



Florida Chapter
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Florida Chapter Teleconference Minutes March 27, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 by President Jeff White. In attendance were President-Elect Ken Lackmann, Vice-President Keisha Brown, Treasurer Eric Harper, Secretary Donna Hopwood, Council members Jeff Norville and Jeff Schmidt.

Norville made opening comments as the out-going Chapter President and thanked everyone from the Florida Chapter for their sweat and tears which made the 2007 International Meeting in Saddlebrook a success.

All officers of the executive committee—White, Lackmann, Brown, Harper and Hopwood--were installed by reciting the Chapter Officer Oath.

Harper gave a financial update based on the information he had available. He is currently investigating transferring the accounts from SunState Federal Credit Union to a statewide institution for easier access. Lackmann moved to open a money market account for savings and a checking account for annual operating expenses at Bank of America; the motion was seconded by Schmidt and carried. Harper or White will meet with former treasurer Jessica Bertine to close out the SunState account. Harper also requested a committee be chosen to audit the financial records.

Norville discussed presenting gifts to those who worked on the 2007 international meeting. Norville will chair a recognition committee made up of Brown, Lackmann, Chuck O'Rourke and Howard Harrison. The committee will work with Harper to determine an appropriate gift based on funds available and will present a recommendation to the executive committee for approval.

White and Lackmann provided a report from the SWCS SE Regional meeting. Currently, the SE has 545 members and Florida is at the bottom with 73 members. A discussion ensued about various ways to encourage and activate Chapter membership. Norville talked about the successful Tri-State FL-GA-AL meeting held in Quincy last May. The meeting focused on the current water shortage crisis and had panelists discuss water issues and provided tours on the St. Marks River and a cookout. All agreed that continuing a Tri-State relationship would benefit the Chapter.

White discussed the Chapter's roll in providing half the funds for plaques and rosettes for the annual State Land Judging Contest. Lackmann motioned to provide \$400; seconded by Brown and the motion carried. Norville will attend this year's contest March 28 in Gadsen County and will let Dr. Randy Brown know of the Chapter's contribution. Hopwood mentioned that the March 27, 2009 contest will be the 50th and is tentatively scheduled for Alachua County.

The 2008 International Conference will be held in Tucson, Arizona July 26 – 30. Early registration is through June 16, but May 16 is the NRCS deadline for STC's to submit names of those approved to attend. White will discuss with incoming Florida STC Carlos Suarez prior to May 16, and will send a bulletin out to the FL NRCS members. Hopwood suggested contacting Donna Smith to create a Florida-themed auction item such as the one created for the 2007 meeting.

Chapter Building was a key item of discussion. Brown suggested forming a few critical standing committees to provide a backbone for the Chapter to begin the process of recruiting and retaining members, and to incorporate these committees into the Chapter By-Laws. After much discussion, the following committees were agreed to:

- Planning & Events Committee: Lackmann to Chair
- Membership / Recruitment Committee: Schmidt to Chair
- Professional Development (includes scholarships): Brown to Chair

Additionally, White will appoint a 2 – 3 member committee to audit the financial records.

Other Chapter Building Items discussed:

- Schmidt commented that we should consider all membership when discussing and planning programs, not just those who are NRCS.
- White suggested luncheon net meetings. The group decided to try quarterly meetings initially. Suggested topics should be sent to Brown & White
- Creation of a Chapter website was discussed and Harper said he could acquire a domain and set it up with a link from the National SWCS website for a reasonable price. Lackmann motioned to allocate up to \$100 for Eric Harper to create a website; seconded by Brown and carried.
- White discussed holding a Chapter meeting or activity in conjunction with another state meeting such as the AFCD. Additionally, whether or not to pursue the former fundraiser of cooking a steak dinner for the AFCD meeting was discussed. White will talk to Ed Wright, the NRCS liaison. The 2008 AFCD meeting will be held in Panama City August 15 – 18.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm. Respectfully submitted,

Donna Hopwood
Florida Chapter SWCS Secretary