The meeting was called to order at noon PST, 3:00 PM EST.

Participants
Sue Sim, Debbie Woodbury, Kristen Farrar, Erich Rudyj, David Prokrym, Dianne Coats, Catherine Jones, Fatima Osman, Irene Lavagi, Glenn Wright, Sue Legget, Pam Hornby, Vicky Scharlu, Wenping Qiu, Brent Pemberton, Bob Martin.

Welcome and Introductions
The meeting was called to order by Debbie Woodbury, co-chair of the NCPN Education & Outreach Committee. Co-chair Kristen Farrar recorded minutes.

Approval of minutes from last meeting
Sue Sim moved to approve the minutes for the November 13, 2017 meeting. Wenping Qiu seconded the motion and the motion carried.

NCPN Updates, Erich Rudyj and David Prokrym
Farm Bill: This is the last year of the current Farm Bill (2014-2018). NCPN has been receiving $5 million per year. This year there was an increase of funding to $6.5 million. A draft of the spending plan for 2018 was submitted in November 2017; it’s now moving up to the Secretary of Ag for approval. A new spending plan is expected to be issued in March. The 2019 Farm Bill is being discussed and NCPN portion is expected to remain the same.

Strategic Planning: The Strategic Planning team of 10 members is working on several goal areas including awareness, productivity, technologies, and resources. In the area of awareness, the objectives are: 1) our relationship with plant nurseries, 2) communications regarding the availability plant material, 3) our relationship with the extension process and 4) economics. Brent Pemberton and Glenn Wright voiced their support of the Strategic Planning progress.

Meetings: Erich attended the Tier 2 Sweetpotato meeting; Dave attended the Tier 2 Hops meeting.

Crop Updates
Berries - Bob Martin indicated that the berries group has a face-to-face meeting in May. They’re also working on several fact sheets.

Roses - Brent Pemberton mentioned the recent edition of the newsletter for which the feature crop was roses. The fact sheet on rose rosette disease is underway. Their next face-to-face meeting is in June.
Sweetpotato - Dianne Coats reported that the Mississippi growers meeting on February 23 will have presentations from MS, LA, NC, and CA Sweetpotato Clean Plant programs. This meeting will: ensure coordination of the six NCPN-SP centers, consider technical aspects of improvements in clean plant production and quality control, and re-evaluate the virus-testing protocols established at Beltsville in 2015. The NCPN – SP fact sheet on the benefits of using clean seed is completed and being used. The sweetpotato group is receptive to sweetpotato being the focus of the next newsletter.

Sue Sim added that the NCPN table (display board with theme art, tablecloth, buttons and magnets) was well received at the North Carolina sweetpotato meeting in January. In addition, while at a sweetpotato growers meeting in California, she was interviewed about FPS and NCPN by an ag radio journalist.

Citrus - Fatima Osman developed a poster that was presented at a citrus day meeting at UC Riverside. NCPN-Citrus is also working to update the trifold and website content.

Grapes - Kristen Farrar said that although it was recently revised, the red blotch fact sheet will need to be revised again due to the recent discovery of red blotch in foundation vineyards. Our next scheduled meetings include a conference call in the fall and face-to-face meeting in January. Sue Sim is retiring, and Kristen will be taking over responsibilities as an NCPN grape coordinator.

Fruit Trees/Hops - Catherine Jones indicated that the fruit tree brochure is done, and the hops brochure draft is currently being reviewed. An NCPN-Hops website will be developed and NCPN-Hops information will be shifted away from dependence on the Hop Growers of America site. Catherine also mentioned that there was a lot of interest in clean grape material at the Washington Winegrowers meeting.

NCPN Newsletter, Debbie Woodbury
The crop-specific newsletter on roses was distributed via MailChimp in January. Debbie has proposed a schedule for future newsletters which was shared with the group. The newsletter is scheduled to be distributed in February, May, August, and November. The next crop to be featured in the newsletter will be sweetpotato. Additions to the blog include the “Five Things” developed for each crop.

A question raised about our target audience generated a discussion about the challenge in reaching multiple target audiences and what tools should be used. One suggestion was that the newsletter target multiple audiences by having dedicated sections for each audience. Another suggestion was to have the newsletter targeted to one audience on a rotating basis. There was a discussion about whether we should hire a communications specialist for education and outreach. Ultimately, it was decided to form a “Planning to Plan” committee. Catherine Jones, Vicky Scharlu, David Prokrym, Erich Rudyj, Debbie Woodbury, and Kristen Farrar will participate in this committee.

Other Business/Projects
Efforts are being made to unify all NCPN products with a similar theme. A poster template and a PowerPoint presentation template with the NCPN banner are featuring all the crops are under development. For consistency purposes, all crops should be using the standard ‘NCPN – Crop Name’ rather than some alternative name. A resource library on the website is being developed that will contain theme art in multiple file formats, brochures, and eventually poster and PowerPoint templates.

Next Meeting Date
The target date for the next teleconference is May 2018.
The meeting adjourned at 1:50 PM PST.