms were about 5 miles away from the venue, we provided a free shuttle service. This cost was absorbed by the conference.
- Decreased attendance. When planning for Anchorage, we planned on the WOW factor and the opportunity to explore the botany of the area as an incentive for attending. However, the continued reluctance to travel (amid an ever-changing COVID landscape) and rising costs kept some people home.

- The cost of providing childcare. There are fixed costs no matter how many children are attending. Most likely due to the distance, not many children attended, and we keep the hourly rate low to parents. Again, the conference absorbs the cost. BSA has generously contributed to the program. In the future, we should encourage the other participating societies to support the program also.

Currently we are looking into a new platform to streamline our registration, abstract submission site, and virtual platform into one component. This will alleviate some of clunkiness that we have right now. It may also help to decrease the cost of support that we incurred this year.

According to the post conference survey, 60% of the respondents want a hybrid meeting in 2023 and 50% would prefer a hybrid for 2024. There are many comments suggesting how we should do it better. For example, respondents have suggested to have everything live-streamed, 2-way video chats, all remote talks available by zoom, and so forth. Unfortunately, all this comes at significant costs and depends on amazing Internet infrastructure at the venue. Attendees cite having the talks available for the following year, having the talks accessible to a larger audience and a greener meeting as the top reasons to have a hybrid conference.

We think we learned a lot this year about what to do and not to do. Despite the additional cost of basically doing two meetings simultaneously, we are optimistic that we can make improvements and deliver a better experience for all attendees – in-person and virtual.

And now on to Botany 2023

On November 11th we will be meeting in Boise to start the plan for Botany 2023.

- We have a theme – One World!
- 4 Symposia and 6 Colloquia have been submitted
- Jacquelyn Gill, University of Maine, Climate Change Institute, has agreed to give the Plenary Address
- Don Mansfield, College of Idaho, will give the Regional Botany Lecture
- Workshop Submission is open. New this year we will be setting up a committee to review Workshop proposals this year for appropriateness and overlap.
- Jim Smith of Boise State has agreed to be the field trip coordinator this year.



Best,
Johanne and Melanie