

UMNA General Meeting

July 23, 2026 @ Pickens County Museum of Art & History

Steve Lewis, President, made a motion to open meeting at 9:59. Mike 2nded.

Polly Powell, Grants Committee Chair, introduced the three grants winners who accepted their checks and gave the group an overview of how the money will be used and how many people will be affected.

Joe, Environmental Educator at Conestee Nature Preserve, accepted the \$2,700 grant to be used for their new Nature Playscape for toddlers which will introduce a doorway to the wilderness, spark and foster a love of nature and bring an estimate 567 students closer to nature.

Ranger Madison Trump of Paris Mountain State Park accepted the \$4,600 grant to Friends of Paris Mountain which will affect major programs there. First, is Bat education for all ages. Secondly, Creek Adventure for 2nd & 5th grade school groups who get into Mountain Creek and find micro-invertebrates as citizen scientists. Kick nets, D-nets, microscopes and boots will be purchased.

Kerry McKenzie of Jocassee Wild Child accepted a \$2,700 grant to be used for the 2,000 students who are registered for fall of 2026 to experience nature and science up close and personal on boats, on land and in the water at Lake Jocassee.

Steve summarized Board Member reports as follows:

Jennifer Randall, 2nd VP & Membership: We have 191 active members.

Phyllis Stanton, Treasurer: We have money.

Cindy Hekking, GO Committee Chair: 8/13 Clemson Botanical Garden with Melissa Fuentes; 10/31 Trail Magic with the Pilzer's; 10/19 Holly Springs Graduation Luncheon.

Laura Godfrey, Newsletter: Recruiting for newsletter articles/pictures.

Manella Calhoun, Website and FB: She is keeping everything updated.

Cindy Robinson, Volunteer Hours Reporting: Not available today for amethysts.

Bill Hollingsworth, Volunteer Opportunities: Get out and volunteer.

Melissa McDow introduced our guest speaker Jon Fritz, BLA, who's topic was Wilding with Purpose. We learned how to introduce native plants thoughtfully to educate and win over our neighbors. His wonderful presentation was followed by an equally wonderful guided tour of the gardens surrounding the Museum which he was personally involved in designing. Several of our members are devoted volunteers who help maintain this amazing space.

Steve motioned to adjourn meeting at 11:12, Pam 2nded.