



Board Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, September 9, 2025, 2:00 pm

The meeting was held at the home of Margie Gibson, Past President

Called to order at 2:00 pm.

Present: Donna Stevens, President; Cara Staab, Vice-President; Naava Koenigsberg, Treasurer; Betty Spence, Secretary; Margie Gibson, Past President; Marty Eberhardt, Elroy Limmer, David Philips

Additions to Agenda: Cara requested an opportunity to discuss the collaboration with Bat Conservation International.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the Board meeting of August 11, 2025, were approved.

Unfinished and General Business

New Bulletin editor: Donna reported that Margaret Madsen had agreed to become the new editor of the GNPS *Bulletin* starting with the 1st quarter of 2026. She was young, excited about it and familiar with MailChimp. Donna would handle the 4th Quarter 2025 issue, working with Margaret to show her how it was done.

Update on volunteer coordinator contractor: Donna reported that there were three refusals so far, and one possible candidate: Polly Cook. Marty said that unfortunately one of the most likely prospects had taken on another job. She wondered if we needed to pursue a different strategy – perhaps approaching people at the University to see if they had any suggestions? Betty wondered if it was fair to expect the volunteer coordinator to also do the garden work. Naava noted that in the garden watering was key; weeding could usually wait for a work party to be scheduled. Margie noted that the way the job was structured might be intimidating. A paragraph describing the need could be included in the next *Bulletin*, with a link to a revised job description.

December Holiday Party: Cara reported that she had scheduled the Holiday Party for December 7th at The Hearth from 12:30 to 2:30 (for set-up we could get in at 11:30 am). The fee of \$50 included use of the kitchen. Elroy agreed to provide roast pork as usual. Cara agreed to help him with our big jugs of iced tea and water.

Field Trips: Betty said that for many of our members field trips were the most interesting activity. To ensure a field trip every month from April through the summer, we should ask one or more people to commit to leading field trips next summer. The field trip leader was expected to scout out likely locations and draw up a plant list, prior to leading the field trip. Donna pointed out that a full plant list of all the plants at the chosen site was not required, just a representative list of a few interesting plants the participants could look for.

Betty recalled that at the April Board meeting we had agreed to pay the field trip leader \$50 per trip, in part to help defray the cost of gas. Naava asked whether we could just pay for mileage. Betty explained that in the discussion in April we had decided that we did not want to place that additional burden on the field trip leader.

Board members suggested that John Titus and/or Hannah Blood could be approached.

Website management: Naava said that it would be helpful to expand the Resources section on the GNPS website, for instance by including Donna's material on Common Plants of the Gila, but she was uncertain about who should contact Lindsey Kirchhevel about posting material on our website. After discussion, it was agreed that Cara would contact Lindsey about program information, Naava would contact her about financial matters, Margie would contact her about garden information, Betty would contact her about posting approved minutes, and of course Donna could make any such request. Donna would let Lindsey know that any Board member was authorized to send her a request for posting.

Board and Committee Reports:

Silva Creek Botanical Garden Steering Committee Report: Prior to the meeting, Marty circulated the following Steering Committee report for September 2025:

"It has been an incredibly busy time as we get the garden ready for the celebration on October 12... and as we plan the event itself.

The wall has been stuccoed and the donor and volunteer tiles are being made as I write this. They will be flowers (flax for donors, wild geraniums, our logo flower, for volunteers, with names on the petals).

Laura Howell is back from Alaska, finishing the welcome sign, and working on the habitat thicket signs (for which we finally have the verbiage). After these are designed, we must get them to the sign maker in Tucson and get them back from Tucson and in the ground. It will be a stretch to get all this done.

Margie has designed the three rules signs, a sign explaining the tiles, and signs explaining the front yard garden and the desert garden. We are so fortunate to have her graphics skills. These signs have been sent to the sign maker in Tucson.

Work parties have added to the desert garden and will add to the front yard garden before the event.

As far as the event goes, VIP invitations have been sent to the Mayor, our city councilor Nick Prince, Carl Colonius of Trails Plus, Jacqui Olea and Alex Brown. At this time, we have heard that Nick Prince and Carl Colonius will come. Nick would like to speak (I will do my best to keep all remarks short). Save-the-Date cards and invitations have been sent to all of those who sent us letters of support for the grant; most of those people have told me they will come. Lucy Whitmarsh of the Waterworks will try to bring her entire board.

At the event itself, we will have “experts” at stations in the garden (i.e, Elroy, Margie, Susan Campbell, Monica Rude, Patrice Mutchnick, Youth Mural Program interns). Katie Skaggs is creating a puppet show about native plants. Elli Sorensen will have botanical printing activity tables. Katie Skaggs will have a scientific/botanical activity. Marilyn Markel will be showing how to process yucca. We will have our usual books/ membership table, and a bee table with a little more info/visual stuff about native plants, which Phil Hastings is creating for a Latin American Conservation week activity that he and I are staffing in Bayard on September 12. Elli Sorensen is creating sculptures in the shapes of pollinators; she is just asking that her costs be reimbursed, and the sales will benefit the garden.

Margie created the Save-the-Date card and is working on the poster. We could use help in distributing the poster.

I’ve written a draft press release and will be working with Betty on publicity.”

Marty said that getting everything ready in the garden for the event would be a challenge, particularly the signage of the habitat thicket. Of the invitees, the Mayor, Town Councilor Nick Prince, and Carl Colonius of Trails Plus had said they would come. Assistant Town Manager Jacqui Olea had not yet responded. The Waterworks people said they would come. Donna added that Peter Pena, the Town’s Director of Public Works and Parks, had said he would be there.

Marty said that the Steering Committee, Denise Smith and Marty’s son and husband would do set-up. Her team would come a few days before and do set-up for the various activities in shady areas. Save-the-Date cards had already been put in a few locations, and extras had been handed to some board members to spread around. At the event she would give a short talk, especially to thank all those involved.

New Business

Bat Research: Cara reported that Rachel Burke of Bat Conservation International had reported on the results of last year’s project of monitoring hummingbird feeders for nectar-feeding bat DNA. Three species of nectivorous bats were detected in our region, the lesser long-nosed bat (*Leptonycteris yerbabuena*), the Mexican long-nosed bat (*L. nivalis*), and the Mexican long-

tongued bat (*Choeronycteris mexicana*). This year BCI wanted to focus on bat use of *Agave palmeri*. Wendy was setting up a site on I-Naturalist for an ongoing citizen science project to report on locations of *Agave palmeri* in the greater Gila area. BCI would like us to encourage our members to participate. Elroy noted that *Agave palmeri* bloomed later than *Agave parryi* and was more useful to migrating nectar-feeding bats; defining the area would help BCI focus its research.

Cara said that she had asked Cathleen Norman do her “Plant of the Quarter” contribution to the 4th quarter *Bulletin on Agave palmeri*. Cara also reported that there would be a photo shoot by BCI in conjunction with BBC at Rick Lass’s place and her own place, including an interview with Don Graves and a written article.

Book sales decisions:

Jack Dash’s book: Donna said that she had inquired about our selling Jack Dash’s new book, *The Southwest Native Plant Primer: 235 Plants for an Earth-Friendly Garden*. Jack would sell it to us for \$18 a copy and we could sell it for \$25. Naava said that she was in the process of resolving some book sale issues and needed just a little time.

Motion: The Board agrees that we should sell the book once book sale issues were resolved.

Free copy of *Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico* to new members: Donna explained that we had many copies of Jack Carter’s book still in our storage locker, and she suggested that we might give a copy to new members.

Motion: The Board agrees that we should offer a free copy of *Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico* to new members.

Board Members at Large: Donna reminded the Board that the terms of the current Board members at large would end on December 31, 2025, and elections would be held at the November meeting. To begin with, she wished to know which current members at large were prepared to stay on for another term. Marty and Elroy said that they were willing to be re-elected. David said that he needed time to consider whether he could continue, in view of some family responsibilities.

A discussion ensued about the election of new Board members at large. Betty recalled that, according to the Bylaws, officers were elected in November of even years, and Board members at large were elected in odd years. The Board was supposed to present a slate of candidates to the membership prior to the election, which was held at the November general meeting. There could be up to six Board members at large. Also according to the Bylaws, members were allowed to nominate additional candidates from the floor, provided the candidates had been consulted and were willing to serve. Marty warned that it was dangerous to open the position to just anyone, since there were some people who did not work well with others. It helped if a candidate had prior experience on a board, but it was not a prerequisite. Betty said that in the

past nominations from the floor had almost never happened, and there was no self-nomination.

David emphasized that a candidate did not need to be a botanist, just someone committed to the mission of the organization. Naava said that it was unfortunate that all the officers' terms ended at the same time. Margie explained that the timing had to coincide with the terms of the officers of the state organization; in our chapter the need for carryover was handled by providing that the past President would serve another term on the Board. Although most Board members felt that the board training they had undergone had been useful, the written information alone resulting from it would probably not be very helpful to new members.

Donna asked whether there were suggestions for new Board members at large. Margie said that Priscilla Titus might be willing to be on the Board, and she could talk to her. Another name that occurred to her was Steve Mudge, a new arrival in town. Board members agreed that it was not necessary to have the maximum eleven Board members.

Volunteer descriptions on GNPS website: Donna said that it would be useful to draw up a list with descriptions of the various tasks for which we needed volunteers, including an estimate of the time involved in each task, so that we could post it on the website. Cara said that bringing refreshments to serve after a program should be on the list. Marty said that, while the Education Committee focused on children's education, there was also a need for some outreach activities. Margie offered to create a draft of such a list; the Board could look it over and add to it or amend it.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Spence
Secretary, Gila Native Plant Society