



Florida Native Plant Society

Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 2/23/25

Online Zoom Meeting taken by
Tiffany Duke – Secretary

Rebekah Kaufman called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM

In attendance (28) – 26 of 32 Chapters

*** indicates proxy or guest**

Broward County - Tiffany Duke – **Secretary**

Citrus – Ellen McNally

Coccoloba – Ben Johnson

Conradina - Martha Steuart

Dade – Riki Bonnema

Eugenia – David Martin

Hernando - Janet Grabowski

Ixia – Cate Hurlbut

Lake Beautyberry – Tina Mertz

Longleaf Pine – Kimberley Bremner

Magnolia – Jenny Rogers*

Mangrove – Linda Wilson

Martin County – Dianna Wentink

Palm Beach County – Rebekah Kaufman

Pawpaw – Karen Walter

Paynes Prairie - Sandi Saurers

Pine Lily – Dana Sussmann

Pinellas – David Perkey

Sarracenia – Lynn Artz

Sea Rocket - Elizabeth Bishop

Seminole – Al Squires

Serenoa – Trent Berry

Suncoast - Merrilee Wallbrunn

Sweetbay – Rhonda Hoeckley

Sweetbay – Ron Houser

Tarflower – Deborah Ferencak

The Villages – Bob Keyes

Melissa Fernandez-de Cespedes –

Executive Director

Regular Agenda Items

- **Minutes from 1/23/25 meeting** o Ethan A. motioned to approve the January 2025 meeting minutes. Karen W. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
- **Next Meetings will focus on challenges:** Speakers/Programs **March 23, 2025 at 6:30 pm**; Full Council Meeting **April 27, 2025 at 6:30 pm**.

News/Announcements/Reminders

- **Updated Chapter Representative List** - attached
- **February Support Documents** – You can access them [here](#).
- **March Support Documents** – Melissa will send email, will include new links
- **Conference Memorial Table** - The Conference Committee would like to offer space during the conference to recognize members that have passed away these last couple years

Initiatives/Updates

- **Chapter Challenges committees** –
 - Join us in a discussion around Speakers/Programs **March 23, 2025 at 6:30 pm** – [see Challenges document here](#)
 - We will resume our usual structure of Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes **April 27, 2025**

New Business

Open Floor

- Rebekah asked the group about their challenges and successes with filling and sustaining leadership roles:
 - Some members expressed challenges in filling “President” position, Ron H. shared their chapter updated their by-laws to include co-president to spread the role’s responsibilities. Janet mentioned the need to rotate positions among the same leaders since it is challenging to recruit.
 - Reasons some members have declined leadership positions: time and family commitments, lack of understanding what the role involves, lack of training
 - Some members expressed challenges in member participation
- Rebekah suggested structured discussions on improving engagement and collaboration. She recommends getting to know your Chapter members with name tags and shoot for ways to engage Chapter members at meetings. Ethan seconds adding recommendation of asking/assigning small tasks: help set out chairs for example
- Al S. asked if meeting during daytime hours instead of evening could see improved attendance for some chapters.
- Rebekah and Ron H suggest looking outside FNPS for potential new members: outside organizations like Audubon were mentioned
- A search for younger members was mentioned: ways to do this – try Eventbrite, Instagram or other social media platforms, maybe post in local coffee shops, think spaces where younger people are present
- Concerns were raised about the group's lack of connection to the state organization and among chapters.
- The need for printed brochures was highlighted

Action Items

- Each Chapter continue getting the word out about the upcoming FNPS 43rd Conference “Seeds for Tomorrow” and consider personally inviting members. Additionally, post to social channels and Chapter Newsletters
- Try at least one of the suggestions discussed, share some feedback at our March meeting
- Ask the State for more templated communication and monthly updates from them and more clear direction for the Chapters
- Check out “Slack” – feel free to ask Rebekah for an invite

Motion to Adjourn

- Al S. motioned to adjourn. Ethan A. seconds. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:53 PM