

**Native Plant Society
of New Mexico**

NEWSLETTER

October, November, December 2002 Volume XXVII Number 4



Outgoing NPSNM President, Bob Sivinski (Santa Fe Chapter), turns the reins of leadership over to the new state prez, Lisa Mandelkern (Las Cruces Chapter) at the annual meeting banquet in Silver City, Saturday, August 17th. On the right is Wynn Anderson, new NPSNM Vice President. Wynn is from the El Paso Chapter.

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Snag on the Rim of Juniper Canyon

by Sandra D. Lynn

We have given them an ugly name,
typical of our disregard
for that which is not alive and well
and running on Central Standard Time.
We call them snags
and they do.

They snag the starred sky
and chill it for a moment.

They snag the sunset
and hold the alpenglow
along their dry veins,
a red memory of sap.

Yes, it is true
they are no longer alive,
and the only timekeeping they know
is the weather —

the sandpaper wind,
the squeeze of desert heat.
But “well”? That is another matter.
The snag is well.

It remains where it was in life,
transformed, sculpted
by death
into a silent, ecstatic dance.

It is clean now, smooth,
pared down to the tight whorls,
to perfect extravagance of form,
nothing wasted on softness
or solidity.

It is devoted to severe beauty,
flung against the sky in that
sternest of disciplines —
praise.

We segregate our dead,
call them departed,
hide them away from us
in the earth, where they rot
in the backs of our minds,
their eyes going empty
behind ours. Or we
burn away
their given form.

From *Where Rainbows Wait for Rain* (Tangram Press,
1989) © Sandra D Lynn. Copies available from author.

VOLUNTEER PROFILES



Martha Carter
Gila Chapter

There's an old saying that behind every great man there is a great woman. To prove the validity of that statement one need look no further than Silver City. Past NPSNM President Jack Carter is quick to credit his wife, Martha, with making his two-year term a great deal easier. Martha served unofficially as his administrative assistant, taking on countless day-to-day tasks that freed him to tackle bigger issues. "When I became President of NPSNM," says Jack, "the Society got a two-for-one deal."

Martha and Jack arrived in Silver City in 1989 and quickly became involved in the Gila Chapter. Martha served as president of that chapter for a two-year term and was instrumental in bringing Gila into the State organization. She also edited the chapter newsletter, chaired the committee that organized the 1995 state meeting, and worked on programs, silent auction, and publicity. More recently, Martha added her knowledge of plants and grammar to the proofreading staff of the NPSNM Newsletter.

"She continually takes on the tough assignments," says Jack, "and never fails to amaze me with her enthusiasm and energy."

Who in your chapter deserves recognition for his or her work on behalf of NPSNM? Send a short description and a photo to Editor, PO Box 607, Arroyo Seco, NM 87514.

**Are You Logging On
to the NPSNM Web Site?
<http://npsnm.unm.edu>**

**Native Plant Articles, Chapter News,
NPSNM Business (budget, by-laws, etc),
and Botanical Links.
It's always being updated, so
check it out regularly.**

This NEWSLETTER is published quarterly by the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, a nonprofit organization, and is free to members. The NPSNM is composed of professional and amateur botanists and others with an interest in the flora of New Mexico. Original articles from the Newsletter may be reprinted if attributed to the author and to this Newsletter. Views expressed are the opinions of the individual authors and not necessarily those of NPSNM. Manuscripts and artwork are welcome and should be submitted to the editor:

**POBox 607, Arroyo Seco NM 87514
andrzej@laplaza.org**

Deadline for next issue is Dec. 1st 2002

Membership in the NPSNM is open to anyone supporting our goals, i.e., promoting a greater appreciation of native plants and their environment and the preservation of endangered species. We encourage the use of suitable native plants in landscaping to preserve our State's unique character and as a water conservation measure. Members benefit from chapter meetings, field trips, publications, plant and seed exchanges, and educational forums. In addition, a wide selection of books dealing with plants, landscaping, and other environmental issues are available at discount prices. The Society has also produced two New Mexico wildflower posters by artist Niki Threlkeld which can be ordered by contacting our Poster Chair or Book Sales representative.

Proofreaders: Jane Mygatt, Beryl Schwartz, Donna Stevens, Sally Wasowski, Jackie Tamas and Ann Ellen Tuomey.
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EDITORIAL

During the last board meeting in Silver City, Judith Lister (Taos Chapter) called our attention to the May 2002 issue of *New Mexico* magazine and an article titled "Pioneer Plants." The article profiles a number of exotic plants that the author, Linda Thornton, said have "made significant contributions not only to the beauty of the landscape, but also to the well-being of New Mexico people."

In the article, Ms Thornton extolled such harmless exotics as the lilac and Harrison's Yellow rose. But she then went on to endorse notorious invasives such as salt cedar (tamarisk), Russian olive and Siberian elm! Interestingly, while Ms. Thornton readily admitted to "the harm done by such species," she casually dismissed the problems and endorsed them for aesthetic reasons. "Under cultivation...the salt cedar in bloom is a spectacularly beautiful ornamental tree." She also had nice things to say about Russian olive — it provides food and shelter for wildlife — and the Siberian elm — its shade offers welcome relief in windswept, dry areas." Right — and let's not forget that Mussolini made the trains run on time!

Judith was so incensed that she wrote a letter to the Editor of *New Mexico* magazine and took both the publication and the author to task for their "irresponsible" stance. Bravo, Judith.

Too often the media, out of sheer ignorance, give out erroneous information on plants. Let's not be shy about educating them whenever we can.

NATIVE VEGETATION QUIZ

Many plants are so closely associated with specific locales that people think they are native to those sites. The following are plants that we automatically connect with specific countries, but are in fact native to some other part of the world. Can you tell where they really came from?

- Tulips & The Netherlands
- Tumbleweeds & The American West
- Potatoes & Ireland
- Pineapples & Hawaii
- Beets & Russia
- Tomatoes & Italy
- Watermelons & The Southern U.S.

Answers on page 15


Global Water Crisis

The demand for clean water is doubling every 20 years! That's twice the rate of the world's population growth. By 2025, two-thirds of the world's population will not have enough fresh water.

Did you know?


- The underground aquifer that supplies one-third of the water for the continental U.S. is being depleted 8 times faster than it is being replenished.
- In China, industry is moving upstream of agricultural communities in a race to claim water. The resulting food shortages in China will force food prices to skyrocket worldwide.
- The manufacture of computer wafers uses up to 18 millions liters of water per day. Annually, the industry uses 1.5 trillion liters of water and produces 300 billion liters of wastewater.
- Saudi Arabia is expected to have depleted all its water reserves within 50 years.
- A concerted effort is underway by global corporations (Coca-Cola, Monsanto) to privatize water worldwide and cash in on the crisis.
- Many environmentalists believe that wars in the 21st Century will be fought, not over oil, but over water!

Reprinted from the Council for Canadians website.



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P.O.Box 2364, Las Cruces NM 88004**

NPSNM ANNUAL MEETING HELD IN SILVER CITY

by Mary Alice Murphy

More than 150 NPSNM members attended the annual meeting in Silver City August 15-18. The members chose from among workshops on grasses, landscaping, illustrating plants, and nature photography and field trips in and around Silver City. Afternoon panel discussions covered: how to improve grazing-degraded areas; how NPSNM grant money is spent; how education, religion and economics affect environmental concerns; and how plants are used in the arts of literature, gardens and digital art.

The keynote speaker for Saturday's banquet was Ray Powell, the elected New Mexico Commissioner of Public Lands. "I find it a wonderful job to protect the flora and fauna of our land," Powell said. "But I think that we will only protect and preserve what we experience." He also commented on the disconnect between many people and the natural world. His aim at the land office is to make lands available so teachers can expose their students to nature. Powell advocates many projects to reconnect people with nature.

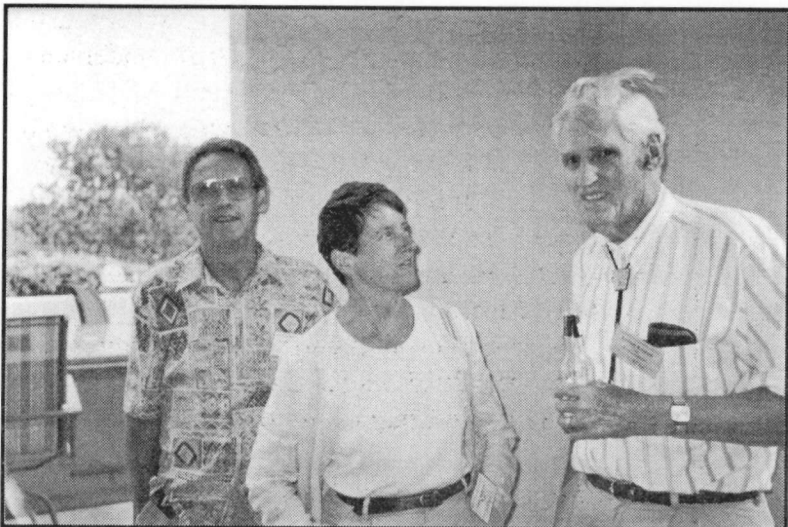
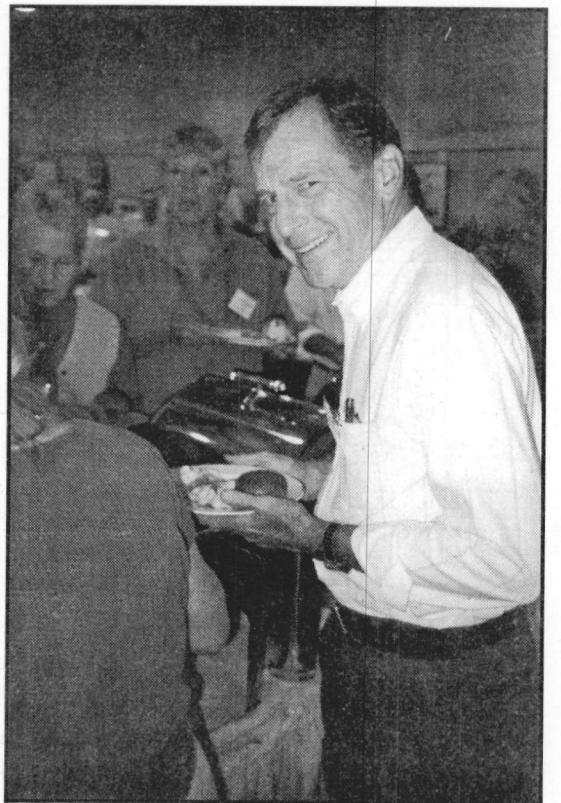
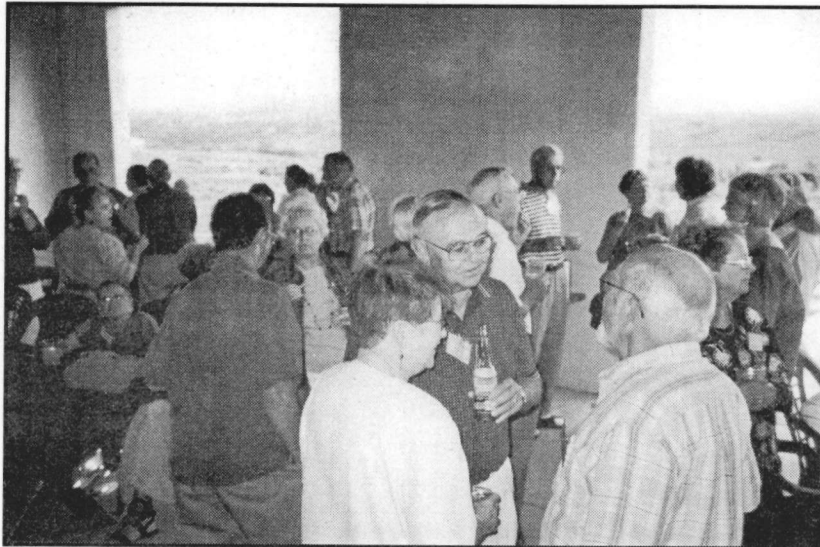
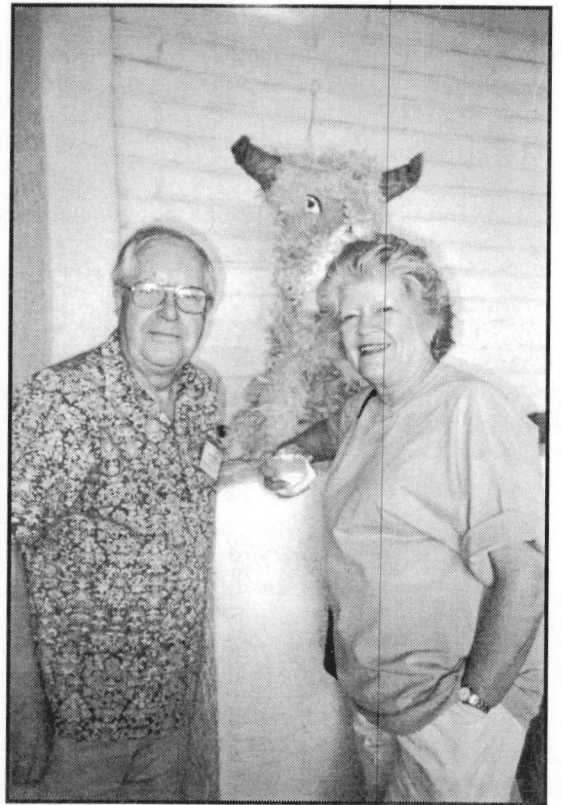
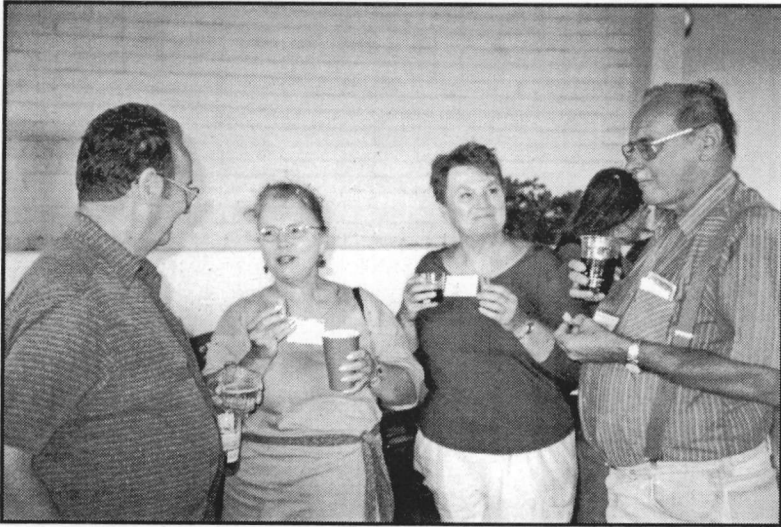
"New Mexico is actually the most urban state in the U.S. because 70% of the population lives in only four communities," he said. "It's not either/or on economics and environment. It's both. If people are struggling to make ends meet, they don't care about the natural world. The states that take the best care of their natural lands have the best paying jobs. People like the members of NPSNM must interact with school kids to help them understand the natural world."

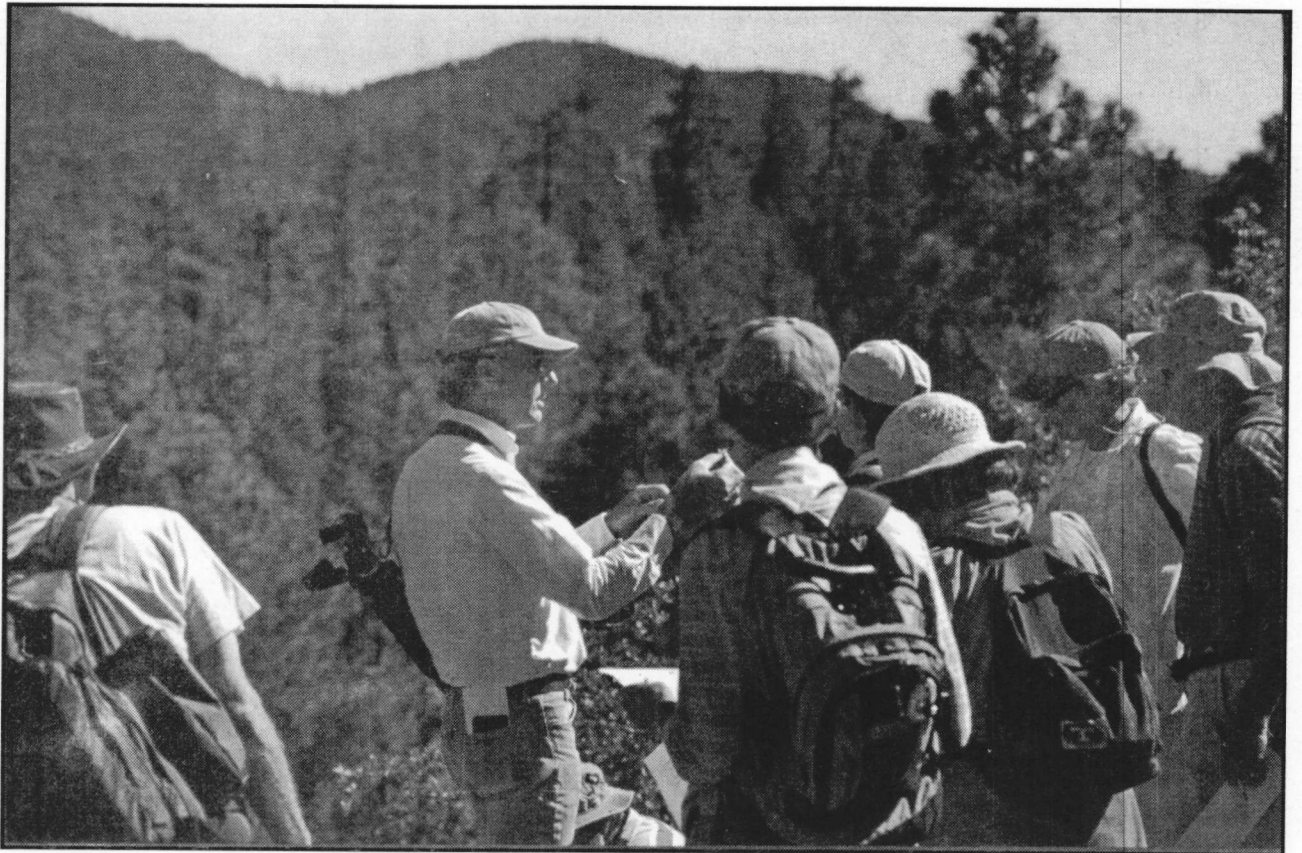
NPSNM awards were presented by out-going president, Bob Sivinski, to past presidents, Bob Reeves, Lisa Johnston, Mimi Hubby and Mary Whitmore. The Gila Chapter presented a Conservationist Award to co-founder of the chapter, Anita K. Morton.

The session ended with the formal announcement that the 2003 annual meeting will be hosted by the Santa Fe Chapter in Los Alamos.

Ed: Pictures on pages 6 and 7

SILVER CITY SNAPSHOTS





COMMON NAMES

by Robert DeWitt Ivey

Scientific names, usually in Latin, were originated by Swedish botanist Linnaeus about 1753 in order to give each plant (and later, each living species) an international and permanent identifying name. This was when most people believed that creation was a once-and-for-all event, with no changes anticipated.

A hundred years later, Darwin announced that creation was an ongoing process, and that changes, together with our constant reevaluation of them, were inevitable. This encumbered part of the original intent of the Linnaeus design. (This was not to be the last multiple-use program in which one use has subverted the prerogatives of others.)

Common names have been used since language began and are a product of the creators of the language itself and of the folklore of a region. A plant may have acquired more than one common name, as we give nicknames to favorite friends, or as its range extended over cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Many plants extend over the Mexican or the French-Canadian borders, and one English name should not have to do for all. Nor should they have to do the serious, encyclopedic job scientific names were invented to do. They are a product of human experience, such as familiarity, affection, resemblance, association, and even contempt. Native Americans undoubtedly had names in various languages for a considerable percentage of our plants. Since Spanish was both the prevailing language of early settlers and the intertribal language of Indians, many plants acquired common names in this language. Food-gatherers, farmers, and curanderas (-os) disseminated and gave status to names in both Spanish and native cultures. Our continued use of many of these shows a proper respect for, and celebrates our diverse cultural heritage.

English, the current intertribal and intercultural language — as well as the language of science, commerce, legislation, and litigation — has now picked up the major burden of vernacular nomenclature. Lacking long association with New World plants, but having greater familiarity with those of Europe, English speakers have applied Old World names to related, or superficially similar plants, with varying degrees of success.

A large percentage of plants never had common

names in any language but are now being discovered and recognized by both scientific and lay people. Labels friendlier than Latin are needed for these and have been supplied in various ways. In addition to true common names brought from Europe, newer names arising in the folklore of the earliest English settlers along with names coined more recently in the "common name" style have been added. These fall into certain groups:

1. True common or traditional names created anonymously, and long in general usage by those in closest association with the plants, have, in my opinion, the greatest priority and legitimacy.

2. A translation of the scientific name has a certain priority and usefulness if the scientific name is actually descriptive and appropriate. The untranslated genus name is often used, with a modifying English adjective, to distinguish individual species.

3. Names of recent origin, created in the common-name style by those "close to the soil" or otherwise involved with plants, such as lay botanizers" (those botanical equivalents of bird watchers), professional botanists, environmental activists, nurserymen, and authors. The character implied in the name needs to be visually apparent, especially in the field, and preferably without scientific instrumentation or ivory-tower knowledge of systematic relationship.

4. Names introduced for convenience, completeness, and perhaps in haste, for litigation, documentation, inventory, and database usage, perhaps in the hope that they will outlive fluctuating scientific names. These often seem to have been composed at a faraway desk by people having little familiarity with the growing plant or its longtime friends. These are the people who gave you "Los Alamos penstemon" (Alamo Canyon being 250 miles from Los Alamos), and the amazing "Puzzled sunflower." Scientific names should be the proper vehicle for such uses.

I believe the legitimacy of common names roughly follows the above outline, in descending order. The introduction of new names should be handled with concern for the citizenry at large. We, who are against the trashing of the planet, must remember that we are trying to make the plant known and therefore loved by the public, the least of whom has a vote equal to that of the most highly educated scientist or the most prestigious agency manager.

CONSERVATION CORNER

by Jim Nellessen

Conserve Chihuahuan Desert Open Space

In New Mexico, the Chihuahuan Desert consists of a mix of desert scrub and desert grassland with some plains-mesa sandscrub contained within its boundaries or on the edges (i.e. from studying W. A. Dick-Peddie's *New Mexico Vegetation: Past, Present and Future*). Its boundaries are generally defined by the combination of creosote bush and tarbush. Creosote bush actually occurs within all of the warm to hot deserts: Sonoran, Mojave, and Chihuahuan.

I have become very fond of the creosote bush. I absorb and inhale its aromatic scent when I walk among them. I like to call it the "ponderosa pine" of the desert. After all, ponderosa pine is another ubiquitous, common, run-of-the-mill plant. In terms of vegetational dominance, the main difference is that ponderosa pine grows at higher elevations, is a tree, and is contained within National Forests.

Last summer our family went on vacation to explore some of the states west of New Mexico and visit some of the other desert areas of the west, the Sonoran and Mojave. As we traveled and I studied the maps of our destinations, I could not help but see all the large desert preserves in these other states: California had Death Valley National Monument, Joshua Tree National Monument, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. In Nevada there is Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, Valley of Fire State Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Desert National Wildlife Range. And in Arizona we found Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Saguaro National Park, Petrified Forest National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, the more recent Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument, not to mention all the parks and monuments in southern Utah.

Then you look at a map of New Mexico and you do not see much. Yes we have lots of desert, Great Basin to the northwest, and Chihuahuan in the south, but you do not see much of anything with any national level preserve type status on the map. We have lots of National Forests, many with large wilderness areas within, and a few national grasslands, but as far as desert preserves things are pretty skimpy.

The Chihuahuan Desert, larger than the Mojave or the Sonoran, lies mostly in Mexico, with some in Texas and New Mexico. The large Big Bend National Park in Texas lies within the Chihuahuan Desert realm. Concerning Chihuahuan Desert in New Mexico, we do have White Sands National Monument, which has been preserved because of its unique sand dune habitats. Carlsbad Caverns National Park does have above ground land area in addition to the main attraction, the caves. Sevillita National Wildlife Refuge also preserves a substantial Chihuahuan Desert component. Various state parks and the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Preserve (about a square mile in area I understand) near Las Cruces do have small tracts, but in essence, there is no larger level "organized" Chihuahuan Desert Preserve in New Mexico.

Considerable amounts of Chihuahuan Desert occur on BLM land, State land, as well as on private land. Certain pieces of BLM land are being studied for potential wilderness status. One of the points I would like to make is that although we can preserve basic Chihuahuan Desert vegetation on relatively smaller pieces of land (conserving mobile wildlife poses a problem), one of the important features of desert conservation is experiencing that wide-open, big-picture landscape view. One is not really in the Chihuahuan Desert unless one can be immersed in its vastness and stillness.

One of the things I like about New Mexico is all the open space. There are many parts of the state where you can drive for miles and see minimal human presence. This open space consists of a lot of public land, but also a lot of private land in the form of ranches. I appreciate the presence of these private ranches just as I do the public lands, because it all adds up to large contiguous areas of open space.

I encourage all public land managers and private landowners to help us maintain that wide-openness of the Chihuahuan Desert.



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Chapter Activities & Events

ALBUQUERQUE

Programs (except Dec. 12th) at Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas NE at 7 pm.

Oct 10th. *"Old World Cultivated Plants: Their Journeys to the American Southwest."* Bill Dunmire, Research Associate in the Museum of Southwestern Biology at UNM and co-author of *Wild Plants of the Pueblo Province* and *Wild Plants and Native Peoples of the Four Corners*.

Nov 7th. *"Plant / Insect Co-evolution: Examples from New Mexico."* David Lightfoot, Senior Research Scientist, UNM Department of Biology.

Dec 12th. *"Cactus Cuisine: the Edible Prickly Pear."* Penny Hoe, Kitchen Chemist, Gustatory Adventuress, Aspiring Eccentric and Sometime Science/Math Teacher. Our annual Christmas Pot Luck meeting begins at 6:30 pm.

CARLSBAD

Oct. 20th. Field trip. Learn more about shin oak and playa plants in southwestern New Mexico. Led by biologist Steve West. For departure time and place and other details, contact Steve at 885-3636 or wthrsswift@carlsbadnm.com.

Late October or early November. Field trip to admire fall foliage on Devil's Hall Trail in Guadalupe Mountain National Park. Led by Erik Pierce. Time depends on peak color. Call Erik at 885-2364 or email him at ekpierce@pvtnetworks.net.

Nov. 16th, 10 am to noon. Chapter planning meeting for 2003. Place TBA. Call Sandra Lynn at 234-1772 or email her at sdlynn@cavern.nmsu.edu for more information.

EL PASO (Texas)

2nd Thursdays at the Centennial Museum on the UTEP campus, 7:00 pm.

Oct. 10th Program. *"Native Trees in your Landscape."* Oscar Mestas, West Texas Regional Forester, Texas Forest Service and EPNPS member.

Oct. 19th. Field experience. Dripping Springs, Organ Mountains, east of Las Cruces N.M. led by Jane Riger and Keith Rhin. Meet 7 a.m. at Wienerschnitzel at Resler and Mesa or at Dripping Springs at 8:30 a.m. Call Jane Riger, 533-2839.

Oct. 25th. Educational experience: Annual Sun Country Landscape Conference, Ysleta ISD Cultural Center, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Southwestern experts present *"Trees, Ornamentals & Maintenance."* Registration and \$25 fee, lunch included. Co-sponsored with Los Tree Amigos of the West Texas Urban Forestry Council. Contact Amy Payne, 834-5610.

Nov. 2nd. Field experience. Guadalupe Mountains led by Jane Riger and Keith Rhin. Meet 7 a.m. at K-Mart parking lot, Montana Ave & Sioux for carpooling to McKittrick Canyon. Call Jane Riger, 533-2839.

Nov. 14th. Program. *"Wildflowers of the Sonoran Desert."* Dr. Richard Spellenberg, Professor Emeritus. Dept. of Biology, NMSU, Las Cruces NM., will discuss and show slides from his latest book.

GILA (Silver City)

Programs at 7 p.m. in Harlan Hall, WNMU Campus.

Oct. 4th & 5th. Overnight field trip to Chiricahua Mountains, AZ. Call Jack Carter for details at 388-9221

Oct. 18th. *"The Otero Mesa: More than a Blank Spot on the Map?"* given by representative of Wilderness Alliance.

Nov. 15th. *"Native Plants of Southwest New Mexico,"* Slides/discussion. Lynn Moseley

December: Holiday Pot Luck Social. Date TBA.

LAS CRUCES

Meetings at University Terrace, Good Samaritan Village, 3011 Buena Vida, 7 p.m.

Oct. 9th. *"Preview of Soledad Canyon."* Terry Sullivan, assistant state director of the Nature Conservancy will talk about plant communities in Soledad Canyon, just south of Dripping Springs Natural Area. Here are some of the best remaining populations of the rare Organ Mountain evening primrose.

Oct. 19th. Field trip. Soledad Canyon, located in the foothills of the Organ Mountains. Rare desert riparian forest, marshes and springs; nodding cliff daisy and Sneed's pincushion cactus. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum Parking Lot. Bring water, lunch and sunscreen.

Nov. 9th. Potluck hosted by Terry and Marlene Peterson at their home, 6 p.m. Call Terry at 523-5295 for more info.

Dec. 4th. Planning Meeting for 2003 Activities. Meet at Good Samaritan location. 7 p.m.

SACRAMENTO MTS (Ruidoso)

Oct. 12th. Noon. Annual Chapter Meeting and Potluck Lunch. Cedar Creek Picnic Pavilion in Ruidoso.

No meetings in November and December.

SAN JUAN (Farmington)

Good news! Nancy Dunning reports the chapter is still alive. Her plea in the last newsletter elicited volunteers who got the ball rolling—again. Program locations TBA.

Nov. 21st. *"San Juan Flora and Fauna Project."* Ken Heil. 7 p.m.

February and March programs are also scheduled, and a number of field trips for May, June, September & October are being planned and will be announced later. A big THANKS to those volunteers!

SANTA FE

3rd Wednesdays at Evans Science Bldg, Rm 122, St John's College, 7:30 p.m.

Sep. 18th. *"The Riparian Areas of the Big Tesuque and Rio En Medio."* Jeanie Higgins

Oct. 16th. *"Landscaping for Wildlife."* Nancy Daniel's slide program highlights plants for butterflies/caterpillars, seeds/berries for birds, and some tips for deer and gophers.

A PREHISTORIC VEGETATIVE HISTORY of NEW MEXICO

excerpted from
*Vegetative Changes in
New Mexico Rangelands*
by Kelly W. Allred

New Mexico's vegetation wasn't always the way it looks today. How it evolved and what it looked like along the way is a fascinating journey through the millennia.

The rangelands of New Mexico include a diverse assemblage of plant communities and terrain, encompassing such different plant communities as mixed woodland, juniper savanna, plains grassland, and desert shrubland. They occupy portions of every county in the state, and extend from below 2900 ft to over 8500 ft in elevation.

Because of their large extent and cultural importance in New Mexico, rangelands have been subjected to numerous environmental pressures and influences, both natural and unnatural. The land has been plowed, grazed, and burned, covered with asphalt and cement, suffered drought and flood, heat wave and cold shock; it has been cut over, dug up, and built on; minerals have been extracted, fertilizers added, and flora replanted; nuts have been gathered, fuelwood harvested, trees planted, species introduced, and species lost. Rangelands have carried an enormous environmental burden, and not without consequence.

To fully appreciate and understand today's rangelands, one must know of their origin and development. Viewed with a geological perspective, today's patterns of grassland, woodland, and shrubland are only temporary faces of an ever-changing landscape.

Mesozoic: Cretaceous. Almost 100 million years ago, during the Cretaceous Period, most of New Mexico was covered by a large sea, which extended inland from the Gulf of California north to Alaska.

Cenozoic: Tertiary. During the early Tertiary Period (Paleocene-Eocene Epochs) the vegetation of

North America was composed of three archetypal floras termed geofloras.

With the continued uplift of the Rocky and Sierra Madre Mountains during the early and middle Tertiary, rain shadows were formed and climates became mostly cooler and drier east of the rising highlands.

The Neotropical-Tertiary Geoflora retreated Southward into Mexico and Central America in response to the increasing aridity of the southwestern United States.

The Arcto-Tertiary Geoflora moved south from the arctic-polar regions, migrating into the temperate regions of southern Canada and the United States which had been vacated by the Neotropical Geoflora.

The Madro-tertiary Geoflora developed in place in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. Its descendants are seen today in the woodland-savanna-shrubland elements so common throughout New Mexico and the greater Southwest.

The grasslands of the Great Plains also developed in the wake of the retreating geofloras, taking relict species from each, concomitant with a shift from browsing to grazing herbivores.

Cenozoic: Quaternary. The cooling and drying trend of the Tertiary culminated in the Pleistocene "ice ages." It is traditionally suggested that at least four major advances of glaciers took place in North America, but recent evidence points to as many as 20 glacial-interglacial cycles (some minor) existing during this period. They reached their southern limit in the Sacramento Mountains (Sierra Blanca) in New Mexico.

As the ice sheets advanced, all vegetation in the way was, of course, destroyed. At the retreat of the ice sheets, plants reoccupied the open ground and assembled into vegetation types. Post-glacial floras were sometimes quite different from those that existed prior to glaciation.

The last of the major glacial advances during the Pleistocene, termed the Wisconsin, reached its peak about 18,000 years ago and continued up until about 10,500 years ago.

Most of the state at this time was covered by montane coniferous forests, with an upper tree line in northwestern New Mexico at 8,250 ft, much lower than today.



Rangeland a few miles west of Emory Pass in the Black Range

Grassland and desert shrub vegetation, so common today, were essentially absent from New Mexico 18,000 years ago, except for a small pocket of Great Basin shrubland in the northwest corner.

This alteration of the climate in New Mexico was followed by corresponding changes in the vegetation. Analysis of packrat middens in the Sacramento Mountains, at sites approximately 5,300 ft in elevation, show the following changes through the last 18,000 years (Van Devender, 1990); at 18,000 ybp (years before present), piñon/juniper woodland (Colorado piñon and Rocky Mountain juniper) associated with wavy-leaf oak, one-seed juniper, and Douglas fir; at 10,000 ybp, juniper/oak vegetation (one-seed juniper and various oak species); at 8,000 ybp, desert shrubland vegetation dominated by honey mesquite, prickly pear, and sotol; at 7,300 ybp, a partial reversion back to earlier woodland; at 5,500 ybp, desert shrubland similar to the present vegetation dominated by creosote, ocotillo, mariola, and allthorn.

Throughout its history, the story of New Mexico vegetation and flora is a story of change, modification, replacement, retreat and advance.

As climates and landscapes passed through successive alterations, the vegetative cover responded, sometimes evolving, sometimes migrating, sometimes disappearing.

The tropical New Mexico forests of the Cretaceous have long since departed for more equable climates closer to the equator, to be supplanted by a parade of alien plants and vegetation. These new plants originated mostly from Madro-Tertiary or Arcto-Tertiary elements and adapted to local conditions, only to be themselves replaced by new waves of vegetation. Plants of current rangelands — woodland, savanna, grassland, shrubland — have come together in their present configurations only since the retreat of the glaciers some 10,000 years ago.

Kelly Allred is a Professor of Animal and Range Sciences at NMSU's College of Agriculture and Home Economics in Las Cruces. He is also the author of *Grasses of New Mexico*.




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Book Reviews

Two Photo Essays From Meinzer

The Roadrunner

by Wyman Meinzer

Texas Tech University Press, Lubbock, 1993

Softcover edition, 104 pages

ISBN 0-89672-244-9 \$ 19.95

Wyman Meinzer's book, *The Roadrunner*, is truly impressive! Through exceptional photos, Meinzer documents this bird's courage, caring, and playfulness, and shows us its nesting and hunting behavior. There are stunning photo sequences showing roadrunners preying on horned lizards, snakes and lizards. Included is a warmly written essay on roadrunners (our state bird), which provides information and dissolves some misconceptions.

This book reminded me so much of a roadrunner that patrolled our garden for a couple of years. We were very fond of this friendly and curious bird. We simply called it "Roady" — not a very imaginative name — but the bird did not mind. It seemed to appreciate any kind of friendly talk. I suspect that leftover cat food played a strong role in choosing our yard. The bird's most endearing trait was its punctuality. Every evening, exactly at sunset, "Roady" would appear purposefully from somewhere around the corner to go to sleep in the same tree.

Texas Sky

by Wyman Meinzer

University of Texas Press, Austin, 1998

Hardcover edition, 132 pages

ISBN 0-292-75218-0 \$ 29.95

Texas Sky explores West Texas, Meinzer's home. If you think you have seen all the sky there is, wait until you see these pictures! Meinzer takes his pictures around sunset — when many of us are indoors — and at night, or during thunderstorms. These are dynamic images, full of colored light and movement. Readers and photographers alike are only humble and romantic spectators of the drama of weather, its color, power and tranquility.

There are no captions to tell us where in West Texas the images were taken, but this is fine — the pictures are universal and, if you live in the desert Southwest, you probably have seen similar vistas at one time or another. Meinzer demonstrates that the "South West" has vast areas of great natural beauty, as worthy of photographing as any National Park.

Anybody viewing this book will probably have a favorite photograph. Mine is on page sixty: A night photograph of a thunderstorm, featuring several lightning bolts and a full moon. I wish I had been there. The book includes edifying quotes which comment on the beauty of the sky and how the weather influences human life.

Two thumbs up for Wyman Meinzer, a gifted photographer who takes time to look at the familiar and show us how extraordinary it is!

Lisa Mandelkern

Answers to Quiz on Page 4.

- * Tulips originally came from the Mediterranean and Asia.
- * Tumbleweed is dead Russian thistle and comes, naturally, from Russia.
- * Potatoes are native to South America.
- * Beets, which we associate with Russian borscht, come from North Africa.
- * Tomatoes, the mainstay of Italian cooking, are native to South America.
- * And watermelons, without which no summer picnic would be complete, are native to Africa.

A college history professor was teaching a class on World War Two. He had recently traveled throughout Europe photographing many of the important sites associated with that war, and was showing the slides to his students. "And here," he said, clicking on a new slide, "is the site of the German Chancellery in Berlin where Adolph Hitler committed suicide and where his body was burned along with his paramour." One of the students raised his hand. "Professor," he said, "I can understand why they'd burn Adolph Hitler. But why would they burn his power mower?"

Activities & Events Cont'd From Pg 11.

SANTA FE (Cont'd)

Nov. 20th. TBA.

Chapter is still looking for volunteer to chair the Speaker/Hiking Programs. Contact Truel West at truelwest@yahoo.com.

TAOS

2nd Wednesdays at San Geronimo Lodge, 7:00 p.m.

Oct. 5th. Field trip to Sipawe Ruin in El Rito, led by Skip Miller. Meet at El Prado Post Office at 9 a.m. to carpool.

Oct. 9th. "Native Trees and Soil Health." Michazel Melendres, owner of Trees That Please in Los Lunas.

Oct. 16th. Field trip to Camino Real Ranger District to view Forest Service procedures for moving cattle around to preserve the health of the grass and forest. Meet at Cruz Alta Rd. Forest Service parking lot at 9 a.m. Some walking. Back approximately 2-3 p.m.

Nov. 13th. "Native Plants and Public Lands Ranching." Courtney White, executive director of the Quivara Collection.

First NPSNM Youth Conference a Success

Leaf rubbings, pressed flower frame decorating and an introduction to keys were some of the activities enjoyed by the fourteen participants in NPSNM's first youth conference, August 15 to 18 in Silver City. The children ranged in age from three to ten years. They joined their elders in field trips and workshops in the mornings, then attended a separate session while the adults sat in (boring) panel discussions.

Adults enjoyed the presence of the younger registrants, parents appreciated the exposure of their children to botanical pursuits, and the kids had fun with the projects, stories and time out of doors. We will all be looking for this event at future meetings; it's an exciting new way to pursue the Society's mission of education, and to introduce future generations to the wonder and importance of our native flora.

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