



Florida Native Plant Society

Council of Chapters Meeting Minutes 5/25/25

Online Zoom Meeting
taken by Melanie Simon – Chair

Melanie Simon called the meeting to order at 06:31 PM

In attendance (27) – 20 of 31 Chapters

*** indicates proxy or guest**

Citrus – Ellen McNally
Eugenia – David Martin
Hernando - Janet Grabowski
Ixia – Cate Hurlbut
Lake Beautyberry – Tina Mertz
Magnolia – James Cooper
Mangrove – Linda Wilson
Martin County – Pete Grannis
Martin County – Maggie Ulman*
Martin County – Evan Wesselman*
Nature Coast – Diane Caruso
Palm Beach County – Rebekah Kaufman
Palm Beach County – Ethan Aparicio
Passionflower – Melanie Simon – **Chair**

Pawpaw – Karen Walter
Pawpaw – Amy Legare
Pinellas – Dave Perkey
Sarracenia – Lynn Artz
Sea Rocket – Elizabeth Bishop
Serenoa – Trent Berry
Sweetbay – Ron Houser *
Suncoast – Tina Paterson*
Tarflower – Deborah Ferencak
The Villages – Bob Keyes
FNPS VP Finance – Ann Redmond*
FNPS VP Administration – Athena Phillips*
FNPS ED – Melissa Fernandez-de Cespedes*

Regular Agenda Items

- **Minutes from 4/27/25 meetings**
 - *Ethan A. motioned to approve the April meeting minutes. Cate H. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*
- **Next Meeting June 22, 2025 at 6:30pm.**

News/Announcements/Reminders

- **Upcoming Deadlines**
 - FNPS Board nominations – May 31
 - Council nominations – June 1
 - Sabal Minor – June 15
 - Palmetto Awards – June 15

- **FNPS Annual Meeting**
 - July 26 (tentatively)
- **FNPS Annual Report**
 - Approved by the Board and posted at: <https://issuu.com/fnps/stacks>
 - Melanie noted that many Chapters did not report their conservation activities as requested last month, so it appears that FNPS is not doing any conservation work (rescues, restoration planting, invasive removal, etc.) in large areas of the State.
- **Survey Report**
 - UCF graduate students reported the results of a latent profile analysis they did using 2023 survey results. The analysis divided survey respondents into groups based on interests and noted differences in demographics, diversity, work, and commitment of each group. This analysis should prove useful for designing membership (attract, recruit, retain) campaigns.
 - Power point showing this analysis is posted on the Council website (follow the 2023 survey links) or use this direct link: [2023 Survey Latent Profile Analysis](#) . A written report coming.
- **Directory Information**
 - **Action Item** – Review your Chapter information (Directory information) on the FNPS website (<https://www.fnps.org/chapters/chapters>) and email Cherice (csmithers@fnps.org) to confirm the information is correct or provide updated information. This is needed so correct information is moved to the new website.
- **Chapter Web and Social Media Contacts**
 - **Action Item** – Send Cherice (csmithers@fnps.org) an email to confirm your Chapter web and social media contacts. This is needed to coordinate action alerts.
- **Conference Treasurer's Workshop Recording**
 - Video posted online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sP7ydnxduUU>
- **Resources and Information Sites**
 - Council has been using two main sites for resources and information:
 - Not secure (anyone on web can access): [Council website https://council.fnpschapters.org/](https://council.fnpschapters.org/) (link to the Council website is on the bottom of the FNPS website)
 - Secure (user name/password required): [Membership Data Portal https://forms.fnps.org/](https://forms.fnps.org/) (link to this site is on right side menu on the Council website pages) – Resources tab
 - Additional sites have been added over the past several months, and Rebekah sent an email (So Many Links) with links. Melanie suggested that finding resources should be as simple as possible and will ask Cherice to add two more links to the menu on the Membership Data Portal site/Resources tab where they can be easily found and accessed by Chapter Representatives without gmail addresses:
 - Google Drive with Monthly Support Documents: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1DyMGjExGJnGAF5zYbRRvhljhFYcyemay>
 - Google Group – FNPS Council of Chapters emails including So Many Links email: <https://groups.google.com/a/fnps.org/g/fnps-council-of-chapters>
 - There was a lot of confusion about the various sites and numerous questions about how to get to different sites. Slack was mentioned as well, but not discussed. Lynn suggested, and everyone agreed, that a tutorial to walk Chapter Reps through all the sites would be useful. Could be optional and scheduled before or after a regular meeting.
- **Insurance Forms**

- Insurance waivers and instructions are on the Membership Data Portal (forms.fnps.org) under Resources. Waiver wording has been reviewed/approved by insurance carrier and lawyers, so no changes should be made or insurance coverage could be compromised. Contact Cherice (csmithers.fnps.org) with questions or if wording changes are needed.
- **Brochures**
 - Melanie provided general brochure cost information (printing + shipping) based on last year's costs so Chapters can calculate approximately how many brochures they can afford to pay for.
 - Good citizen Guide – Gatefold - \$0.52
 - Good Citizen Guide – Insert - \$0.25
 - Homeowner's Guide (English or Spanish) - \$0.28
 - Native Landscaping Brochure - \$0.84
 - Most effective way to get brochures printed (especially if needed before fall) is to fill out printing request form and adjust quantity, if necessary, once Cherice has gotten an updated estimate from printers.
 - **Action Item** – Complete the 2025 printing request form (Melanie will get Cherice to resend it after June 3) - please complete the form whether you need brochures or not. Will also look into which chapters have already submitted requests.

Elections

- **Nominating Committee**
 - Lynn (Chair of the Committee) noted the focus so far has been publicizing openings and seeking nominations through the Sabal Minor, email, and Facebook.
 - **Action Item** - Share the Facebook post to your Chapter's website. Rebekah noted that for people to see the post it has to be shared from the FNPS Facebook page –not from the CoC or Members Only pages.
 - Lynn is developing a list of interview questions to circulate to the nominating committee.
 - **Action Item** - Consider joining the Nominating Committee to help with interviews between June 1 and June 14 – email Lynn at Lynn.
 - To date, the numbers of non-vetted nominations are: 1 for Chair, 4 for Vice-Chair, and 3 for Secretary. Lynn thanked nominees Maggie Ulman and Evan Wesselman for attending as guests.
 - **Action Item** - Lynn asked all Chapter Reps to reconsider serving in one of the officer positions as many of the nominations (mostly self-nominations) are from general membership and are members who may not be familiar with the Council. She also asked that Chapter Reps consider nominating someone from their Chapter leadership.
 - Nominations close on Sunday, June 1.
 - Melanie reinforced the importance of the Council to represent Chapters and reviewed the responsibilities of each officer.
 - It was noted that Chapter Reps have felt blindsided by some recent Board decisions (particularly the brochure budget). Athena said the Board was shocked and well and that many Board decisions are brought up, discussed and decided in a single meeting, so there is no opportunity for input; however, the agenda is posted and anyone is welcome to attend Board meetings.
- **Voting Method**
 - The recent Handbook change lets the Council use online polling software for voting.
 - Discussed voting procedures, including verifying one vote per Chapter and vote anonymity.
 - After discussion it was decided that:
 - Google forms will be used for voting and the link will be emailed to Chapter Reps.

- Form will ask for Chapter so the votes can be verified.
- Cherice will administer the voting (as an impartial party) and verify votes.
- Goal is to give Chapter Reps about a week to vote: plan to send out the voting link on June 15 and close voting at noon on June 22 so results can be announced at the Council meeting.

New Business/Open Floor

- **Program/Speaker List**

- The discussion from the March Council meeting was continued to develop action items to update/expand the program/speaker list started by Melanie in 2021. List has been on the Council website, but additions have been limited.
- Rebekah suggested each Chapter can provide programs/speakers to be added to the list and the Council Secretary can add them to the list.
- Melanie suggested that individual Chapters can go through their TeamUp calendar to make a list of program topics and speakers.
- Cate questioned whether programs/speakers from one region would be useful to Chapters in another region. Melanie replied that often interesting program topics can inspire Chapters to find a speaker on that topic closer to home, or speakers can be asked to do remote (Zoom) programs.
- The Program/Speaker list should also have more fields/sorting/search capabilities.
- **Action Item** - Chapters should download the spreadsheet, add their programs from the past year, and email it to the Council Secretary to add to the master list
 - Program/Speaker list is on the home page of the website or can be downloaded the spreadsheet using this link: [Program/Speaker List](#)

- **Endangered Species Act (Federal)**

- Melanie asked if anyone was following proposed changes which would weaken the act by excluding habitat modification from the definition of “harm”
- Lynn noted the deadline for comment has passed
- Evan commented that the change seems unlikely to pass.

Action Items

- See details above:
 - Review and confirm/correct Directory Information
 - Send Chapter Web and Social Media Contacts to Cherice
 - Complete Brochure Print Request Form (will be sent out around beginning of June)
 - Share the Council election Facebook post to your Chapter’s page
 - Consider self-nominating or nominating a Chapter leader for a Council officer position by June 1.
 - Volunteer to help the nominating committee vet nominees.
 - Add to the Program/Speakers list.

Motion to Adjourn

- *Karen W. motioned to adjourn. Cate H. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*

Meeting Adjourned at 7:54 PM