

Welcome to the 2026 Annual Member Meeting

We will be starting momentarily. If you have questions or comments during the meeting, please add them to the chat.



*Photo Credit: Sterling Herron, Highlands Chapter
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Advocacy in Action*



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*Photo Credit: MAC Camacho-Viera, Tarflower Chapter
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Advocacy in Action*



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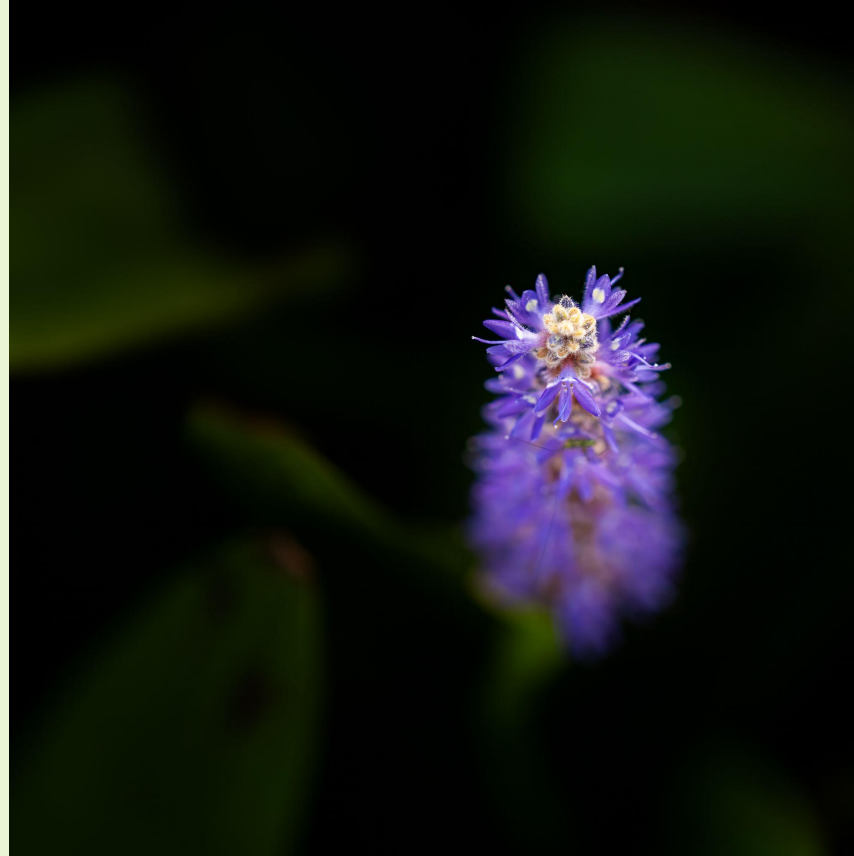


*Photo Credit: Mike Franqui, Ixia Chapter
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Artistic Interpretations*



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*Photo Credit: Satesh Ramjattan, Broward Chapter
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Artistic Interpretations*



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*Photo Credit: Janae Hernandez
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Artistic Interpretations*



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*Photo Credit: Brian Podlisny, Paynes Prairie Chapter
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Native Plants in their Habitat*



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*Photo Credit: Julie Mitchell
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Native Plants in their Habitat*



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*Photo Credit: Garret Hall, Magnolia Chapter
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Native Plants in their Habitat*



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*Photo Credit: Shelby Radcliffe, Marion Big Scrub Chapter
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Home Landscapes w/ Native Plants*



Welcome to the 2026 Annual Member Meeting

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*Photo Credit: Brian Kamprath
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Wide Landscapes w/ Native Plants*



Welcome to the 2026 Annual Member Meeting

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*Photo Credit: Paul Strauss, Martin County Chapter
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Wide Landscapes w/ Native Plants*



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*Photo Credit: Lora Lekos, Palm Beach County Chapter
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Wide Landscapes w/ Native Plants*



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*Photo Credit: Kristina Gavigan, At-Large Member
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Wildlife & Plant Interactions*



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*Photo Credit: Lora Lekos, Palm Beach County Chapter
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Wildlife & Plant Interactions*



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*Photo Credit: Paul Strauss, Martin County Chapter
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Wildlife & Plant Interactions*



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*Photo Credit: Merranda Docksey
2025 Photo Contest Winner - Youth Photography*



Welcome to the 2026 Annual Member Meeting

...celebrating 46 years of native plant conservation

July 18, 2026



We recorded nearly 87,000 hours of volunteer service in 2025, with an estimated value of nearly \$3 million. Fully 94 percent of those volunteer hours were contributed by the chapters.



- All Time Record of 457 Registrants for 2025 Conference
- 33 Chapters + new UF Student Club
 - Incl. 2 new chapters (Beluthahatchee and Highlands)
- > 1.4 million website visits
- > 58,000 Facebook followers
- 4 dedicated, professional staffers
 - Executive Director - Melissa Fernandez
 - Communications Director - Valerie Anderson
 - Operations Director - Cherice Smithers
 - North FL Program Director - Lilly Anderson-Messec



Lilly's work with *Torreya* now published in the American Journal of Botany



Valerie Anderson with Dicerandra Intern Kristin Luckock



Cherice is the backbone of FNPS



Melissa Fernandez (center), our intrepid leader, botanizing with Sea Rocket



Council of Chapters

- Building Community
- Sharing Resources
- Supporting Chapters



Retreat at Archbold Biological Station (February 2026)



Retreat at Archbold Biological Station (February 2026)



Looking Ahead

We are planning another retreat (Date TBD)

- Continue to grow relationships
- Develop useful skills
- Strengthen our chapters
- Inspiration and fun!



Thank you



Thank you to Maggie Ulman
(Martin County)

Going to Duke University!



Welcome to New Leaders!

- Alyssa Sferrazza (Sea Rocket) - Secretary
- Nell Calhoun (Nature Coast)- Assistant Secretary & Youth Ambassador
- Danielle Calhoun (Nature Coast) - Leadership Strategist
- Michelle Anaya (Suncoast) - Marketing Consultant



A LIVING MOSAIC

Connecting People, Plants, & Places

April 1-4, 2027
Shores Resort & Spa
Daytona Beach, FL



The 2027 State Conference

Bigger!
Bolder!!
Beachier!!!





April 1-4, 2027 at the Shores Resort & Spa Daytona Beach

What To Expect

**Field Trips Galore!
2 Scenic Socials + Banquet
40 Sessions &
Research Presentations
Plant Sale & Vendors
Fun & Practical Workshops**

**Silent Auction
Plant ID Contest
Meet With FNPS Leaders
The Book Signing Is Back!
Longer Lunches
And You!**

**Thank You Pawpaw Chapter For Bringing Us To
Daytona**



Conservation Committee

- **Committee Members:** Jennifer Cobb Adams, Laura Bennett-Kimble, Julie Becker, Neal Halstead, Amy Morie, Kimee Bremner, John Benton – **more members are welcome!**
- **Meeting on the third Tuesday** of most months at 6:30 pm
- **Responsibilities** – Manage applications for the annual Conservation Grant Award, assist with Land Management Reviews, promote conservation efforts of FNPS on a statewide or regional scale.



Land Management Reviews

What are these reviews and why is FNPS involved? All state-owned public lands must be reviewed for compliance with an approved management plan at either five or ten-year intervals. These lands contain important and rare plants and ecosystems. Their maintenance is crucial to Florida's biodiversity. This is an opportunity to visit the areas with staff and assess how the management plan is being implemented. FNPS is fortunate to be invited to participate as representatives of the conservation interests – other interests are present too, such as recreation and hunting interests. **In 2025-26, there were 17 Reviews, FNPS participated in 16 of those.**



Land Management Reviews



Usually a two-day process – one day in-person tour, second day may be a video meeting.

We try to enlist local members for each review.

Training is available! **If you are interested, let John or Melissa know!**

- jbenton@fnps.org or mfernandez@fnps.org



Grant Awards 2026

Conservation Grant Main Award – To Rosi Mullholland - Seed Collection, Propagation, and Planting of *Warea amplexifolia*, Lake County, Florida. A collaboration with FNPS volunteers, private landowners, Bok Tower Gardens, and St. Johns River Water Management District to enhance the extent and genetic diversity of *W. amplexifolia*

Conservation Grant Partial Award – Thomas Green – Control of woody species in wet areas of Point Washington State Park, third year

Dan Austin Ethnobiology Award - There were no applicants for 2026

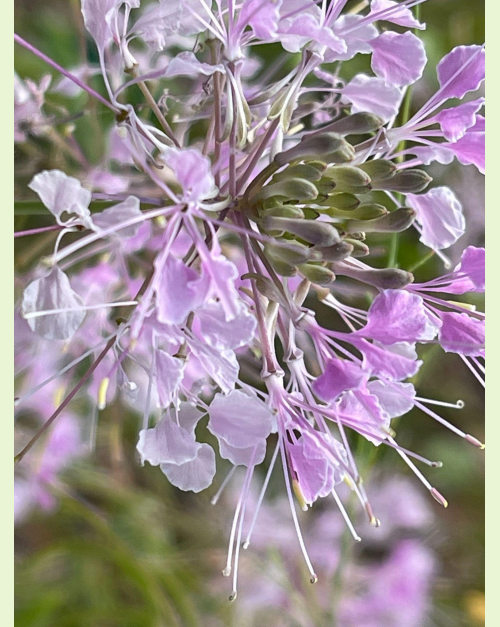


Photo by Susan Carr



Policy and Legislation Committee 2026 Annual Report

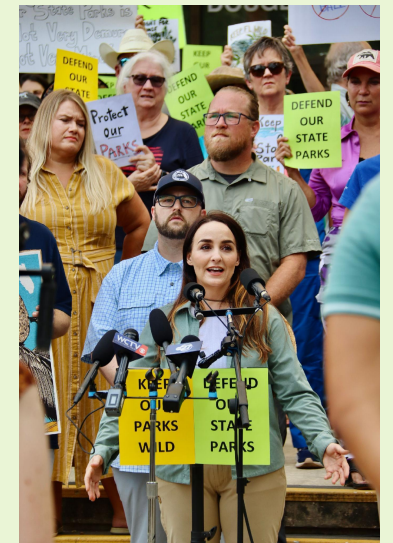
Committee Members: Lynn Artz, Joan Bausch, Susan Carr, Chadd Charland, Sara Delessio, Eugene Kelly, David Perkey, Winnie Said and Melissa Fernandez (*Ex Officio*)

Government Affairs Consultant: Travis Moore



2026 Legislative Session Primary Successes

- **PASSED:** *Coastal Resilience* (SB 302 by Sen Garcia) promotes “nature-based” (native plant based) approaches to prevent coastal erosion and requires the state to provide guidelines.
- **PASSED:** *Conservation Lands* (HB 441) requires 30 days advance public notice and comments for any future proposals to “swap” state-owned conservation land for development.
- **STOPPED:** *Blue Ribbon Projects* (SB 354 by McClain) allowed large (15,000+ acre) development projects to bypass local regs.



FNPS advocacy worked in 2026!



2026 Legislative Session Primary Successes

- **2026-2027 BUDGET** awarded \$216,000 to *Endangered and Threatened Native Flora Conservation Grants*.
- **STATUS OF FEDERAL FUNDING REMAINS UNCERTAIN** for *Florida Statewide Endangered and Threatened Plant Conservation Grants*.
- FNPS *Dicerandra* and *Torreya* projects were funded by federal grants and Florida Wildflower Foundation.
- These grant programs support essential native plant research by Bok Tower Gardens, Archbold Biological Station, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Atlanta Botanical Garden and others.



Blushing Scrub Balm



Torreya sprouts

2026 Legislative Session

Other Successes

- **STOPPED:** *Cattle Grazing on State Lands* (HB 1421) required all state lands to consider suitability for cattle grazing; amended thru collaboration of Rep Lindsay Cross, Florida Springs Council and FNPS to require consideration of ecological and recreational constraints. Passed House, failed in Senate.
- **PASSED – THEN VETOED:** *Biosolids* (HB 1245) required land applications of Class AA biosolids (sewage sludge) cannot exceed the capacity of the pasture or crop to take up nutrients.



2026 Legislative Session

Other Successes

- **PASSED – BUT DENIED A FINAL VOTE ON THE SENATE FLOOR:**
Tributaries of the St Johns River (SB 1066) required FDEP to develop a plan for the restoration of the Ocklawaha River, apply for permits and create the Northeast Florida River and Springs Recreation and Economic Development Advisory Council.



Kirkpatrick Dam/Rodman Reservoir



Other Outcomes of the Legislative Session

- **MAJOR DISAPPOINTMENT – FLORIDA FOREVER DENIED NEW FUNDING:** The Legislature violated their own requirement to provide a minimum of \$100 million to Florida Forever and the Governor declined our request to veto provisions that transferred land conservation funding to “other priorities”. FNPS will be positioned as a major champion of land conservation among new legislative leadership and an incoming Governor.
- We have legislators ready to partner with FNPS to enact stronger protections for conservation easements purchased by the state.
- We are positioned to partner with select legislators to enact comprehensive regulations controlling data center development.



Advocacy Beyond Legislative Session

- **Central Polk Parkway East Extension** alignment changed following FNPS pressure to protect the only natural population of Blushing Scrub Balm.
- **Opposed Construction** of Alligator Alcatraz detention center.
- **Support for Local Moratoria on Data Centers** and working with select legislators to develop comprehensive statewide regulations.
- **Opposed development of SR70 to SR66 expressway** based on projected impacts to imperiled plant species and habitats.
- **Support for Local Land Conservation Programs** including Volusia Forever and proposed Ridge to River referendum in Highlands County.



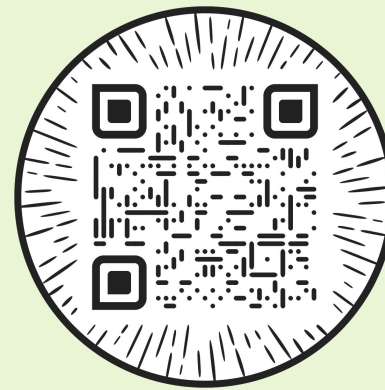
We are extremely grateful to all the members who receive and act upon our Action Alerts. The effectiveness of our advocacy for native plant conservation depends on your continuing support and participation!

If you would like to be more involved...

Sign up to receive our Action Alerts



Donate to our first-ever targeted fund drive specifically to support the work of your Policy and Legislation Committee



Science Advisory Committee Annual Report

Committee Chair: Paul Schmalzer, Ph.D.; members: Suzanne Koptur, Ph.D., Jon Moore, Ph.D., Gage LaPierre, Ph.D., Kim Zarillo, M.S.

FNPS Annual Membership Meeting
July 18, 2026



Barbara Grigg Grant

The Barbara Grigg Grant for the Study of Bryophytes, Pteridophytes, and Lichens is a two-year grant of \$5000 per year that was funded by a donation in honor of Barbara Grigg.

Dr. Grigg was a botanist, educator, and long-standing member of the Florida Native Plant Society who completed her dissertation on the *Lichens of Florida*.

We received 11 applications for the new award. Dr. William (Bill) Buck, Curator Emeritus, New York Botanical Garden, helped review applications for this grant. The applications were of high quality.



Barbara Grigg Grant (cont.)

One grant was selected by the review committee and approved by the FNPS Board.

The grant was awarded to Dr. Weston Testo, Department of Plant Biology, University of Vermont for the project *Evolutionary origins, genetic diversity, and conservation status of the endemic Florida spleenwort Asplenium plenum*.

Asplenium plenum is a rare fern that is only known from a handful of populations in Sumter and Citrus counties, Florida, where it occurs in shaded limestone grottoes. Little is known about the biology of *A. plenum*.



Research Awards 2026

Call for applications. Received 10 proposals for 2026 Research Grant Awards. Three were recommended for funding after review by the committee, and these were approved by FNPS Board.

Amy Faivre, Ph.D., Department of Biological Sciences, Cedar Crest College, Measuring population genetic diversity and reproductive biology of threatened *Clitoria fragrans* (pigeon wings – Fabaceae), a Florida endemic.

Alassane Sow, University of Florida, Plant Pathology Department, *Unde venistis?* Investigating the range, emergence, and evolution of *Parvodontia relampaga* in Florida forests and on native plant species. Note: This project investigates a recently described fungal pathogen that effects *Torreya taxifolia*, *Taxus floridana*, and other species.

Luke Sparreo, New York Botanical Garden, Systematics of the North American pitcher plants *Sarracenia* and their symbiotic mites *Sarraceniopus* for insight into potential coevolutionary relationships.



Research Grant Awards 2026 (cont.)

Funding of Research Grants is from contributions from individuals and Chapters and earnings of the FNPS Endowment.

Thanks to the Sea Rocket Chapter for a \$500 donation this year and to all who contributed to the endowment this year and in the past.



Finance Committee 2025-2026

Members: Ann Redmond (Chair), Gene Kelly, Athena Phillips, Chris Moran, Bonnie Basham, Melissa Fernandez (Ex Officio)

We're the boring committee that works year-round to keep
FNPS' financial underpinnings sustainable



Finance Committee Charter



- ❖ **Responsible for the long range strategic financial planning for the Society.**
- ❖ To make recommendations to the Board concerning needed financial policy changes, policy requirements, or policy creation or dissolution regarding the Society's financial stability.
- ❖ Advise the President and the Board of Directors of investment and expenditure strategies for long range planning.
- ❖ To be knowledgeable of the current state of the FNPS budget, profit and loss statements, balance sheets, and major financial instruments or accounts.
- ❖ Advise the President and the Board of Directors of investment and expenditure strategies for long range planning.



Timeline - 2025

Summer

- ❖ Began discussing how to fund educational murals or placement around Florida
- ❖ Updated financial account signatories
- ❖ Assessing options for Core chapter banking (they don't need an EIN)
- ❖ Reviewed/approved raffle guidelines
- ❖ Developed draft Parental leave policy
- ❖ Determined approach for annual appeal

Autumn

- ❖ Collaborate w/ED Fernandez on assessing whether to update our membership dues
- ❖ Purchased CDs after tracking and waiting for favorable rates – 3 yr at Vanguard, 1 yr at Live Oak Bank
- ❖ Annual Appeal developed/disseminated
- ❖ Collaborated with ED Fernandez on 2025-26 budget, which included staff raises
- ❖ Assessed Warea property's financial needs for 2026

Timeline - 2026

Winter-Spring

- ❖ Collaborated with staff on new membership fee launches (individual and business)
- ❖ Began discussion of providing startup funds for new chapters, adding to next year's budget
- ❖ Worked with Bylaws Update team to allow for both Core and Affiliate Chapters
- ❖ Closed Wells Fargo bank account
- ❖ Beginning to set up sub-accounts at Chase for chapters

Spring-Summer

- ❖ Began to receive payouts of 2025 employee pay designation from UF United Way Fund
- ❖ Major concerns about new bookkeeper's lack of responsiveness, chronically late reports, errors in payments. Ended their contract in April.
- ❖ Tracking fundraising campaigns' progress, including conference fundraising
- ❖ Updating workflows to publish Dr. Andre Clewell's book
- ❖ ED Fernandez to open discussions to deed Warea property to Putnam Land Conservancy
- ❖ Endorsed selection of new bookkeeper



❖ Contact me at aredmond@fnps.org



Introducing the Native Habitat Certification Program

Landscape Certification Working Group



A new way to recognize your native landscape supporting pollinators, wildlife, & biodiversity in your own yard.

Now in development, here's an early look.



Members

Group Lead: Christine Andrews (Pinellas)
Douglas Hook (Conradina), Sanne Kure-Jensen (Pinellas)



How Certification Works



Five tiers, one path: from your first pollinator pot to a fully restored landscape.

Higher tiers unlock added recognition from a certificate to a yard sign.

A 6th option, Champion, is reserved for municipalities, Restricted Communities, & private business who have restrictions but still choose to prioritize native plants in their landscaping.



What's Next



Applications are opening later this year.

Stay tuned for details on how to get your yard certified!



Mission Statement Update

THE purpose of the Corporation is to gather information and educate the public through published materials, conferences, meetings, lectures, and liaison with individuals and organizations about native plants and native plant communities of the State of Florida, and their preservation, conservation and restoration.

Our Mission Statement must reflect this purpose.

The Bylaws Committee, BOD, COC, and Chapters met and discussed mission statement options. Here is what came out of the discussions... introducing our updated mission statement!



Mission Statement Update

Motto
What we do

↑ **To conserve, preserve and restore**
↓ **Florida's native plants and their habitats**
↑ through science-based education, research,
↓ advocacy, horticulture, landscaping, and
↑ engaged participation by our members and
↓ communities.

How we do it



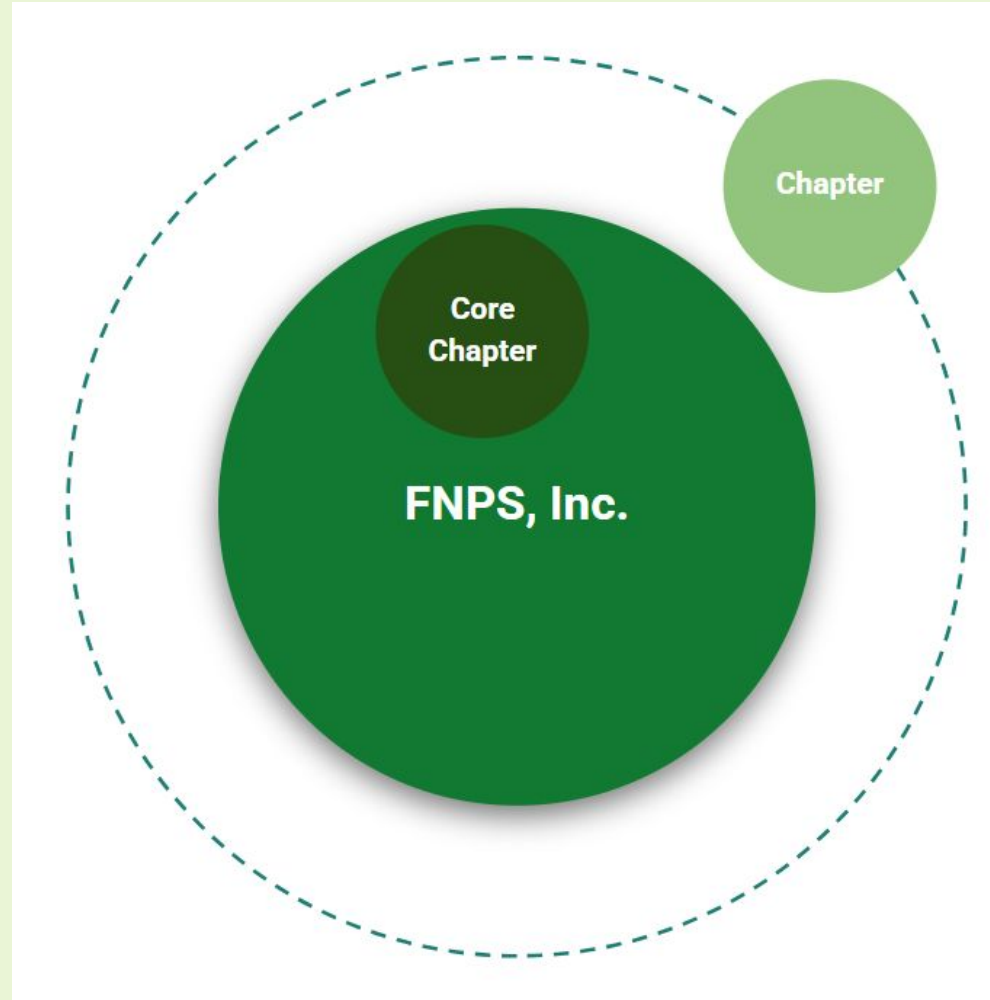
Introducing the Core Chapter

Core Chapters

Are within the FNPS Inc umbrella as a subsidiary – hence “Core”

We share an EIN and FNPS files all the annual paperwork and taxes, sets up a business checking account for them, and can more intimately support their needs

Chapter boards are replaced with a Leadership Team, which still have fiduciary responsibility



Chapter (Affiliates)

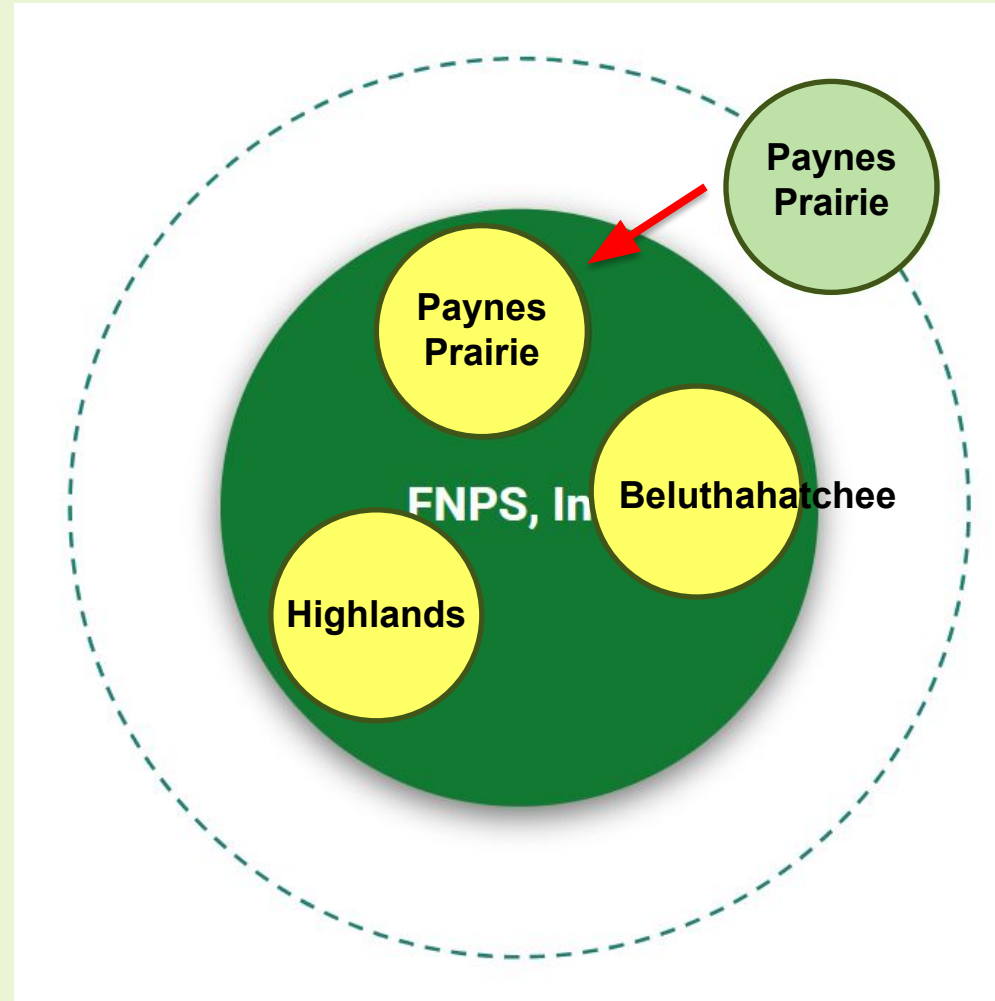
Are separate legal entities with their own EIN and file their own annual paperwork and taxes

All are 501c3's

Chapters are independent in acquiring bank accounts and handling hand-overs between outgoing and incoming board members

Chapters have board with fiduciary responsibility to uphold

Our Current Core Chapters



Introducing New Business Member Tiers

Tier	Price	Employee Membership	Directory Listing	Event Discounts	Early Bird Conference Pricing	Business Calendar Posting	Newsletter Mention	Palmetto Listing	Printed Palmetto
Seed Steward	\$150/yr	1	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Plant Partner	\$350/yr	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Habitat Hero	\$600/yr	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Conservation Champion	\$900/yr	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Social Media Working Group

Collaborate as a team on improving social media marketing and expanding reach on all platforms, including marketing events like selling out in-person Plant ID Retreat Tickets, plus individual Special Projects, detailed below

Catherine Bemis

Magnolia Chapter

Increase Action Alert
social media reach

Event photography

Jamieson Clancy

Magnolia Chapter

Evaluating existing
videos for performance
+ republishing

New post series on
planting for HOAs +
facebook group posting

MonaLiza B

Mangrove Chapter

Improving overall
messaging + team
social media workflow



FNPS Internship Program

Adult on Pink Flowers

An infected adult monarch emerges, carrying OE throughout its body and life.

As it feeds on milkweed nectar and mates, the cycle continues: spores are shed onto plants, contaminating the next generation of caterpillars.

Breaking this cycle depends on preserving healthy native milkweed populations on conserved land and restoring milkweed habitat where it has been lost.



Adult Monarch

Adult monarchs visit milkweed plants to lay eggs.

As they forage and deposit their eggs on milkweed leaves and stems, they may inadvertently shed OE spores, a protozoan parasite that clings to the plant's surface.

Once on the plant surface, OE spores can persist for several weeks or longer, depending on environmental conditions like moisture and temperature.

This means a single infected butterfly can contaminate a milkweed plant, creating a reservoir of infection that poses a risk to any caterpillar that feeds on it during that window.



Brianna Molina, Educational 2D Artist

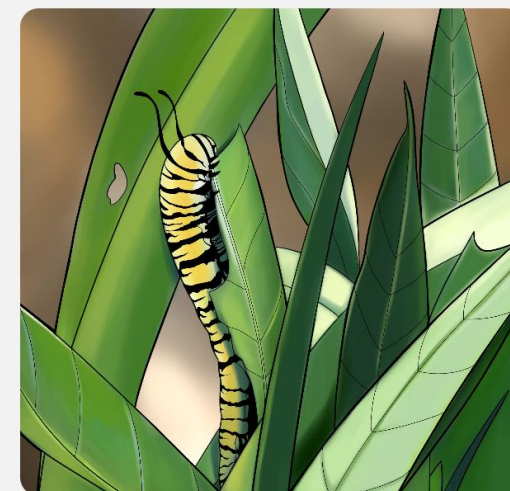
Caterpillar on Leaves

Monarch caterpillars consume milkweed leaves exclusively during their larval stage.

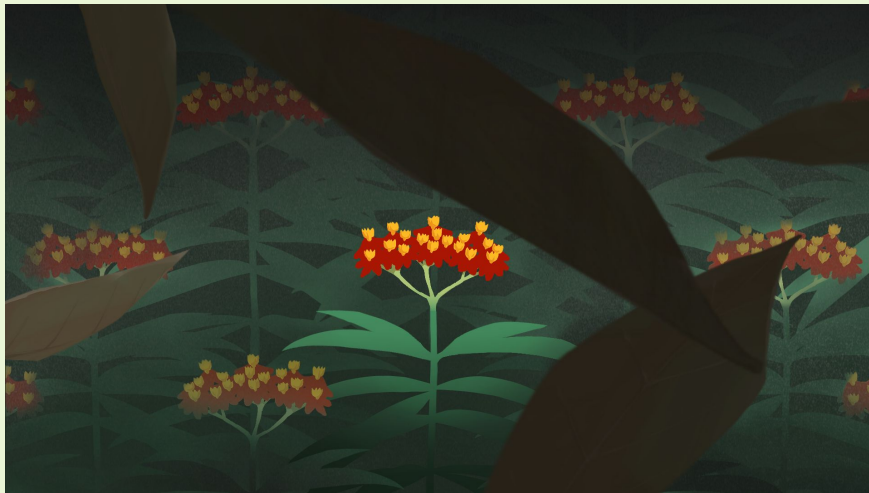
If the plant is contaminated with OE spores shed by infected adults, the caterpillar ingests the parasite while feeding, beginning an infection that will persist into adulthood.

Infected monarchs face serious consequences: malformed or crumpled wings, reduced flight ability, shortened lifespans, and diminished reproductive capacity.

These fitness costs can be lethal, particularly for monarchs undertaking the demanding multi-generational migration to Mexico.



FNPS Internship Program



Kristen Molina, Educational Animation

FNPS Internship Florida Scrub Mint Internship FNPS/FWF Partnership

Program: A joint FNPS–Florida Wildflower Foundation internship providing hands-on conservation career pathways.

Term: Aug 10 – Dec 10, 2026 | Part-time, 24 hrs/week

Core Duties:

- Survey public/private lands for *Dicerandra* (scrub mint) species
- Collect and map plant location/demographic data
- Recruit and manage volunteers
- Plan Dicerandra Day (October) and produce educational/social media content

Location: Field work in Polk & Marion counties; intern based anywhere in FL

Ideal Candidate: Undergraduate or graduate student in environmental science, biology, ecology, or related field; comfortable in rugged outdoor terrain; strong communication and leadership skills.



News & Upcoming Events

Endangered species grant is back!

- The renewal of this grant is made possible by a generous donation from Chris Calder, who initiated the grant in 2020. He is a Cuplet Fern member who wants to advance the knowledge of our native plant heritage.
- If you would like to donate to contribute to this grant, or our Science endowment, contact me at executivedirector@fnps.org

Native plant themed retreat planning is underway!

- Our inaugural Plant ID Retreat was a fun and educational experience
- We can't get enough 1:1 time with members and learning with experts so another one is underway in central Florida



Top: *Torreya taxifolia*

Bottom: Plant ID Retreat, Torreya State Park, June 2026



Make-a-Will Month

Protect Florida's Wild Places for Generations to Come

August is Make a Will Month, the perfect time to consider joining the FNPS Legacy Society by naming FNPS in your will, trust, or estate plan:

- Costs nothing today, guarantees your impact tomorrow
- Free estate-planning support available through our partner, FreeWill
- Recognition (public or confidential, your choice) as one of the highest honors FNPS bestows

Already included FNPS in your estate plans? Let us know so we can honor your commitment.

To join or learn more: email Melissa Fernandez, Executive Director, at ExecutiveDirector@fnps.org



Ways to Support FNPS Today

Possibilities Are Endless!

Donate:

- Science Endowment
- Conservation Grant Fund
- Endangered Species Grant Fund
- Barbara Grigg Grant Fund
- Consider FNPS for your QCD, DAF, or other tax-smart giving plans

Plan a Legacy Gift: Join the Legacy Society

Give Your Time & Talent

- Volunteer professional services
- Sponsor an event
- Volunteer with your local chapter
- Donate to a silent auction
- Donate a car or property
- Become an LMR (Land Management Review) reviewer

Speak Up:

Sign up for Eco Action Alerts to help amplify our voice on threats to Florida's native plants



2026 Advocacy Wins And the Fight Still Ahead

Select Wins:

- Passed SB 302 (Coastal Resilience) - promotes nature-based shoreline protection
- Passed HB 441 (Conservation Lands) - blocks future sell-offs of state conservation land
- Defeated the "Blue Ribbon Projects" bill - would have let mega-developments bypass local review

Fight Still Ahead:

- Ocklawaha River restoration blocked again - will keep fighting in 2027
- Florida Forever funding still at risk - pressing for the statutory \$100M minimum



Donate to Support Our Work at [FNPS.org](https://fnps.org)

2026 Green Palmetto Awardees:

Conservation



David Roddenberry, Sarracenia

For leading groundcover restoration of a longleaf pine-wiregrass sandhill community at Bald Point State Park and for decades of plant rescues, surveys, and conservation work across Wakulla and Franklin counties with the Sarracenia Chapter.

Sterling Herron, Highlands

For his research and conservation translocation work on endangered species like the Florida ziziphus and Avon Park harebells at Archbold Biological Station, his role as founding Vice President of the new Highlands Chapter, and his mentorship of nearly two dozen interns and research assistants.



2026 Green Palmetto Awardees:

Education

Andrea Andersen, Pinellas

For her leadership as Vice Chair of the Council of Chapters and for creating the Florida Native Plant Steward Certification Program, a statewide educational initiative that trains new stewards, advocates, and future chapter leaders.

Maggie Ulman, Martin County

for her leadership as Council of Chapters Secretary, founding the Students Against Invasive Species Group, and 582 volunteer hours driving conservation education and outreach as a high school student.



2026 Green Palmetto Awardees:

Service



- Melanie L. Cave, Tarflower : For her rare-plant salvage and Sandhill restoration work at Oakland Nature Preserve and Bill Fredericks/Turkey Lake Park
- Spencer Bennett, Tarflower : Service and Leadership Supporting Native Plant Education and Community Engagement
- Lynn Artz, Sarracenia : A Steady Voice and Driving Force for Florida's Native Plants and Conservation Community
- Barbara Seibel, Mangrove : For over 13 years of coordinating a monthly plant survey at Cedar Point Environmental Park in Charlotte County while also mentoring volunteers and sharing her encyclopedic native plant identification skills with the Mangrove Chapter.



2026 Green Palmetto Awardees:

Service



- Pam Hopkins, Martin County : In recognition of her decades of service, educational outreach, scientific contributions, and unwavering commitment to advancing the conservation and appreciation of Florida's native plants through the Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society.
- Virginia Overstreet, Suncoast : 10 years of service to the FNPS and outstanding dedication to Florida's native plants and the Suncoast Chapter.
- Rhonda Hoeckley, Sweetbay : As Sweetbay president for the past 2 years, Rhonda has provided tireless service, and through her efforts has directly increased outreach, grown membership, inspired new volunteers, added a new public native garden, planned and executed successful new events, and personally injected creativity and fun into all that Sweetbay does in our native plant mission.





2026 Emerging Leaders Under 30:

- Nel Calhoun, Nature Coast : Serves as a ‘youth ambassador’ on the Nature Coast board. They are engaged and always willing to help and provide their perspective and hard work. Nel has taken deep interest in our Wesley Chapel District Park Demo Garden and is now co-leading volunteer days.
- Benton Willis, Paynes Prairie : Has brought technical innovation, social media awareness and many new members to our chapter, all while working as a curator at UF's mycological herbarium and completing a Ph.D. project in Plant Pathology. Benton's enthusiasm for native plants deserves recognition at the state level.





Outstanding Chapter of the Year:

Paynes Prairie

The Paynes Prairie Chapter has been nominated for the FNPS Green Palmetto Award for developing the Core Chapter model with FNPS leadership, a streamlined onboarding framework built from real chapter experience that has already helped launch two new chapters, Beluthatchee and Highlands, in 2026.





Mentor Award:

Dr. Ann Johnson

For her career-long contributions to Florida's native plant communities, including decades on the Magnolia Chapter board, maintaining the chapter's Native Plant Garden at Maclay Gardens State Park, and her work as a field botanist with the Florida Natural Areas Inventory.





Mentor Award:

Cammie Donaldson

A dynamo influencer across all of Florida's native plant organizations, including FNPS, the Florida Wildflower Foundation, FANN, and the Native Plant Horticulture Foundation, the latter two of which would likely not exist, or would exist in a far diminished form, without her devotion to advancing native plant use, conservation, education, and advocacy, work that extends beyond Florida through collaborations with the University of Oregon and national initiatives like the USDA Specialty Crop Program.





2026 Silver Palmetto Awardee:

Dr. Gage LaPierre

- Led formation of FL Native Seed Partnership
 - Major collaborative effort with FL Wildflower Foundation
 - Remedy shortage of seed for habitat restoration & other needs
 - Co-authored the Florida Meadow Manual
- Organizer of Groundcover Restoration and Enhancement Workshop (GREW)
- Post-Doctoral Research Assoc at UF
 - Founder/Manager of UF Native Plant Nursery





2026 Silver Palmetto Awardee:

Rebekah Kaufmann

- As Chair, has revitalized the Council of Chapters
 - Major increase in meeting attendance and participation
 - Improved communication between Council and Board
 - Presided over participation in important FNPS business
 - Rallied great talent from the community to help FNPS in growing
- Assisted in organizing Board and Council Retreat
- Chapter Support Documents enhance operations



Proposed Revisions to FNPS' Bylaws

July 18, 2026

Governance *ad hoc* Bylaws Committee:
Ann Redmond (chair), Athena Phillips,
Chris Moran, Gage LaPierre, John Benton,
Melanie Trexler, Susan Earley

The Bylaws Committee, BOD, CoC, and Chapters met and discussed bylaws revision proposals. This proposal reflects those discussions.



Proposed Bylaws Revisions

1. Administrative Changes and Updates: Articles 1; 2; 3.A, C, F(4); 4; 6-7; 8.A(1)(4), B(3); 9; 11-12; 14-18
2. Chapters-related changes: Article 10
3. New Dispute Resolution Article: Articles 3.D(3)(4); 13
4. Notice Requirements: 8.A(3), B.(1), C(1)



Administrative Changes and Updates

Articles: 1-2

- 3.A, C, F(4)
- 4
- 6-7
- 8.A(1)&(4), B(3)
- 9
- 11-12
- 14-18

These include

- ❖ Formatting,
- ❖ Spelling errors,
- ❖ Updating reference to our address,
- ❖ Adding updated mission statement,
- ❖ Codifying current Conflict of Interest policy by requiring such in bylaws
- ❖ Removing an Article related to “Other Committees” which has never been used,
- ❖ and the like.



Chapters-related changes: Article 10

Current bylaws do not allow for creation of the **creation of the new, simpler Core Chapter structure**

Proposal is to allow two types of Chapters:

- Core (Subsidiary)
- Affiliate

Article 10 changes are proposed to allow for both types



New Dispute Resolution Articles

Article 3.D(3)(4)

This change clarifies member termination “For Cause”

Occasionally member conflicts arise and the bylaws only supported termination of membership to address .

We propose creating “Article 13 - Dispute Resolution” to allow, when requested, Board assistance in these matters.

Article 13*

Membership Dispute Review Panel to conduct a fair, impartial, and timely investigation into the circumstances giving rise to the dispute.

Investigation may result in an informal resolution of the dispute or a range of recommendations, including:

- Written warning
- Removal from committee or chapter leadership position
- Suspension of membership
- Termination of membership



* Mistakenly labeled as Article 12 in the briefing memo

Notice Requirements

Articles

- 8.A(3) – Membership Meetings
- 8.B.(1) – Board of Directors meetings
- 8.C(1) - Executive Committee Meetings

In the internet age,
proposed change of
noticing requirements from
three to two weeks



Proposed Bylaws Revisions

Vote

www.fnps.org/bylaws



Thank You!

Thank you for joining us for the 2026 Florida Native Plant Society Annual Meeting.

Your continued support and engagement helps us to conserve, preserve, and restore Florida's native plants and their habitats.

This meeting is now adjourned.

