Board Meeting Minutes, Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 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; Naava Koenigsberg, Treasurer; Betty Spence, Secretary; Margie Gibson, Past President; Marty Eberhardt, Carol Martin, Cecil McNicoll, Sheila Williams

Absent: Cara Staab, Vice President (proxy to Donna Stevens); Elroy Limmer and David Phillips (both with proxy to Margie Gibson)

Additions to Agenda: Margie requested a vote on the annual allocation from the Endowment Fund and a vote on changing the Policies in Effect to reflect the new Silva Creek Botanical Garden management structure. Those issues would be addressed under the budget and steering committee items. Betty requested a discussion on tabling participation in Continental Divide Trail Days.

Approval of January Minutes: The minutes of the Board meeting of January 21, 2026, were approved.

Approval of the minutes of the Special Budget Meeting on February 9, 2026:

Minutes recording the observations and decisions taken at the Special Budget Meeting had been prepared by Cara Staab and circulated to the Board members prior to today's Board meeting. Donna said she had only one correction to make: on the second page, under "Conservation/Advocacy Committee," she would delete the words "in the absence of an active committee." The chapter's Conservation Committee was quite active and in contact with the NPSNM Conservation Committee. The only inactive committee she was aware of was the Education Committee.

> **The Board approved the minutes of the Special Budget Meeting of February 9, 2026, with that change and confirmed the decisions recorded in the notes.**

<u>Unfinished and General Business</u>

Review and approval of 2026 budget: Prior to the meeting the Treasurer had circulated the draft budget for 2026. She reminded the Board that the financial and calendar year now

coincided. She mentioned that she had prepared a template for conference expenses, which Donna had agreed to help track. The information on SCBG finances was unchanged except for a carryover item that put the budget in balance. The information on GNPS finances had been updated to reflect the decisions at the special budget meeting. The items still open were "Allocated Investment Gains" and the "Carryover." Because in 2025 we had decided to withdraw $10,000 from the Edward Jones mutual fund, our "Endowment Fund," we might not need to make an allocation in 2026 from the investment gains. That was a decision still to be made. She and Margie planned to talk to the fund manager, Vladimir Gnilozubov.

The Board decided to leave the gains from the mutual fund in place, at least until after the discussion with the fund manager.

Give Grandly update: Donna reported that she had registered GNPS for Give Grandly 2026. It had taken some effort to have us listed on the Candid site, because we are a chapter of NPSNM, not an organization with our own ID number, but that was straightened out. We will need a representative to serve on one of the Give Grandly committees; the easiest approach would be to sign up on the Event Committee to do some task on the day of the tabling event, April 18th. GNPS would need to organize its own table, and she would recruit volunteers to preside at the table and ask Jim Blurton if he could provide his usual help in set-up and take-down.

Board and Committee Reports

Silva Creek Botanical Garden Steering Committee Report: Prior to the meeting, Marty circulated the Steering Committee report for February 2026 and gave an oral update. She reported that:

The final report for the Trails Plus grant was submitted on January 30.

A volunteer coordinator for the garden had been found. Naava had identified Dana Baskett, and she and Naava had interviewed her and obtained her resumé. Her references from Molina Healthcare were checked by phone. She was recommended to the Steering Committee, which approved the hire. She was prepared to start on March 2. Naava explained that, since the amount of $5,000 for the volunteer coordinator for the garden had already been approved in the budget, the Board did not need to vote on the contract, but she would send it to the President for her approval.

A meeting in the garden with the new Mayor, Simon Wheaton-Smith, had taken place on February 14th. Marty, Naava and Margie had tried to make a strong case that GNPS was performing a great service for the Town by beautifying town property. The Mayor seemed favorable, being a gardener himself. The Assistant Town Manager, Jacqui Olea, and the Town Councilor for the district, Nick Prince, were very supportive of the garden. We should press a campaign to restore our funding, which had been cut in half.

Marty explained the proposed new structure for management of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden and drew attention to the circulated organization chart. It seemed helpful to combine the Steering Committee and the Management Committee into one Garden Committee for greater efficiency. The combined Garden Committee would handle policy, planning and management and would be better positioned to work with the volunteer coordinator. The organization chart detailed which Committee member would be the lead on which aspects of garden affairs. Sheila had joined the Garden Committee and was the lead on gardening advice, since there was a need to field inquiries. Naava said that they had created a separate email account for the garden.

The Board approved the proposed new structure for the Silva Creek Botanical Garden and the corresponding name change in the Policies in Effect.

New Business

2026 Plant Sale: Donna reminded the Board that Ceci McNicoll, one of our new Board members, had volunteered to organize our native plant sale. Ceci had tried unsuccessfully to contact Don Graves, who had organized the plant sale for several years, but Don had sent an email to Donna suggesting that we should skip having a plant sale this year in order to concentrate on the state conference in September. What was the Board's feeling on the subject?

In the discussion the following points were made: Encouraging the use of native plants in gardens was an important part of our mission. GNPS members and other gardeners in the local community were expecting us to hold a native plant sale and would be disappointed if we did not. It was also important to support vendors who propagated native plants, since there were so few of them.

The Board agreed that we should hold our annual native plant sale this year.

Ceci said that, although there had been some discussion at the special budget meeting about charging vendors for participation in the native plant sale, on consideration she recommended not changing the previous arrangements, i.e., not charging the vendors and continuing to offer them lunch. The aim was to get native plants into people's yards. She would try to book the parking lot across from Gough Park for the 8th or the 15th of August. Margie suggested that, unlike last year, we could have a booth selling the plants that Priscilla Titus cultivated for us.

Ceci posed some questions: Would there be a GNPS table for taking memberships and gathering emails of interested people? Yes. Did we have plant care sheets? No. What aspects were stressful? Margie noted that it was difficult to keep buyers out until the official opening. Marty commented that it did not work if vendors sent plants and expected us to sell them. Ceci suggested that we should have monitors or guides roaming around with some identifying badge, hat or apron, and possibilities were canvassed.

A discussion ensued on how we defined a native plant. Naava said that at some point we needed to have a conversation about our stance towards cultivars. After discussion, it was agreed that for purposes of the native plant sale this year we would not define a native plant too rigorously or set the geographic boundaries too narrowly.

Table at CDT Days: Betty said that, although the Continental Divide Trail Days tabling event at Gough Park was scheduled for April 25th, only one week after Give Grandly, the event was particularly pertinent for organizations focused on conservation and the outdoors. She was willing to organize the tabling, if the Board was in favor of our participation.

> **The Board agreed that GNPS would participate in the Continental Divide Trail Days tabling event at Gough Park on April 25, 2026.**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Spence, Secretary
Gila Native Plant Society

Appendix 1:

Minutes for the Special Budget Meeting

of the GNPS Board

Monday, February 9, 2026, 1:00 to 4:00 pm

The meeting was held at The Seedboat Collective, 214 W. Yankie St.

Present: Donna Stevens, President; Cara Staab, Vice-President; Naava Koenigsberg, Treasurer; Betty Spence, Secretary; Margie Gibson, Past President; Marty Eberhardt, Elroy Limmer, Carol Martin, Ceci McNicoll, David Phillips, Sheila Williams. [None absent.]

This was a special meeting to discuss annual budget and priorities, and therefore did not follow standard meeting procedures, format, or documentation.

Comparison of 2025 and 2026 budgets: We briefly compared 2025 net income/expenses with preliminary projections for 2026 to provide context for refining the draft budget. Many of the 2026 figures were based on 2025 numbers, roughly adjusted for inflation.

2026 Line-item Expenditures: Pre-identified questions were discussed to resolve.

- Board Expenses: Do we want to include $600 for Board training?
    - Yes, because training could help the Board be more efficient and cohesive.
- Conservation/Advocacy Committee: Should the budget include funds for this currently inactive committee, since it could re-activate as issues evolve?
    - No, Their primary activities (review of and response to issues) seldom require money.
- Grants, Gifts, Community Support: Should GNPS allocate to items in this category?
    - Yes, $1000 to the NPSNM's Carter Fund.
    - No, $0 to GNPS community grants; reconsider in a future year.
    - Yes, $500 to appreciation gifts, which will always be needed.
- Program Meetings: How much should we allocate to this cause?
    - $1482 for room rental, meals, mileage, no-host lodging, misc.
        - See Related Discussions below.
- Contracted Volunteer Coordinator: How much, if any, should GNPS allocate to this?
    - $2000 for conference-specific needs.
    - See Related Discussions below.

Related Discussions on Budget and Priorities

- Contracted Volunteer Coordinator (joint GNPS & SCBG):
    - There have been repeated challenges filling the position.

    - It may also be challenging to find new presidents willing to supervise.
    - In 2026, SCBG will be the primary funder and beneficiary of the position ($5000 / 5 hours per week).
    - GNPS will allocate $2000 to fund contractor for conference volunteer recruitment.
- Program Meetings:
    - In future years, consider funding meals for speakers only.
    - To encourage volunteer participation with refreshments, the Programs chair will discontinue providing snacks, beverages, paperware, etc.
- Conservation/Advocacy Committee: Donna informed the Board that she recently responded on behalf of GNPS about new mining claims being staked around Pinos Altos. In the future, she will poll the board for participation in conservation issues, which Margie affirmed is the normal procedure.
- Food Co-Op Donations:
    - How do we allocate income from the food co-op's round-up donations?
        - Split equally between GNPS and SCBG (estimated $500 each).
- Give Grandly – April 18th:
    - This important income generator needs a coordinator.
    - Donna is gathering information to enable the coordinator and will get us listed on Candid.
- CDT Days – Apr 23-26:
    - Occurs the weekend after Give Grandly. If our capacity is low, we could forgo tabling.
- Endowment:
    - Our fund had approximately $7000 in gains from last year.
    - What policy do we want on gains or use of investment?
    - Motion passed unanimously:
        - "A minimum balance of $50,000 plus cost of living adjustment shall be maintained, consisting of the current value of mutual funds held at Edward Jones. Use of the funds is considered "restricted," only in that withdrawals must support the mission of the Gila Native Plant Society.

          The board will consider annually allocating all or part of the one-year return from the highest-earning mutual fund. Additional funds for special projects may be withdrawn with GNPS board approval, providing the minimum balance is maintained."
    - Intention of the motion included:

        - Maintaining a minimum balance of $50k + cola so it could grow rather than stagnate if there were repeated withdrawals.
        - Allocating dividends, when appropriate to circumstances.
        - Fund special projects, when appropriate to circumstances.
- Native Plant Sale – Do we have capacity to run it, and if so, who will lead?:
    - Ceci stepped forward to lead. Notably, Tricia Hurley expressed willingness as well.
    - Ceci will work with Don to get info about past vendors, processes, etc.
    - The sale has components of tabling, permits, vendor communications, advertising, etc.
    - The Board will reconsider the existing business model, re: expenses and incomes.
- Storing and Building on What We've Learned:
    - Ceci will develop a template to document our business knowledge. The intent is to garner and build on what's been working for our volunteers.

Appendix 2:

Garden Committee 2026
(Policy, Planning and Management)
Chair: Marty Eberhardt
Members: Margie Gibson, Naava Koenigsberg, Elroy Limmer, Sheila Williams

Responsibilities:

Marty Eberhardt:
- Supervision of volunteer coordinator
- Lead: Education and Outreach
  - Family Day
  - Docent Training
  - Docent Tours
  - Donor/Volunteer recognition
- Habitat Thicket (Lead: Susan Campbell)

Margie Gibson:
- Lead: Workdays
  - Front Yard Garden
  - Kiosk
- Propagation (Lead: Priscilla Titus)

Naava Koenigsberg:
- Lead: Medicinal/Ethnobotany Garden
  - Butterfly Garden
  - Bicycle Mitigation
- Watering (Lead TBD)

Elroy Limmer:
- Lead: Maintenance

Sheila Williams :
- Lead: Gardening Advice