



KAWO Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at Ilse Gebhard's home

Present: Beth Bradburn, Cameron Lockwood, Holly Hooper, Ilse Gebhard, Kathy McGoff, Kira Griggs, Laura Moss, Mel Luna, Mike Weis, Noel Ocen, Paul Laferriere, Quyen Edwards, RosaLee Ward

Absent: Ann Klobucar, Ellie Shenker

1. Call to Order by President Quyen Edwards at 7:13 p.m.

2. Reading of Minutes from February 4, 2026 for discussion and approval

Motion to approve the Minutes was made by RosaLee and seconded by Beth. All in favor and motion approved.

3. Changes to the Agenda

RosaLee proposed two changes to the agenda, one pertaining to New Business and one pertaining to a potential new Public Site. Quyen suggested folding the latter item into discussion during the relevant committee report.

4. Reading of Treasurer's Report of March 2026 for discussion and approval

In Ellie's absence, Quyen drew attention to the March 2026 Treasurer's Report and confirmed that she and Ellie did successfully transfer the chapter bank account to Lake Michigan Credit Union. She explained that the first statement Ellie received from LMCU was included in the Report. Noel inquired whether a CD was already purchased, and there was general discussion around the topic and following up with Ellie for clarification. Quyen shared that LMCU has issued the chapter a debit card in her name. Motion to approve the Report was made by Noel and seconded by Paul. All in favor and motion approved.

5. New Business

(a) Additions to KAWO's listing of Native Plant Nurseries

Beth drew attention to the Resources page on the KAWO website and its listing of native plant nurseries and native plant landscape services. She questioned whether the KAWO EC needs to consider adopting a specific policy around additions to and maintenance of these lists. She explained that, from time to time, she receives requests from new nurseries or service providers seeking to have their contact details displayed. There was general discussion around the potential for a mismatch between KAWO's own philosophy and those of some of these businesses, with promotion of natives being highlighted as one example where stances may diverge. Quyen offered the insight that neither the national Wild Ones organization nor adjacent groups tend to undertake vetting of the vendors that they list in their own resource materials. From what she has observed, most groups will display the details of any business which requests that they do so, provided there is sufficient overlap. In her view, the general policy is to allow individual members and the public to do their own research and determine whether the business in question is aligned with their objectives.

Noel raised the point that the same issue applies to the Site Visit program, as individual volunteers may hold divergent views on topics such as natives. There was general discussion around whether it makes sense for the KAWO EC to issue formal materials outlining the chapter's stance on such topics. Laura questioned whether the EC also needs to consider a formal definition of what is meant by "native plants." Kathy questioned whether a disclaimer should be added to the website to inform readers that KAWO does not endorse the various entities. Holly expressed the view that should a new policy be adopted, there would need to be a spelling out of criteria for inclusion in order to avoid bias. Mel drew attention to the frequency of changes in business operations—highlighting that sources of seed, for example, can change at any time—and the difficulty this would create for KAWO to undertake routine monitoring.

A consensus emerged that it would be difficult to develop and enforce a specific set of criteria governing inclusion in the business listings. There was also general discussion around whether the listing should be restricted to local Michigan entities, but several members emphasized that certain out-of-state providers offer important educational materials.

(b) Guidance on incentivizing membership—applicability to Site Visits program

Beth drew attention to national Wild Ones guidance pertaining to the ability of non-profit organizations to incentivize membership. To provide context, Paul highlighted the example of the Planting Partnerships program, where it would be impermissible to make eligibility for a grant conditional on KAWO membership. There was general discussion that the matter can be something of a gray area, dependent on intent and wording, with the offer to members of a 5% discount on the KAWO Plant Sale being cited as one benefit which does comply. Beth clarified that with regards to the Site Visits program specifically, such visits cannot be offered as an incentive for membership. Noel highlighted that site visits are not a professional service as such,

as they are performed by volunteers, not professional landscapers. Mel emphasized that the site visits are essentially a case of members supporting other members. Quyen identified that the Site Visits are often most beneficial for new members or those who do not know other members of the community. Noel considered whether KAWO might say that Site Visits are part of the welcome package for new members. Beth drew the matter to a close by underscoring that it is important to be mindful of intent and phrasing.

(c) Plant Sale 2026

Quyen stated that Hidden Savanna Nursery provided her with the list of plants available for the 2026 Plant Sale and circulated that list to EC members. She also stated that the Plant Sale committee has switched platforms from Neartail to Zeffy. She clarified that sales of eBooks, physical books and signs, as well as all Plant Sale fundraising, will flow through the same channel and automatically deposit in the new LMCU account. She stated that Plant Sale committee members will be working with Hidden Savanna's list to enter all the relevant species in Zeffy. In terms of timelines, she confirmed that the sale will go live on May 1, and the orders close date will be May 22, assuming the plants do not sell out in the meantime. She stated that Noel volunteered to put order sheets together. She also identified that EC members will be onsite at Hidden Savanna on May 26 to sort orders, and that order pickup will be on May 27 & May 28.

In terms of pricing, Laura considered whether it would make sense to take the median wholesale price and then add a set margin to arrive at a uniform final sales price applicable to all plant species. Quyen advocated for charging prices equivalent to Hidden Savanna's retail prices at a minimum. Noel clarified that last year, a margin was added on top of Hidden Savanna's retail price, not the wholesale price. She stated that last year, the feedback from customers was that they were happy with the prices and that they especially appreciated being able to reserve orders in advance. She identified that in previous years, there were sponsors of the Plant Sale, and that this year, one potential sponsor may offer seed packets. Kathy put forward a motion to add a set margin of \$1 to Hidden Savanna's retail price to determine the 2026 Fundraising Plant Sale pricing, and Noel seconded the motion. All in favor and motion approved.

8. Report of Committees

(a) Programs

Quyen shared that the presentation planned for Wednesday, April 22 may need to be cancelled. There was general discussion regarding upcoming programs.

(b) Outreach & Education

Quyen shared that she recently tabled at a KVCC event (the Foodways Symposium), using the new trifold made by Holly. She talked through the other items available for tabling, including garden design booklets, business cards and a Programs handout. There was general discussion regarding upcoming outreach events and the EC members scheduled to participate.

(c) Monarch Group

Ilse shared that 170 Milkweed seed packets were put together to share with the Plainwell and Delton public libraries. She also confirmed that Joyce Leppard will be giving a talk to a garden club following their request. She clarified that she is all set for seed packets.

(d) Hospitality

No updates.

(e) Community Projects

Paul stated that he will share a Google calendar with EC members containing all the planned workday events should they wish to join. Quyen shared that there may be another joint workday with Jerico later this year, as well as one at the Portage District Library. Laura asked whether it would be possible to approach OutFront about establishing a new Public Site, especially around the koi pond. RosaLee shared that her place of employment works frequently with OutFront and that she will look to arrange an introduction.

(f) Mentorship & Site Visit

In Ann's absence, Quyen shared that Ann has been scheduling Site Visit requests from the tail end of last year as well as new requests from this year.

(g) Publications

No updates.

(h) Membership

Holly put out a general query as to what sorts of activities would be most beneficial for her to undertake, as many of the processes she had originally intended to put in place are already automated. Noel pointed to suggestions made by the national Wild Ones organization, such as following up with non-renewals. Holly confirmed that she had been considering creating an anonymized Google form for this purpose. Noel identified a need for a welcome packet for new members, including information on what KAWO does, who we are, etc. She stated that it could be offered as a digital resource but emphasized that many members still like to receive physical copies. Holly considered that she might create a form for new members to seek information on their areas of interest. Quyen asked what materials new members currently receive, and the general consensus was that such materials are lacking.

Laura shared a list of ideas for relevant materials she had been contemplating, including a three-ring binder with a name tag, a list of local resources, a schedule of events, a short survey to assess needs, and information on MNFI mapping and planting techniques. She generally feels

that we need to create a set of materials that will serve as a foundation for success. Another idea she shared was to begin asking at events whether any new members are in attendance.

Upon further discussion as to whether to provide digital and/or physical materials, Holly considered creating an option for new members to designate their preference. Laura also suggested creating a physical map of the area on cork board, with new members encouraged to designate the location of their home/plantings with a pin in order to visually display the corridors we are creating. The map could be displayed at events and meetings. Quyen shared that we currently have a similar map in digital form on the KAWO website, accessible to members.

Beth stated that as of February of this year, new members are automatically subscribed to the Seedlings newsletter. She does take note of members who opt out of receiving it; she suspects most of them are in fact lapsed members. Quyen drew attention to the fact that with the change in the Seedlings format, the newsletter has started going to her Promotions folder in Gmail. Beth considered whether it would be worth adding a warning about this on the website. Holly drew the conversation to a close by encouraging EC members to email her ideas for a welcome packet. As a side note, Quyen stressed that KAWO is in need of someone with audio technology skills, as the recording of the last speaker did not contain audio.

(i) Social Media

Quyen reminded EC members that RosaLee, Mike, Mel and herself are all admins on Facebook, and encouraged them to get in touch should they wish for anything to be shared.

9. Announcements & Action Items

RosaLee described an initiative from the League of Conservation Voters seeking to educate the public about energy rate hikes as a potential collaboration opportunity. After some general discussion, Quyen put forward the view that any related summit or other events would present a good occasion for tabling.

Mike gave a general update on Asylum Lake and the transfer of ownership from WMU to the County. There was general discussion about the potential for installation of streetlights in the vicinity of the preserve. Mel voiced the view that KAWO should be putting energy into advocating against such an outcome. Quyen identified that Ann Arbor has successfully passed a light pollution ordinance and expressed her intent to reach out to relevant stakeholders there. She also mentioned that this concern is unlikely to figure in the Imagine Kalamazoo initiative, and any related advocacy will almost certainly fall on the community.

Quyen identified that the League of Women Voters is looking to advocate for a native plant ordinance in Portage. She shared that a KAWO member composed a very well-written, thoughtful letter in support of the ordinance which she will share with the EC. The author has encouraged members to adapt the material as needed when undertaking advocacy.

Quyen also gave an update on Bronson Park, following her participation in meetings with the Gun Lake Tribe, the City and the County, along with Paul and Mike. Work has commenced on

the Bronson Park Mound to kill off the grass and prepare the site for a planting of native species. She identified that there will likely need to be some degree of site stewardship from KAWO in the short term to keep the site weeded. Mike confirmed that the intended KAWO planting in Bronson Park has been put on hold due to concern over lack of sufficient drainage.

10. Adjournment

Quyen thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9:10 p.m.