Dave Feagles called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM

I. Introductions

- Dave asked nonmembers to leave if they want and asked if he could be heard at current volume. He discussed passing around the sign up sheet and asked to state your position and chapter.
- Dave – We would like to get this council of chapters meeting started so please take a seat. If any of you are not in the council but would like to stay, you are more than welcome. Can you hear me speaking at this volume?
  (various people say yes)
- Dave – we are sending around two sign up sheets, one to go left and one to go right. I would like you to
put down your name, what chapter you are from, and whether or not you are a council member. If you are president and acting as chapter rep, please note it in that way. Nicole is gonna be taking minutes. It is very important before everyone speaks that they begin by saying “Hello, my name is Dave Feagles and I am from the Serenoa Chapter, because she doesn’t know everyone. So for her to take the notes properly, it is important that we all identify ourselves and our chapters as we speak. We are gonna try to be a little more organized in the way that we speak than our previous meetings. But she will get used to us.

- Dave – As you all are aware I have had endless computer problems, they have not ended for me. When we were at one of the meetings and I stood in front of the group and said hello and the screen went black behind me and shut down. So you are right. Even my phone is having trouble. So, I did not prepare an agenda for us today, I am sorry to say. I managed to get a report off to the board last night but that is as far as I managed to get last night. I am sorry about that.

II. Posting to the forum before council meetings & communication

- Dave - The first thing I wanted to say is that in the past I have asked that everyone go to the forum and make a brief report about what is going on in their chapters since their last meeting. I’ve asked for this to be done before the gotomeeting and it would be ideal before the face to face meeting. No body is doing it. I don’t know whether or not what is the problem, not knowing how or if it is a problem with me not riding on top of everyone. But that is not my style, and that is one of the reasons I think I’m the wrong person for this job, because I will not do that. There are people who are much more social than I am who might fit this position better. I use this as a preamble because we will be talking about - in this meeting - about the need to replace me. And I think its to everyone’s advantage to replace me.

  - Catherine – You mean today? Or in May?

  - Dave – I mean in May. We are talking about a normal transition of power. I was uncertain whether or not I was the right person coming into this and I am now totally convinced that someone else would have done a better job. I am sorry if I have let you down, but this is the best I know how to do. We have a lot of things that would be confusing to me. Like if you were to go to the forum right now, and put in that report, how many of you would know where to do it?

    (Three people raised hands)

    - Al - That might explain it.

    (Dave pulled up the forum on the projector)

  - Juliet – So the council of chapters has a section on the forum

    (Dave pulled up the forum and walked us through the steps of posting chapter updates. Once on the forum, scroll to the subheading “Council of Chapters” > click Meetings > Click the upcoming meeting post)

  - Dave- So when we first come in, normally we are looking at the board of directors. This is where you would find the board and council of chapters meeting November 5th. This is where you expect to find the information as to what is going on and we can make replies. Such as the one that I have done here for my report to the board, it’s the same process identically but we would be doing it under instead the next category down which is the council of chapters. Under council of chapters we would want to post on here under the meeting that is going on. This would be the place there would be an entry, and you would click on the top “reply” and that gives a box in which you can now enter whatever you want and make attachments. This is where that would be done.

    (Dave went over example of typing and posting)

  - Dave - And then you scroll down and click post.

  - Ginny – I have a question. What are we supposed to put in there? I mean what is it gonna do?

  - Dave – what is going on in your chapter.

  - Ginny – who is gonna use it? What is the purpose?

  - Al – so that the chapters can read it

  - Devon – I can tell you right now if we are gonna do an annual report we are gonna need to know what the chapters are doing, and we can compile all that information.

  - Juliet – in order for this to work, you are going to have to create the council of chapters meeting notice
ahead of time. And hopefully you will also post your agenda there.

- Dave: Yes exactly. Part of the reason I did not get this done for this meeting was I did not have enough time to do this first report and get the agenda down.
- Juliet: Ask for help. One of us out of this whole society can get it done.
- Ginny: is the purpose for all of us to read what everyone else is doing? So the target audience is each other? We held a fundraiser and it worked well or it didn’t work well. Or is the target what goes into the annual report. Is it informal? Formal? What are you looking for?
- Dave: Informal, anyway we can get the information in there. Hopefully everyone can get this done three or four days before the meeting so that everyone can look into it before our meeting. So the day before the meeting we can sit through and look at what everyone has done. And that can give us some concepts to take back to our chapters. We just had a plant sale and we learned a lot. We got a bunch of new members. The method we used was offering 20% off.
- Ginny: So it would be good ideas that the chapters can use?
- Dave: Another thing our chapter has done is we went down to the county commissioners. Just something that says these are activities and this is what we have done.
- Gail: So what about standard generic things like so this was our program, this was our speaker, and this was our field trip.
- Julie: we might need to make a template kind of thing so people can fill it in.
- Miki Rener: That might be true but truthfully people can do them. At this point we don’t know what people want so a template is too over reaching.
  
  (incomprehensible chatter)
- Juliet: so there is different categories in here.
- Marlene: so what kind of frame are you looking for here?
- Sandi: so this is coming into my question, I think this is a good idea, I come to all these council meetings but this is the first I heard we are supposed to post these. So this is news to me, but I was thinking if before the next meeting if we could get a reminder email a week ahead of time, it would be very useful.
- Dave: Yes I will do that next time and include a link to it to take you directly to it.
- Wendy: We put out a newsletter, it’s not me but its got all the information. Can I just cut and paste?
- Juliet: Put the link in there.
- Dave: But some are too long, like ours is 4-5 pages. A link would be great but a summary would be great. Then if someone sees an idea and want more information they can go look.
- Al: Sabal minor gives us about a 3 week notice and I think most of us put information from our chapter and we put in the good things… you want that plus our problems right?
- Dave: Right, yes, more is better.
  
  (pulled up an COC directors report)
- Dave: This might give you an idea that I am talking about. These are the bullets that are associated with my report to the Board. And down here there is an attachment with the same bullets plus lengthy text associated with it. The bullets are posted in the forum for a quick review with a longer explanation in the downloadable document. Is it clear enough what we are trying to accomplish here? The whole reason we are doing the council of chapters is to improve communications between the chapters, between the board and the chapters, communication anyway that you can imagine. That’s why last meeting you found me a little annoyed, because I was not aware, I did not know the west coast brochure was printed. Why didn’t I know what was going on? Why isn’t anyone talking to me? Those of you who have been around long enough you may remember I used to say “everything is Dave’s fault”. It simplified things. That’s what we are trying to accomplish here. We have to go through these reports to know what’s going on. Beyond that if there is a motion going on we would like the background information so we can make an intelligent vote on the motion. It’s the same process identically. The important thing is you go in and try to be reasonably brief.
- Al: This morning somebody mentioned we don’t know what the chapters are doing. This is the solution right here. Say you read Mangroves report and you have a question, then you can ask me at the meeting.
- Dave: I also ask that you contact the chapter reps or presidents, the ones that are adjacent to where you
are. Call them up every couple weeks. Stay in touch with each other. Communicate amongst yourselves. It is that network that makes us work. Without that, well her we are. Not knowing what we are doing. The place I let you down was you didn’t know that was an expectation. I sort of expected it to happen. I expected a dissemination of information. I will get better between now and May. And someone will be better than I am.

- Catherine Bowman – So, Dave, for people reaching out to their neighboring chapters, have you designated which neighbors they should reach out too? It seems confusing to know who I should be contacting to get information
  (On projector: pulled up chapter map from FNPS homepage)
- Dave – So if I was here, I would say these are the neighboring chapters. And these are people I wanted to talk to. It’s that simple
- Catherine – the purpose for that would be for what?
- Dave – a lot of the time there are regional issues.
- Miki Rener – for field trips?
- Marlene – If I could make a suggestion – one of the things that is really important is when you do an event you do a short report. Who ever is in charge of that event needs to do a really short report. Then you compile those reports and as you ask people for funding you use those reports. For example when we do a plant sale we collect zip codes. Zip codes can be very important because they show the person you are capturing – that you are talking too and getting a native plant in their yard. So if you can get people to do a report for every single event they do it will pay back. We collect zip codes because when someone buys native plants it means they have listened to our message and have taken a big step, and have purchased a native plant to put in the ground. And we do native plant sales every week so we keep these reports, we have a lot of zip codes. It is important to show people who support us financially. The reports should be light and fun and entertaining.
- Ginny – Wouldn’t you count the volunteer hours while you are thinking about it? This many people worked this many hours while we did this event. So when you are doing the report you need to put that in while you are thinking about it otherwise you are never gonna collect that data.
- Marlene – I have a question? Do you consider a monthly meeting volunteer hours? Do you count everybody and the amount they spend there?
- Julie – Yes

III. Volunteer Hours

- Juliet – on the form we have volunteer hours by type. For all the board members who spent time planning the meeting, setting up, that’s all counted as one group. Like for plant sales. All the people that put in hours for that that, its gonna go as chapter volunteer hours under plant sales and the easiest way to enter the hours is in groups. If you want to do every single week you can, but it is easier to do blocks of time. You can say January 1st 2016 until now, we had 10 plant sales, x number of volunteers, total number of hours. It doesn’t have to be perfect, you can estimate
- Marlene – so what about chapter meetings?
- Juliet – so chapter meetings, board or general?
- Marlene – regular
- Juliet - general meetings: if you are not working at the meeting and you are just going to enjoy a speaker is not a volunteer hour, but if you are working and setting up it is an hour.
- Dave – I would take a different look to that, it seems to me, if you are learning and taking away information then you should get an hour, because you are gonna take it away and educate
- Marlene – do we have training or CEUs on there?
- Juliet – No, we have educational outreach, but not CE
- Marlene – but nothing for volunteer development?
- Greg Thomas – where is the volunteer tracking format?
- Juliet- I emailed that to all chapter reps and presidents, we have a spreadsheet with all the categories listed and its all on a Google doc. You use that link to go straight to the form.
- Greg – okay but where is the link?
Juliet – I have sent it to you guys. I may have to resend it.

Dave - This whole business was something I was going to take as an individual issue later in the meeting. I was going to urge us to make sure we have done it by the end of this year. We are gonna be looking at these numbers at the end of the year. Please try to get the volunteer hours into the system by December 31st.

Juliet- so far we have a little over 6000 hours, and I’ve talked to a number of people who have a bulk of hours trying to put in…. I expect that to double. The value of that is easily worth over $140,000 a year, so easily they are worth over $300,000 a year. This is good information for donors, so if Andy goes out and is trying to solicit donations, get sponsors for our conference or October native plant month, this is information we need to share. It makes people look twice and think “oh wow, this is a worthy organization to support”. When you put actual values and facts behind our mission, and show what we are doing, it adds tremendous value.

Anne cox – where is that sheet?

Juliet – I will email it to us

Anne – email it to the board of directors

Juliet – those hours go to Cammie at the end of the year.

Anne – If you have one already set up for the board of directors can you send it to us?

Juliet - At the May meeting we agreed we would do board of directors hours separate.

Dave- its becoming clear that we still don’t quite have this volunteer hour thing quite straight. But it is important that we try to get it straight. We can show that we have half a million dollars worth of volunteer hours it is worth something, that’s gotta get someone’s attention. Without this information its like “oh FNPS… you’re those pro marijuana people”. That actually happened to us. One legislator said he knew us as the pro-marijuana group.

(Incomprehensible)

Dave – We are a professional and science based organization so we need to present ourselves professionally. These volunteer hours are important.

Juliet – Use our Linkedin! Even if you don’t use Linkedin you can go to our Linkedin and follow us. If we reach 100 followers then I can start sending out announcements to huge groups: the entire United States, Europe. We need 100. Right now we have 27 people following us.

Julie Wert – so people with Linkedin pages should go there and follow it?

Marlene –and tell your friends

Al- what is that?

Juliet – Its like Facebook but for professionals. It is really important for us to reach out to other professionals, scientists, people in the environmental communities, fellow plant geeks, biologists, botanists, scientists etc. anyone who might be interested in what we are doing or visit our conference. As soon as I get 100 followers I can really start spreading the word.

Al – so we can go to the link and enter our information or just follow it?

Dave – which should be very simple

Andy - As the millennial in the room I am gonna answer that question. Just like with Facebook you will need to create a Linkedin account. Think of it as professional networking, like a resume online.

Juliet – We are now up to 28 followers.

Dave- You might even get a job offer

Catherine – As a follow up to your comment about being a millennial. We were talking earlier about people being involved in land management reviews, and participating on a large scale, not just gardening. I know a lot of the millennials are not home owners. They don’t wanna garden. They don’t wanna buy plants for their yards that is a way they can participate in a really big way.

IV. Plant sales and finding native plants

Sandi – speaking of millennials we had our plant sale and it was actually quite a bit smaller than usual, our fall plant sale. We have lost a couple of vendors I think one person retired… and one person got tired of doing plants, I think state wide the question is do we have younger people starting up native plant nurseries to take the spaces of the older members?
Juliet – Maybe one day we can start offering internships. I think this is a big issue Cammie is working on. FANN is working on that

Catherine – this is something we had discussion on some earlier meeting. We are pushing all these native plants. They are hard to get, hard to find (native plants). Wholesale nurseries are out of town. it is so much easier for people to walk into big box stores and buy them. We need to explore retailers for native plant growers in town. I know there are places we can sell to the public or maybe combine with other organizations to have a regular booth somewhere or at nurseries that sell a small component of natives, maybe get in their with our chapters as a regular seller of natives.

Marlene – we have the same problem, and actually Liz, acting director (our friends at CHNEP) we spent some time a year ago interviewing last summer about native nurseries. Sadly what we found out is there is no money in them. They just can’t stay open. Which is really a tragedy. We found even our friends at ? they would not be able to stay in business if they were not bidding and getting big projects for installations. It is an issue. Our vendors decided it was too much trouble. We ended up falling into a sweet deal with the state park. They had a nursery that was dilapidated and we went in and rebuilt the nursery so we could at least store plants there. And they were very happy to have us on the property. After that it turned out they had a weekly farmers marker. And its very easy to take the plants from one side of the park to the other and sell them. And its not so easy to stock and get the prices and the information sheets, there’s a lot of work and a huge commitment behind it. It is also important that we make them available, make them identifiable, and help people get them into the ground, those are 3 of our objectives and this meets those objectives. It’s a big task but it’s a worthwhile task.

Anne – do you have the written up somewhere?

Marlene – actually it was written up, in the “Harbour Happenings”

Anne – Put it in the Sabal Minor.

Marlene – it really is a benefit to the park too. We found endangered plants there, that we are monitoring. We saw the district 4 biologist now and she asks us to dig them up and try to grow them at the nursery. It is really important that customers know they can depend on us being there every week selling plants. It didn’t work to have it on a sporadic schedule.

Meredith - We have an event at Wilcox nursery twice a year. We had an event last week and the contribution from the chapter was over $3000 we did over $14,000 worth of business. We publicize and we have a lecture series as well, every hour. This years theme we went back to the basics. We always have standing room. I’ll be happy to write that up for our newsletter. Its just getting bigger and bigger. We have problems with parking /restrooms and everything. We are working on getting younger members and more volunteers.

Dave- you see why these reports would be useful?

Meredith – we will probably need to go out into more things. We have been lucky because we have a ready source with Bruce getting the plants in from places, what we do is go in a couple of days before to clean up the nursery and get the labels down on the plants and we are there to help people select their items.

Dave – in Manatee County, we have the Sweetbay nursery, and we hold the plant sales on site, and it works out nicely for everybody. Trying to transport a whole lot of plants and keep water on them for a day or two is really a bitch.

Al – we do something on a smaller scale we have our members dig up their plants that set seed around their yard such as scarlet sage, we charge anywhere from 1-4 dollars a pot. Last March we made over $250 just on 1-4$ plants that are member grown and potted. Essentially we are finding our own.

Dave- We have some variation on that. We have some that are brought in from Sweetbay nursery. We make it a silent auction. People bid on them and we see what we get. We pick up about $20-30 at every meeting on maybe 8 or 9 plants.

Al - We are gonna have a bunch at the nature festival coming up middle of the month we got $100-250 just on free plants from our members

Athena – I wanted to make two comments. I was curious if you organize any speakers or anything at your sale and what you make off it? We do a thing at our meetimgs with plants at our meeting but you have to be very careful about being a Florida inspected.. if you are selling plants. There are Florida rules
on selling plants at your meeting. That’s why we stick to a nursery.

- Marlene – you have to take donations
- Al – Yes we take donations
- Dave – yes we don’t have a silent auction, it’s a silent donation.
- Athena - but do you have speakers at your meetings?
- Dave – We have but they were not very successful, not well attended. People would rather just wander around the nursery
- Athena – so it just plant sale?
- Meredith - Well with us we have standing room only
- Julie Wert – I want to say about Pinellas sale, it got dynamite publicity. I know that’s why they had standing room only, the Tampa bay times had a big write up about it. And it was listed on several calendars.
- Meredith – we did that on purpose
- Dave- the same thing happened for us the year before because we had a great article in the Tampa Bay times. We had something like $12,000. This year we had $7000. Of which we receive about 40%.
- Ginny – one other thing about plant sales it that people are then having to take care of them at home, so there are books that you can sell. Any of the chapters could be vendors for university press. You get them 40% off and you can sell them at retail price. So you can make money and not just my books but other books you know Craig’s book on shady plants, and Gils book on native plants and where to plant them, so there is a huge array of garden books that you could sell… and you could get a upf.com 40% discount for being a vendor at of university press.
- Dave – Yeah we tried that with Serenoa
- Ginny – Another thing is that 50% of royalties from my last book do go directly to FNPS (Maintaining a Florida Native Landscape) so that’s another sales pitch for you
- Julie Becker – Tarflower does sell all your books at our plant sale, and like you said all the other books. We do do both. I have to say you have to look around your chapter, because there are a couple of people who are really good at selling books, and if they are not there we don’t sell as many books. They know the books, they know everything about them.
- Dave – One more comment then we need to move on
- Martha – the central FL native plant sale in Kissimmee in conjunction with FANN, last year was not very good because it rained, other than that we did very good every year. This year it is going to be in Bradenton, still central FL but on west coast, something to keep in mind for the spring, in conjunction with FANN trade show
- Julie – I think its good they move around the state. You get to see different plants and speakers
- Martha – it is in the spring, last years was at end of March beginning of April
- Dave – I heard it was in February this year but I am not too sure

V. Nominating Committee
- Dave - A couple items of business we need to talk about. One is a nominating committee. We need council members and we need to look outside the council for someone who is willing to be a director. Is there anyone who is willing to make a few calls?
- Wendy – Who isn’t in the room? (Laughter)
- Dave – how is this gonna work? It is your council.
- Anne – if you could let the nominating committee for the board also, because the board needs to fill position for the board. We could also ask if they would like to be on the council of chapters. Why duplicate something that is being done. Why have 3 from the council and 3 from the board?
- Miki – to expand that don’t ask them just tell them this is part of it too
- Dave- The only thing I don’t like about that is we have to come up with a nominating committee for the board
- Anne – We always do anyways and we always have a good one. We need to find president-elect
- Dave – I am concerned about the fact that whenever I bring this up is this is what I hear [silence].
• Devon – at our chapter we tell them if you are on the nominating committee then you are not on the board. and we get lots of people!
• Julie – Yes if you are on the nominating committee you won’t be an officer
• Dave – You could be. Roberts rule is clear about that. Someone should not be eliminated because they might be appointed. They should not be exempt from being an officer the idea of appointing someone to that position has occurred to me.
• Carol – I am willing to be on the committee. I am willing to help once we have people to look at. I don’t think I can be the chair because I don’t know everyone but I am willing to help once we have people to look at.
• Dave – We only have about 32 people (take me out, and take Nicole and Donna out), about 25 people. What would the role of a director want to be? Could you see yourself as a part of that? If you call, look at about a half dozen calls, and then we can know where we are.
• Juliet – we talked about this at the last board meeting, it is not necessarily the current serving members, it could be past council of chapters members?
• Dave – anyone with enough interest, we will take anyone. As a matter of fact Nicole was interested in being secretary based on Scott’s urging. Scott was officially done during the last council. And unfortunately or I guess fortunately for Nicole she was gone to Alaska. And she was not on a board. Scott stepped down from his position as chapter representative, Nicole took over, but she left for Alaska for 4 months, so Scott took her place for the time being. So we can make it work. What we really need is someone with enough enthusiasm and a strong social life.
• Julie Becker – I will be another committee member. But I think we need someone to be a cat herder. Someone who feels really organized to poke us down and get us organized
• Dave – I will try to come up with another person for you.
• Martha – I volunteer to be the third committee member.
• Dave – Thank you very much for stepping up.

VI. Landscape Brochures
• Dave- We have one other thing to talk about. The brochures. They are theoretically being sold for $1. Donna said she didn’t have any trouble selling them at the last meeting. They were selling 5 at a time. If you do bring in money it can be used to move on for the next printing
• Julie – I agree absolutely it should be set aside for the next printing, so that it funds itself
• Dave – Bring to your chapters, if they would like to support to get them printed? And they can make money on them back by selling them. Another source of income and I don’t think Andy would mind one bit
• Andy – the goal is to not do that, but rather to find sponsors. But if it comes to that it would be greatly appreciated by the chapters who have needs
• Dave – there are some questions about what the costs are going to be associated with this. If we are trying to produce small batches of just… it is gonna be more considerably more expensive then if we did one large grouping. There are a lot of things that go into it. We would like this to be a green publication… In order for it to be green the costs associated are astounding. The type of paper used, pulp origination, tree farming sustainability, and that’s just paper. Look at the inks and the nature of the inks themselves are important, more important is the cleaning that goes into those inks, they can turn out to be very dangerous chemicals. That is what we are up against. When approaching people, all you need to ask is are you willing to help? Don’t talk about costs.
• Athena – I have a question on sponsorship. If we are going out looking for sponsors, if each region costs about $2000, that might be a bit of a stretch to get one sponsor. Say there are 6 chapters in my region. My region is very fortunate to have a lot of eco-type businesses, if I go in to a business that wants to pitch $500, that is only a quarter. How much space do we have on the brochure to put logos?
• Andy – that would be a Donna question. I believe things can be played with to make sure. I don’t know that we could get 5 or 6 logos where they were visible, readable, comfortable
• Juliet – I think depending on the size you could get 6
• Andy – I will tell you, I will take as many sponsors as it takes to get it funded. If it takes 10, I will take
• Athena – If I find someone who can give $500 I should be able to tell someone who is sponsoring whether or not they will get their logo on it
• Andy - We will make it work
• Julie Wert – is there a minimum?
• Andy – I would not go lower than $500
• Athena – of course if you want to get someone who is willing to donate with no logo you know just to promote the goals…

VI. How to handle political discussion in meetings
• Dave – we are running out of time, we have one minute, Catherine has one more question
• Catherine – I got a question from the audience. I am gonna speak slowly because I am gonna ask Gene and I see he is eating. We are in the middle of an election season and people want to voice their opinions about issues that concern us and some of us want to do this at our meetings. They may be members of our chapters and when they come to our chapters and say to us something about not supporting a particular candidate, which we all know we are not doing, but they want to get up and say “vote no on amendment one” is that something we can give space to at our meetings? During our announcement periods? Or does that open up a can of worms? Is it not a wise thing to do it? Or is it prohibited?
• Gene - I don’t think it is prohibited. In the case of amendment one, not this years (land and water), we threw our weight behind it to ever extent that we could. If it is something mission related, if it is something more marginal, I have a serious issue, but it is not directly related, I mean you could say climate change, but there is no clear nexus to our mission. If you let people address it I don’t think you are violating anything but then you do open a can of worms where another organization or another member has an issue that’s important to them…
• Dave – I believe you hit the note right on the head. Is it mission related?
• Juliet – [in reference to amendment one: land and water] and you wrote very clear policy statements for the state. It wasn’t like it was willy nilly, we had a clear position voted on by the board
• Gene- Yes, the board discussed it, should we take a position on it. I also came to a meeting with forms
• Martha - the speaker that was at the conference talking about those issues was very clear the way she explained it
• Dave - nothing about candidates, as much s some of us might want to say something
• Catherine – That’s it

The meeting was adjourned at 3:38