



Board Meeting Minutes, Wednesday, May 20, 2026, 2:00-3:30 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, Carol Martin, Ceci McNicoll, David Phillips, Sheila Williams

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the Board meeting of March 18, 2026, were approved.

Unfinished and General Business

Plant Sale update: Ceci reported that three of the vendors she had contacted had committed to participating: Ethical Desert, Upper Gila Watershed Alliance and Lone Mountain Natives. She would try again to contact the others on her list.

Margie noted that the Gila Watershed Partnership in Safford, a vendor in the past, was having some difficulties. Betty suggested that a phone call to Gabe Feldman at Honey Hawk Farm might be productive. Naava suggested that it might be worth contacting Plants of the Southwest, even though they were based in Santa Fe and Albuquerque; she would share contact information with Ceci.

In response to Ceci's question about publicity for the native plant sale, Betty said that she had the information from last year and would share it at the next meeting.

Sponsorship of the 2027 Natural History of the Gila Symposium: Donna reported that she had clarified with the organizers of the Natural History of the Gila Symposium that organizations that sponsored the Symposium at the level of \$250 or more would be able to have a table in the lobby. After some discussion, the sense was that GNPS would like to sponsor, but it was agreed the decision could be tabled until after the state conference.

Board and Committee Reports

Silva Creek Botanical Garden Committee Report: On April 26 Marty had circulated an interim report on the garden. In her update she reported that more people had shown up at the most recent work party. Waterers had been lined up. The current focus of work was on the Front

Yard Garden; yard art in the form of the façade of a small metal house would be created to illustrate the idea of a front yard. She had recontacted the Town about allowing \$7,500 in support for garden operations, but did not know yet whether the Town would budget anything. The Garden Committee had applied for a grant for the Volunteer Coordinator, but that was uncertain.

Marty reminded the Board that Family Day at the Garden was scheduled for July 11. She had lined up music, a puppet show and six activity tables. Heart of the Gila would be doing butterfly releases. Volunteers would be stationed at different areas of the garden to provide information about them. She herself would be away from May 21 to June 11 and would work on a press release when she returned. Docent classes would take place on July 18 and 25 and August 1.

Carol suggested a donation jar on the table at Family Day.

Field Trip Report: Donna said Steve Mudge had reported that eight people had participated in the Boston Hill field trip, which he thought was very successful.

Treasurer's Report: Prior to the meeting Naava had circulated the Treasurer's Report for the first quarter 2026, with separate summaries of income and expenditure by project and separate summaries of accounts for GNPS in general and the Silva Creek Botanical Garden specifically. She noted that the proceeds of Give Grandly 2026 had not been fully received and calculated by the end of the quarter. There was a decrease of \$5,100.80 in the asset value of the Edward Jones mutual fund due to market fluctuations.

Conference update: Cara reported that Margie was compiling the full program and registration information for the state conference in September for the July 1st issue of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico newsletter. Enough field trips or workshops had been arranged for all the anticipated participants. Since the deadline for submissions for the newsletter was May 25th, the conference planning committee had been working hard on the program.

Registration would begin on July 1. The cost for NPSNM members would be \$145 if they registered by July 31, or \$160 after that; registration would close on August 21. The cost of the banquet was \$45, and registrants could also opt to purchase a hat with the conference logo. Naava urged the planning committee to be sure to charge enough to cover expenses.

Cara also reported that the Tituses had sent out notification of the opportunity for Sunflower Scholarships (for students or interns presenting posters at the conference) to 60 entities (agencies, academic institutions, NGOs, and individuals).

Continental Divide Trail Days and Book Inventory: Betty reported that it had been worthwhile to have a table at CDT Days. We had sold \$311 worth of books and posters and had many visitors interested in talking about native plants.

After the event she had checked with Rick Lass and Naava on the supply of our publications and determined that we were very low on two popular titles, *Common Southwestern Native Plants: An Identification Guide* and *Beginner's Guide to Planting Native Perennials of the Gila Region*. According to Rick, *Common Southwestern Native Plants* was available from the Colorado Native Plant Society at a cost of \$200 for 16, plus shipping. Betty recalled that the *Beginner's Guides* were printed by Copies on the Run at under \$5 a copy. Naava suggested purchasing 32 of *Common Southwestern Native Plants* and printing 50 of the *Beginner's Guide to Planting Native Perennials*.

Motion: The Board approved the purchase of 32 copies of *Common Southwestern Native Plants: An Identification Guide* and 50 copies of *Beginner's Guide to Planting Native Perennials of the Gila Region*.

New Business

Budget Amendment for Book Purchases: Naava said that, since we had already used up our budgeted amount for 2026 for books and related expenses (that included rental on the storage unit), we should approve an additional amount to be added to the budget for that purpose. She would suggest \$800 to cover the estimated cost of the two items with a little margin.

Motion: The Board approved an addition of \$800 to the 2026 budget for books and related expenses.

Naava suggested we might want to increase the price on some of our titles. We needed to be sure to cover our costs, including shipping, and there was no harm in making a small profit. The discussion on what to charge for the publications was tabled until we had further information about the cost of the publications.

SCBG Grasslands Garden Plan and Budget: Marty circulated a draft budget for the proposed Chihuahuan Grasslands section of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden, and Margie displayed a detailed plan prepared by Steve Mudge, a landscape architect. The Grasslands Garden would fill in the middle of the garden – now somewhat lacking – and would bring cohesion to the whole.

With regard to grant possibilities, Marty reported that she and Margie had met with Jennifer Pedneau of the Petrie Foundation. The Foundation originally had been interested in our plan for a pollinator garden, but that plan needed to be rethought to make it simpler. We were now trying to sell the idea of the Grasslands Garden to the Petrie Foundation, which would require a plan and a budget before deciding whether they would invite us to apply for a grant. The Garden Committee had come up with a draft budget, adding benches and signage in addition to Steve's plan.

Naava noted that, if the Petrie Foundation did invite us to apply for a grant, we would come up with a more detailed budget. Board members were very pleased with the plan to enhance the underdeveloped center of the garden.

Motion: The Board approved the plan developed by Steve Mudge for a Grasslands Garden and the draft budget to be presented to the Petrie Foundation.

Use of Give Grandly Funds for the Crevice Garden Workshop: Donna recalled that GNPS had received \$5,700 in donations from the Give Grandly fundraiser. The question was how to allocate those funds.

Sheila explained that Mike Kintgen of the Denver Botanic Garden was willing to come down to conduct a two-day workshop at the state conference to create a crevice garden in the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. He said it should be possible to finish it in 7 hours. His plan was smaller than originally contemplated and would require a different location, in the sun and out of the way of tours. Funds would be needed for materials. She would like to know if the Board was supportive of the workshop, which would benefit the garden. Mike Kintgen had a world reputation in the field.

Board members were supportive and agreed in principle to share some of the Give Grandly funds but would like to see some figures of the amount needed before voting on it.

New Officer Recruitment: Donna reminded the Board that in November GNPS officers were to be elected to serve in 2027-2028. She herself did not intend to run again for President. Cara said that she would not be seeking another term as Vice-President. Naava agreed to serve another term as Treasurer, provided she could have the support of a bookkeeper; she would explore that possibility with several people. Betty agreed to run again as Secretary. A nominating committee was needed to search for candidates for President and Vice-President.

In order to involve more members, Margie suggested creating a member survey, asking them what skills and interests they had that they could contribute to the organization.

Carter Conservation Award Nomination Process: Donna reminded the Board that it would be its responsibility to choose the recipient of the Jack and Martha Carter Native Plant Conservation Award on the occasion of the state conference. It was agreed that we would reach out to members for their ideas on who they would nominate as the conservation hero. Donna and Betty would work on a MailChimp.

New Mexico Backyard Refuge Program. May 21 Webinar: Donna asked if any of the Board members were interested in participating in the Webinar to be held on May 21, 2026, at 7:00 pm concerning the New Mexico Backyard Refuge Program. The program had been started in Albuquerque but was trying to expand statewide. Naava said that she would attend and report back.

Other Business:

Cows near the Big Tree Trail in Fort Bayard: Margie reported that cows were being allowed to graze in that area to accommodate the Crumley Ranch, which had lost an allotment to the Trout Fire. The cows were doing considerable damage and were possibly straying beyond the permitted area. Perhaps we could encourage members to send letters to the Forest Service. Marty said she and Donna could bring the issue to the attention of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness, who did much of that kind of monitoring. Cara said that detailed information was needed; we might refer the issue to Dave Becker of our Conservation Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Spence, Secretary
Gila Native Plant Society

Appendix: Decisions taken by exchange of email since March 18, 2026

Motion: On April 25, 2026, the Board authorized the Conservation Committee to participate in the public hearing on the Roadless Rule in Grant County to be organized by New Mexico Wild and Heart of the Gila and to submit comments on behalf of the Gila Native Plant Society expressing our opposition to rescinding the Roadless Rule. The Board also agreed to invite our membership to attend the hearing and/or to submit comments.

Motion: On April 26, 2026, the Board agreed that the GNPS, through its Conservation Committee, should sign on to a letter drafted by New Mexico Wild to the Bureau of Land Management expressing concerns about the mining project proposed by the firm of Almadex America Inc. in the Antelope Pass area of the Peloncillos.

Motion: On May 6, 2026, the Board approved the comment letter drafted by Dave Becker of the Conservation Committee on behalf of GNPS addressed to the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, about proposed geothermal leases on BLM land in southern New Mexico.