

MINUTES
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY—THE VILLAGES CHAPTER
Friday, Feb. 26, 2016
Big Cypress Recreation Center, Periwinkle Room

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Steve Turnipseed at 1:30 pm.

Present: Members and guests.

Old Business:

Membership: Steve welcomed guests and new members and explained how FNPS-The Villages Chapter works. FNPS membership is tax deductible and runs 12 months from the date of sign up. Forms and annual dues were accepted at the meeting and prospective members can join on-line at www.fnps.org. Our chapter has exceeded 110 paid memberships and still growing. Those who joined in 2015 will receive renewal notices the month before they are due.

Goals: All of our goals from last year have been met.

Native Plants: Steve reminded us to ask for native plants when visiting any nursery. He added that our voice and dollars are making a difference and helping us achieve our Chapter Vision: *“The Villages becomes renowned for its extensive use of native plants and award winning native plant landscapes”*.

New Business:

Upcoming field trips: Any direct questions should be sent to Georgette Gerry butterflylady601@gmail.com

1. Feb 29 - Lake Griffin State Park, 3089 US Highway 441/27, Fruitland Park, FL 34731. A “Walk on the Wild Side” will be led by Park Manager Rachel Nunlist (Rain Date March 11).

2. March 22 - Green Isle Gardens, native plant nursery, 11303 Hwy 33, Groveland FL 34736. This will be a visit to an 8 acre native plant nursery to purchase trees, shrubs, flowers, vines, and clump grasses. There will be a 10% FNPS discount. The owner donates plants each month for our chapter chance drawings.

3. April 6 - Biosphere Nursery 14908 Tiden Road, Winter Garden, FL 34787. This native plant nursery creates habitats to conserve water, decrease maintenance and use little or no pesticides. Plants are available for very reasonable prices. This tour will be led by owner Jim Thomas.

4. April 21 – Ocala National Forest (Bus / walking tour with lunch – price and tour leader to be announced). The tour will include several pine and mixed hardwood ecosystems in the Ocala National Forest. Bus will depart the parking lot at Sumter Landing.

5. April 28 - Fort Cooper State Park, 3100 S. Old Floral City Road, Inverness, FL 34450. There are over 700 acres of nature. The tour will be led by Ranger Tammy Roberts.

Upcoming meetings:

On March 25 there will be a brief history of the Southwest Florida Water Management regulatory program and a discussion on the ecology of wetland systems, their maintenance and preservation by Ross Morton with SWFWMD. This will be a timely topic, as The Villages has a wetland vegetation maintenance proposal with a cost estimate of \$100,000 which will be rolled out at a District #1 meeting March 31.

Natives in the News: The on-line Feb 2016 Gardener’s Journal featured the Oak Leaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) as the native plant this month.

Wildflowers: It is still time to plant wildflower seeds. See 12 steps from Florida Wildflower Foundation <http://flawildflowers.org/planting.php>

Speaker:

Kathy Porter introduced our guest speaker, Bill Belleville. Bill Belleville is an award-winning nature writer and documentary filmmaker. His themes include nature, conservation, and “sense of place”. Bill has written seven books, including his most recent publication, *Peace of Blue*, which won a Florida Book Award for Non-Fiction. He has also contributed to eight national anthologies, written over 1,000 articles & essays, and scripted and co-produced eight films—as well as several NPR documentaries.

Mr. Belleville took us on a compelling presentation to identify our water-driven natural landscapes in Florida. He helped us understand how other writers and artists have been inspired by them over time. He also helped us understand the threats to these diverse natural systems from Florida’s unbridled sprawl. He used vivid photographic images from above and below our magical springs, to show our characteristic scrub and sandhill areas that help “recharge” our springs.

A lively Q&A session followed. Many in the audience asked for more information on how they can help preserve Florida’s springs and keep bottling companies from withdrawing so many gallons of

Donations: Green Isle Gardens provided our chapter with six 1-gallon plants, and members provided plants as well. These donated native plants were awarded to members and friends. Freshly collected seeds were available for a \$2 donation.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be March 25 at 1:30 at the Big Cypress Recreation Center.
