



Florida Native Plant Society Chapter Representatives

FNPS Chapter Representatives are a vital communication link between the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS or Society) and the local Chapter. FNPS Chapter Representatives must be able to serve as a member of the FNPS Board of Directors (BOD) and attend FNPS BOD meetings as a representative of the local Chapter. The FNPS Chapter Representative has one vote on the FNPS BOD. The primary function of the FNPS Chapter Representative is to provide information to the Chapter about Society proceedings and report Chapter items to the Society.

What Does a Chapter Representative Do Anyway?

The handbook says that Chapter Reps serve on the Society's Board of Directors, attend the Board Meetings, and represent their Chapter to the Society—and the Society to the Chapter. This is all well and good, but pretty abstract. The first time anyone attends an FNPS Board meeting a lot is going on and it can be fairly disorienting. Everyone else seems to know what's going on, but what are you supposed to be doing?

With a little preparation, you can make the most of your membership on the BOD, and use this opportunity to not only represent your Chapter, but get involved in things you are interested in and make connections with like-minded people from across Florida. Even if you're only standing in for your Chapter Rep, the same advice applies. The Frequently Asked Questions below address much of what you need to know. More detailed information is available in the FNPS handbook which is provided on-line at the FNPS website under "Chapter Resources."

Where are the meetings held?

You will be attending the general BOD meetings, oftentimes in great scenic places where field trips are an option. Of the four per year, the January meeting is a 2-day retreat, in various locations, and the May meeting is at the annual FNPS conference. The August meeting is typically located in the center of the state to minimize driving, and the November meeting is held at a native plant nursery in conjunction with the annual Association of Florida Native Nursery's meeting and bar-be-que.

So who pays for travel?

At this time, FNPS does not cover travel expense. Fuel and lodging (if applicable) costs are currently being reimbursed to the Chapter Reps by many Chapters, although this practice has not been universally adopted throughout the Society. Your Chapter board is best able to discuss the Chapter's policy on travel reimbursement for Chapter Reps.

Where can I get a meeting schedule?

As soon as it's final, it appears on the FNPS website, and will be published in *Sabal Minor*. Additionally, if you're an "official" Chapter Rep, the FNPS President e-mails the schedule to you. About two weeks before the meeting, you'll receive directions, an agenda, and any committee reports that have been submitted to date via e-mail. In any event, all information that is available is posted in the Society's discussion forum under Board of Directors.

How will the meeting be organized?

Board meetings follow a pre-published agenda, which is pretty much followed in a structured fashion. Robert's Rules of Order apply. There are motions, discussions, and votes. There are four general board meetings a year, and each has a central recurring purpose (see FNPS Year Snapshot, at end). In between, the Executive Committee (Excomm) meets to give Committee Reports, decide what additional issues should come before the Board, recommend actions, and take care of routine tasks. The ExComm is made up of the FNPS Officers and Chairs of the Standing Committees.

This is how Board of Directors meetings usually go:

- Review and approval of Minutes from previous Board meeting
- Reports by the Committees
- Discussion of Old Business with accompanying discussion and resolutions.
- Discussion of New Business, i.e., items that have been placed on the agenda by Committee Chairs or Chapter Reps.

How to get on the Agenda, or how can my Chapter's voice be heard?

If you have an issue or a great idea you'd like to get on the Society's radar screen, there are two basic ways to go about it. First, if it is directly related to the work of a standing committee, contact the Chair, and give them the information in advance. The Chairs can be found on the website and in the Palmetto. Second, you can ask the FNPS President to include it on the agenda under new business. If you take this route, it's best to prepare something written and submit it to the President at least two weeks ahead of time so that it can be distributed to the entire BOD prior to the meeting. Items can also be added at the beginning of the meeting, but this does not give the BOD the option of preparing for discussion.

Since everyone's pretty glazed over by the time the New Business comes around, it good to be prepared to quickly summarize what you've sent and suggest the language for a motion. (e.g., "What we're recommending is...")

What do I do after the BOD Meeting?

As Chapter Rep, you will report back to your Chapter on issues of relevance, and solicit any information identified/requested during the meeting. The Chapter Rep brings Society issues to their Chapter's Board of Directors for discussion or decision making, and typically provides a brief overview of these issues at the Chapter's public meeting. At that time, the Rep may field questions, request input, and identify Chapter issues. As issues arise, the Chapter Rep can contact the Executive Director who can identify members of the Society across the state with the best information or most relevant expertise.

What does the Executive Director do, and why does this person keep writing me?

The Executive Director serves as the voice of the Society under the direction of the President. As such, this position represents us, supports the work of Committees and Chapters, and ensures that the Chapter Reps are apprised of organizational news, new resources, or requests. Hence all the e-mails. The Executive Director also serves as event planner for the annual conference.

So what are these Committees, and what am I supposed to do?

There are several standing committees and ad hoc committees that more than welcome your participation. As a Chapter Rep, you are asked to serve on at least one committee. Don't be alarmed if the Board just assumes you know all about this and forgets to invite you. Read the descriptions below and see what most appeals to you. You can always shift later; no one will care.

Each Committee has a Chair (that person that serves on the ExComm), and you can either express your interest ahead of time (usually by introducing yourself via e-mail) or at the meeting. They will be thrilled that you're showing an interest. Promise. If, as a Chapter Rep, you're sending someone in your stead to a board meeting, make sure the person knows what Committee you are working with, and what they should listen for during the discussion surrounding that Committee's report. It would probably be good to let the Committee Chair know that you are sending a substitute in advance so your stand-in can feel welcomed.

Most of the business of these committees is carried out between meetings via e-mail. Most have specific projects they are working on, which means the members may be doing research, making contacts, gathering information, writing things, etc. Usually it's pretty fun and interesting stuff. Committees usually meet face-to-face at the annual conference, and on occasion during the board meetings. Such meetings are usually a review of what's been going on since the last meeting and firming up any reporting that needs to happen to the board at large.

Committees:

I. Publications

Oversees and facilitate development and publication of FNPS information and articles in print for the general public, and make recommendations to the FNPS BOD regarding publications.

II. Education

Develops and executes educational outreach programs on native plants and native plant communities.

III. Scientific Advisory

Provides technical review of various publications and manuscripts, serves as a reference to members on technical scientific issues, and administers the Research Award program.

IV. Landscape Awards

Encourages and rewards the propagation, preservation, and use of Florida native plants through administration of the Landscape Awards Program.

V. Policy and Legislation

Researches environmental issues relating to Florida, assists in the formulation of FNPS policy statements or positions, and advocates, disseminates, and promotes official FNPS opinions/policies on environmental matters.

VI. Conservation

Represents FNPS on the Endangered Plant Advisory Council and at National or State meetings concerning native plant conservation. Examines and evaluates conservation issues which could benefit or harm the mission of FNPS. Includes the Public Land Management Partners Sub-Committee which coordinates Society participation in mandatory management reviews for the state's public conservation lands, including properties purchased under the C.A.R.L. and Florida Forever programs.

VII. Communication

Communicates the results of other committee work, assist FNPS chapters in disseminating information, and promote the organization. Includes the Media Relations Sub-Committee that develops and distributes press releases on the Society's activities, or issues of interest to the Society.

VIII. Membership

Addresses membership issues, oversee the membership process, and promotes increase in FNPS membership.

IX Conference

Oversees conference organization, promotes, and hosts the FNPS Annual conference.

X. Finance

Prepares the annual budget and assists in financial decisions that may affect the Society's fiscal well being. Includes the Development Sub-Committee, which promotes, executes and publicizes fundraising opportunities.

So What Can I Expect Between Board Meetings?

In short, a fair amount of e-mail. The Executive Director, Chairpersons, or Officers may write to ask for input, information, or alert you to new resources or opportunities for your Chapter. This could also include Society initiatives or events. Your job will be to synthesize this information for your Chapter's Board and membership, and to represent them in responding. You are also encouraged to contact the relevant Officer or Committee Chair

for help in addressing your Chapter's needs. The Society has recently introduced a Chapter Liaison role within the Communications Committee, and you will hear from her soon. This person will orient new Chapter Reps and other officers, help synthesize and translate information from Board meetings, and make sure that issues raised by Chapters stay on the front burner.

Chapter Grants, Conservation Grants, Endowment Grants – So What's the Difference?

The **Chapter Grant program** provides small grants for chapters to carry out projects that promote the mission of the Society. These grants provide funding for special projects of educational value initiated by a Chapter that is in need of additional funding for success or enhancement of its efforts. Examples of projects eligible for funding under this program include (but are not limited to): publications, native plantings, displays, educational program materials, and special program expenses (e.g. speakers). The money isn't big (up to \$2000 per year per grant), and the criteria is pretty straightforward. The Chapter submits a proposal and a subsequent progress report. The details are available on the website under Awards and Grants.

The **Conservation Grants** are more complex. As Chapters, you will be nominating worthy local non-profit organizations or collaborations that could use seed money to support conservation efforts. On-the-ground native plant community restoration, land acquisition, habitat and native plant biodiversity enhancement projects are examples of projects that this grant can assist. This is an excellent way to reinforce local partnerships and increase Chapter recognition. Up to three grants may be awarded by the Society per year from the pool of nominees.

The Florida Native Plant Society maintains a **Research Grant** program (aka Endowment Awards) for the purpose of funding research on native plants. These are grants in the amount of up to \$2500, awarded for a 1-year period, and intended to support research that forwards the mission of the Florida Native Plant Society. These awards often go to university students to support botanical research on protection, restoration, or associations of specific native plant species. Although anyone may apply, preference is given to FNPS members, and presentation of a paper at the FNPS Annual Conference and/or contribution of an article to the Palmetto on the results of the research are encouraged

So Who Gets Palmetto Awards and Why?

At the annual conference, the Florida Native Plant Society bestows various awards to members and Chapters for their contributions to our mission. The Palmetto awards were established in 1984 by Sherry Cummings, Palm Beach Chapter (then FNPS President), to further the mission of the Florida Native Plant Society by encouraging and acknowledging the contributions to conservation of natural areas and native plants, and education related to these objectives. Nominations for these awards are solicited during the November Board of Directors meeting.

The Green Palmetto Awards

The Society generally awards several Green Palmettos, falling under the categories of service or mentorship, education, and science. FNPS board members are not eligible for this award category. A Green Palmetto is also awarded to the outstanding chapter of the year. Contributions can be of regional or statewide significance. Any member can make Green Palmetto award nominations by contacting their chapter director or the FNPS president.

The Silver Palmetto Award

The Silver Palmetto award is made by the president to the board member(s) who has been of the greatest assistance during the past year.

Florida Native Plant Society Chapter Representatives
Frequently Asked Questions

The Mentor Award

Created in 1995, the Mentor Award recognizes distinguished individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the science and practice of native plant conservation, preservation, and restoration. This award is the highest honor the society can bestow and is reserved for lifelong or career-long contributions.

Snap Shot of FNPS Year

Month	Action	Who
May BOD (at Conference)		
	Provide schedule of years meetings	President
	Approve Grant Recipients	Committees
FNPS annual mtg. (at Conference)		
	Election of Officers	Nominating Comm Chair & Pres.
	Endowment Awards Presentation	Endowment Award Chair
	Palmetto Awards Presentation	President &/or Presenters
	State of FNPS	President and Comm. Chairs
	Introduction of current BOD	Outgoing president
	Introduction of new BOD members	Incoming president
May 15		
	Tax return due for prior year	Treasurer & VP Finance
	Endowment Award letters & checks	President, Endowment Award Chair and Treasurer
July EXCOM		
	Present preliminary budget	Treasurer & VP Finance
August BOD		
	Present preliminary budget, request Committee budgets.	Treasurer & VP Finance
	Approve any new Committee Appointments	President
	Advertise Research awards	Science Chair & Comm
September EXCOM		
	Budget review	Treasurer & VP
Oct-November BOD (w/ AFNN)		
	Review Contracts	VP Admin
	Budget approval	Treasurer & VP Finance
	Select Nominating Committee, request for Palmetto nominations	President
	Approve service contracts	VP Admin
	File forms with the State (i.e., Solicitation forms etc.)	Treasurer
January EXCOM		
	Review Bylaw revisions	
January BOD - Retreat		
	Strategic Planning Session	
	Review Membership Status	
	Palmetto Award nominations	President, Society at large
	Approve any Bylaw Revisions	
	Chapter Discussion/Training	
February	Advertisement for Slate of Officers	Nominating Committee
	File Taxes	Treasurer /Bookkeeper
March 6 – Deadline for Grant Applications; all programs.		
April EXCOM		
	Review Grant Award Recipients	Conservation, Science, Landscape, Exec Director
	Review Conference Plans	Executive Director