



NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO

Minutes

Winter Board Meeting

January 24, 2026, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Sevilleta NWR Field Station

Dvorachek Library Conference Room

- I. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by the President, Margie Gibson. The President determined that there was a quorum. She welcomed all board members and guests.

Board Members

Chapter Representatives:

Albuquerque: Sara Keeney

El Paso: Julia Bailey

Gila: David Phillips

Las Cruces: Jackye Meinecke

Otero: Laurel Berry

Santa Fe: Barbara Fix

Taos: Bob Pokorney

Guests: Elva Österreich, Otero Chapter

Arle Kruckeberg, Santa Fe Chapter

Rebecca Koskela, Santa Fe Chapter, via Zoom

Margaret Ménache, Newsletter Editor

Observers: All NPSNM members were invited to observe via Zoom

Officers

President: Margie Gibson

Vice-President: Sylvan Kaufman

Recording Secretary: Betty Spence

Treasurer: Tom Stewart

Documentarian: Cheryl Zebrowski,
absent

- II. **Validation of the approval of the minutes of the fall board meeting (October 2, 2025) and other decisions taken by exchange of email since then**

- October 17, 2025: Motion by Tom Stewart that NPSNM send a letter as proposed by the Conservation Chair addressed to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior commenting on the Conservation and Landscape Health Rule (The Public Lands Rule). Seconded by Betty Spence. The motion passed unanimously on October 21, 2025, with 12 yes votes out of a possible 12.

- November 12, 2025: Motion by the President that the board approve the minutes of the NPSNM board meeting of October 2, 2025. Seconded by David Phillips. The motion passed unanimously on November 22, 2025, with 12 yes votes out of a possible 12.
- November 19, 2025: Motion by Tom Stewart that NPSNM should add its name to the long list of organizations signing the letter opposing Steve Pearce for the BLM Director position, with Sylvan Kaufman signing as our Conservation Chair. Seconded by Margie Gibson. Because of the very short deadline (November 21st), the President sought approval from the NPSNM officers rather than the whole board. Approved by the five officers on November 19, 2025.
- December 1, 2025: Motion by Barbara Fix that NPSNM send a letter as proposed by the Conservation Chair addressed to the Project Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Farmington District Farmington Field Office commenting on the proposal to withdraw protection from a buffer zone around the Chaco Culture National Historical Park. The letter would be posted to the Federal Register as soon as the public comment period opened. Seconded by Bob Pokorney. The motion passed unanimously on December 2, 2025, with 12 yes votes out of a possible 12.
- December 13, 2025: Motion by the President that NPSNM send a letter as proposed by the Conservation Chair addressed to the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers commenting on the proposed updated definition of Waters of the United States. Seconded by David Phillips. The motion passed unanimously on December 15, 2025, with 12 yes votes out of a possible 12.
- December 13, 2025: Motion by the President that NPSNM send four letters as proposed by the Conservation Chair addressed to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior commenting on proposed rule changes to four sections of the Endangered Species Act. Seconded by David Phillips. The President proposed a minor editorial correction. With that correction the motion passed unanimously on December 15, 2025, with 12 yes votes out of a possible 12.
- January 9, 2026: Motion by the President that NPSNM send a letter as proposed by the Conservation Chair addressed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposing the listing of Leoncita false foxglove (*Agalinis calycina*) as a federal endangered species. Seconded by David Phillips. The motion passed unanimously on January 13, 2026, with 12 yes votes out of a possible 12.
- January 11, 2026: Motion by Barbara Fix that NPSNM sign on to the letter initiated by Environment New Mexico Research and Policy Center addressed to Gov. Lujan Grisham urging her to speak out publicly against the proposal to rescind the Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

Seconded by Cheryl Zebrowski. The motion passed unanimously on January 13, 2026, with 12 yes votes out of a possible 12.

The President moved that the board verify the approval of the decisions taken by exchange of email since October 2, 2025. David Phillips seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

III. Financial Matters

Treasurer's Report

Tom Stewart, the Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report for the NPSNM Winter Board Meeting dated January 16, 2026 (Appendix 1).

Financial Position: Our financial position was sound. Both the Nusenda checking and the Nusenda savings accounts increased from the previous year. The checking account, available to cover operating costs, had a balance of \$52,417. The savings account for Carter Fund donations included \$8,812 from the T&E Foundation. Significant donations continued to come in during January, so that the total available for use in awarding Carter Fund grants, gifts to herbaria and the \$500 for the year's Conservation Hero, now totaled \$35,946.

Investment position: The current values of assets managed by Edward Jones Investments were also quite a bit higher than last year, although they could vary with the market. The restricted account (Carter assets) now contained \$174,239. The unrestricted account (Special Projects Account), greatly boosted by a gift of stocks from the T&E Foundation, had a balance of \$137,664.10. That total included \$10,280 in available cash and a \$15,000 CD maturing in March. The current value of the stocks that were donated to the unrestricted account totaled \$67,011, which last year generated a dividend income of \$2,928.

Budget v. Actual in 2025: In terms of operating revenue, the total actual revenue exceeded expectations. We were accurate in our membership dues projection. Barbara Fix donated \$3,000 to be used for indexing newsletters. Advertising revenue, though not large, was greater than budgeted. Although some expense items were larger than the budgeted amounts, overall revenue exceeded expenses by \$2,091.20.

Proposed Budget for 2026: The Treasurer reported that the Finance Committee had met in early December to consider operating expenses in 2026. The largest items of expense would be dues transfers to chapters (25%), payments to contractors (primarily Lindsey Kirchhevel and the accountant), and newsletter printing and mailing. Revenue of \$38,860 was estimated for 2026, and the proposed operating expenses would exceed revenue by \$2,480 – easily covered by the large amount in the checking account.

The President suggested adding an expense of \$100 for printing more membership brochures.

Other Financial Decisions

Funding the Wootten Family Grants

Tom Steward suggested using the dividends each year from the stocks donated by the Wootten family to fund the Thomas H. Wootten Family Student Conservation Grants. The dividends this year totaled \$2,928. It was agreed that it was best to retain the capital and not sell off stocks to fund the grants. When asked if the stocks were held separately, the Treasurer explained that the stocks could be readily distinguished in the Edward Jones account because the remainder was a mutual fund. The stocks were doing well and clearly had been well chosen.

The President moved that the currently available dividends of \$2,928 should be used to fund the 2026 Thomas H. Wootten Family Student Conservation Grants. Laurel Berry seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

Rare Plant Watch

Sylvan Kaufman reported on the request from the State Botanist, Erika Rowe, for financial help from NPSNM to help launch the EMNRD Botany Program Rare Plant Watch pilot program. The request is for \$16,497 to partially fund the wages and benefits of Mia Brann, a Restoration Ecologist at the Institute for Applied Ecology, who would do essential coordination and volunteer management.

The President explained that she, Tom Stewart and Sylvan Kaufman had discussed the project on a Zoom meeting with Erika Rowe. The President asked her to fill out a Carter Fund application (26-S) so that we would have full information in writing, even though the request clearly did not fall within Carter Fund parameters. Tom and Sylvan recommended that NPSNM fund the project using money from its unrestricted Edward Jones account, which was meant for special projects. Specifically, they recommended that the money be sent in two installments, one of \$10,000 with cash available and a second installment of \$6,497 after the CD matured.

Discussion: Sylvan said that the Rare Plant Watch project closely aligned with our mission and would be involving many NPSNM members as volunteers. Many rare plants had not been monitored for decades. There was a need for coordination and training of volunteers and the establishment of a consistent reporting system. Mia Brann had considerable experience in those areas. Jackye asked if the project was to be ongoing. Sylvan and Margie said that we would need to get the state to fund it going forward. Barbara commented that the first set-up would surely be the hardest and most time-consuming. Laurel questioned why, if Mia Brann was an employee of IAE, funds were needed to pay her wages. Sylvan explained that IAE had lost much of its government funding under the current administration.

The President moved that NPSNM support the Rare Plant Watch project with a grant of \$16,497 in 2026, in two installments of \$10,000 and \$6,497, as proposed. Jackye Meinecke seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

IV. Administrative Report (President's Report)

The President referred to the written report she had circulated prior to the meeting listing her actions on behalf of the organization throughout the course of 2025, and she invited questions. Asked if she had a vision for 2026, she said that that she was not prepared to speak to that question in full, but certainly she hoped that the organization could bring in new members during the organization's Jubilee year.

V. Documentarian's Report

The President explained that the Documentarian was unable to attend this meeting but had indicated in her written report that she had begun reviewing the Dropbox files.

VI. Conservation Report (Appendix 2)

Sylvan Kaufman, the Conservation Chair, referred to the written report of the Conservation Committee covering 2025, which she had circulated prior to the meeting. She was pleased to report that Rebecca Koskela had joined the committee as the representative from the Santa Fe Chapter.

A matter of special importance was that Margaret Ménache was willing to serve as Co-Chair of the Conservation Committee. Margaret had a science background and experience with the Environmental Protection Agency and some relevant New Mexico agencies, in addition to being an excellent writer. Margaret's help would make it possible to do additional outreach. The Conservation Committee was in favor.

Barbara Fix moved that the board appoint Margaret Ménache Co-Chair of the Conservation Committee. Sara Keeney seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

Sylvan said that by way of outreach the Conservation Committee planned to prepare talking points for the chapters' own letters; advocate for the relevant agencies during legislative sessions; and increase contact with those in charge of conservation at other native plant societies. She asked board members, if they knew someone personally, to pass on the contact.

The President thanked the Conservation Chair for the excellent letters she had drafted over the course of the year. Sylvan said we should make sure the chapters knew that the letters were available online for their use.

Tom Stewart raised the need for chapters to coordinate with state policy when sending out their own conservation letters. Barbara Fix recalled that according to the Bylaws chapters could not send out letters in the name of the state organization. Sylvan said it helped that there were representatives from all chapters on the Conservation Committee. Margaret added that with two Co-Chairs they would have more time to make sure all the chapters were connected.

Sylvan reported that April had been designated National Native Plant Month and asked chapter representatives to spread the word. The President said it should be borne in mind for Jubilee ideas.

VII. Membership Report

The President introduced the NPSNM Membership Report 2025 prepared by Lindsey Kirchhevel and noted that membership was down slightly, although not to a significant extent. A discussion ensued on how to increase membership in the Jubilee year. Tom Stewart reported that the Albuquerque chapter was sending a letter to new members to find out why they had joined and what they wanted to get out of the organization. Sylvan Kaufman asked whether Lindsey could provide a list of towns or zip codes where NPSNM did or did not have members. Bob Pokorney said that sometimes it worked just to ask interested people if they would like to join. Several board members noted that there was great interest in gardening with native plants among current and potential members. Margaret Ménache suggested having gardening articles in the newsletter, and Jackye Meinecke offered to write some.

VIII. Social Media Report

The President presented a brief report on the social media project and said that it was going well. Weekly posts to our Facebook and Instagram pages had begun in February last year, with many contributors. Elliott Gordon had taken over as Coordinator in September when Andrew Tree moved away.

IX. Unfinished Business

Board Elections

The President reported that the current officers for the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Documentarian had expressed willingness to be on the slate of candidates for the 2027-2028 term. The position of Treasurer was open. The responsibility was not as onerous as it might seem, since NPSNM had a good accountant and the services of Lindsey in recording and depositing checks.

Margaret Ménache said that in order to promote the election in the October newsletter, she would need to have a firm date for when the voting would open and close. In the meantime, more information on board members would help in encouraging others to participate. Jackye

Meinecke had taken on the task of writing profiles of board members and had arranged for interviews with Laurel Berry and Sylvan Kaufman. David Phillips agreed to be interviewed. Margaret also suggested the use of social media to promote the election. The President said that letters via MailChimp were also a way of getting out election information. Barbara Fix suggested that we should let people mail in their ballots if they wished, since there were still some members not comfortable with electronic media.

Annual Membership Meeting

The President reminded the board that the state required nonprofit organizations to have an annual meeting. The state conference and board meetings were not practical venues for our members to ask questions, offer comments or make suggestions about the organization. A discussion ensued about how to attract members to attend. The President suggested a report on grants funded, a report on our conservation efforts, and information on Barbara Fix's oral history project. If Elva Österreich was able to put together her idea of a White Sands gathering, that invitation could be announced.

At Sylvan Kaufman's suggestion, a Zoom meeting for the membership was scheduled for Sunday, March 1, 2026, from 2:00 to 3:30 pm.

Membership Auto-Renewal

Tom Stewart said that at the fall board meeting the board had approved a mock trial of the PayPal auto-renewal system. He and Lindsey Kirchhevel had run a trial on a dummy website, stipulated dues of \$1.00/week and a trial cycle of several weeks. Their finding was that it was very difficult to opt out of auto-renewal. He therefore recommended abandoning the option.

Arnold Clifford Committee

Bob Pokorney reported that he had put together a committee to discuss how to help Arnold Clifford, who was doing important work on the Navajo reservation. His valuable herbarium collection was currently housed in a shipping container. However, committee members felt that a Zoom meeting with Clifford himself was needed before coming up with a plan to help. So far he had been unable to make direct contact, although he had talked with Clifford's assistant, Shawna Begay.

When Laurel Berry asked about contacting the Navajo government, Bob said he had gotten the message that we should not approach other contacts without Clifford's approval. The President recalled that Harpo Faust had sent us a letter last year detailing needs for herbarium supplies. Bob said he was reluctant to send money without a formal request. However, since Clifford himself had asked for a spare cabinet and some other equipment from the Taos chapter, he would keep trying to make personal contact.

50th Anniversary Plans

The board, while applauding the efforts of individual chapters, canvassed a number of ideas the state organization might pursue to celebrate the Jubilee year.

Cards – New plant cards such as those based on Bob Sivinski’s designs did not sell well but might be useful for outreach. If new cards were to be printed, they should be made more educational.

New logo – There was agreement on the need to design a new logo for the organization. Some thought it worthwhile to hire a professional, while others suggested using a volunteer artist. A logo committee was formed consisting of Margie Gibson, Bob Pokorney, Jackye Meinecke and Elva Österreich to explore options.

White Sands Night - Elva Österreich was exploring the possibility of an evening gathering at White Sands National Park’s Group Picnic Site for the NPSNM membership and the Otero County community.

Website – Promote the Jubilee with a page on our website.

Break 10:25-10:35 am

X. Newsletter Report

Margaret Ménache asked the board to consider publishing the whole newsletter in color, rather than just the front and back pages. After consultation with the printers, she found that for a 20-page issue in color the total cost would be approximately \$4,000. That figure included postage at current fees, but of course postal fees might change. If all four issues were in color, the annual costs would be \$16,000. It might be a fitting celebration of the Jubilee year.

It was noted that a considerable portion of the membership dues went to publishing the newsletter. Some organizations charged extra for those who wanted to have their newsletters in print. In response to a question about font size, Margaret explained that the font size was within the range of other organization’s newsletters; anything larger would require a 24-page newsletter. It was suggested that as a trial we could have the July issue in color this year – except for the conference program. The question of charging extra for print copies of the newsletter could be taken up at the September board meeting.

Sylvan Kaufman moved that the July 2026 issue of the newsletter should be in color.

Betty Spence seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

XI. Chapter Highlights by Chapter Representatives

Las Cruces

Jackye Meinecke, representative for the Las Cruces chapter, reported that in the past year the chapter had, of course, concentrated on organizing the state conference that took place in October. The chapter continued to maintain the Visitor Center Garden at Dripping Springs, monitor Spring Canyon and the nearby ciénega, and volunteer to work in the Corralitos Range.

Among the challenges the chapter faced was to preserve the gains made in conserving Spring Canyon and Picacho Peak. The chapter was also monitoring the plan to swap BLM land with the Apache tribe to find out what the tribe planned to do with the land. They were also seeking to find new officers and board members to fill empty slots.

Otero

Laurel Berry, representative for the Otero chapter, reported that the chapter was, metaphorically, blossoming. Old members had returned and new members had joined. At the last board meeting a raft of committees had been formed, including one to organize their participation in the Earth Fair, which they hoped could be revived to embrace the entire town of Alamogordo.

The chapter had donated to the NMSU herbarium and made student grants. They were working on a memorial to the late Eric Meltzer, their local moth expert, and were exploring the possibility of a gathering at White Sands National Park to celebrate the Jubilee.

Santa Fe

Barbara Fix, representative for the Santa Fe chapter, reported that 2025 had been a productive year for the chapter, with great field trips and speakers. The chapter continued to volunteer at Leonora Curtin Wetland and the Acequia Trail cactus garden. They had become better organized recently, establishing bylaws and creating committees. The chapter's main contribution to the Jubilee had been the upgrade of the wildflower posters. She was working on an oral history of the organization and found the newsletter indexing a great help. Since Santa Fe was the founding chapter, they were also celebrating an anniversary.

Sylvan Kaufman added that the chapter was organizing a panel discussion on sustainable horticulture entitled "Looking Back to Grow Forward: 50 Years of Landscaping in New Mexico" at the Santa Fe Woman's Club on Sunday afternoon, March 8, 2026.

Taos

Bob Pokorney, representative for the Taos chapter, reported that the chapter's emphasis was on growing native plants in their greenhouse. An average of 15 people worked there a week, and the chapter planned some upgrades. The chapter sold plants and also gave advice on what to plant. Their book *Native Gardening in Northern New Mexico* was also selling well. The chapter had held several public education and seed distribution events.

El Paso

Julia Bailey, representative for the El Paso chapter, reported that the chapter had had a fantastic year. There was good attendance at monthly meetings, social events and activities that included cactus rescue and hikes, seed exchange and a plant sale. As the board was aware, the chapter collaborated in meetings and activities with the El Paso Cactus and Rock Club. Together they had implemented the BAND app communication platform, a kind of electronic bulletin board, to coordinate activities, share files and request volunteers. They had also set up a Google Drive for board members. Outreach had expanded. The chapter had donated \$250 to the “Bring Back the Monarchs to Texas” program created by the Native Plant Society of Texas and Monarch Watch. The chapter was celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, along with the NPSNM 50th.

Albuquerque

Sara Keeney, representative for the Albuquerque chapter, reported that the chapter had had good attendance (between 40 and 60) at the monthly public meetings, with speakers from around the state. They were trying to attract younger people and found that the best way was to have some university students giving presentations. The chapter provided support to the Oso Grande native plant garden and helped with weed control at Petroglyph National Monument. They had enjoyed great field trips from March to November and had awarded five grants under the George O. Miller Education Grant Program.

Gila

David Phillips, representative for the Gila chapter, said that many of the evening programs had focused on pollinators. The chapter had fewer field trips than usual in 2025 because of drought and the large Trout Fire. In March this year a U.S. Forest Service employee would be giving a talk and leading a field trip on the restoration efforts. Donna Stevens, Gila Chapter President, had published a revised online pamphlet “Common Plants of the Gila National Forest” (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r03/gila/animals-plants/common-plants-gila>). At the chapter’s Silva Creek Botanical Garden, Phase One of the Master Plan had been completed and celebrated with a community event.

David said that the chapter was hard at work on the 2026 state conference, which would feature a wide variety of field trips and workshops. Among the line-up of speakers were Doug Tallamy, advocate for the concept of creating habitat in your yard with the Homegrown National Park campaign, and Phil Connors, longtime backcountry fire lookout in the Black Range and author of *Fire Season* and other books. David urged everyone to come to Silver City in September.

XII. New Business: Sunflower Scholarships

The President referred to her written proposal to revive the Sunflower Scholarships that had been given in the past in conjunction with the state conference. The scholarships were designed to make the conference more accessible to university students and interns working in native-plant-related fields and to provide them a more participatory role. The applicant must be a current student or intern with an organization, must present a poster at the conference and be available at breaks to explain his or her research to other conference attendees.

Her proposal involved two types of scholarship:

Local Scholarship: This scholarship was for students in the region hosting the state conference and covered the full cost of the conference, including field trips, workshops, meals, the banquet, and \$30 to help cover poster costs.

Participants from Other Chapters: This scholarship was nearly identical to the one above, but included \$150 toward poster and travel costs.

An appropriate instructor, professor, or supervisor must approve the applicant. Awardees would be selected by the chapter hosting the conference. Other chapters were encouraged to recommend applicants.

She proposed a total budget per year of \$2,500.00 to be provided to the chapter hosting the conference, any unutilized funds to be returned to NPSNM. In her view, student participation should be part of every conference, and the state organization should support it.

Tom Stewart recalled that in the past there was a mechanism, namely, sales of the coloring book, for funding the scholarships. The President noted that we did appear to have funds available.

The President moved that the Sunflower Scholarships should be revived in accordance with the above proposal. Bob Pokorney seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

11:55 – Group photo of the board

Noon – Lunch Break

1:05 pm – Meeting resumed

XIII. Approval of the Budget

Tom Stewart, the Treasurer, said that, based on the decisions taken in the meeting, a few expense items would need to be added to the proposed 2026 budget he had submitted earlier.

- \$16,497 for the Rare Plant Project (in two installments), to be taken out of the unrestricted funds at Edward Jones

- \$2,500 for Sunflower Scholarships
- \$100 for reprinting membership brochures

He also recalled that an additional expense of \$800 should be included for the accountant.

(Final budget: <https://www.npsnm.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Budget-approved-2026-NPSNM.pdf>)

The President moved that the proposed 2026 budget be approved with those changes. Sara Keeney seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

XIV. Grants and gifts

The Treasurer reminded the board that \$35,946 was available for grants and gifts, with an additional \$2,928 earmarked for Wootten grants. As decided last year, each of the following seven herbaria would receive a gift of \$600: University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University, University of Texas at El Paso, San Juan College, Farmington, Western New Mexico University, Roger Peterson Herbarium and Carrizo Mountain Herbarium. A gift of \$500 would be given to the Conservation Hero chosen by the chapter hosting the 2026 state conference.

Year-end Reports from 2025

The President reminded the board that the year-end reports (YERs) on grants awarded in 2025 had been made available on the state website and asked for questions or comments. There were none.

New Grant Applications

- **2026 Carter Fund Grant Applications**

The board members had received the grant applications in advance and had submitted a form with their preliminary assessment of the applications.

The President opened the discussion asking for some straw votes. First, she noted that most applicants, although not all, did follow the instructions on the grant application form, and she thought that following instructions should be a requirement for funding. Next, she explained the Gila Chapter reimbursed travel costs at one-half the IRS rate – should the state do the same? Lastly, she proposed adding instructions to the grant application requiring applicants to present an itemized budget. Board members agreed that these were sensible guidelines.

26-A: Bandelier Riparian Monitoring and Restoration

Barbara Fix noted that the applicant was the only botanist at Bandelier and was good at working with volunteers. Board members remarked that the project was well designed, even though the budget was not itemized. Although it was questioned why a local student could not have been

chosen to participate in the project, the board did not wish to interfere with plans already made.

The President moved that application 26-A be funded in full at \$2,000. Sylvan Kaufman seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 10 yes votes and one abstention.

26-B: Plants and People Gardens at Black Range Museum

Board members from Silver City said that the people involved in the project were well qualified. Board members noted that project was well planned, had an educational focus and was already underway, and the budget was detailed. Hillsboro, although a small community, attracted tourism. The use of some 15-gallon-sized plants was questioned, since smaller plants did better, but others mentioned the need for something to show early on for educational purposes.

Sylvan Kaufman moved that application 26-B be funded in full at \$1,865. Sara Keeney seconded. The motion passed with 10 yes votes and one abstention.

26-C: Plant ID Signs at Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park

Board members noted that the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park was well attended, and the organization engaged in plentiful outreach. The project was well-researched and a modest request.

Jackye Meinecke moved that the project be funded in full at \$700. Sara Keeney seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-D: Solace Healing Garden

Board members felt that the garden would not and did not fit well with our mission.

The President moved to eliminate the application from consideration. David Phillips seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-E: DAVA Native Habitat & Outdoor Learning

Board members noted that the Doña Ana/Radium Springs area was an impoverished part of the county, and the Doña Ana Village Association was very active and engaged the community. Concerns were raised about whether the garden could thrive with just rainwater collection. It was decided that our letter could not insist on irrigation but could recommend it. Since they seemed to be soliciting advice from a local NPSNM chapter member, the letter could direct them to the Las Cruces chapter.

The President moved that application 26-E be partially funded at \$1,350. Betty Spence seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-G: Kingston Ghost Town Museum Garden

In 2024 NPSNM awarded this project a \$1,000 grant for a garden master plan, which had been done. Since they had a master plan, board members thought that the applicant should have been able to submit an itemized budget.

Sylvan Kaufman moved that application 26-G not be funded this year, and that the applicant should be encouraged to apply next year with an itemized budget based on their master plan for the garden. Seconded by Tom Stewart. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-H: 2025 Rare Plant Monitoring Reporting

Since the board had earlier in the meeting arranged to grant a considerable amount to the Institute for Applied Ecology for the Rare Plant Watch, the feeling was that IAE should not receive more funds this year.

Sylvan Kaufman moved to eliminate application 26-H from consideration. Bob Pokorney seconded. The motion passed with 8 yes votes, 2 no votes and one abstention. [Decision revisited: see below]

26-I: Yerba Mansa Project

The Yerba Mansa Project was a worthwhile effort to remove invasive plants from the Rio Grande bosque and involve the community. It was funded this year by the Albuquerque Chapter. However, in its Carter application the organization was asking for funds to support all its activities in a general way. The board would have liked a more time-defined activity to support, and some of the funds requested were for overhead. It was suggested that we could fund the amount requested for plants.

David Phillips moved that application 26-I be partially funded in the amount of \$530 to cover the cost of plants. Jackye Meinecke seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-J: Valle de Oro NWR Backyard Refuge Habitat Garden Guide

The PDF guide for the project was to be accompanied by a coloring book, and the main amount requested was to pay the coloring book artist. Board members found that to be excessive and questioned the educational value of a coloring book.

Sylvan Kaufman moved to eliminate application 26-J from consideration. David Phillips seconded. The motion passed with 9 yes votes and 2 abstentions. [Decision revisited: see below]

26-K: Shrub Encroachment and Seed Dispersal

A good project by an Assistant Professor at UTEP. The budget is entirely for materials, but we cannot afford to fund it in full.

Sara Keeney moved that the project be partially funded in the amount of \$3,000.

Sylvan Kaufman seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-L: Restoring Urban Ecosystems at Barrio Chamizal

Board members agreed that Barrio Chamizal, a poor community in southern El Paso, could use our help in transforming part of their community garden into a native plant demonstration and learning site. They submitted a very specific budget. It was agreed that we could not afford to fund in full, but after discussion there was no consensus on exactly which items to fund, although it was agreed that the water feature was not a priority and a tool shed with a good lock was a necessity.

Sara Keeney moved that the project be partially funded in the amount of \$3,500.

Barbara Fix seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-M: Bicycle-Powered Native Seed Pelletizer

There was some doubt about how much we should award since we do not fund institutional overhead. It was agreed that the educational value of using the bicycle to pelletize seeds did not warrant \$5,000. However, the technique had been tested and the University of Arizona published explicit instructions on creating the bicycle pelletizer and its use.

Bob Pokorney moved that the project be partially funded in the amount of \$1,000 to cover supplies and travel. Betty Spence seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-N: An Annotated Checklist of Ferns and Fern Allies of New Mexico

NPSNM had funded the first three years of this very important project by herbarium curator Harpo Faust. It was argued that we should help her finish by providing some funds for this fourth and last year of field work. Funding for illustrations might wait for another time.

The President moved that the project be partially funded in the amount of \$2,500.

Betty Spence seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-O: Conservation, Genetics and Taxonomic Characterization of Sotol (*Dasyllirion*: Asparagaceae)

Most felt that the research on varieties of Sotol by an NMSU graduate student was worthwhile, although it was remarked that the research would benefit the industry making a distilled

beverage from sotol and had only minor conservation value. The project had funding from other sources and did not warrant the full \$5,000 requested.

Sylvan Kaufman moved that the project be partially funded in the amount of \$2,000, Barbara Fix seconded. The motion passed with 10 yes votes and one abstention.

[Decision revisited: see below]

26-Q: Arroyo Seco Community Center Native Plants and Exercise Loop

Doubts were raised about how much exposure native plants would get in an exercise loop, and it was noted that we had funded signage for project 26-C at a much cheaper rate. However, Bob Pokorney reported that the Taos Chapter had provided consultation to the Arroyo Seco Community Center and was growing native plants for them; they were serious people. Plant signage was highly educational, and costs had been carefully researched. The Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park was replacing a few signs, whereas the Arroyo Seco Community Center was starting from the beginning.

The President moved that the project be funded for the full amount requested of \$2,670. Jackye Meinecke seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-R: Hands-on Wetland Restoration Education in the Lower Embudo Valley

Board members were favorable to this combination education and wetland restoration.

Sara Keeney moved that the project be funded at the requested amount of \$2,000. Jackye Meinecke seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-T: Success of Agave Restoration in Southwestern New Mexico

Although the project seemed interesting, the reason for the amounts requested under 26-T was unclear. The board decided to re-consider the project as Wootten Grant application 26-U.

26-V and 26-W: Genetic Diversity of *Bouteloua curtipendula* in Southwest NM

The President observed that the applicant, who had applied for both the Carter Fund and the Wootten Grant for the project, had failed to follow instructions. For example, when asked for an abstract of 75 words that NPSNM might use in announcements or publications, the applicant provided a lengthy discourse. Learning to follow instructions was an important part of a student's education.

The President moved to eliminate applications 26-V and 26-W from consideration for failure to follow instructions. Sylvan Kaufman seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

- **2026 Wootten Grant Applications**

26-F: Plants for Native Bees: Pollen DNA Metabarcoding to Identify Key Conservation Targets

Board members agreed that the research on bee-plant interactions was important and that the budget was reasonable.

Sara Keeney moved that the project be funded in full for \$1,997. David Phillips seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-P: Climate and Latitude in Biodiversity of Vegetation in the Rocky Mountains

Board members decided not to fund project because most of the research would be done in Montana, not in New Mexico.

26-U: Success of Agave Restoration in Southwestern New Mexico

Board members found the project worthwhile and thought the amounts requested under 26-U more reasonable than those requested for the same project under application 26-T.

Betty Spence moved that the application be funded for \$2,000. Sara Keeney seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-W: Genetic Diversity of *Bouteloua curtipendula* in Southwest NM

Eliminated – see above

26-X: Taxonomic and Phylogenetic Complexity of *Ericameria parryi* in the Western US

Board members thought the research into varieties of *E. parryi* was interesting but noted that the budget covered field work in Utah and Colorado as well as New Mexico. It was suggested that we could fund it in part, stipulating that it was for field work in New Mexico.

Sara Keeney moved that the project be funded in the amount of \$520 for field work in New Mexico. Laurel Berry seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes. [Decision revisited – see below]

After the Treasurer, with help from Margaret Menache, added up the amounts awarded so far and announced that we still had funds available, the board decided to revisit some of its awards:

26-H: 2025 Rare Plant Monitoring Reporting

The application was eliminated in the first round of funding decisions.

Sylvan Kaufman moved that the project be partially funded in the amount of \$3,000. David Phillips seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-J: Valle de Oro NWR Backyard Refuge Habitat Garden Guide

The project was eliminated in the first round of funding decisions.

The President moved that the project be funded in full in the amount of \$2,000. Tom Steward seconded. The motion passed with 10 yes votes and one abstention.

26-O: Conservation, Genetics and Taxonomic Characterization of Sotol (*Dasyilirion*: Asparagaceae)

The project was partially funded in the amount of \$2,000 in the first round of funding decisions.

Jackye Meinecke moved that the project be awarded an additional grant of \$1,000. Sara Keeney seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

26-X: Taxonomic and Phylogenetic Complexity of *Ericameria parryi* in the Western US

The project was partially funded in the amount of \$520 in the first round of funding decisions.

Jackye Meinecke moved that the project be awarded an additional grant of \$411, still in support of field work in New Mexico. Laurel Berry seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes.

The board awarded a total of \$34,063 in grants, in addition to \$4,200 in herbarium donations and \$500 set aside for the Conservation Hero of the year.

Julia Bailey said that the entire board of the El Paso Chapter had reviewed and voted on the grant applications. They had some suggestions for improving the scoring rubric and prioritization form. The President said she would be happy to receive them.

XV. Adjournment

The President moved that the meeting adjourn. David Phillips seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 11 yes votes. Adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Spence
Recording Secretary
Native Plant Society of New Mexico

Margie Gibson
President
Native Plant Society of New Mexico

Carter Grant Identifier	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded	Not Funded
26-A: Bandelier Riparian Monitoring and Restoration Brownson	\$2,000	\$2,000	
26-B: Plants and People Gardens at Black Range Museum Trushell	\$1,865	\$1,865	
26-C: Plant ID Signs at Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park Bestelmeyer	\$700	\$700	
26-D: Solace Healing Garden Peach	\$6,000		X
26-E: DAVA Native Habitat & Outdoor Learning Vargas	\$2,000	\$1,350	
26-G: Kingston Ghost Town Museum Garden Briske	\$2,000		X
26-H: 2025 Rare Plant Monitoring Reporting Meredith	\$5,000	\$3,000	
26-I: Yerba Mansa Project Tucker	\$4,200	\$550	
26-J: Valley de Oro NWF Habitat Garden Guide Ladwig	\$2,000	\$2,000	
26-K: Shrub Encroachment and Seed Dispersal Martínez Blancas	\$4299.51	\$3,000	
26-L: Restoring Urban Ecosystems at Barrio Chamizal Andrade	\$5,000	\$3,500	
26-M: Bicycle-Powered Native Seed-Pelletizer Gisler	\$5,000	\$1,000	
26-N: Ferns and Fern Allies of New Mexico Faust	\$5,000	\$2,500	
26-O: Conservation, etc. of Dasylirion: Asparagaceae Ruiz Flores	\$5,000	\$3,000	
26-Q: Arroyo Seco Community Center Native Plants and Exercise Loop Harper	\$2,670	\$2,670	
26-R: Wetland Restoration Education in Lower Embudo Valley Pieper	\$2,000	\$2,000	
26-S: NM Rare Plant Watch Rowe	\$16,500		Funded elsewhere
26-T: Success of Agave Restoration in Southwestern NM Plazewski	\$5,000		Funded as Wootten
26-V: Genetic diversity of <i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i> in Southwest NM Barraza	\$2,000		X

Wootten Grant Identifier	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded	Not Funded
26-F Plants for Native Bees: Pollen DNA Metabarcoding Chandar	\$1,997	\$1,997	
26-P Climate and latitude in biodiversity of vegetation in the Rocky Mountains Segal	\$2,000		X
26-U Success of Agave Restoration in Southwestern NM Plazewski also applied to Carter Fund	\$2,000	\$2,000	
26-W Genetic diversity of <i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i> in Southwest NM Barraza also applied to Carter Fund	\$2,000		X
26-X Taxonomic and Phylogenetic Complexity of <i>Ericameria parryi</i> in the Western US Ingram	\$2,000	\$931	

Appendix 1

January 16, 2026
Treasurer's Report for the NPSNM Winter Board Meeting
Tom Stewart

Our income, expenses and cash balances are on par with 2024. A Profit and Loss Report from Quickbooks will be available for anyone on request if more detail is needed. The facts most relevant to decision making by the board are displayed in the "2025 Operating Revenue, Expenses and Proposed 2026 Budget" attached to this report. Our investment accounts are included.

Here are the bank balances on January 15 of this year compared with a year ago.

Checking 2026 (operating cash): \$52,417
Checking 2025: \$50,219

Savings (Carter Conservation Fund): \$29,651
Savings January, 2025: \$22,155

1. Our savings account contains the available cash belonging to the Carter Conservation Fund, and it was boosted early this year by the unexpected gift from the T&E Foundation (Tom and Eleanor Wooten family) of \$8812. Total donations to the Carter Fund deposited by 12/31/25 were \$26,831.

2. "Unrestricted donations" are those not intended for the Carter Fund. \$3000 of the total of donated in 2025 were specified by donor Barbara Fix to support the indexing of past newsletters. In addition, \$7,137 general donations were deposited, for a total of \$10,137.

3. Significant donations continue to come in during January, and the total will be available at the board meeting. It is almost certain that at least \$30,000 in donated money will be available for use in awarding Carter grants.

4. For the first time, our IRS filing required using the full form 990 as our revenues were greater than \$200,000 and assets exceed \$500,000. Until now we were able to use the shorter 990EZ.

Investments managed by Edward Jones (Santa Fe office):

About \$7440 of cash held by Jones was donated as approved by the board in January to support regional herbaria (two new ones added) and to the Las Cruces chapter in support of this year's annual state conference.

Current values of assets at Edward Jones Investments (varying daily with the market):

Restricted Account (Carter assets) now at \$174,239 (Includes \$9,255 in cash.)

One year ago: \$156,502.

Unrestricted Account ("Special Projects Account"), greatly boosted this year by a grant of stocks from the T&E Foundation as it was dissolved in late 2024. Now at \$137,664.10 1 Year Ago \$127,067.01

This includes \$10,280 in available cash and a \$15,000 CD that matures in March. Current value of the stocks that were donated to our unrestricted Edward Jones account in 2024: \$67,011.

Estimated income as dividends generated last year by those stocks: \$2928.

Appendix 2

NPSNM Conservation Committee Winter 2025 report

Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2025

Activities

- The Conservation Committee met online on Nov. 18 with six of seven chapters represented at the meeting. We reviewed chapter conservation issues and participation in conservation projects and discussed priorities for 2026. Some suggestions are to:
 - Prepare talking points on issues that chapters can use to write letters to the editor or to their congressional delegates. These would be distributed through members of the Conservation Committee and could be posted to the web site under Public Participation.
 - Advocate for funding for agencies that support rare plants, habitat restoration and conservation. This includes the Botany program within Forestry Division of EMNRD, Department of the Environment – River Stewardship and Wetlands programs, Department of Fish and Game (new mandate to include habitat restoration).
 - Sign on to letters sponsored by other organizations sparingly – mainly if they have a plant focus or to partner with other organizations on letters to add more of a plant focus to sign-on letters.
 - Form a network of regional Native Plant Society conservation contacts to share information.
- Rare Plant Watch – Plans for the statewide Rare Plant Watch community science program are progressing. Erika Rowe and Katy Kline attended the 2025 Annual meeting with a poster about the project and NPSNM volunteers have registered. The pilot training will occur in Spring, 2026. Sylvan has volunteered to review the training materials.
- Social Media posts – there were about 9 social media posts to the NPSNM Facebook and Instagram pages on Conservation issues in 2025.
- Sylvan met with Kelli Miller of Environment NM in October and Environment NM sponsored a Town Hall on Public Lands that was useful. Environment NM is particularly following the Roadless Areas Rule (see request for vote on a sign-on letter).

Comments and Letters

- Comments on WOTUS definition revision, December 18, 2025. Letter to EPA and Army Corps on the revisions of the definition of the Waters of the United States.
- Comments on ESA revisions, December 18, 2025. Letter to USFWS about proposed revisions to the Endangered Species Act.
- Letter to BLM in opposition of Revocation of the Mining and Leasing Withdrawal of Lands Surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park, December 5, 2025 This letter was submitted before an official comment period, but the letter was received and will be added as an official comment when the comment period opens.
- Letter to BLM re: rescinding the conservation and landscape health rule, October 20, 2025. Also known as the Public Lands rule, this rule made conservation and restoration priorities equal to other land uses.
- FY2026 Funding Request for BLM's Plant Conservation and Restoration Program, May 6, 2025. Request to support funding for plant conservation and restoration.
- ESA harm comment letter, May 8, 2025. Letter noting the importance of the current definition of harm under the ESA.
- Native Plant Month letter to editor – a long and short version of a letter about the importance of native plants was sent to the major newspapers in New Mexico. Letters were published in the Santa Fe New Mexican and Gallup Independent. In future, it is probably best to encourage chapters to write a letter for Native Plant Month to their local papers.
- Letter supporting NM National Monuments, March 11, 2025. Support for maintaining National Monuments in NM.
- 'Fix our Forests' Act objections letter, March 5, 2025. This Act is still under consideration and is supported by NM congressional delegates because of the fire mitigation sections.

The Act though makes it easier to bypass NEPA review of projects and would mean less consideration of rare plants in areas where logging and mitigation would take place.

- Monarch butterfly endangered species listing comments, March 1, 2025. Supporting the listing of the monarch butterfly as an endangered species.

Votes Requested

Co-chairs for Conservation Committee: Margaret Menache is interested in co-chairing the Conservation Committee with Sylvan. She has a science background and experience with EPA and some NM agencies. She is also an excellent writer. Adding a co-chair would make it possible for the Conservation Committee to do additional outreach and advocacy. There was general agreement from the Conservation Committee that this seemed like a great idea. Sylvan requests a vote by the Board at the January meeting to name Margaret Menache as Co-Chair.

Sylvan requests votes on two letters. One is a comment letter on the status of *Agalinis calycina*, Leoncita false foxglove, an endangered species in southern NM. The other is a sign-on letter sponsored by Environment NM supporting Roadless Areas protections.

Upcoming Events

The NM Rare Plant Technical Council meeting will occur on Feb. 11-12. Sylvan will attend at least part of the meeting and give a brief update on NPSNM activities. Hopefully some other Conservation Committee representatives can also attend.

As of Jan. 7, there were no bills in the state legislature pertaining to native plants. Jan. 16 is the last day to prefile bills, so Sylvan will continue to monitor what has been submitted in case something comes up. Feb. 6 is the Public Lands Day event 2 – 4pm.

Committee Members as of 1/7/26: Ann Falknor – El Paso, Rachel Jankowitz – Taos, Laurel Berry – Otero, Rosemarie Lion – Otero, Ken Steigman – Las Cruces, David Becker – Gila, Phil Hastings – Gila, Mike Fernandez – Albuquerque, Pam McBride – Albuquerque, Santa Fe – Rebecca Koskela

Submitted by Sylvan Kaufman, Conservation Chair